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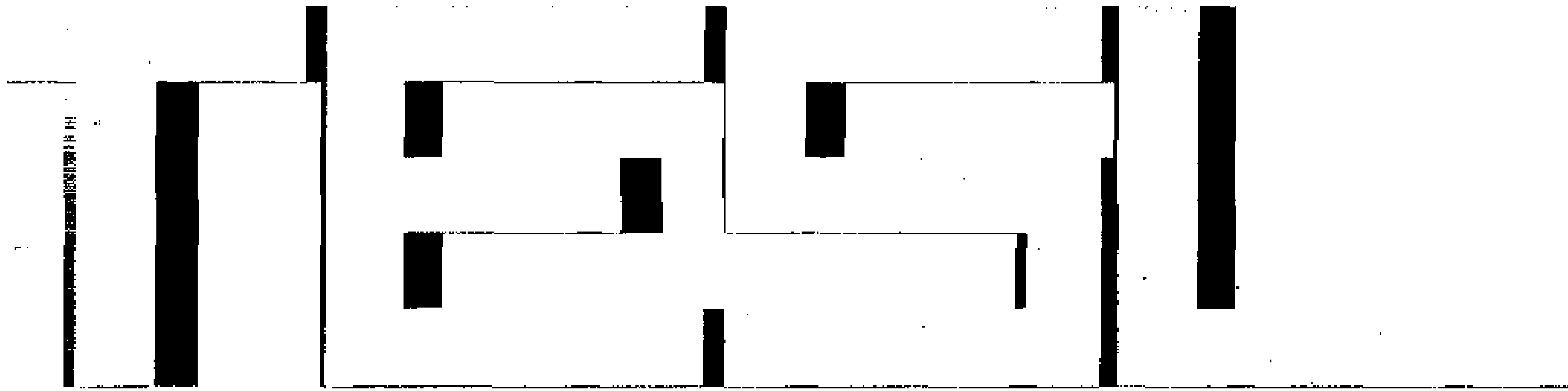

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Employment Opportunities

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
1. English Language School in Huesca, Spain. 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., names of references and a recent photograph, to J. Royo, Centro de Estudios Aries, Avda Menendez Pidal 26, Huesca, Spain. 5. When filled.

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TESL REPORTER

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An Expectancy Exercise in Cohesion

by Dean Brodkey

Some years ago, Jon Jonz, a creative teacher in the English Tutorial Program at the University of New Mexico, introduced a text-prediction exercise to his freshman ESL composition class. He used a mock incohesive, incoherent student essay and contrasted it with an excerpt from Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring." The two passages were presented one sentence at a time on separate pages so that the students had to guess what would follow next before turning the page. The students quickly came to appreciate that the mock student essay was thoroughly jumpy and unpredictable while Carson's smooth prose was so carefully plotted with logical connectives and organizers that no one could be surprised by what followed what.

Picking up on this exercise a few years later, I found an even more compelling way to illustrate cohesion using actual students' papers as they came across my desk. For example, I might get the following:

> "I'm belonging to E.S.S. (English Speaking Society) of my university in Tokyo. I'm interested in English, especially English conversation. I wish I could speak English fluently. In Japan, there are only a few opportunities to talk to a native speaker. I think it is the best way to study English in the countries such as America, England and Canada."

This sort of paragraph bothers me. Although a silent reading gives a passable impression that the student wants to write about "Difficulties and Opportunities in Learning English," I was bothered by the many indirect turns the text was taking. Where would the focus end up? Would I hear more about the student's English club? About problems speaking fluently? About the lack of opportunity to speak English in Japan? About the best cut-rate fares to America, England and Canada? My mind sank into the frequent dilemma that I have when trying to follow incohesive student writing, as I give the student the benefit of the doubt while doggedly searching for the main claim or theme as I proceed dutifully down the page unhappily aware that I am paid to do it.

