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From Skill-Specific to Skill-Integrated: Theme-Based Instruction and Weeksheet Recycling

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Introduction

This paper describes how, over the course of the last two years, an ESL program has moved from a skill-separate to a skill-integrated curriculum model. A theme-based approach was used, with weekly as well as course themes identified for each of the five courses described. Teacher awareness of each other's instructional plan as well as teacher involvement in course decision-making was encouraged through instructional "weeksheets." Samples are provided of the curricular change timeline, course themes, objectives, and weeksheets.

For nearly six decades, English language teaching has focused on language form, resulting in skill separation and curricular models which revolve around four modes of performance: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Brown, 1994). Separate skill courses tend to be considered as more traditional and "bottom up" (Shrum and Glisan, 1994). Instructional foci are on discrete skills and linguistic content, learning/teaching about language rules, structures, etc. with linguistically graded input (Brown, 1994). Many pre-university intensive English programs still use a skills-separate model, probably due mostly to administrative considerations making it easier to program separate courses. Specialized courses may be practical and warranted when meeting the needs of higher proficient learners who need to "balance" their skills. However, if communicative, interactive use of the target language is the goal, skill integration is, according to Brown, "the only plausible approach to take" (p. 219). In fact, most of us would agree that, even when teaching in a skills-separate program, good teachers naturally integrate all language skills when orchestrating learning activities.

Integrated skills models described by Brown as being currently in use include content-, theme-, and task-based teaching, experiential learning, and/or episodically structured language input (see Table 1 for a summary of the characteristics of each). All use a "communicative, interactive framework" (p. 219). Shrum and Glisan (1994) also emphasize skill integration and meaningful communication in their support of contextualized, theme-based, whole language approaches: "students manipulate language to communicate thoughts by using higher level skills before attending to discrete language

structures with the use of lower level skills" (p. 25). Experiential language use is included in Nunan's description of content-based syllabuses in which learners are exposed to language input "which has not been linguistically graded" and which is focused more on experiential content than linguistic content (1988, p. 38).

Moving from Skill-specific to Skill-integrated

Throughout the last two years, our English program at SIU-C has been involved in moving from a predominately skill-specific curricular orientation to a theme-based curricular model. The old curriculum was for the most part a four-level model, with one-hour courses each in communicative activities (listening/ speaking), reading, grammar, and writing. The new curriculum, instituted in the fall of 1994, is a five-level model with three distinct phases: General English (GE), Advanced English 1 & 2 (AE1, AE2) and English for Academic Purposes 1 & 2 (EAP1, EAP2). The first phase focuses on receptive language growth with students tracked into a listening-focus versus a reading-focus course of study. The second phase continues receptive growth while introducing more productive work and a process approach toward writing. The final phase teaches academic study skills while improving English language proficiency with social science and earth science content (see Appendix A, Three Phase Model, for a more detailed overview).

Elements from each of Brown's integrated skill models were included in the courses at each level (see Table 1). The curriculum was based at each level on theme, with a balance of content and language skills the focus in core classes throughout the curriculum. Experiential learning was the focus of both the projects and the clinic (language media center) classes. A task-based approach was inherent especially in the GE phase, with its focus on life skill English. A task-based orientation to instruction was also an important part of the writer's workshop classes and is evidenced in instructional objectives at each level of the program. Multi-media and reading materials, in particular, were chosen with episodic elements to stimulate learner curiosity, interest, and hypothesis-forming/ testing capabilities. Community survey projects and research projects were also built in as class activities to further students' awareness of the scientific inquiry process and to practice higher-level critical thinking skills.

Implementation of the new model involved a number of major programmatic changes. A great effort was made to expose students to both print-based and non-print-based materials at all levels, with more focused listening and concept development through a multi-media approach to language learning. Audio- and video-based material use was greatly expanded, in required texts, supplemental texts, and for remedial and challenge work. CAELL-based instruction was integrated into the curriculum through clinic classes to introduce and practice with software at the lower levels and clinic

electives at the upper levels. Computer classrooms for writing workshop courses and a newsletter course were utilized at the upper levels.

Improved community resource use and experiential learning were other goals, with structured community immersion built into the curriculum through projects courses. Project courses employed elements of a whole language approach to language learning by providing a purpose for communication, requiring the students to negotiate, make plans, and initiate meaningful interactions in authentic language settings, integrating language skills, and providing authorship opportunities. Coffeehouses, newsletter publishing, "Travel USA" and "Know Your City" projects were successfully implemented, with regular end-of-term (EOT) exhibits held for students to display and explain their work.

Scheduling changed from hourly teaching blocks to 2- and 3-hour teaching blocks for all core and writing workshop classes, necessitating changes in lesson planning. Teachers were encouraged to plan instructional activities in approximately 20-minute "chunks," moving between print and non-print materials as they also integrated language skills and worked with theme-based content. Organizational patterns also changed. Students now have a "home room" teacher, a full-time teacher responsible for their core class who is considered the primary teacher responsible for that group of students. Leadership roles changed, as well, as we switched from skill coordinators (reading, grammar, etc.) to level/area coordinators (GE, AE, EAP). We have also tried to increase student choice and assist them with specific skill improvement through offering "electives" courses which are optional and graded "pass/fail" (e.g., TOEFL preparation, advanced pronunciation, current events, conversations with Americans).

Obviously, the new curriculum involved a great deal of change; ongoing attention and concern has been given to developing communication patterns and establishing teacher ownership and control over the instructional plan. Attention to communication patterns and the flow of information was essential, with effort given to foster bottom-up communication patterns and to involve individual teachers in instructional decision-making and curricular evaluation. One important move to promote teacher communication was to make Wednesdays a "light" teaching day, with no core classes meeting that day. This ensured that all full-time teachers (and most part-time teachers) would be available for teachers' meetings and instructional planning. It also gave teachers a day midway through the week for student conferences, lesson planning, materials and test development, and grading. This scheduling plan allows students to attend optional elective courses and has encouraged student free-time use of the language media center. Wednesdays are also used for extended field trips and projects work which would otherwise conflict with regular classes.

While we are still involved in formative evaluation and revision of the new curriculum and continue to problem-solve as we try out this drastically different curricular model, some tools employed in implementing the new model have been very useful and may be of benefit to others. Organization of courses by themes has been helpful both in selecting materials and in keeping students and teachers oriented to the integrated skills model. Weeksheets have been important in allowing teachers to see the instructional plan "a week at a glance," have fostered awareness and reinforcement of instructional objectives, and have proven to be an important tool for bottom-up, ongoing formative evaluation and revision of the curriculum throughout the year.

Theme-based Instruction

The use of themes for each course has been very helpful in orienting both teachers and students to course content. Level-appropriate themes and content-based materials were chosen for the various levels, according to instructional objectives and learner needs analysis (see sample themes in Appendix B). For example, learners in the GEL (General English—Listening focus) course tend to be our lowest proficient learners and are typically new arrivals to the U.S.A. All GEL classes use content related to the theme, "Leaving home and family, coming to a new community." Students learn life skills and the use of community resources while being involved in a "Know your City project." Selected print-based texts focus on a functional-notional approach, with life skills extended in community-based activities. Students also work with CAELL-based materials and participate in a grammar class, but those materials also reflect a life skill approach and the theme of the course.

Learners at the next proficiency level deal with materials related to the regions of the U.S.A. Across all classes at that level (core class, CAELL-based clinic class, projects class, culture class, and grammar class) the texts and materials have a "U.S.A.: People, Places, Institutions" theme. Regions of the U.S.A. are explored with audio-visual materials, through interaction with short stories, history lessons, introductions to regional music and cultures, a look at historical figures, famous sites and recreational activities, occupations and lifestyles of the people in the region, and so on.

Learners at the middle proficiency levels are involved in issues-focused classes, with Advanced English 1 dealing with "personal issues" (e.g., personal values, cultural values, friendships and relationships, goals and aspirations) and Advanced English 2 working with "societal issues" (e.g., gender roles, educational differences, genetic engineering, urban/rural lifestyles, influences of the media). The highest proficiency levels then move into a focus on English for Academic Purposes (EAP), with EAP1 learning English through social science content and EAP2 learning English and academic skills and

strategies through earth science content. Exposure to lectures by university professors, formal and informal classroom presentations, library research techniques, and a combination of skill-based and content-based testing helps our EAP students in their transition to university coursework.

Weeksheets

The movement from skill-specific to skill-integrated instruction involved not only a drastic change in scheduling and instructional strategies but also hinged upon teacher awareness of each other's instructional purposes, use of materials, and schedules. Teachers needed to communicate effectively with each other to plan and carry out instruction so as to avoid student overload, repetition of content or materials, and to better reinforce instructional objectives. Part-time teachers (TAs) and full-time teachers had to match busy schedules so as to plan instruction and to deal more effectively with individual learners. Teachers were asked to work closely with their core teacher in order to identify students who may be "at risk" as well as those who would benefit from challenge activities. Teachers and Level/Area Coordinators (i.e., General English coordinator, Advanced English coordinator, EAP coordinator) were also expected to function together as instructional decision-makers as they adjusted and improved the weekly plan of instruction.

During weekly meetings with teachers, area coordinators would solicit feedback regarding the instructional plan as presented in the weekly plan, or "weeksheet" (see samples in Appendix D). Teachers were encouraged to edit the weeksheets as they progressed through the eight-week term so that area coordinators could then recycle the plan for the following semester. Teachers and coordinators also met to critique texts and materials used, to identify material needs (for purchase or development), and to suggest instructional improvements. While themes remained constant from one term to another, texts and materials changed so that term 1 materials were different than term 2 materials. This was done so that students who needed to repeat a particular level would not be exposed to the exact same texts. Student and teacher responses to texts and materials were solicited at the end of the term to assist in text selection the following semester.

