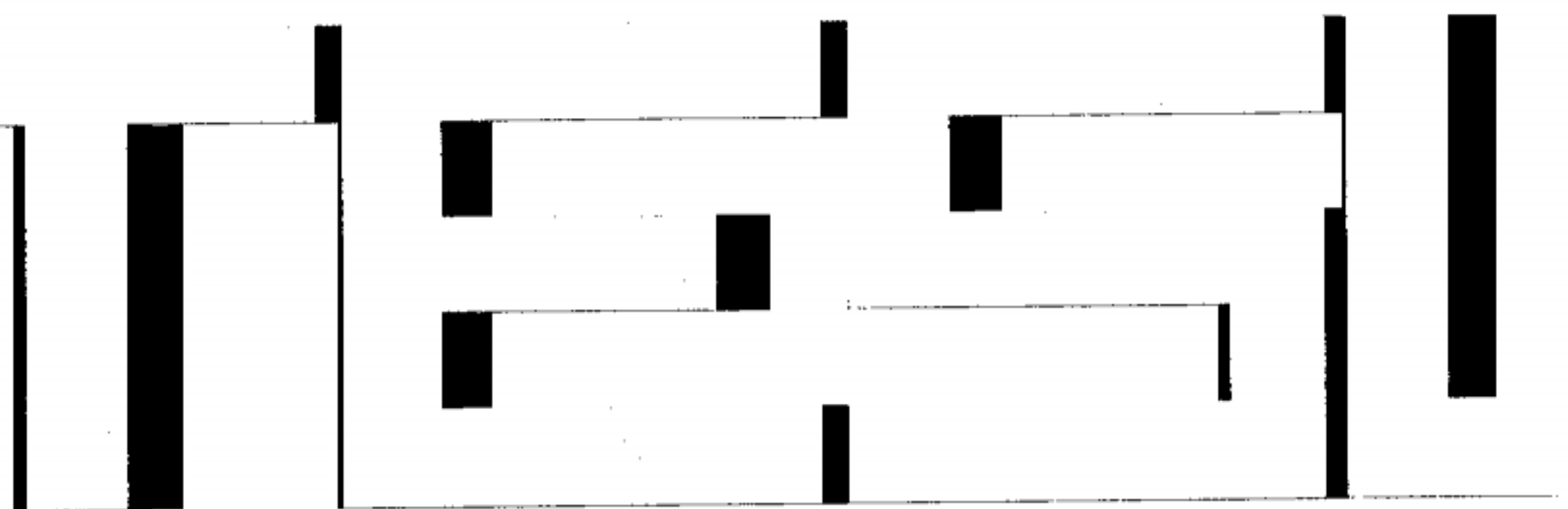


Brigham Young University—Hawaii Campus
Vol.16, No.2 □ Laie, Hawaii □ April 1983



REPORTER

**Aerobic ESL: Variations on a
Total Physical Response Theme**
by Marci Mitchellpage 23

The Process of Composition
Book Review by Neil J. Anderson . . .page 27

**Correcting ESL Compositions
with a Cassette Recorder:
Getting to Know the Reader,
Not the Proofreader**
by Brien Hallett.page 29

**Culture, Language,
and Academic Success**
by Curtis W. Hayespage 33

Employment Opportunities.page 37

Announcementspage 40

Aerobic ESL: Variations on a Total Physical Response Theme

By Marci Mitchell

Song awakens the soul to a glowing longing for what the song contains; song soothes the lusts of the flesh; it acts like dew to the soul, making it fertile for accomplishing good acts; it makes the pious warrior noble and strong in suffering terrible pain; it is a healing ointment for the wounds suffered in the battle of life . . .

—Anon, A.D. 370

Since ancient times, music has been praised and used as a balm for the soul. The music of a young David soothed the passions of a mad King Saul. Plato, in *The Republic*, (Book 3, Chapt. 12), wrote, "Education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else, rhythm and harmony find their way into the secret places of the soul."

Music in the ESL classroom can no longer be viewed as a gimmick to use merely to pass the time of day. Students can relate to contemporary popular American music because of its international acceptance. The universal language of music can both motivate the students and improve their language performance.

Students can also relate to physical fitness, another popular international movement. Jane Fonda's *Workout Book* was recently the number one bestseller in America. Jacki Sorenson's aerobic dancing is practiced in school gyms, church halls, and anywhere people want to shape up in a fun way. What can music together with aerobic dancing do for the ESL classroom?

How many ESL teachers who teach all day in public schools or universities feel tired and drained at the end of the day? How do students feel after going to school all day, five days a week? Both teachers and students can benefit from an aerobic ESL class.

BENEFITS OF AEROBIC ESL

Much research has been done concerning the cognitive and affective domains of second language acquisition. Another domain to consider is the physical. What are minds and emotions without bodies? James Asher's Total Physical Response (1969) includes the physical domain to help students learn by physically performing commands. Aerobic ESL takes Total Physical Response beyond the command to aerobics and the universal language of music.

To ensure maximum learning in the ESL classroom, teachers must consider their students' physical and mental well-being. Physical fitness may have a positive effect on personality attitudes, self-image, mental alertness, learning capacity, and sensory and perceptual awareness. By integrating

Marci Mitchell is director of the American Languages Institute at Pan American University, Edinburg, Texas, where she has coordinated the Inter-American Affairs and International Education program for the past five years. She has lived and studied in Costa Rica and Mexico.

physical exercise with the ESL curriculum, teachers can provide opportunities for students to release tensions and improve their mental efficiency. A regular exercise program benefits student-teacher relationships and encourages social interaction, energetic motivation, and all-round fun.

Jacki Sorenson's definition of aerobic dancing is as follows:

Aerobic dancing is a physical fitness program that offers complete and effective conditioning. It conditions

your muscles by trimming, firming and shaping. It conditions your heart, lungs and blood vessels by demanding that this internal, life-supporting system be strengthened through healthy use. This fitness program is fun and challenging. It is a combination of dancing for the fun of it, and dancing for more energy every day. (1978:2)

Doctors have noted that aerobics have a physiological effect that elevates people's moods and banishes depression. The sense of accomplishment that aerobic exercise provides gives people new confidence in their ability to succeed. Aerobic dancing allows students freedom to "spring free" mentally and emotionally and to "get out of themselves" through exercise. It is also a healthy switch from the daily grind of the classroom.