Then I tried the following exercise. I asked the student to read the paper *aloud* to the class, stopping after each sentence. After the first sentence, the other students would have to guess what came next, giving the exact words they would write and not just a general response such as, "well--I think it will talk about . . ." Naturally, what came next had to flow cohesively from what came before. The students' expectancy grammar for cohesive thinking had to be tapped, and the result was usually something like this:

> Student: "I'm belonging to E.S.S. (English Speaking Society) Club of my university in Tokyo."
>
> Class:
> 1) This club is very popular because. . .
> 2) The purpose of this club is. . .
> 3) The E.S.S. is a group students who. . .
> 4) I joined this club because. . .

At this point, the writer would begin to giggle because the lesson is such an obvious one. The class has no trouble coming up with appropriately cohesive followup sentences, and the giggle is that no teacher had ever suggested using such a style. In fact, some students will begin to object that their last English teacher told them "never repeat the same words!" Therefore, an exercise that seems to demand repetition of the same key terms must be "wrong". Yet a predictable reading almost demands verbatim repetition of terms in order to carry the main idea forward with clarity, and the effect, if not stylistically elegant, is conceptually very easy to follow.

Two objections from teachers crop up at this point. The first objection is that without prior instruction in how to be cohesive, with lessons in the use of logical connectives and other organizers, the students simply won't be able to do it. I an-

swer that my own intermediate-level students seem to do it quite well and seem to need no special pretraining. The exercise seems to tap the same sort of latent skills that sentence-combining taps. Someone in the class always comes up with a good answer, and the rest quickly catch on. The logic of cohesive continuations is easy to apprehend, even in multilingual settings, and when the linguistic emphasis falls on simple reiteration of key terms there is no confusing pressure to resort to the difficulties of our connective vocabulary except as students in the class find them natural and well acquired already. Many will blurt out "Second, . . ." or "For example, . . ." because these are such readily understood and acquired stylistic devices.

Teachers may also object that the resultant style is crude, childishly bare sounding, and undesirable. I reply that it need not be so. For example, the following passage from an exercise book intended to teach "finding the main idea", makes the reiterative point well.

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> Fat people have fewer colds than thin people; rich people have fewer colds than poor people; old people have fewer colds than young people; city dwellers have fewer colds than their country cousins. Families on the east and west coasts have fewer colds than those in the middle of the country, and small families have fewer colds than large families. Management workers have fewer colds than administrative employees, and office workers have fewer colds than production workers. Workers in offices where the air is filtered and conditioned have the fewest colds of anyone. (Boning 1976)

Pardon me while—achoo!—I expel a thoroughly cohesive sneeze.

Finally, I include this excerpt from a weightier tome which illustrates exactly what I am talking about.

> The study of discourse has become a major concern of scholars in many fields. With regard to children, education, and schooling alone, there is a great accumulation of *work.* Much of this *work* is readily available and summarized. What is most *lacking,* perhaps, is perspective on the relation between this *work* and the needs of educators. Such a *lack* is indicated in the bewildering variety of definitions and understandings of the term 'context'; the diversity of approaches to the relation between 'form' and 'function'; and the uncertainty as to the pedagogical relevance of various outlooks. (Hymes 1982)

The author goes on to repeat the word "discourse" four times in the short half page that follows, repeats the formulation, 'context', 'form', 'function' a second time, and uses such sentence continuers as "a few key ideas . . . . These ideas," "I shall argue . . . . I shall argue" and so forth.

The ensuing style reminds one of devices used when talking to foreigners who do not quite follow what is being said. Dubbed "foreigner talk" it emphasizes the repetition of key lexical items and the left-shifting of main ideas to the beginning of utterances. The effect is often seen by native speakers as sounding a bit simple-minded and overly emphatic. But I would contend that college writing needs a good deal more of this than we usually get from scholars, who work with difficult concepts, and from our freshman students, who have the same sort of trouble keeping their ideas in focus to themselves as well as to their patient English teachers.

Note: For the very advanced ESL class, see Donley 1976.

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Bridges to English

Book Review by Dorothea Heberle

BRIDGES TO ENGLISH. Protase E. Woodford and Doris Kernan. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. Six levels. Student texts, $3.20 each. Teacher's manuals, $1.50 each. Workbooks, $2.82 each.