This schedule of development, tryout, critique, revision, and recycling of term 1 and term 2 materials and weeksheets (see instructional development timetable in Appendix C) gave the teachers and coordinators a chance to reevaluate and select materials according to teacher and learner response, revise the instructional plan, and distribute the recycled plan in time for the following eight week session.

Long-term curricular change cannot take place until instructional details are smoothly managed and teachers feel a sense of "ownership" of the curriculum. The weeksheets

were a very effective tool for successful implementation of the new curricular plan. Developed initially by the curriculum coordinator for all courses, the weeksheets are now revised each term by the teachers themselves.

Weeksheets to Implement and Reinforce the Instructional Plan

The weeksheets are much more than an instructional plan. They keep all teachers focused on the theme for the week and keep them informed as to instructional plans, materials use, teacher schedules, and "heavy" times for students (i.e., when tests are being held, when major writing assignments or presentations are due). The weeksheets also let teachers know what kind of community excursions are planned for the week, allowing for reinforcement activities or simply providing fuel for informal conversations with students about the field trips. Perhaps most importantly, the weeksheets ensure that all teachers know the schedules and names of other teachers who work with the same group of students. Instructional calendar reminders are also included, so teachers know when to notify each other and supervisors of "at risk" students, when midterm evaluations are due to students, when holidays and make-up days are, when elective course offerings begin and end, and when beginning and end of term events are being held. Teachers can access the week "at a glance" as they receive guidance for their own instructional plan and see the plans which others will be following. Working together with the same theme for the week encourages teachers to discuss their instructional plans as they share supplemental materials and reinforce each other's instructional objectives.

The weeksheets are printed on legal-size paper and consist of a header which lists the course title, week, and theme, followed by dates and special events for the week. The remainder of the weeksheet is in table format, with each column providing information about one class starting with teacher, schedule and room information, and followed by a listing of class materials and content in the order in which they occur that week (see weeksheet samples in Appendix D). Optional and supplemental materials are also listed, along with special instructions to the teachers (for example, where materials can be found, whether it is text and/or audio/video, suggestions that they cooperate with another teacher to allocate materials, and so on). If space allows, a listing of objectives is also provided at the bottom of the weeksheet so that teachers can be aware of and reinforce what is being covered in other classes.

Teacher Control and Ownership—Weeksheet Recycling

Teachers are asked to edit the weeksheets as they proceed through their course, noting in particular how much they could cover in a week, which materials they think should be required and which should be optional, additional objectives they worked on, and which activities were particularly useful in meeting the stated objectives. The weeksheets and

materials developed are then collected and "recycled" by the curriculum coordinator and the area coordinator. The area coordinator also meets with the teachers weekly or biweekly to discuss the students, schedule, instructional plan, and materials.

In our program, the weeksheets have provided a tool whereby teachers can more easily and effectively communicate with each other about their plans for the week and about their students' needs. Teachers have acquired a sense of ownership of the weeksheets, copying them onto bright colors and readily assisting in revision and criticism of the instructional plans. Area coordinators and core teachers seem to be viewing themselves more as developers and experts, looking to the curriculum coordinator more as an outside reviewer and as someone to help in locating appropriate supplemental materials. Teachers are able to adjust course due dates and to project so that student work loads are more reasonable and better-distributed across the term.

The weeksheets also provide security and direction for novice teachers who may otherwise be at a loss if simply provided with a textbook and a set of objectives. The course descriptions allow the various teachers to understand the focus of their particular class and to note the difference in classes which are oriented toward bottom-up teaching of skills (grammar class, for example) versus more top-down orientations (projects class, for example), while valuing the importance of both. Teachers can see when students have been exposed to various software in the clinic class (a typing tutorial, for example) and can then reinforce computer literacy skills by giving assignments that apply the skills learned. The weeksheets break the instructional plan into manageable units of instruction, providing both "the big picture" and detailed structure to a novice teacher who may be at a loss if given a less specific eight-week overview.

Conclusion

As a tool for curricular change and ongoing evaluation and revision, the weeksheets have proven invaluable as tools for planning for the future and documenting the past. Curricula can be kept current, with an ongoing effort to meet the needs of teachers and learners while keeping a consistent theoretical orientation in practice. Formative evaluation of the curriculum is built-in and encouraged. A top-down and a bottom-up flow of information and problem-solving has become the standard, with all teachers involved in instructional decision-making. The responsibility for curricular change has become a focus for the entire group of teachers rather than for a select few. Hopefully, other programs will be able to employ the concepts of theme-based instruction and the weeksheet as tools for curricular change as they work together to make instructional decisions through shared knowledge and cooperative decision-making.

Table 1

Integrated-Skill Models: Elements (summarized from Brown, 1994, p. 219-230 and as related to classes in new CESL curriculum)

Content Based Teaching = Curriculum Framework & Core Classes
•"Strong form" - primary purpose is to instruct re: subject-matter area •"Weak form" - equal value on content and language objectives, e.g. Theme-Based, Topic-Based •Underlying principles: Automaticity, Meaningful, Learning, Intrinsic Motivation, Communicative Competence •More Common at intermediate and advanced levels
Experiential Learning = CESL Projects & Clinic Classes
•Concrete experiences whereby students "discover " language principles •Learner hypothesis testing, inductive "discovery learning" (Dewey) •Learner takes charge of their own learning progress •Physical actions which require use and reinforcement of language •Contextualized language
Episodically-Structured Language (multi-media approach, reading materials)
•Authentic, real-world purposes •Interaction of cognition and language •Curiosity and motivation enable learners to form "expectancies" and to become more deeply involved in content
Task-Based Approach (Writing Workshop, Projects & Laval Objectives
•Priority is on functional purpose for which language must be used •Context is specified •Pragmatic language competence is a goal •Includes both Target tasks (accomplished beyond the classroom) and Pedagogical tasks (nuclei of classroom activities)

Appendix A

Three Phase Language-Building Process

Phase 1: GENERAL ENGLISH

Build Habits, Encourage Fluency, Promote Self-Confidence, Build Receptive Language Proficiency, Provide Content for Transition to U.S.A. Context

- Focus on fluency in receptive skill areas. Encourage reading and listening as leisure-time habits by making available high-interest, cross-level receptive language texts of varying rhetorical modes.
- Familiarize students to roles and responsibilities in university and community settings. Provide language instruction and practice through use of life skill materials.
- Practice purposeful recognition of standard English use, form, and meaning.

Phase 2: ADVANCED ENGLISH

Explicit Exposure to and Practice of Receptive and Productive Language and Critical Thinking Skills. Continued Building of Higher-Level Receptive Skills with Explicit Attention to Productive Writing Skills

- Step-by-step exposure to critical reading skills and rhetorical modes, with a focus on reading for comprehension, analysis, and reader response. Learn and practice techniques to increase vocabulary and word recognition abilities. Improve reading pace as well as independent and instructional reading levels. Learn and practice strategies and skills to read for varying purposes.
- Introduce to reader-based writing and writing as a process, as well as differences between narrative and expository writing. Practice process writing and acceptable sentence/paragraph/short essay structure with personal narrative, reader response, and personal opinion writing, in addition to summary, synthesis, critical review, and short answer essay writing when describing or responding to issues-related materials. Movement from a focus on fluency in writing to more structured planning and organization of written work for academic purposes.

Phase 3: ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

Critical reading, note taking, and advanced academic language and study skills taught, practiced, and tested through application with authentic materials.

- Listen and read to learn and remember information, with realistic testing and numerous opportunities for study skill application. Learners to practice self-help strategies for academic success, including the development of meta-cognitive awareness of own weaknesses and needs.

- Comprehend and practice logical categorization of information, recognizing author's purposes, credentials, and biases.
- Longer (Essay, Report) writing for academic purposes in guided and unguided situations. Introduction to and application of library research techniques to collect relevant, appropriate source materials for class projects. Use of conventional forms of citation, introduction of sources, and quoting/paraphrasing. Use of the word processor as a writer's tool.
- Formal and informal speaking to express ideas, gather information, contradict or seek clarification, inform, and/or persuade others.

Appendix B

Sample Themes

Wk.	GENERAL ENGLISH - Listening Focus "Life Skills / Welcome to Carbondale"	GENERAL ENGLISH - Reading Focus "USA - People, Places, Institutions"
1	Starting Out/Meeting People	U.S.A. Overview
2	Getting There	The Pacific Northwest
3	Problems & Solutions	The Great Lakes/Midwest
4	Moving In/Eating Out	The Northeast
5	The Community	The Southeast
6	Work and School	The Southwest
7	Health and Safety	The Golden West
8	Vacation	The Outer Regions
Wk.	ADVANCED ENGLISH 1 "Personal Issues/Transitions"	ADVANCED ENGLISH 2 "Societal Issues/Opinions"
1	Arriving/Adjusting	The Elderly
2	Challenges	Health & Citizenship
3	Goals & Decisions	Work & Gender
4	Educating Yourself	Effects of Development
5	Culture & Identity	Systems of Education
6	Personal Wellness	Bilingual Education
7	Love & Friendship	The Environment
8	Personal Choices	The Future
Unit	EAP 1 "Social Sciences"	EAP 2 "Earth Sciences"
1	Social Relations (altruism, prejudice)	Culture and Ecology
2	Conformity & Obedience to Authority	Laws of Ecology
3	Consumer Behavior	Biodiversity
4	Branding & Market Targets	

Appendix C

Instructional Development Timetable (Four 8-Wk Academic Terms,
Two 8-Wk Summer Terms/yr.)