By implementing an aerobic ESL program, the teacher can expect some of the following results:

- *increased energy
- *increased stamina
- *enthusiasm
- *relaxation
- *better health
- *a positive effect on self-image
- *vitality
- *motivation
- *improved language performance
- *healthy teacher-student relationships

IMPLEMENTATION

Intensive English students at the American Languages Institute, Pan American University, Edinburg, Texas attend classes five hours per day, five days a week. The Aerobic ESL experiment has produced positive results with both the class and the instructor. The themes of the songs on the tape were deliberately chosen as "motivational" songs, to make the students feel good about themselves, their relationships, and their efforts to learn English. The dance steps were choreographed by the instructor, tapping a resource of steps and movements used in different aerobic dance classes attended. The songs used are as follows:

Warm-Up

1. "Hooked on Classics" (The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, RCA)

2. "Let's Get Physical" (Olivia Newton-John, MCA Records)
3. "I Write the Songs" (Barry Manilow, Peter Pan Records)
4. "Love Me With All Of Your Heart" (Englebert Humperdinck, TeeVee Records)

Aerobic

5. "Long Tall Texan" (Murry Kellum, K-Tel)
6. "Sir Duke" (Bob McGrath, Sesame Street Records)
7. "Thank God I'm a Country Boy" (John Denver, RCA)
8. "High Hopes" (Bob McGrath, Sesame Street Records)

Cool Down

9. "New York, New York" (Birchwood Pops Orchestra, Pickwick)
10. "I Love" (Tom T. Hall, K-Tel)
11. "Annie's Song" (John Denver, RCA)
12. "American Trilogy" (The London Symphony Orchestra, RSO Records)

Exercise classes naturally lend themselves to Total Physical Response command forms and body vocabulary. Some examples are the following:

Aerobic ESL Vocabulary

Apart	Bend over
Bow	Change sides
Clap your hands	Count
Cross (leg, arm, etc.)	
Dance	Exhale
Face (center, right, left)	
Fall back	Flex
Glide	Hoe-down
Inhale	Jog
Jump	Kick
Lasso	Left
Lie down	Lift (leg, knee, etc.)
Lunge	Point
Push backward	Push forward
Reach	Relax
Relaxation exercise (toes, feet, ankles, calves, knees, thighs, hips, back, stomach, chest, shoulders, arms, hands, neck, face)	
Right	Rock
Roll (shoulders)	Run
Side bend	Sit down
Sit up	Skip
Squat	Stand up
Step	Stretch
Sweep the floor	Swing your partner

Turn	Together
Touch (toes, knees, calves, etc.)	
Walk backward	Walk forward

Ideally the lyrics of the songs should be presented before the aerobic dancing begins. Teachers are limited only by their own imaginations as to how to present the vocabulary and structure of the songs. Some ideas as to how to implement the songs in the ESL classroom are presented below.

As in any exercise program, the participants should consult a physician before beginning strenuous physical exercise. After obtaining the green light, go forth and aerobicize in the ESL classroom! Let the rhythm and harmony find their way into the secret places of your students' souls.

SAMPLE SONGS AND ESL EXERCISES

I WRITE THE SONGS

(Barry Manilow, Peter Pan Records)

I've been alive forever
 And I wrote the very first song
 I put the words and the melodies together
 I am music and I write the songs
 (refrain)
 I write the songs that make the whole world sing
 I write the songs of love and special things
 I write the songs that make the young girls cry
 I write the songs, I write the songs
 My home lies deep within you
 And I've got my own place in your soul
 Now when I look out through your eyes
 I am young again, even though I'm very old
 (refrain)
 Oh, my music makes you dance
 And gets your spirit to take a chance
 And I wrote some rock-and-roll so you can move
 Music fills your heart
 Oh, that's a real fine place to start
 It's from me—It's for you
 It's from you—It's for me
 It's a world-wide symphony
 (refrain)
 I am music, and I write the songs

Structure to Review

Verbs: Simple present

put	look
dance	be
make	write
cry	lie
get	fill
move	start
sing	

Prepositions:

of	within
in	through

Vocabulary (Meaning in context)

alive	home
again	forever
deep	very old
song	real fine
place	music
melodies	soul
spirit	words
how	eyes
chance	whole world
heart	rock-and-roll
world-wide symphony	young girls
love and special things	

Listening and Speaking Exercises

- I. Play the song three times. Next, play each verse a line at a time and ask students to repeat each line.
- II. Present the theme of the song for students to discuss:
 - a. What is your definition of music?
 - b. How long has music existed?
 - c. Who is the speaker in this song?
 - d. When do you listen to music?
 - e. Where does music come from?

Reading and Writing Exercises

- I. Present the song as a dictation. Play the song and ask students to write the words as they listen.
- II. Have the students write ten sentences utilizing the structural features of the song.
- III. Have the students read the entertainment section of the newspaper and bring articles about music to class. Read the "Top Ten" record lists for the week.

IV. Test the students with the lyrics of the song using the cloze method. Omit approximately one word per line and instruct the students to fill in the empty blanks for a test.

V. Have students add the punctuation marks on each line and write complete sentences.

LONG, TALL TEXAN
(Murry Kellum, K-Tel)

Giddy-up, Giddy-up

Well, I'm a long, tall Texan

I ride a big white horse

He rides from Texas on a big white horse

Yes, I'm a long, tall Texan

I ride a big white horse

He rides from Texas on a big white horse

Well, people look at me and say,

"Oh Roy, Oh Roy, is that your horse?"

He rides from Texas on a big white horse

Well, I'm a long, tall Texan

I wear a ten-gallon hat

He rides from Texas with a ten-gallon hat

Yes, I'm a long, tall Texan

I wear a ten-gallon hat

He rides from Texas with a ten-gallon hat

Well, people look at me and say,

"Oh Roy, Oh Roy, is that your hat?"

He rides from Texas with a ten-gallon hat

Well, I was walking down the street

With my shining badge

My spurs jingling at my feet

I seen a man coming

And coming with a gun

I just can't be beat

Well, I'm a long, tall Texan

I enforce justice for the law

He rides from Texas to enforce the law

Well, I'm a long, tall Texan

I enforce justice for the law

He rides from Texas to enforce the law

Well, people look at me and say,

"Oh Roy, Oh Roy, are you the law?"

He rides from Texas to enforce the law

Structure to Review

Adjectives:

long

tall

big

white

ten-gallon

shining

Contractions:

I'm

can't

Verbs: Simple present

be

ride

look

say

wear

enforce

Present Continuous

walking

shining

jingling

Questions (verb before subject)

Oh Roy, oh Roy, is that your horse?

Oh Roy, oh Roy, is that your hat?

Oh Roy, oh Roy, are you the law?