Bridges to English is an ESL series for adults which, in addition to textbooks, includes teacher's manuals, workbooks, cassettes, and tests. However, because the budget in our school district is limited, we use only the student texts.

Each lesson begins with a short reading and questions about relevant situations, such as renting a house, visits to the post office, etc., which a foreign visitor might encounter in this country. An abundance of substitution and transformation drills precedes each grammatical generalization. This is followed by a dialog, a reading selection, and questions, all containing the new vocabulary and structures. Review exercises provide oral and written practice at the end of each lesson.

In the teacher's manual, the authors state that each level can be mastered in 25 to 40 class hours, "depending on the abilities of the students and the amount of beyond-the-text material presented." However the series has been successfully adapted to our adult evening course of twenty two-hour classes, meeting once a week. Since most of our students are at a low-intermediate level, we use Book 2 in the fall term and Book 3, which introduces regular and irregular past tense forms, in the spring. Each book contains eight lessons, and we cover one lesson per class. Since most of the students are already acquainted with the material, I skip the repetitive pattern drills and use the more difficult "Writing Practice" exercises for oral classwork.

The main advantage of this series is its emphasis on conversation and pronunciation. Pattern drills provide controlled practice with formation of questions and negatives. New nouns and verbs are grouped together, according to their endings, in separate lessons. Each lesson is developed with simplicity and visual appeal. Grammatical structures are presented concisely on charts, and photographs and drawings stimulate conversation.

The main disadvantage that I find in this series is not enough inclusion of personal, meaningful questions or chain drills, that would allow more interaction between students. However I believe that the authors achieve their purpose of aiming for "rapid acquisition of the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills necessary for effective communication"; and I shall continue to use this series, adapting it to the needs of my own ESL class.

Dorothea Heberle has taught ESL and foreign languages to children and adults. She currently teaches ESL at the Amherst Adult School near Buffalo, New York.

The Intentional ESL Teacher

by Joan E. Friedenberg & Curtis H. Bradley

Almost anyone can look back and identify at least one teacher who made a significant impact on his or her life. Although a few individuals will remember the particular teacher's instruction, most will recall the personal interest which that teacher took in them.

The early investigations of Lippitt and White (1943), Whitall (1949), and Flanders (1951) reveal that teacher influence on the learner extends far beyond the learning of subject matter content. It is now commonly accepted that the teacher is more than a dispenser of knowledge. The teacher impacts on the mental health (Tolar, 1975), self-concept (Hamachek, 1975), social, emotional, psychomotor, moral, and intellectual development of students (Mosston, 1972). Teachers can obstruct or contribute to every facet of student development. This influence is *not* limited to cognitive achievement.

Despite these findings, evidence also indicates that teachers are generally unaware of the extent of their influence on learners (Amidon and Flanders, 1971). That is, few teachers realize that the very style of teaching they use can affect the *total human development* of their students.

Language Teaching: Methods and Styles

Language teaching in the U.S. has been influenced by both linguistics and psychology. During the 1940's and 1950's, based on structural linguistics and behavioral psychology, the audiolingual method of language teaching was developed. This method provided students with such activities as repetition and substitution drills and dialogue memorization. Structural linguistics provided ALM with the discrete-point units to plug into the substitution drills while behavioral psychology contributed the notion that language learning was merely the subconscious learning of a set of habits, hence the emphasis on repetition and memorization. Teachers were (and still are) attracted to this method because it claimed to provide clear and foolproof methods and materials and it also sought to give students more of an opportunity to speak.

During the 1950's and 1960's, based on the "Chomskyan Revolution" (generative-transformational linguistics) and cognitive psychology, the cognitive code method was introduced. This method stressed the conscious cognitive awareness of phonological, morphological, and syntactic rules.

Since the 1970's, many linguists have been dissatisfied with Chomsky's syntax-based description of language, arguing that it lacks an adequate account of the semantic relationships in language. Generative semantics, case grammar, Schlesinger's systems of realization rules based directly on a speaker's intentions, and others were introduced as a result of this dissatisfaction. This interest in semantics, or meaning, coupled with a new interest in humanistic psychology has also had an impact on the language teaching profession, hence the recent emphasis on communication.