	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
Formal materials evaluations (EOT)													
Review/Refine Instructional Objectives													
Collect/organize tchr-devpd materials													
Tryout Fall 1 weeksheets													
Collect instructor edits of Fall 1 weeksheets													
Recycle Fall 1 weeksheets for Spring 1													
Tryout Fall 2 weeksheets													
Collect instructor edits of Fall 2 weeksheets													
Recycle Fall 2 weeksheets for Spring 2													
Tryout Spring 1 weeksheets													
Collect instructor edits of Spring 1 weeksheets													
Recycle Spring 1 weeksheets for Fall 1													
Tryout Spring 2 weeksheets													
Collect instructor edits of Spring 2 weeksheets													
Recycle Spring 2 weeksheets for Fall 2													
Develop/Tryout Summer weeksheets													
Collect instructor edits of Summer weeksheets													
Recycle Summer weeksheets for next summer													

* EOT = End of Term, BOT = Beginning of Term

Appendix D

Sample Weeksheets (sample 1)

Course: (GE-L) General English - Listening
Week Two: Shopping

Theme: Life Skills/Coming to SIU
CESL/SIU-C

Term: 951

12/29/94
GEL 951.2

January 30-February 2 (Diagnostics, Elective courses begin)

Core T: name, F1132 MTRF 9-12am	Grammar T: name, F1132 MTRF 3-4pm	Projects T: name, F1132 MF 2-3 pm :W 2-4 pm	Clinic Class T: name , F1132 TR 8-9am	LMC Clinic T: name, LMC MWF 8-9am
Etc. 3 L/S, Ch. 6, p. 66-77 Comparison shopping; understanding sales, discounts, etc. Understanding commercials and announcements. Comparing kinds of bank accounts. Expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing. Family Album, p. 8-14 Teach Days of week and today, tomorrow, weekend. Teach months and calendar days 1st-31st. Hearsay, Ch. 4 "How Much is that?" Ch. 5 "I want that one." Ch. 12 "Do you have change..."	Finish Grammar Review, chapters 1-5 Begin Etc. 3, Grammar, ch.6 "Money" (adjectives & adverbs, the comparative & the superlative, present continuous with nonaction verbs	Review family labels. Share Photo albums or pictures from home. Discuss relationships, country names, urban/rural, etc. occupations. Browse newspaper for items for sale. Identify items on sale and discounted prices for items of interest. Work with coins, money, and giving change. Discuss cost of items in home country versus U.S. (encourage use of comparative and superlative). Organize for Trip to Grocery stores next week. Orient to locations, forms, language needed, names & specialties of stores, etc. Teacher prepare comparison exercises for students to complete on site.	Tradit'l Ties, finish episode 1 and begin episode 2. Collect/grade LMC learning log. Sounds [i] vs. [I], cont.	Begin typing skills practice, (under Menu/Skills/A-J). Collect/grade CPC (clinic progress chart) Intro to MacReader Pro, if time
directions How many? How much? days, months, today, etc.	this, that ____ of these/those ordinal numbers	Family-labels/occupations days of the week money and making change Excuse me. Can you help me? Thanks... Neg and Yes/No ? and answer	Listening for a purpose: to determine topic, setting, relationships between speakers, beginning and ending conversations Talking about personal interests	Typing/Finger positions Keyboarding Spelling

Appendix D

Sample Weeksheets (sample 2)

Course: (GE-R) Gener . English - Reading Theme: U.S.A. - People, Places, Institutions *GE-R 951.4*

Week Four: The Northeast

February 6-10 (Midterm evaluations; Identify "at risk" students. TOEFL practice test)

Core T: name, F1126 MTRF 10-12 am	Grammar T: name, F1126 MTRF 8-9am	Int. Reading & Culture T: name, Pul. 112 MTRF 2-3pm	Projects T: name, F1126 3-5pm M, 3-4pm WF	LMC Clinic T: name, LMC MWF 9-10am	Clinic Class T: Phil Plourde, F1126 9-10am TR
Review Mon.; Test Tuesday Places to Know...p. 27 Niagara Falls American Patterns, Maine Lobstermen, p. 126-131 CNN video "Interviews Across America" 1st program Opt'l: American Patterns, Cape Cod, p. 140-144 Places to Know, p. 37 "The Mayflower" (Opt'l) Dear Ming, p. 16-17 Thanksgiving (audio tape in LMC) All About the U.S.A.(as homework?): Unit 17 "The Cranberry" Unit 18 "Thanksgiving" Opt'l: Family Album, pp. 79-81, bottom of p. 88-92 Thanksgiving & Football Remind re: story summaries next week	Finish Chapter 7 Review Chapters 6 & 7 TEST FRIDAY	Faces of the U.S.A., The Northeast, pp. 20-21 Education, pp. 40-41 Great American Stories, pp. 102-115 "The White Heron" Collect Rdg. Log Thurs. If ready, give out other books for independent reading (teacher check out class sets from KHW; to be returned to teacher): It was on Fire... (omit first selection) "Love Medicine" plus single copies of others in TRR	Begin researching Projects. Trip to Morris Library to find materials. Set up visits to Amtrack, Greyhound, AAAL, and travel agency. Role play language of requests and clarification. National Parks laserdisk (LMC) Introduce to IBM software materials: Ultimate Geography, Trip Planner, Tourist Spots of Interest (KHW office; teacher use ahead of time to get oriented)	Typing practice, cont. Practice with Inform Intro to Pronunciation Materials (e.g. American Accent, Well Said, Pronunciation Plus, All Clear) Practice with MacReader Pro Grade CPC & LMC Log	Family Album, pp. 18-25 Directions, phone numbers, apologizing, excusing, restaurant langnage & ordering

Appendix D

Sample Weeksheets (sample 3)

Course: (AE-1) Advanced English - 1 Theme: Personal Issues/Transitions Term: 951 *1/3/95*
AE1.951.6

Week Six: Personal Health
February 20-24 (Coffeehouse, Practice TOEFL #2)

Core (10 hours) TA: name, F1122, 2-4 MF, 1-4 TR TB: name	Reading/Culture Discussion (4 hrs) TA: name TB: name, F3113 11-12am MTRF	Grammar (6 hours) TA: name, F3514 MF 8-10am, TR, 8-9am TB: name, F1132 1-3pm TR, 1-2pm MF	Projects (4 hours) TA: name, F3514 8-10am W, 9-10am TR TB: name, F1122 8-10am T, 8-9am MR
Comparison Essay, Draft 1 due (Mon.) Share & debrief over homework & essays. RJ, p. 131-137 "Why does Beauty matter?" Opt'l: Introduce topic with LMC video: *"People with good looks treated better."* Use as prompt for personal opinion essay. RJ, p. 88-90 Personal Opinion Essay. Discuss, model, and go over criteria on scoresheet. Prewriting & first draft of Personal Opinion Essay (Due Monday, week 7?) Culture Connection, p. 116-139 "Secrets to Good Health" (making suggestions & recommendations; prefixes, suffixes, roots; making comparisons from charts, drawing conclusions, determining fact/opinion, cause/effect, homonyms) Select portfolio writings to do 2nd (and 3rd?) drafts for a grade. Conferences with Teacher as needed	2nd Pronunciation Read-aloud: "Second Nature," p. 75 (do for a grade on pronunciation, fluency, stress, intonation, and rhythm). Unit 7 "The Search for Love" pp. 94-99 "Romantic Deceptions and Reality" Use "attack" strategies a-d from week 4 and add: e) locate/highlight key ideas f) make notes in margin of content to be tested g) prepare literal, interpretive, & applied type questions over the reading Have groups rate each other re: their questions (3 star, 2 star, 1 star) & discuss answers. Teacher-developed quiz over the reading. Practice for pronunciation read aloud of selection from "The Prophet," p. 100 Collect/evaluate reading log. Discuss book "sales" talks grading criteria and schedule (talks to begin next week).	Debrief over Test 2 Etc. 5 Grammar, Ch. 6, pp. 107-126 "Going Places" Simple Modal Verbs: Continuous Modal Verbs; Perfect Modal Verbs Descriptions; Comparisons	Prepare for/Hold second Coffeehouse (invited speaker on health or fitness theme?) Submit 1st draft of newsletter contribution for teacher response/editing Bulletin Board & Pen Pal letters Opt'l: Conduct poll/survey asking Americans about their favorite leisure activities & sports. Sumarize results & present orally & in writing (submit to newsletter) Alternatively, describe sports which are relatively unknown in U.S. (e.g. sepak takraw from Malaysia)

Appendix D

Sample Weeksheets (sample 4)

Course: (AE-2) Advanced English - 2 Theme: Societal Issues Term: 951 AE2.951.1

Week One: Families

January 16-20 (Wednesday orientation & course overview, Thursday & Friday regular instructional days)