Vocabulary (Meaning in context)

Texas

Texan

horse

people

hat

street

badge

spurs

gun

justice

law

Listening and Speaking Exercises

I. Play the song three times. Next, play each verse a line at a time and have students repeat each line.

II. Present the theme of the song for students to discuss:

a. What is a long, tall Texan?

b. Where is Texas?

c. How big is Texas?

d. When does Roy wear his ten-gallon hat?

e. Who is Roy?

III. Have students discuss the cowboy myth.

Reading and Writing Exercises

I. Present the song as a dictation. Play the song and ask students to write the words as they listen.

II. Have the students write ten sentences utilizing the structural features of the song.

III. Read some magazine articles concerning Texas and cowboys.

IV. Test the students with the lyrics of the song using the cloze method. Omit approximately one word per line and instruct the students to fill in the empty blanks for a test.

V. Have students add the punctuation marks on each line and write complete sentences.

REFERENCES

Asher, James J. 1969. The total physical response approach to second language

learning. *The Modern Language Journal* 53, 1:3-17.

Fonda, Jane. 1981. *Jane Fonda's workout book*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Plato. 1951. *The Republic*, Book III. London: Oxford University Press.

Sorensen, Jacki. 1978. *Aerobic dancing for physical education*. New York: Educational Activities.

The Process of Composition

Book Review by Neil J. Anderson

THE PROCESS OF COMPOSITION. Joy M. Reid. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982. pp. 195+appendix. \$10.95.

The Process of Composition by Joy M. Reid, Colorado State University, is an advanced level intensive ESL writing text. This is the very best advanced writing text that I am familiar with. It offers a great variety of exercises that assist ESL students in their development of writing skills.

The text is designed to be used in an intensive ESL program on a daily basis for a fourteen week semester or two seven-week terms. It is designed to prepare ESL students for university writing assignments. For the university bound student this text works through exercises in writing fundamentals that train them in writing effective paragraphs, compositions, and library research papers.

There are thirteen chapters that deal with the following topics: audience, paragraphs, support, development, introduction, organizing the essay, writing the essay,

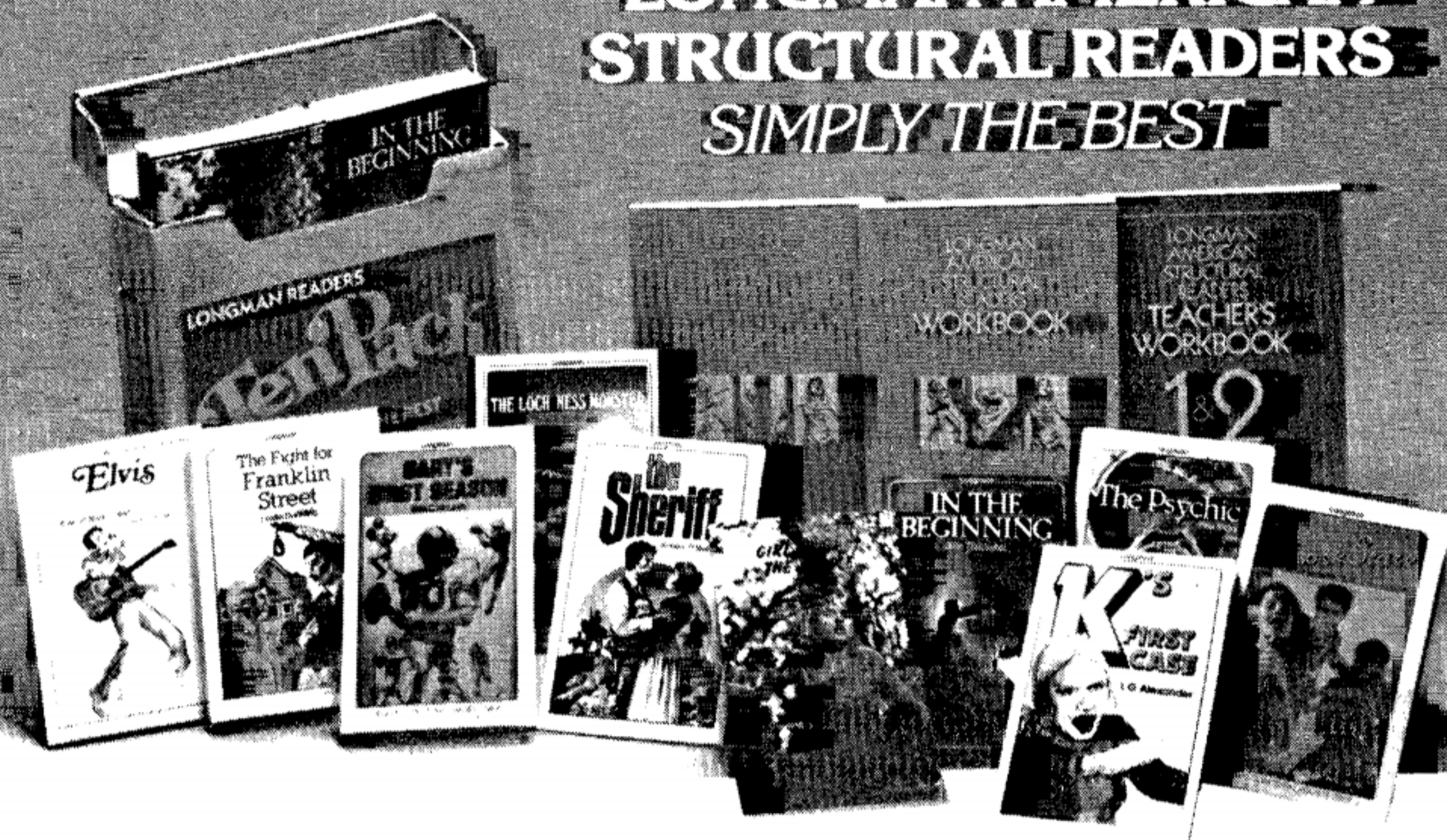
summary, argumentation, research paper, library research, the process of research, and grammar explanations. The teacher's manual contains a suggested syllabus, explanations, answers to exercises, as well as additional exercises that can be used in the classroom.

Probably the greatest strength of the text as I see it is that there are no lengthy grammar explanations. It is actually a *writing* text. There are practical exercises with samples of writing from ESL students who have completed the writing assignments. There is no strict control of student writing yet it helps them follow a basic formula for success in their writing. Time is spent in writing, *not* in explanations from the teacher.

This text is exactly what is needed for advanced ESL writing students. Students leave your class prepared to use skills acquired during the time you have worked together.

Neil J. Anderson coordinates testing and teaches in the English Language Center at Brigham Young University (Provo campus).