Core: 10 hours Description: Reader/Writer Workshop to comprehend, summarize, evaluate, contrast, & synthesize texts written at or above a 9th grade level. Focus on expository writing, critical analysis of issues, and expressing an opinion with appropriate evidence.	Reading/Culture Discussion: 3 hrs Description: Reading & Discussion of issues-related materials. Text analysis to summarize & evaluate writer's purpose, target audience, effectiveness, etc. Establish reading as a habit while enhancing proficiency & vocabulary.	Grammar 6 hours Description: Complex structures as well as grammar for academic purposes (decoding complex sentences, editing)	Projects 4 hours Description: "Whole language" classroom with focus on using English in immersion situations (field trips, polls, surveys) & for newsletter projects (deciding tasks, time lines, responsibilities, themes, article collection, editing, distribution, etc.)
Preview books and assign to get "tools" (e.g. diskette, writing notebook). Show sample writing journal & discuss due dates. Review Summary/Response & Personal Essay. Show samples & discuss criteria. Focus on American Culture, p. 10 "Changes in the Traditional American Family" as possible summary. Discussion topics. p. 11 as possible journal writing or personal essay prompt for diagnostic. Begin Unit 1: Family with Related Matrls: *Focus on American Culture*, (text & video): "Mid-life Moms" (p. 1) "Fast-Track Parents" (p. 13) "Is Love Color Blind?" (p. 25) "The Joys & Risks of the 'Daddy Track'" (p. 61) *Making Connections* Unit 5 (text-note that readings increase in difficulty throughout bk) "The Changing American Family" (p. 294) "The Effects of Divorce on Children" (p. 285) "Family Structure & Society" (p. 271)	Preview book & read "To the Student," p. iii Show sample reading log (record of titles & pages read, etc.). Discuss how to organize, collection dates & grading. Take/Browse Pleasure Reading Books from TRR: Begin reading a book for pleasure & begin keeping reading Log Orient to/begin *Read On, Speak Out*, ch. 2 "American Family in Transition" Assign to be prepared for discussion topics, p. 13 & 15	Give Pretest & decide Chapters which can be shortened or omitted. Revise schedule accordingly. Etc. 6 Grammar, Ch. 1 Families Review present continuous vs. simple present; Present perfect; if vs. there; yes/no ?s & answers; wh ?s and answers	Orient to Morris Library, Search Tools, and Location of Pleasure Reading & Journal Materials Introduce to LMC software & MS Word Examine Interviewing Strategies what makes good/bad questions (discuss use of open-ended ?s). Suggestion to augment core & theme: Conduct regular surveys from "team tasks" at end of each segment in *Focus on American Culture* (see page 12 for sample). Practice with class, then expand to asking outsiders. Begin to organize newsletter (decide publication dates & main sections)

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Conference Announcements

The Center for Business Education and Research (CIBER), University of Hawaii, will offer a workshop for college and university faculty who wish to develop courses in intercultural and international topics. July 9-18, 1997. For more information, write to: Dr. Richard Brislin, University of Hawai'i, College of Business Administration/MIR, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96822. Tel. 808-956-8720. Fax 808-956-2774. E-mail: brislinr@busadm.cba.hawaii.edu

Second Language Research Forum (SLRF), Annual conference, Michigan East Lansing, Michigan. October 16-19, 1997. Contact SLRF 97, English Language Center for International programs, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1035.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Annual conference, Nashville, Tennessee. November 21-23, 1997. Contact ACTEFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, New York 10701-6801. Tel. 914-8830. Fax 914-963-1275.

Moscow State University. 4th International Conference, "Russia and the West: The Dialogue of Cultures," Moscow. January 12-14, 1998. Proposal deadline October 1, 1997. Contact the Organizing Committee. Tel. 7-095-939-20-79 or 7-095-932-88-67. Fax 7-095-143-08-77.

American Association For Applied Linguistics. March 14-17, 1998. Location: The Madison Hotel, Seattle, Washington. Abstracts due August 15, 1997: AAAL 1998 Program Committee, PO Box 21686, Eagan, MN 55121-0686 USA. Tel. 612-953-0805. for further information: E-mail: aaaloffice@aaal.org Internet: http:// www.oise. utoronto. ca/AAAL98

Predicted Problems of Elementary School ESL Teachers: Implications For Teacher Education

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Introduction

The reports on the early induction period of novice teachers, including English language teachers, show that they are not always prepared to assume full teaching responsibilities (Barkhuizen, 1994; Featherstone, 1993; Johnston & Ryan, 1980; Veenman, 1984). A number of schools in South Africa are now responding to this dilemma by planning and implementing various induction programs, very much the way American schools have been doing for some time now (see Adkinson, 1985). These are programs that supposedly ease the transition into teaching for beginning teachers. New teachers will always experience some instability when they start to teach, but perhaps this condition could be prevented somewhat if potential problems received more attention during teacher preparation.

This article features ways in which preservice teacher education programs could work towards eliminating some of the anxiety first-year teachers feel about problems they may experience when they begin teaching. The suggestions and insights presented evolved from the results of a study in which preservice student teachers were asked to indicate what problems they were expecting to encounter when they start to teach English in South African elementary schools.

The Study: Background and Method

Preservice student teachers at three South African teacher preparation institutions (two colleges of education and one university located in the Eastern Cape Province) were asked to consider the problems they might experience when they start to teach. One hundred and twelve student teachers completed a questionnaire which was designed to investigate their expectations of the early part of their teaching careers. The questionnaire covered many aspects of beginning teaching, but two questions, which formed the basis of this study, probed the nature of the problems that the student teachers predicted they might experience in their prospective ESL classes.

All student teachers shared the following profile:

1. They planned to become elementary school English teachers.
2. They expected to teach English as a second language.
3. They were non-native English speakers. All, in fact, were mature speakers of Xhosa.
4. They were in their final year of study.
5. None of them had taught in full-time situations before. All had experienced some form of practice teaching.

The first of the two major considerations was an open-ended question which asked the student teachers the following: *What **worries** you the most about being an English teacher? Give at least **three** points.* Only responses which had to do with teaching English were analyzed. Other general problems such as "getting on with the other teachers" were not categorized. The responses were categorised according to common themes, and each instance of a specific problem was tallied. The nature of the problems were then described and ranked according to frequency.

The second question which respondents were asked to consider involved the following: Respondents were presented with a list of problems; they were asked to indicate a maximum of five problems which they predicted they might encounter when they start teaching (see Table 1 for the problems listed). Frequencies were tabulated and ranked. The responses to the first and second questions were then compared.

The Study: Findings and Discussion

The first question

Table 1 summarises the answers to the first question: "What worries you the most about being an English teacher?" nineteen problem themes were identified. The frequency refers to the number of times each problem theme was found in the responses. Sometimes a particular problem theme was mentioned more than once by individual respondents. Each of these themes can be subcategorized into more specific descriptions of the problem. In this section, the highest ranking problems will be discussed. The others will be considered where applicable.

Table 1

Rank	Problems	Frequency
1	Limited English proficient students	63
2	Attitude of students	35
3	Mother tongue interference	32
4	English proficiency of teacher	31
5	Teacher effectiveness	22
6	Inadequate facilities	14
6	No English practice outside school	14
8	Insufficient materials and textbooks	13
9	Current outdated teaching practices	7
9	Personal constraints	7
9	Relations with students	7
12	No student participation in class	4
12	Teaching in a multilingual setting	4
12	Time constraints	4
15	Ineffectiveness as change agent	3
15	Large class size	3
15	Relations with parents	3
18	Inadequate guidance and support	2
19	Syllabus constraints	1

The most frequently mentioned problem related to the limited English proficiency of the students. This problem theme was mentioned 63 times by the respondents. In answering this question, respondents referred to the entire range of language skills. The skills subcategory was listed 55 times. Other subcategories include: knowing no English at all (1), students' lack of confidence in using English or being shy (6), and lack of knowledge of literature (1).

It was surprising that the problem of prospective students' limited English proficiency should be ranked the highest. One would assume that since these student teachers are going to be teaching English they would be expecting to do just that. Furthermore, one would assume that they would also expect their prospective students not to be advanced speakers of English, especially in an elementary school ESL situation. Perhaps one explanation is that the teachers perceive English teaching as being similar to teaching "content" school subjects; that is, there is information to be passed on, stories to be read, compositions to be written and interesting topics to be discussed. They may ask themselves, "How is it possible to do all of this if the students can't speak English?"

Another explanation may relate to the problem theme, Personal constraints (7). Subcategories of this problem include comments such as "teaching will exert much strain" (1), English teachers "cannot be lazy" (1), they have to "deal with a lot of work" (4), and the "difficulty of teaching English" (1). The conclusion drawn is that the lower the level of the students' English proficiency, the harder the work will be for the teacher, and the more severe the Time constraints (see problem theme ranked 12).

The second highest ranked problem theme, Attitude of students, has, like the first problem, the students as its source. Of the 35 responses, 15 refer to the unwillingness to speak or fear of speaking (practising, using) English in class, as opposed to being unable to. Teachers obviously want their students to participate in classroom English activities; perhaps because of their familiarity with the communicative language teaching method. This lack of participation may also be a result of other attitudinal factors: unmotivated, uninterested or lazy students (10) and students having a negative attitude to the English language (8).

The problem theme, Relations with students (7), ranked 9, endorses these student teachers' concerned interest in their students. Subcategories in this theme reveal that they want good relations with their students (2), they want to be liked by their students (1), they want their cooperation (2), and respect (2), and they want their students to appreciate their teaching (1). Relations of this nature would obviously lead to an anxiety-free classroom atmosphere and thus one conducive to more effective teaching and learning.

The third highest ranked problem theme, Mother tongue interference at 32, also relates to the language learners. However, this time there is a move towards including teaching practice in the problem. Respondents here were concerned with the use of the mother tongue in English classes (21); in other words, they were worried that the students would not get enough practice using English, and would consequently not learn much English. This view is supported by their concern that their future students do not get much practice speaking English outside of the school; see problem theme No English practice outside school (14), ranked 6.

The next two problems, English proficiency of teacher (31) and Teacher effectiveness (22), ranked 4 and 5 respectively, redirect focus away from the students and onto the teacher. What the student teachers were concerned about here was their own lack of proficiency in English. Many acknowledged that because they were not native English speakers (20), they lacked knowledge of the grammatical structure of the language (3), and that they had "poor pronunciation" (8).

Being an effective teacher was also a high priority concern for the student teachers. The major subcategory in this problem theme was simply that the teachers were afraid of not being successful (12 of 22).

The ranking of problem themes progresses from a focus on the students, to the teacher and then onto facilities. This seems to be a move outwards: from the central purpose of teaching, to those who make it possible, to the hardware needed to make it successful. Inadequate facilities (14), ranked 6, refers to the lack of structural support in the form of adequate classroom space, libraries, and equipment and teaching aids, such as overhead projectors and video-recorders .