LONGMAN AMERICAN STRUCTURAL READERS SIMPLY THE BEST



Graded for Structure and Vocabulary

Stage 1. _____

Basic vocabulary 300 words

*Grammar: Verb **to be**, Transitive and Intransitive verbs, Imperative, **What** questions, Present tenses and **going to***

Elvis
The Fight for Franklin Street
Gary's First Season
The Loch Ness Monster
The Sheriff

Stage 2. _____

Basic vocabulary 500 words

*Grammar: **There** + **to be**, Auxiliaries and Modals, Tags, Comparison, Present, Past, Future, Present perfect tenses*

Girl Against the Jungle
In The Beginning
K's First Case
The Psychic
Rock Stars

Workbook Stage 1 and Workbook Stage 2 provide reading skills exercises such as retelling, understanding new words, locating specific information, inferring, using the pictures and understanding the sequence of events.

The Teacher's Workbook contains the text of Workbook Stage 1 and Workbook Stage 2, answers to the exercises and notes on using the Workbooks in class. Due April.

The Ten Pack includes two copies of each Reader, two copies of the Teacher's Workbook. 22 books in all—for a substantial savings!! Due April.

Longman 

19 West 44th Street
New York, New York 10036

Correcting ESL Compositions with a Cassette Recorder: Getting to Know the Reader, Not the Proofreader

by Brien Hallett

In the teaching of ESL composition, cassette recorders are a significant technological innovation. They allow the composition teacher to become again a flesh and blood reader rather than a lifeless proofreader. The key to improving a student's writing is to teach him "to know his reader." But how can this maxim be any thing but a vague, empty adage if the student's only reader limits himself to the standard proofreader's marks and an occasional marginal comment? Such a procedure only teaches the student "to know his proofreader," a sharp-eyed stickler for detail with no apparent interest in what the student actually says.

Indeed, systematic error correction (i.e., good proofreading) is ineffective because it has little to do with teaching students what they really need to know: how their writing affects their readers. But how can a student learn this when the teacher, red pencil in hand, underscores this, crosses out that, and scribbles a few thoughts in the margin? This approach is obviously incapable of telling the student, in any meaningful way, how his audience has reacted to his writing.

Cassette recordings, on the other hand, permit students to know once again who their reader is, what their reader thinks about the composition, and why their reader thinks as he does. Without this full explanation, this direct personal challenge to the student, one wonders how the proofreader's marks left by the teacher can have any meaning at all, much less motivate the student to improve his writing (Hurst 1975). The point is well made by Farnsworth's students (1974: 287):

I rather prefer the using of tape cassettes to the comments on my paper because it isn't possible to explain the errors in such a little space; however, if the teacher uses a tape, she can tell us the

error and also the way she thinks it could be made better.

I prefer having my composition corrected using the tape method because it is more precisely commented on than the standard use of comments in the margins of my paper.

The cassette gives me more information about my paper and also I can understand better what you are thinking about.

Although cassette recordings can never match the give and take of a personal interview, they are the next best thing.¹ For instance, what else besides an *awk* or *ord* can a teacher using a pencil say to help a student improve this opening sentence?

"I've studied most lessons (1) which I've learned in school, by the method of cramming (2) by teacher (3) from elementary to college."

However, if he is using a cassette recorder, in a few seconds he can say,

This is a good topic sentence. However, it could be better. Number 1: Why have you used a whole relative clause to tell us that the "lessons" were learned in school? Could you have said, "I've studied most school lessons dot, dot, dot?" Would this have been simpler and more direct? Number 2: I really don't understand what you mean here. From what you say below I think you mean something like ". . .cramming the teacher's lectures. . ." or ". . .cramming lectures by the teacher." Whatever you mean, you haven't said it. This part needs to be rewritten. Number 3: Why is this phrase last in the sentence? "From elementary school to college" sets the scene for your whole composition--just like the opening scene in a movie. Don't you think you should tell the reader right away where the action

of your composition will take place? Therefore, shouldn't this phrase come at the very beginning?

In short, the teacher can make the lifeless proofreader's marks come alive with significance simply by explaining what he means by them. Furthermore, the cassette recordings allow the teacher to make full use of all the "affective variables" inherent in spoken language but absent from red pencil marks. He can express praise, amazement, anger, and irritation with all the subtlety of the human voice. For example, what is a student to make of a written comment like this?

Keiji, this paper is not worth reading. What happened? You usually do very good work, but this paper is sloppy, full of careless mistakes. You obviously didn't even proofread it. As for organization, there is none. You are wasting your time writing this junk and my time handing it in.

The teacher is plainly unhappy. But how unhappy--slightly irritated or really angry? Keiji has no way of knowing from the lifeless, emotionally empty written words. However, listening to the same comment on a cassette tape, Keiji knows immediately from the teacher's intonation whether the teacher is really put out or just slightly peeved at one sloppy paper. Again, it is the subtle qualities of the spoken voice which reaches out to give meaning, substance, and emotional weight to the words. The teacher is transformed from a distant, impersonal editor-in-chief into a real person with real emotions.

In addition, listening to the teacher's recorded comments gives ESL students much needed experience in listening comprehension which is both personally relevant and of high interest--their grade depends upon it. This is especially helpful to students whose written English is stronger than their listening comprehension. The teacher's recorded comments are a listening exercise in which the topic, the vocabulary, and the context are all focused upon the student's practical concerns. Any new vocabulary or expressions which the teacher may introduce are presented in a context which is clearly and directly related to the student's

immediate communicative needs. It is an opportunity to further integrate the ESL curriculum which should not be overlooked.

All these advantages can be achieved without undue trouble or effort. The basic procedure is simple enough. The students hand in a blank cassette tape along with their papers. The teacher reads the papers marking the points he thinks need attention. He composes his thoughts for a minute and systematically dictates his reaction to the paper. Finally, the cassettes and the papers are returned.

Considered in more detail, the initial problem is to keep track of each student's cassette and paper. Klammer (1973) has his students hand in a file folder contain-

Brien Hallett received his MA in English as a Second Language from the University of Hawaii-Manoa where he teaches composition. He has previously taught EFL in France, Japan, and Taiwan. While in Japan, he published a self-instructional text which teaches phrasal verbs to advanced students.

ing their paper and their cassette. He then uses a large box to carry the folders to and from his office and to keep the cassettes from falling out of the folders. Farnsworth (1974) favors assigning each student a cassette number which he puts on both his cassette tape and on his composition. She then collects the cassettes in a sack, the papers in a pile, and sorts them out in a few minutes when she is ready to correct them. However, I find that the problem is solved just as well by having each student put his paper and his cassette into a paper bag or a manila envelope.