A problem theme related to facilities, and the final one to be discussed in this section, is Insufficient materials and textbooks (13), ranked 8. Once again, the student teachers predict that the materials they will require and the textbooks which they find suitable will either not be available or will be inappropriate to meet their needs and to support their teaching methods. Considering the state of textbook distribution in parts of the country and the financial situation of some schools, this is a very real problem indeed.

The second question Table 2 summarises the results of Question 2, which asked respondents to choose a maximum of five problems from a given list. Most chose five, but some of the teachers chose fewer. The table shows the number of times each problem was chosen (the frequency) as well as the percentage of respondents who chose each problem. For instance, the problem ranked 1, Teaching in large classes, was chosen 80 times by the 112 respondents, which is 71 percent of all respondents.

Table 2

Rank	Problems	Freq	%
1	teaching in large classes	80	71
2	teaching in multilingual classes	64	57
3	dealing with a range of English proficiency levels in the same class	52	46
4	explaining grammatical rules and structures	42	38
5	finding or designing suitable materials	36	32
6	teaching poetry	32	29
7	knowing how to use a particular method effectively	25	22
8	using the language textbook effectively	22	20
9	assessing students' written work	19	17
9	following the prescribed English syllabus	19	17
9	knowledge of subject matter: English	19	17
9	motivating students	19	17
13	planning and testing oral work	18	16
14	language testing and examining	15	13

It was surprising to find Teaching in large classes ranked so high since it was hardly mentioned in Question 1. On the other hand, research has shown that crowding and lack of space is not conducive to effective teaching and learning (Holahan, 1982), and at many South African conferences, teachers' meetings and in the media (see, for example, Garson & Mona, 1996) the problems teachers experience in overcrowded classrooms, which in less advantaged schools could consist of up to 80 students, are often highlighted and discussed.

Also highly ranked in Question 2 (in contrast to Question 1) is the problem of Teaching in multilingual classes. On another question in the questionnaire all teachers indicated that they expected to teach in ESL contexts (probably a group sharing the same mother tongue). When presented with the idea of teaching in multilingual settings (which in South Africa has typically come to mean having English mother tongue and non-mother tongue speakers in the same class), 57 percent of the student teachers felt that this would be a problem for them. This makes sense when one considers that two of the more highly

ranked problems in Question 1 were English proficiency of teacher and Teacher effectiveness.

There are two other problems which are related to the English proficiency of teachers. Firstly, Explaining grammatical rules and structures (38 percent): It would be difficult to do so if one were not sure of the rules and structures in the first place. This problem may be perceived to be a major one because of the emphasis in ESL classes on a grammar teaching approach to ESL instruction. Secondly, Teaching poetry (29 percent), English poetry, with its complexity of structure and intensity of the language, would certainly be difficult for limited English proficient teachers.

Dealing with a range of English proficiency levels in the same class is a common problem for ESL teachers (Pica, 1994), and it is therefore not surprising to see it ranked 3 (at 46 percent).

For most of the other problems ranked in Question 2, there is a fairly high correlation with the ranking of similar problems identified in Question 1. For example, Insufficient materials and textbooks (Question 1) and Finding or designing suitable materials (Question 2) are both in the top half of the ranked problems for each question. Concerns with the syllabus are in the second half, and worries about methods are in the middle.

Images of Teaching and of Problems

The 112 student teachers who responded to this questionnaire were all in the final year of their preservice teacher preparation. The following year they were expecting to go out into the real world of elementary school English teaching. With them they would take their memories of their own experiences as language learners at school, the knowledge and skills they had acquired in their years of teacher education, and their expectations or perceptions of what they are going to encounter and experience in their future classrooms.

These expectations or perceptions have been referred to in a number of ways. Barnes (1992, p. 16), for example, uses the term "frame" to refer to "the clustered set of standard expectations through which all adults organise, not only their knowledge of the world but their behaviour in it." Calderhead (1988) talks about the "images" that teachers have about teaching, and about the images that student teachers have which are then taken with them into the classroom when they start to teach. These images which are like mental pictures or conceptions of teaching "seem to be quite powerful influences" on teachers' developing practice (Calderhead, 1988, p. 54).

This research has shown that student teachers have, as part of their image of teaching, ideas about the kinds of problems they expect to experience when they start teaching. Strong sources of these images are no doubt the teachers' own experiences of being

students in schools and student teachers in teacher education programs. The question which needs to be asked is: What effect will these images of problems have on the teaching of student teachers when they actually start to teach? One possibility is that the teachers may be so concerned about the predicted problems that they may focus only on these, ignoring or neglecting other areas of teaching practice. Another possibility is that their image of problems may change dramatically when they enter the school: They may, for example, find that their predicted problems may not exist at all or may not be as serious as they thought. The question could only be answered by further research; by following, for example, student teachers into schools, by observing them teach and by talking to them about their teaching experiences.

Implications for Teacher Education

Intervention at the stage of preservice teacher education could help student teachers to come to terms with their images of problems they may have. By including in the teacher education program the following, teachers may develop different, less threatening images of problems and a more positive attitude towards coping with them:

1. *Raise an awareness of problems which English teachers may experience in elementary schools.* Ask student teachers to project themselves into their future lives in schools and to predict what sort of problems they might encounter there. Encourage student teacher to think back to the times when they were school children; have them recount their observations of teaching in action. Student teachers could, while on teaching practice, be asked to note problems they themselves experience or they could observe or talk to other teachers in the school. The problems listed in Tables 1 and 2 in this paper could also serve as a useful source.

2. *Examine the nature of the problems, their possible causes and the extent of their negative effect.* Individually, student teachers could be asked to reflect on these issues in assignments or journals. Together, pooling of ideas and experiences in groupwork or whole-class discussions is an effective way of broadening the range of problems under investigation and for examining in more detail their nature and influence. Once again, observation exercises could be devised for student teachers to work on while on teaching practice in schools. They could "self-observe" their own classes (see Richards & Nunan, 1990, for examples) or those of experienced teachers. Once problems have been identified in this manner, a closer analysis should be undertaken to reveal a more in-depth understanding of the problems. Guidelines in the form of worksheets, questionnaires or observation instruments could be provided by course instructors (or developed by the student teachers themselves before the practice teaching session) to systematise the investigation.

3. *Consider, practise and evaluate strategies which could be effective in coping with the problems when they are encountered.* Once the problems have been identified and analyzed, student teachers should begin to ask themselves what they are going to do about them when they start to teach. For example, if they have identified as a problem the students' use of their mother tongue in the classroom, they will need to consider what they are going to do about it. Will they limit the use of the mother tongue? How will they do so? How will they monitor its use? What will happen if the learners insist on using their mother tongue?

The coping strategies should not be in the form of "recipes" provided by instructors, where step-by-step procedures are listed for application in specific circumstances. This type of prescription would be difficult to apply since the circumstances in which the problems are located will no doubt be different each time. Furthermore, the prescriptions may limit the freedom of the teachers to come up with more suitable coping strategies of their own. Instead of recipes, I suggest that "maps" are used. By maps I mean rough drafts or conceptualisations about the way problems are solved. Whereas recipes are inflexible and limit freedom, maps allow the teacher flexibility in working out alternative routes (coping strategies) in case the original ones are problematic.

Closing Comments

This article reported on a study which aimed to identify the problems student teachers expected to encounter when they start teaching ESL in elementary schools. Because beginning teaching can often lead to instability-generating experiences (Barkhuizen, 1994), it was suggested that some form of pre-emptive intervention be included in preservice teacher preparation. I described a three-point approach to the examination of problems, whereby student teachers identified predicted problems, analyzed them and then planned coping strategies for dealing with them in their future teaching lives.

This is not to say that student teachers should be provided with alternative images by teacher educators. Instead, they should be given the opportunity to build their own images, and to see themselves as self-reliant thinkers and practitioners. This could be achieved if student teachers firstly, are aware of any potential problems, and secondly, have developed ideas for how to deal with them.

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The Internet for English Teaching: Guidelines for Teachers

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Teachers have been using online communication in the language classroom for more than ten years now. From an investigation of the experiences of dozens of teachers around the world who have used the Internet in language teaching (Warschauer, 1995a; 1995b; 1996c; 1996d), a few common guidelines emerge that can assist teachers in successfully planning and implementing network-based learning projects.

Guidelines

Readers will note that these guidelines are independent of the particular technological tools being used. As has been noted elsewhere, "technology is developing so rapidly that it can often be difficult or even overwhelming to harness somewhat like trying to get a drink of water from a gushing fire hydrant" (Warschauer, 1995b. p. xv). In order to make effective use of new technologies, teachers must thus take a step back and focus on some basic pedagogical requirements. The following guidelines are designed to help teachers implement computer network-based activities, technologies into the second language classroom.

#1: Consider Carefully Your Goals

There are several possible reasons for using the Internet in language teaching. One rationale is found in the belief that the linguistic nature of online communication is desirable for promoting language learning. It has been found, for example, that electronic discourse tends to be more lexically and syntactically complex than oral discourse (Warschauer, 1996a) and features a broad range of linguistic functions beneficial for language learning (Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995; Wang, 1993). Another possible reason for using the Internet is that is creates optimal conditions for learning to write, since it provides an authentic audience for written communication (see for example Janda, 1995). A third possible reason is that it can increase students' motivation (Warschauer, 1996c). A fourth possible reason is the belief that learning computer skills is essential to students' future success; this reason suggests that it is only a matter of using the Internet to learn English, but also of learning English to be able to function well on the Internet.