Marking the papers is no problem. Mechanical errors are noted with conventional proofreader's marks. These are not usually commented on unless they happen to be the point of the lesson. Problems of content, organization, or vocabulary choice can be numbered, underscored, circled, or otherwise highlighted, perhaps with a brief note

to the teacher so he does not forget why he circled it. Farnsworth (1974) reports that Harris used a vertical line in the right hand margin to signal a favorable comment and vertical line in the left hand margin to signal an unfavorable comment. Other marks can be developed as needed.

Points to remember when dictating are all common sense:

1. Begin by addressing the student by name and use the title of his composition.
2. Accent the positive; make your first comment favorable.
3. Give a global impression first, then address each item systematically (e.g., Write a number beside each item you wish to comment on. Then begin each comment by saying, "Number 1 is a vocabulary problem Number 2 is").
4. Summarize your comments at the end.
5. Give the grade. (Giving the grade last ensures that the cassette tape is listened to.)

It takes between ten to fifteen minutes to correct a two or three page paper. If classes are large and time a problem, the teacher need not correct all the papers each time with a cassette recorder. For each assignment, half or a third of the papers could be corrected using a cassette recorder and the rest in the traditional way.

Nowadays, in most places, every student owns a cassette recorder. If, however, this is not the case, remember the students do not have to own a recorder but only have access to one for short periods of time. Thus, students who do not own cassette recorders can be given access to one by pairing them with students or cooperative neighbors who do. In those rare situations where only one or two machines are available to the class, the teacher can either organize a listening schedule or can limit his recorded corrections to only those few students who have the greatest need—those who are especially weak or who require extensive correction. Weaker students often appreciate this special attention.

The usefulness of cassette recorders is not limited to correcting student essays. In addition to recording her comments, Popovich (1976) has her students hand in a recorded reading of their essay as a form of self-evaluation. The recording and the typed text are compared. Any discrepancies between the two highlight passages that need to be re-written. For those few students who cannot write because they cannot even form the letters, Murry and Croft (1979) have the student record his story. Afterwards they write it out for him to copy. This allows the teacher to work on vocabulary, grammar, content and organization even before the student learns to draw the letters. But the use of cassette recorders for pre-writing and self-evaluative exercises is another story for another time.

In summary, the use of cassette recorders to correct ESL compositions provides numerous advantages over both impersonal and ineffective marginal notes and time consuming personal interviews. By carrying the teacher's voice to the student, cassette recordings re-introduce all the affective dimensions of oral communication and re-establish the teacher as a most knowledgeable and concerned reader instead of a mechanical proofreader.

¹See Medlicott (1979) for an example of a teacher who combines cassette recordings and personal interviews.

References

- Farnsworth, Maryruth Bracy. 1974. The cassette tape recorder: A bonus or a bother in ESL composition correction. *TESOL Quarterly* 8, 3.
- Hurst, C.J. 1975. Cassette grading improves student report writing. *Engineering Education* 65, 5.
- Klammer, Enno. 1973. Cassettes in the classroom. *College English* 35.
- Medlicott, Alexander, Jr. 1979. Cassette commentary: An approach to the teaching of expository writing. ERIC ED 178 942.

Murry, Donald M. and Mary K. Croft. 1979. The handout page: Use your trusty cassette recorder. *English Journal* 68, 8.

Popovich, Helen Houser. 1976. From tape to type: An approach to composition. *College Composition and Communication* 27, 3.

Additional Readings

Carlson, David L. and John B. McTasney. Grading technical reports with the cassette tape recorder: The report of a test program at the United States Air

Force Academy. *Journal of Technological Writing and Communication* 3, 2.

Hays, Janice. 1978. Play it again Sandra: The use of tape cassettes to evaluate student compositions. ERIC ED 162 332.

Olsen, Gary A. 1982. Beyond evaluation: The recorded response to essays. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 8, 2.

Stratton, Charles R. The electric report card: A follow-up on cassette grading. *Journal of Technological Writing and Communication* 5, 1.

NEWBURY HOUSE



Elementary Composition Practice: Books 1 (Code: 2330T) and **2** (Code: 2331T), and **Intermediate Composition Practice: Books 1** (Code: 3040T) and **2** (Code: 7252T), \$7.95 each. Linda Lonon Blanton.

Developing Reading Skills: Advanced (new 2nd edition. Code: 6001T) and **Intermediate** (Code: 7236T), and **Expanding Reading Skills: Advanced** (Code: 2040T) and **Intermediate** (Code: 7242T), \$8.95 each (Answer Keys available). Linda Markstein and Louise Hirasawa.

English Structure in Focus (Code: 2090T) \$12.95 (Teacher's Manual and Answer Key available). Polly Davis.

Idioms in Action (Code: 1600T) \$8.95. George Reeves.

Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Code: 2580RT) \$15.95. Marianne Celce-Murcia.

Read On, Speak Out (Code: 2660T) \$8.95. Linda Ferreira.

Composition Steps. Student's Book (Code: 1970T) \$9.95 (Teacher's Manual available). Vivian Horn.

Advanced Listening Comprehension (Code: 7227T) \$12.95 (Cassettes available). Patricia Dunkel and Frank Pialorsi.

Send orders (less 25% when prepaid) and examination requests to Box TESL-4-83. *Indicate titles, authors, and codes.*

**NEWBURY HOUSE
PUBLISHERS, INC.**
Rowley, Massachusetts 01969



Order Department: 1-800-343-1240
Massachusetts Residents, call:
(617) 948-2840
Main Office: (617) 948-2704

Language Science •

Language Teaching •

Language Learning

Culture, Language, and Academic Success

by Curtis W. Hayes

"Do you think I can make it into Harvard?" Huan Nguyen asked me as I headed toward the door. Huan's question concluded our interview which focused on his widely publicized academic accomplishments, first brought to my attention when I read in a San Antonio newspaper that he had finished in the top forty of the 54th National Spelling Bee Championship held in Washington, D.C. Huan, a Viet Nam refugee, had been in the United States for a little over four years.

Meanwhile, in Austin, Texas, Tu Anh Ngoc Tran finished first in her high school class of 375, graduating with an average of 97. Two years previously, upon her arrival in the United States, she had entered high school knowing no English. Currently, she is an electrical engineering student at The University of Texas in Austin. Tu is also a Viet Nam refugee.