None of these reasons are more or less legitimate than any of the others. However, since there are so many ways to integrate the Internet into classroom instruction, it is important for the teacher to clarify his or her goals. If, for example, one of the teacher's goals is to teach students new computer skills, the teacher may want to choose Internet applications which will be most useful to them outside of the classroom, with activities structured so that students steadily gain mastery of more skills. If the immediate goal is to create a certain kind of linguistic environment for students, once again, the teacher should consider what types of language experiences would be beneficial and structure computer activities accordingly. If the goal is to teach writing, Internet activities should be structured so that they steadily bring about an increase in the types of writing processes and relationships essential to becoming a better writer (see for example seven activities by Janda in Warschauer, 1995b).

As will be discussed further below, little is usually gained by just adding random online activities into a classroom. Clarifying course goals is thus an important first step toward successful use of the Internet.

#2: Think Integration

Most teachers who have used the Internet have started out with some kind of simple key pal (computer pen pal) exchanges. And most teachers who have used these exchanges have felt something lacking. Simply put, there is no more reason to except a significant educational outcome from simply creating a pen pal connection than there is from simply bringing two students into a room and asking them to talk. Over time, greater involvement on the teacher's part in creating learning activities that create sufficient linguistic and cognitive demands on the student is needed to get maximum benefit from Internet exchanges. And, as a number of people have noted, this teacher intervention is most successful when it brings about activities and projects that are well-integrated into the course curriculum as a whole.

Bruce Roberts, the coordinator of the Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections (IECC) program, explained this point well:

> There is a significant difference in educational outcome depending on whether a teacher chooses to incorporate e-mail classroom connections as (1) an ADD-ON process, like one would include a guest speaker, or (2) an INTEGRATED process, in the way one would include a new textbook. The e-mail classroom connections seems sufficiently complex and time consuming that if there are goals beyond merely having each student send a letter to a person at a distant school, the ADD-ON approach can lead to frustration

and expected academic results—the necessary time and resources come from other things that also need to be done. On the other hand, when the e-mail classroom connection processes are truly integrated into the ongoing structure of homework and classroom interaction, then the results can be educationally transforming (in Warschauer, 1995a, p. 95)

Of course there are many ways that Internet activities can be integrated into the overall design and goals of a course (see Sayers, 1993 for a good overview). The teacher can work with students to create research questions which are then investigated in collaboration with foreign partners. Students and long-distant partners can work collaboratively on publications. Or students can use exchange partners as experts to supply information on vocabulary, grammar, or cultural points which emerge in the class. Again, the choice has to be made by the classroom teacher, preferably in ongoing consultation with the students. Nevertheless, as Roberts suggests above, it does behoove the teacher to think about how to integrate online connections into the class rather than adding these connections on top of the rest of the classroom activities in a disconnected fashion.

#3: Don't Underestimate the Complexity

Most English teachers, even those who consider themselves computer novices, have several relative advantages when learning to use the Internet. They are in most cases skilled at English, experienced at typing or keyboarding, and have some basic computer literacy (i.e., they probably have at least used a computer for word processing). ESL students, on the other hand, at least in some cases may lack these basic prerequisites. Though we have had students who are quite experienced with computers, we have also had students who had seldom used a computer; lacked basic knowledge such as how to operate a mouse or open a folder; and lacked the vocabulary, reading, and listening skills to follow instructions for using the computer

Beyond these issues of learner preparation, there are a number of other complexities in introducing Internet-based activities in the ESL classroom. Activities in a single class may be dependent on scheduling the computer lab, and on students finding computers outside the class time to continue their activities. Hardware and software can malfunction and computer systems can be down. Students' schedules might not permit them to return to the computer lab at a time when computers are available to complete their assignments.

Exchanges between classes are even more complex. The partner class might have absent students, or might not meet in a particular week due to holidays or other activities

in that location. The partner teacher might not have the same understanding of the nature of the exchange, and working through differences can cause further delays. The students might have differences in background, language, and experience which can cause further complications.

None of these potential problems mean that Internet-based activities shouldn't be used. But, in attempting to integrate online teaching, it is best not to be overly ambitious in the beginning. A situation which overwhelms both students and teacher in technical difficulties is not likely to bring about the desired results. It is better to start small and to create the kinds of activities which have a direct purpose and are well-integrated into classroom goals. If these activities prove successful, you can build from there and attempt a more ambitious plan the following semester.

#4: Provide Necessary Support

Mindful of the complexities which can arise in Internet usage, teachers need to provide support sufficient to prevent students from being overwhelmed by difficulties. This kind of support can take numerous forms: creating detailed handouts that students can refer to when class is finished and the teacher's personal help is not accessible; building technology training sessions into the class schedule, not only in the beginning but on an ongoing basis; working with the computer center to set up log-on systems and other procedures which are as simple and intuitive as possible; assigning students to work in pairs or groups, both in and out of the lab, so that they can provide assistance to each other; providing details to the students about how and when they can get assistance from technology specialists or others on campus outside of class; and being available to help students at times when they are most likely to need it.

#5: Involve Students in Decisions

The concept of a learner-centered curriculum (Nunan, 1987) predates, and has broader significance, than the Internet-enhanced classroom. However, this concept seems particularly important when considering network-based teaching.

First of all, as indicated above, network-based teaching involves a number of special complexities. It will be difficult, indeed, for a teacher to be fully aware of the impact of these complexities without regular consultation with students. This might involve anonymous surveys, class discussions, or similar means of involving students in expressing their opinions about the process of implementing technologies.

Beyond that though the nature of computer-mediated communication is that it creates opportunities for more decentered interaction (for summaries, see Warschauer, 1996b; Warschauer, Turbee, & Roberts, 1996). To fully exploit these opportunities, the teacher

must learn to become a "guide on the side" rather than a "sage on the stage". A situation which is based on communication between students, but in which the students have little say over the topics or outcomes of that communication, is not likely to lead to the kind of atmosphere optimal for language learning.

As pointed out elsewhere (Warschauer, Turbee, & Roberts, 1996), involving students in determining the class direction does not imply a passive role for teachers. Teachers' contributions in a learner-centered, network-enhanced classroom include coordinating group planning, focusing students' attention on linguistic aspects of computer-mediated texts, helping students gain meta-linguistic awareness of genres and discourses, and assisting students in developing appropriate learning strategies.

An Illustration from the Classroom

An example of one network-based class will illustrate several of the above points. A university instructor decided to organize her ESL advanced writing class largely around network-based exchanges. Class was conducted in a networked computer lab twice weekly and in a regular classroom the remaining two classes weekly. Students shared their writings in small groups within the class, both via e-mail and by exchanging rough and final drafts of their essays. They also carried out exchanges with native English speaking partners at other universities in the United States and Canada. The activities were carefully constructed around the teachers' goals, which were to give her students (a) experience in learning to write in a variety of styles to a particular audience, and (b) frequent opportunities for feedback on the organization and structure of their writing from peers and the teacher.

Unfortunately, the teacher somewhat underestimated the complexity of the new course design, and both the teacher and the students consequently felt overwhelmed by the many tasks. The students, a number of whom were from underdeveloped Pacific Island communities and had little experience with computers, could not keep up with their many assignments, which included lessons for learning keyboarding, grammatical lessons, frequent small group writing activities, letters to several key pals, and formal essays. Students felt somewhat frustrated and questioned the value of many of the assignments.

Fortunately, the teacher implemented an important guideline listed above: she listened to her students and involved them in the decision-making. Based on student feedback in the middle of the semester, the teacher streamlined the course activities, focusing on the activities which most carefully integrated the use of the Internet with the goals of the course and which also gave students more say over the direction of their writing. The students' final projects included short autobiographical essays which were posted on the World Wide Web, a class video-project which was directed by the students and shared with

their exchange class, and an in-depth essay which incorporated research on the partner's culture compared with their own as gathered from the web and from e-mail interviews with their key pals. At the end of the class, students expressed pride in what they had learned about writing and using computers. One student from a small Pacific village commented, "Now [that] it's the end of the class, the teacher could just give us anything and I think I can write about it now. I feel confident!"

Conclusion

A paper of this length can not completely cover the topic of network-based language teaching. Further information on this topic is available in books (see for example Warschauer, 1995a; Warschauer, 1995b) and on the Internet itself (see for example NETEACH-L at http://thecity.sfsu.edu/~funweb/neteach.htm). In the end though, each teacher will have to find her or his own way, based on the goals of the teacher and the program, the needs of the students, and the materials and technology available. It is hoped that the guidelines outlined in this paper can provide some assistance to teachers attempting to optimally combine their own goals, their students' needs, and the power of the technology-enhanced classroom.

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A Case For Using CLT With Japanese University English Conversation Students

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Native speakers of English teaching English conversation at Japanese universities often complain that their students, after six years of language study in secondary education, cannot carry on even a simple conversation in English with a native English speaker. Teachers who are new to the situation turn in desperation to their Japanese and native English speaking colleagues and ask for some kind of explanation of how this could be the case. The usual response to such a query is an account of the Japanese examination oriented education system with final blame being placed on the grammar translation method employed in most schools. Not only has this response become cliche, but it is no longer entirely true. The number of Japanese English teachers enrolled in Japan based M.A. TESL programs (Temple University, Columbia University, SIT) and TESL certification programs (Georgetown University, Cambridge University) indicates that there is a keen interest in adding a communicative element to the English classroom. At some point in the average Japanese student's school life, the student is now likely to have been in a class where the teacher used an approach other than the grammar translation method.

Even if we accept that the reliance on the grammar translation method is to blame, however, it does not help the new or prospective teacher deal with the problem at hand: How do you get the average class of forty first year university students who have spent the better part of six years with their heads down, pencils and dictionaries in hand, translating word for word from English to Japanese, to pick up their heads, look you in the eyes, and speak to you in English? There are quite a few English teachers in Japan who have concluded that it cannot be done. If the goal is to produce fluent speakers of English in one school year, then most would agree.

If, however, a more realistic goal is pursued, that of getting students to begin talking and feeling more comfortable with conversing in English, then the task does not seem nearly as impossible. Getting first year university students to begin speaking English would be far less formidable if teachers were to learn more about their students' culture and how much English they learned in high school. In other words, if teachers know how and what their students have studied in the past and why students have chosen to study with a native speaker of English, they stand a better chance of accomplishing their goal.

What follows is a general account of some of this information which will be of some help to teachers new to, or preparing to leave for, a position at a Japanese university. Once this background information on Japanese students and their needs has been discussed, an example of how these needs might be met with a communicative activity will be given.

What and How the Students Have Studied

In Japan, English education usually begins in the first year of junior high school. By the time students finish junior high school they have completed over 300 hours of English instruction, and are expected to have committed nearly 1,000 words to memory (Helgesen, 1993). Once the student enters high school, the story gets far more complex. The Japanese Ministry of Education's curriculum outline in use during the 1996-97 school year requires that first year high school students receive 140 hours of English language instruction (Goold, Madeley, and Carter, 1993). During the second and third years students can choose from up to a total of 560 hours of elective English coursework, basing their decision on what they intend to do upon graduation. Only students who intend to study nontechnical fields at a university are likely to take full advantage of the 700 hours of classroom instruction available in the high school curriculum because English makes up a large part of their university entrance examinations. Students intending to try to get into a high ranking university, regardless of the field, will probably have sought additional outside opportunities to study in excess of the 700 hours available at school. This means that the average university freshman enrolled in an English conversation class will have had anywhere from 440 to 700+ hours of English instruction over a six year period.

New curriculum guidelines have been implemented in order to accommodate a more pressing need for conversational English skills than was formerly perceived. The new curriculum outline has increased the amount of time that can be spent studying English conversation from 140 to 210 hours. The effect of this new emphasis on oral communication will not be seen until April of 1997 when the first products of the new curriculum enter universities. However, since the goal for most high schools is to provide their students with the education needed to pass the entrance examination to the university of their choice. this is what high school teachers tend to focus on. While it has been rumored for quite some time that future entrance examinations will include an interview in English to test conversational skills, for the most part this has yet to happen. Current entrance examinations require students to be able to translate long passages from English to Japanese. In "Beyond Grammar Translation: Teaching Students to Really Read," Bamford (1993) explains that Japanese students have been given only one strategy for dealing with written English. In junior and senior high school, on university entrance examinations, and in many of their university English classes, Japanese students have been trained to transpose English word-for-word into Japanese. Although Bamford is writing

about how to teach reading, the following quote is relevant to the Japanese system of English language education in general:

> . . . the tradition of using the "grammar-translation" method is so strong that it is practically synonymous with English education in Japan. It is not only the main method of instruction in junior and senior high school but also in university: as a result, most of your Japanese colleagues will be using it as the pedagogical method of choice in their English classes (p 64). The 1994 Ministry of Education Curriculum Outline indicates that Japanese students will have more of an opportunity to take classes to help them deal with spoken English, but again, until university entrance exams include a spoken English section, these elective classes will take a distant back-seat to those which stress grammar-translation.

Even if high school students choose to take the new elective series, we cannot assume that by the time they enter university they will have had plenty of opportunity to use English for communication. While the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Outline signals a move in the right direction, very few Japanese English teachers in junior and senior high school have ever experienced a communicative approach to language study. For the most part, they themselves studied English using the grammar-translation method. Although many of these teachers are currently turning to language teacher training courses that have become available in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kobe for help, many of them simply do not know how to teach communicative English.

In sum, the average university freshman enrolled in a native English speaker's English conversation class will have had anywhere from 440 to 700+ hours of English language instruction, will have been taught to translate using the grammar-translation method, and may have had English conversation classes with a Japanese English teacher. Very few of them will have had the chance to practice speaking English with a government sponsored Assistant English Teacher (AET), outside the high school via classes or self study, or in a home-stay situation.

Some Important Cultural Factors

In "The Japanese Student and the Foreign Teacher," Nozaki (1993) lists some cultural differences between Japanese and western students, two of which are important to this study. The first difference, one which a new foreign teacher will quickly notice, is that Japanese university students do not appear to be very motivated to study. Students will rarely do any homework and this, as Nozaki explains, is because once they have entered a

university, students are virtually assured of graduation. This situation is what is called the "escalator system" (p. 28) which Nozaki says Japanese society sees as compensation to the students for the long hours and hard work they were forced to go through during their elementary and secondary schooling. In Japan, the university is a place for young people to relax, experience as many things as possible, and to learn to socialize with their peers. Consequently, the new university English conversation teacher should not be surprised when it becomes clear that his/her students place a higher priority on their club activities than their English studies.

The second difference Nozaki mentions is that Japanese students differ from their western counterparts in their attitude towards learning and ideas about appropriate classroom behavior. Unlike western students, who have been taught to speak up in class and express their opinions, Japanese students have been trained to learn by sitting quietly and observing. Expressing one's opinion is not something that is done in a typical Japanese classroom. This makes the teaching of conversation rather difficult, especially if the teacher makes an effort to conduct a student centered class. Regardless of how many hours of English language instruction Japanese students have had, they are not likely to voluntarily put those hours to use and engage in conversation with the instructor. In other words, even in a "conversation" class, the students expect the teacher to do most of the talking.

In addition to the differences that Nozaki lists is the important fact that Japanese tend to be more group oriented than westerners. This is especially evident among university students, because the university is one place where young individuals begin to establish theinselves as lifelong members of a group. In *The Japanese Today*, Edwin Reischauer explained that "Groups of every sort abound throughout Japanese society and usually play a larger role and offer more of a sense of individual self identification than do corresponding groups in the United States" (Reischauer, 1988, p. 134). This group orientation has a profound effect on the way that Japanese students approach classwork. A new teacher will quickly discover that it is futile to hand out in-class assignments and expect the students to complete them by themselves. However, as will become evident later, this propensity to do things in groups can be used advantageously in an English conversation class.

How and What to Teach:

From what we know of the typical Japanese university freshman enrolled in an English conversation class, it is safe to say that even the worst students will be false beginners. This is true because even though they have gained certain language skills through their high school studies, they still function at a beginning level. The fact that

they will have passed the entrance examination is an indication that they will have at least a basic understanding of English grammar, and a vocabulary larger than the 1,000 words they had to memorize during junior high school. Consequently, this paper recommends the use of teaching methods and techniques that are output-based. Such methods and techniques are appropriate because one of the reasons these students cannot speak despite six years of language study is that the grammar translation method with which they have been taught never requires it of them. If we borrow some terminology from Krashen, we might say that Japanese junior and senior high school students are allowed a six-year "silent period." Six years is long enough, and makes the adoption of an approach such as Krashen's, which would give the students more silent time, unnecessary. Instead, teachers should use techniques that will give students the chance to practice speaking English within the context of a communicative language teaching approach. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an appropriate choice because it requires the students to actively use the target language from the start (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 8). In addition, the fact that university English conversation classes only meet once a week for an average of 90 minutes makes it imperative that the students get as much time to produce the target language as teachers can give them. Since the focus of this paper is on teaching conversation, techniques for practicing reading, writing, or listening will not be discussed. However, it should be remembered that CLT does allow for one to incorporate these skills into an English conversation syllabus as well.

The example I have included below is one half of a pair work information gap activity. In information gap tasks students have information that their partners need. In order to complete the task, they must use their English, not just practice it. In this activity each student has a handout with two menu charts, one filled in and one empty. The task for the student who has the empty chart below is to find out from his/her partner what three fellow group tour members ate for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Once the students have exchanged the information needed to fill each other's charts, they can use the information together with clues provided at the bottom of the handout to help discover each tour members' nationality

Fill in the charts

Ask your partner for the information you need

Name	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Vitri (female			
Mahmood			
Toni (male)			

Clues:

1. Vitri's country is made up of more than 13,000 islands and islets.

2. Mahmood's country became independent from India in 1947.

3. The people in Toni's country enjoy watching bullfights.

Activities like the one discussed above not only fulfill the CLT requirement that meaning be transferred and/or negotiated (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 8), but they also capitalize on Japanese students' predisposition to work in groups. Other CLT activities, such as the freer group speaking tasks, labeled "Ensemble" activities in the Lingual House *New English Firsthand* series (Helgesen, et al, 1991), give students the opportunity to move from working with one partner to working within a larger group. These activities, like the pair work task discussed above, require the students to transfer and/or negotiate meaning while interacting with other students in English. Frequently, such activities are in the form of games which require focused practice on an element of English grammar such as the use of prepositions of place (For example, a simple game of "I Spy"). Regardless of the type of conversation activity, the teacher is to circulate around the classroom, providing help when needed. By doing this, the teacher fulfills another requirement of CLT by facilitating the communicative process between the students themselves, and between the students and the text (Breen and Candlin, 1988).

The kinds of activities listed here are particularly suited to the Japanese university English conversation class because of the typical 40:1 student-teacher ratio. In a teacher-centered classroom where the teacher dominates the class calling on individuals to answer questions one by one, the amount of time spent in English speaking practice is minimalized. In the activities discussed here, however, students are given plenty of time to practice using English. In addition, the pair and group activities allow for further exploitation of the Japanese student's group orientation. Granted, Japanese students might at first be confused by the student-centered classroom, but Nozaki indicates that so many of her students at Kyoto Sangyo University came to enjoy this classroom style that student-centered classes have become among the most popular on campus (Nozaki, 1993).