Huan's and Tu's achievements reflect the success of a large number of students, children of the Indo-Chinese refugees, who have immigrated to the United States during the last decade. These comparatively recent immigrations have allowed researchers to begin to make tentative and cautious comparisons between and among ethnic groups so as to determine why certain ethnic groups appear to be prospering more than other ethnic groups in their academic achievements in general and in learning English as a second language in particular.

Research on Culture and Learning

The hypotheses that some researchers are beginning to draw concerning the effect of culture upon learning are only tentative, somewhat sketchy, and in no way can be interpreted to mean that any one ethnic group is *sui generis* more or less gifted, or more or less academically talented than any other ethnic group. What is being suggested is that some cultures may encompass a particular set of cognitive and social styles that together appear to be compatible with the

cognitive and social styles fostered by the public schools in the United States. These styles consist of variables which are neither good nor bad in themselves, as we shall see.

In the San Francisco Bay Area Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore and her colleagues (1982) have been studying (longitudinally) the children from two different ethnic populations, the Mexican-American and the Chinese. These children are in various developmental stages of learning English as their second language. In an issue of the *TESL Reporter* (1981), she reports that "there is a common perception among educators that ethnic groups differ in their ability to learn second languages." She explains: "Asian background children are generally considered 'good language learners' [while] Hispanic background children are regarded as poor language learners. The children," she laments, "are victims of a sort of cultural prejudice; in the case of the Asian children, it is a positive one; in the case of Hispanic, a negative one."

In her paper Wong Fillmore addresses these widely held perceptions. From her observations she has tentatively identified several learner variables, which she refers to as "cognitive styles" and "social aspects" of learning and which appear to be related to cultural background. These may account for the success of some children learning second languages and the limited success of other children who do not learn as fast or as efficiently.

Cognitive Styles

One cognitive style Wong Fillmore identifies is "level of attention." Put simply, it is the time that children are willing to spend upon an assigned task before moving on to another activity. In observing a number of Mexican-American children, she found that they, on the average, sustained interest for approximately fifteen to twenty minutes. The Chinese children, on the average, would spend an hour, or even longer, on a task.

As to "what extent such differences will be reflected in the second language learning of these children" she hesitates to say but she does suggest that this attribute may be significant and as such deserves further investigation.

Benjamin Bloom (1980), in his survey of the pupils of Western and non-Western secondary schools, also mentions the time that Asian students, in this specific case, the Japanese, spend on tasks assigned by the teacher. For example, students in the United States, as well as those in Japan, have approximately two-thousand hours of instruction devoted to the teaching and learning of mathematics. In the United States, Bloom found that only 60% of the instructional hour actually concerned itself with instructing and learning, while in the Japanese school over 95% of the instructional hour is devoted to instruction and practice in mathematics. Time is the constant, then; time on task is the variable. Bloom uses these statistics to explain, partially, why the Japanese student is so much better academically in mathematics than the American student.

A second cognitive attribute that Wong Fillmore identifies is "memory," specifically "rote memory." Memory, according to Robbins Burling (1982:114), has received comparatively little emphasis in Western education. He points out that we in the West have always wanted our students "to understand principles and patterns, not to memorize facts"; yet we "have not offered our students much help in dealing with the areas of language learning that call for simple memory, possibly because to do so would seem to violate our belief that sheer memorization is an undesirable component of education." It is true, and common knowledge at the same time, that the educational systems in a number of Asian societies impose upon their pupils a great deal of memorization, and this emphasis upon memory may well be facilitating the second language learning processes for these children.

A third cognitive attribute is "analyticity", the willingness to generate hypotheses: the attempt, in other words, to guess, to "figure out", whether right or wrong, how

the second language that is being learned works. Children who ask questions, who are curious, who are willing to take risks (at the risk of being wrong) learn more quickly and more efficiently.

Social Aspects

A social attribute is reliance upon adults for direction, specifically the teacher. Wong Fillmore observed that the Chinese children depended greatly upon the teacher for support, encouragement, direction and praise while the Mexican-American children seemed to be more peer centered, deriving their support, encouragement, and direction from their peers.

Wong Fillmore identifies and describes other attributes in addition to these four, but let's return to Huan and Tu and analyze

Curtis W. Hayes is Professor of Linguistics and English as a Second Language at the University of Texas at San Antonio, where he directs the Master's Program in TESL for teachers.

the possible reasons for their success, briefly with Tu and more in-depth with Huan, at least partially and informally, in light of sustained attention, memory, analyticity, and adult direction.

Some Case Studies

With Tu Anh Ngoc Tran, we have an example of an individual who learned English, at least well enough to cope with academic subjects, in two years: an extraordinary accomplishment. In fact, she must have learned English in a shorter period of time since she was able to do so well in the two years that she was in high school. Tu succeeded to the extent that her accomplishments also made the newspapers. We can see three attributes at work here: the two years in which she concurrently was learning English and subject matter attest to her capacity to memorize and to her determination to devote sufficient portions of her day to her studies. And her choice of college major and future career, engineering, calls

upon sophisticated and well-developed powers of analyticity and abstract reasoning.

With Huan Nguyen, we also have a demonstration of remarkable learning ability. Even though he did not win the championship of the national spelling bee competition--he fell on the spelling of "gamut"--his success reflects a powerful capacity to memorize. Huan was persistent in his goal of learning the spelling of many words and by his own admission spent a great deal of his time, inside and outside of class, studying and reading English. Learning to spell also calls upon analytical powers, determining the sound-symbol correspondences and the internal structure of a great number of words.

Tu and Huan, both, derive a great deal of their support and direction from their teachers, and in Huan's case, parents. Tu's parents did not accompany her but she brought with her a culture and its attributes which placed emphasis upon parental and teacher reverence. Huan's parents have high aspirations for all of their children, as do most parents I would suspect. However, Huan looks to his parents to articulate and to identify career possibilities and to his teachers for guidance and advice. Harvard is a possibility, and Huan's teachers have recommended that he pursue his goal.

While not specifying a particular university that they would like their son to attend, Huan's parents do want him to pursue a career, in whatever university he attends, in medicine rather than in business, Huan's preference at this time. What career he will eventually choose is almost predictable: when I asked Huan whether he planned to enter the spelling bee the following year, he said that it would all depend upon his parents' wishes: "They might not want me to do so much studying and use up all my mind." Huan did not enter.

During my interview with Huan, I learned that he had arrived in the United States just after his eighth birthday. Huan's father was a military pilot, his mother a teacher. Both parents still speak French and even though his father knew some English ("pilot" English) his mother knew none. Hence, the

family's native language continues to be the language spoken at home. Both parents are now employed, the mother as a technician at a local computer manufacturer and the father as a manager of a McDonald's.