Although there are a multitude of textbooks available in Japan that conform to the CLT approach, a single text alone should not be relied on for classroom activities. Strict adherence to the exercises as they appear in a text would quickly bore most of the students in any class. CLT requires that classroom materials and activities reflect real-life situations and demands (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 8). Textbooks cannot always be expected to fulfill this requirement. It is up to the teacher to take the material that is in the text and adapt it so that it seems relevant to his/her students' life. In other words, the teacher may want to change and supplement some of the material found in the text to reflect the community in which his/her students live.

Providing classroom conversation drills that are built around the people and places of our students' community tend to make the English conversation class more interesting. This technique, however, does not address the fact that Japanese university students have almost no chance to use English outside of the classroom. For students who are keenly aware of this it is difficult to convince them that the effort required to learn a language well is worthwhile. One way to address this problem would be to give frequent homework assignments that require students to use English with foreign residents of their community. In almost any community in Japan one can find foreign exchange students, language teachers, missionaries, and laborers. These foreigners are not always from countries where English is the first language, but Japanese students also need to be taught that English can be used as a means of communicating with people from other countries as well. In one assignment that this writer found particularly successful at a rural Japanese national university, students were required to interview four foreign residents of their community in English. The students were surprised to find that not only could they use English to talk with an Australian English teacher, but with a Brazilian worker, a Malaysian medical student, and a Russian language teacher as well.

Conclusion

Getting first year Japanese university students to begin speaking English is no easy task. Given the six years of grammar-translation studies, the teacher-centered classroom environment, and lack of opportunity to use English for communication that these students have had prior to entering the native English speaker's classroom, one might think the task impossible. This paper, however, has attempted to show how instructors, with a little bit of knowledge about Japanese students' background, can use communicative teaching techniques to at least get the students to begin speaking in English.

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Teacher Learning and Language Teaching: 2 Reviews

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TEACHER LEARNING IN LANGUAGE TEACHING. Freeman, D. & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. $21.95

Review by Robert Yates

According to Freeman, one of the editors, *Teaching Learning and Language Teaching* is a first attempt to study the "unstudied problem," how people learn to teach. For teacher educators, this topic is of crucial importance. Although Johnson (Chapter 2) asserts that most teacher education programs assume that when teachers complete their pre-service training they will become effective teachers, I know of no teacher educator who is so boastful. If the sixteen chapters really did consistently offer "deeper and closer examinations of how language teachers come to know what they know and do what they do in their work," as claimed in the preface, this would be an important first step. Unfortunately, there is little consistency in quality in volume's sixteen chapters and considerably more chaff than wheat.

The contributions are divided into four sections: Beginnings, five chapters on the initial experiences of language teaching; Transitions, four chapters on experienced teachers who are struggling with how to teach new subjects or different kinds of students or proficiency levels; Learning to Teach, six chapters on the impact of teacher education, both pre- and in- service courses; Epilogue, the final chapter by Freeman which attempts to define the framework for further research on the "unstudied problem."

For a new field of inquiry, it is important that the various contributors used a variety of data-gathering techniques: interviews, survey questionnaires, journals, examination of course assignments or classroom observations. It is not good, however, that the presentations of the date are couched in such a high level of generality that a reader has no idea what the teachers know or how their practices are influenced by what they know or how practices have changed because of new teaching or in-service experiences. The discussions of teacher knowledge presented in Knezevic and Scholl (Chapter 4), Smith (Chapter 9), Pennington (Chapter 15) are particularly cursory.

This text would have been valuable with more chapters like Ulchiny (Chapter 8). She provides specific transcripts from a lesson, discusses a teacher's reflections on the lesson,

and then provides a transcript of a lesson which reflects a change in practice. This chapter would be worthwhile to use in a practicum course. The first step on examining teacher learning is much too small to be recommended.

TEACHER LEARNING IN LANGUAGE TEACHING. Freeman, D. & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. $21.95

Review by Richard Day

Donald Freeman and Jack Richards are among the vanguard of ESL professionals who have taken the lead in defining and developing the field of ESL teacher education. Their collaboration as editors of the volume *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching* is another substantive contribution to our understanding of how we learn to teach languages.

Teacher Learning in Language Teaching has 16 chapters. The first 15 are all original pieces of research on how teachers learn to teach languages, and are organized into three sections: Section I Beginnings: Starting out in language teaching (Chapters 1-5); Section II Transitions: Learning in the practice of teaching (Chapters 6-9); and Section III Learning to teach: The role of language teacher education. The final section, Chapter 16, is a summary chapter by Freeman.

I found this organization somewhat arbitrary. It was not clear what criteria were used to place the 15 chapters in the three sections. For example, Amy B. M. Tsui's report of how a teacher in Hong Kong learned to teach ESL writing, is found in Section I which is characterized by the editors as describing "the beginning stages of teacher learning" (p. 3). The teacher described in Tsui's research already had two years of teaching experience before the research project. Moreover, there seems to be little difference in the focus of many of the articles in the first and third sections.

However, these organizational problems do not detract from the volume's overall quality. There are a number of excellent research reports, including Karen Johnson's investigation into the TESOL practicum (Chapter 2); Gloria Gutierrez Almarza's longitudinal study of the professional development of four L2 teachers (Chapter 4); Anne Burns' research into the relationship between the beliefs and practices of an experienced ESL teacher (Chapter 7); and Michael Wallace's discussion of the professional project (Chapter 13). Particularly noteworthy is Polly Ulichny's ethnographic investigation of an ESL classroom (Chapter 8).

Another positive feature of the volume is the broad focus of the 15 chapters. There are studies of teachers and teacher education programs in both ESL and EFL settings, and

in Spanish and French as foreign language programs. Also impressive is the variety of data-gathering strategies, from survey questionnaires to classroom observations.

Teacher Learning in Language Teaching, however, is not free from a problem common to many edited volumes—an unevenness of the quality of the articles. Indeed, it might be that the normal bell curve of distribution is at work in the volume.

I agree with the editors' claim that the volume "illuminates the nature of learning to teach second or foreign languages . . ." (p. 1). *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching* should be read by all those interested in the education and development of second and foreign language teachers.

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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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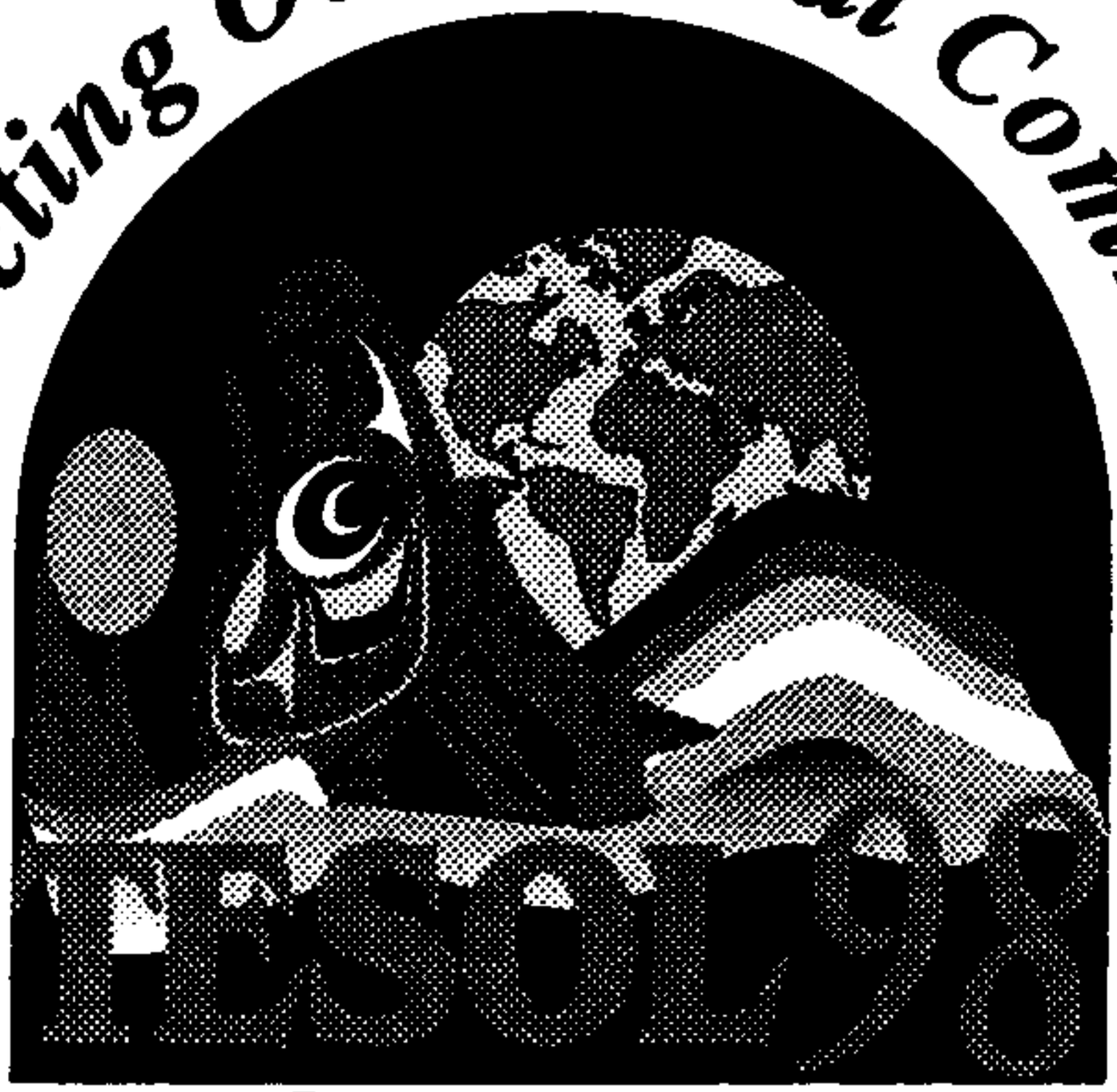

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