During this first year in San Antonio, Huan was immersed in English, attending classes in an all English language environment. During the school day Huan was pulled out of his classes for a one-hour session with a bilingual Vietnamese aide (who was, according to Huan, supposed to teach English to him and the five other Indo-Chinese refugees but who instead went over their lessons with them in Vietnamese). In his second year, he was assigned to an American ESL instructor who knew no Vietnamese. Huan remembered this year of English instruction to be the "hard way" of learning English but later admitted that he made much progress during the year. What also aided him in his learning of English were, according to Huan, his American friends, his peers, all native speakers, who after a fashion, immersed him in their activities after the close of the school day. According to his teachers and to his middle school principal, Huan was extremely well liked and sociable, as were the other refugees. Although not achieving the singular success of Huan, all refugees in this school were doing well in their studies. Huan himself received five As and one B the semester that I interviewed him.

Tu and Huan are extraordinary students. I do not intend, however, to generalize from their success that even a majority of children of the Indo-Chinese are doing well in their academic subjects. There are thousands to be assessed, some living with their natural parents and some, like Tu, living with foster or adoptive parents. Yet the success of Tu and Huan (and the other refugees in Huan's school) and the identification of attributes by Wong Fillmore give us some notion of possible explanations--although for the time being these explanations must remain tentative.

Areas for Additional Research

At this juncture I would like to list additional areas of research where my own

inquiries lead, in my attempt to broaden the scope of such research:

1. Socio-economic region of where the school is located. What effect does the socio-economic status of the school district, and even more narrowly the school, have upon the success of the Asian refugees? This area of inquiry does not relate to learner characteristics at all, but is one, I believe, that may be crucial to students' success. Huan attended a school located in an upper-upper middle class region. He also lived within the boundaries of that school. Tu attended an upper middle class school in Austin, where in order to obtain an "ethnic balance", students who normally would have attended a school closer to their home were bussed. In San Antonio, it is extremely important where one lives as there is no bus-sing. There are seventeen individual and independent school districts, some extremely prosperous (Huan's district) and some extremely poor.

2. Success "quotient" of the student body. What bearing does the "success" rate of the student body as a whole (such as merit scholarships per senior class and the number and amount of scholarships awarded, grade point averages, college entrants) have upon the success rate of the Asian refugees? Again, this area of inquiry does not relate to learner characteristics, but is an area that I feel may be crucial. Approximately seventy percent of Tu's graduating class went to a college or university. Only two other high schools in Tu's district had a higher percentage of students going to college, and both had a higher number of merit scholars (Tu's high school had four). In Huan's school, approximately 80% of the students, according to their administrator's guess, would be going to college or to a university. Both Tu's and Huan's schools, according to their administrations, have high achievers and high standards. Thus, Tu and Huan were among peers who had established high goals for themselves.

3. Literacy of Asian students in their native language. Does literacy in the first language translate easily and efficiently into literacy in the second? What is the success rate of

those Asian refugees who were not literate in their native language? Tu, the older, and Huan, the younger, were literate in their native language when they emigrated to the United States; but there is a large number of refugees who were not: how successful are they?

4. Socio-economic status. Does the socio-economic status of the students' families in their native country have any bearing upon their children's success in this country? It is not clear what status Tu's parents were, but Huan's parents had a high socio-economic status in their native country but assumed a lower status in this country upon their arrival.

Conclusion

Finally, where do these observations (all concerned with tendencies) lead? Perhaps culture, and the values that are within each culture, do play a more important and crucial role in learning than we have assumed. While these examples of academic prowess do not prove a case, such observations should serve to build one. While Tu and Huan are extraordinary, and thus newsworthy, children who do not do as well as Tu and Huan seldom make the news. With over a half of a million Indo-Chinese refugees in the United States, and the presence of other ethnic groups, it seems that we can begin to ask about those who are within our schools: how are they doing and why? Lily Wong Fillmore's remarks were "to provoke thought and investigation": it seems to me that she has done just that.

REFERENCES

- Bloom, Benjamin. 1980. Dr. Bloom made this claim in his lecture, entitled "New Directions in Education Research" presented to Kappa Delta Pi, Trinity University, San Antonio. In February 1983, Dr. Bloom returned to Trinity and (personal communication) further corroborated his research. The results of his research have been published in his

book, *All Our Children's Learning*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1980.

Burling, Robbins. 1982. *Sounding Right*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers.

Wong Fillmore, Lily. 1981. Cultural Perspectives on Second Language Learning. *TESL Reporter* 14, 2:23-31.

Wong Fillmore. 1982. Dr. Wong Fillmore gave the Spring 1982 Plenary address to members of TEX-TESOL II. She addressed the research that she and her colleagues were doing in schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her grant is funded by NIE.

Employment Opportunities

The following format is used for entries:
1. Name of school. 2. Position available.
3. Qualifications required. 4. Address for applications and/or requests for further information on the position. 5. Closing date for applications.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. Language School in Thessaloniki, Greece. 2. English Language Instructors (several openings). 3. Applicants should have a Bachelors degree or be near to completion of one and be qualified to teach English as a Foreign Language. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and the names of references as well as a photograph, to S.G. Strategakis, 24 Pr. Koromila St., Thessalonaki, Greece. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. English Language School in Jakarta, Indonesia. 2. English Language Instructors (several openings). 3. Applicants should have a Bachelors degree and be qualified to teach English as a Foreign Language. 4. Applications, including a c.v., photograph and photocopies of qualifications, to EEC, P.O. Box 4147, Jakarta Pusat, Indonesia. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. Centro Educazione Linguistica, Sardinia, Italy. 2. English Language Instructors (several openings). 3. Applicants should have a B.A. degree and be qualified to teach English as a foreign language. 4. Applications, including a c.v., photo, references to Centro Educazione Linguistica, via Cap.

Bellieni 23, Sassari, Sardinia, Italy. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

1. St. Paul's College, Hong Kong. 2. Elementary and Secondary School Teacher. 3. Applicants should have a Bachelors degree and be qualified to teach English as a Second Language at elementary and secondary school level. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and the names of references, to Principal, St. Paul's College, 69 Bonham Road, Hong Kong. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. English Language School in Madrid, Spain. 2. English Language Instructors (several openings). 3. Applicants should have a Bachelors degree and be qualified to teach English as a Foreign Language. Some experience would be desirable. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and recent photograph, to La Casa Inglesa, Plaza de Salamanca 11, Madrid, Spain. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. English Language Centers in China. 2. English Language Instructors (several openings). 3. Applicants should have a Bachelors degree and be qualified to teach English as a Foreign Language and have at least two years teaching experience. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and the names of references, to Overseas Educational Appointments, The British Council, 90-91 Tottenham Court Road, London, England. Quote reference No. 83B 23-32. 5. When filled.



Announcing Important New Books from **NEWBURY HOUSE**

New!

INTERMEDIATE COMPOSITION PRACTICE: Book 2, Linda Lonon Blanton

Intermediate Composition Practice: Book 2 is the culmination of the linguistic-rhetorical efforts developed in the author's three other books in this series: **Intermediate Composition Practice: Book 1** and **Elementary Composition Practice: Books 1 and 2**. This fourth volume brings intermediate writers closer to the type of writing needed in academic and professional life.

Elementary Composition Practice: Book 1	Code: 2330T \$7.95
Elementary Composition Practice: Book 2	Code: 2331T \$7.95
Intermediate Composition Practice: Book 1	Code: 3040T \$7.95
Intermediate Composition Practice: Book 2	Code: 7252T \$7.95

New!

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM Ruth Cathcart and Michael Strong

"In our years of teaching English to adult immigrants, one of the things we found most trying was having to search for materials to supplement an inadequate intermediate textbook. The ideal, we thought, would integrate survival situations and sensible grammar sequencing with a focus on the appropriate uses of language. Such a book was not to be found, so we sat down and wrote it ourselves. The result is **Beyond The Classroom**, which includes all these features together with listening comprehension practice and survival activities." The Authors

Books in the Gateway to English Program

First Steps in Reading and Writing, J. Wigfield. Code: 7186T. \$6.95
Discovering English, K. Batchelor de Garcia and B. H. Nixon.
 Code: 7245T. \$6.95. Teacher's Book. Code: 7246R. \$4.95
Notion by Notion, L. Ferreira. Code: 7199T. \$6.95
Beyond the Classroom, R. Cathcart and M. Strong. Code: 7170T.
 \$6.95

Send orders (less 25% when prepaid) and examination requests to Box TESL-4-83. *Indicate titles, authors, and codes.*

**NEWBURY HOUSE
PUBLISHERS, INC.**
Rowley, Massachusetts 01969

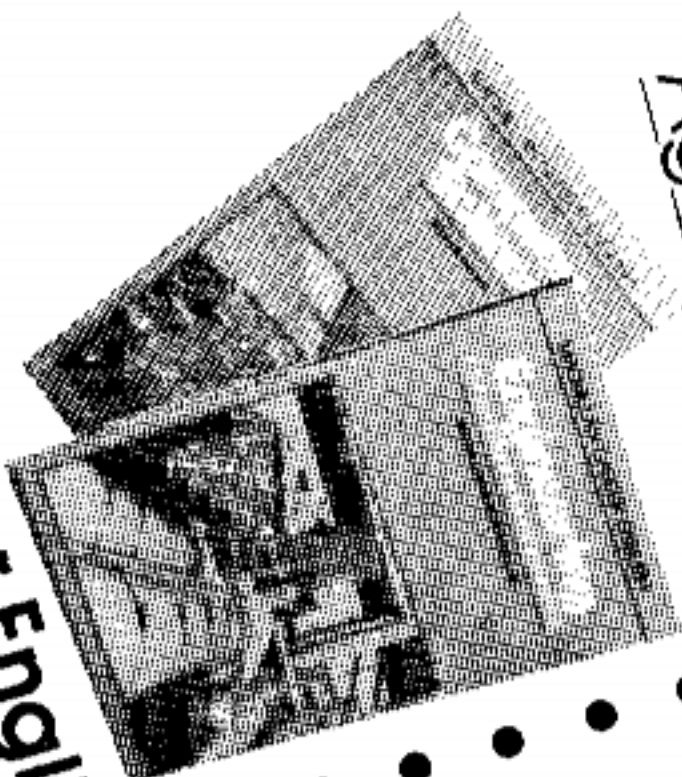


Order Department: 1-800-343-1240
 Massachusetts Residents, call:
 (617) 948-2840
 Main Office: (617) 948-2704

Just Published!

CAREER ENGLISH

For Specific Purposes series is ideal for students who are learning English for specific vocations or professions. Each of the nineteen books is designed for classroom and individual use. From *Agriculture to Tourism*, students will find:



- accurate, up-to-the-minute information and terminology exercises
- lively, easy-to-read definitions
- clear, concise exercises used in the book
- self-teaching for every term used in oral drills and pronunciation exercises
- a glossary for every term used in oral drills and pronunciation exercises
- a cassette recording with dialogues on specific topics

Career English will help intermediate-level students improve their command of the language as they learn more about their field of interest. **Career English** will help teachers keep the attention of these special students by making the classroom more relevant to their needs.

For more information write to:
Collier Macmillan International
 866 Third Avenue
 New York, N.Y. 10022-6299 U.S.A.

Announcements

The Institute of International Education has published the first in a new series of research studies on higher education and international exchange. *Absence of Decision: Foreign Students in U.S. Colleges and Universities, A Report on Policy Formation and the Lack Thereof* concludes that "absence of decision has more often than not characterized higher education's approach to foreign student issues. This is a luxury . . . that we are no longer able to afford." *Absence of Decision* is available free of charge from the Office of Communications, Institute of International Education, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017.

The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs announces the publication of the *1983 NAFSA Directory of Institutions and Individuals in International Educational Exchange*, a comprehensive resource listing well over 7,000 institutions and individuals involved in the administration of international educational exchange. It includes most private sector organizations working in the international exchange field, leaders of community efforts, and many overseas organizations. It contains names, titles, addresses, a cross reference telephone and alphabetic index, professional sectional affiliations and foreign student enrollment statistics as well as a list of government agencies, international education acronyms, and a regional map. Copies can be ordered for \$20.00 (plus \$2.50 postage and handling) from Publications Order Desk, National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, 1860 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

A Foreign Student's Selected Guide to Financial Assistance for Study and Research in the United States has been compiled and edited by AFS International/Intercultural Programs Vice President for the United States, Joe Lurie. The directory contains information on a wide variety of sources of financial assistance available to foreign nationals for the purposes of study and/or research in the United States. It is available for \$20.00 per copy (plus \$2.50 for domestic postage and handling and \$8.00 for overseas airmail postage and handling) from Adelphi University Press, Levermore Hall, Garden City, New York 11530.

TESL Reporter

Box 1830

Brigham Young University—Hawaii Campus

Laie, Hawaii 96762

Non-Profit Organization

U. S. Postage

PAID

LAIE, HAWAII

Permit Number One

address correction requested