The reader should not believe from this brief history that foreign language classrooms, especially in the public schools, have followed the same trends at the same pace. This is not the case for several good reasons:

1. Many overworked language teachers have been unable to keep up with the latest developments in their profession.
2. Economic limitations prevent most schools from purchasing new materials each time a new method is introduced.
3. Some educators are resistant to change—especially those who were responsible for introducing the older methods and materials to an institution.
4. There is still disagreement over which methods and teaching styles are best.

In an effort to address the issue of behavioristic vs cognitive approaches to

language learning, Chastain (1972:56) states, "an effort must be made to provide as many different learning experiences as possible." He later suggests that this be done by deciding what aspect of language teaching each method can do best. For example, a behaviorist approach would be most suitable for teaching pronunciation while both approaches would be appropriate for teaching vocabulary and syntax.

In his discussion of manipulative vs communicative language learning activities, Prator (1972:142) regards the language teaching process as a, "prolonged and gradual shift from manipulation to communication, accomplished through progressive decontrol." He continues, "We determine the speed of transition by allowing the student the possibility of making certain errors only when we are reasonably sure that he (or she) will no longer be likely to make them."

It is clear that both Chastain and Prator recognize the importance of introducing a variety of teaching methods and styles into the language class. However, neither refers to the total human development of the student in his criteria for selecting a given method or style. While Chastain's criteria focus on the *aspect* of the language (i.e., phonology, vocabulary, or syntax), Prator relies on the learners' levels of linguistic skill (i.e., lack of errors) to determine whether a manipulative or communicative teaching style should be employed.

In an effort to take a closer look at the language learner, Oller and Richards (1973) edited a collection of readings entitled, *Focus on the Learner*. In the preface, the editors state, "The focus is on language learners–their capacities, attitudes, learning strategies, and, of course, what it is that they learn." While this volume *does* focus on the learner, it focuses on the learner only as a learner (actually, only as a language learner) and not on the learner as a total human being.

Although there is a dearth of research on the relationship between language learning and self-concept, studies by Gardner and Lambert (1972), Brodkey and Shore (1976), and Heyde (1979) suggest an important relationship between self-concept and better performance in foreign language classes. Although, as Brown (1980) cautions, we do not know for sure whether self-esteem influences language success or whether language success influences high self-esteem, Heyde's study indicates that language teachers can influence both the linguistic performance and the total human development of the student. As Brown (1980:105) puts it, "Perhaps good teachers succeed because they give optimal attention to linguistic goals and to the personhood of their students."

Which Teaching Style is Best?

Mouska Mosston (1972) developed an "anatomy of style" which is used to classify teaching style based on the type of student and teacher involvement in the learning process. Mosston identified seven different teaching styles and used the anatomy to present the assets and liabilities of each of these styles. These styles progress along a continuum of student involvement from the "command style" (minimum student involvement) on to "individual program-student design" (maximum student involvement). The frequently used command style, where all decisions are made by the teacher, is shown to be the most comfortable style for both teachers and students–each knows exactly what is expected of them. However, this often used teaching style is also shown to be the *least* conducive to the total human development of the learners. Mosston's position regarding the command style of teaching is, of course, supported by numerous educational leaders. Flanders (1970), for example, classifies the command style as "direct" teaching behavior. He demonstrates that it restricts students' opportunity to participate and grow but nonetheless is widely used.

The point being made here is that the command style has certain inherent characteristics, not that it is "wrong" for teachers to use. There are certainly times when the command style or direct teaching behavior is appropriate; Mosston, Flanders and others cite numerous examples. Whether one uses "styles" or "directness/indirectness" or any other method of classification, there

are no inherently "right" or "wrong" methods of teaching. Every teaching method has inherent characteristics regarding the various facets of human development. The successful teacher is one able to select appropriate methods considering *all* of the objectives at a given moment in time. Indeed, it has been shown that the ability to adapt teaching behavior to the moment—teacher *flexibility*—or the lack of it, is more useful in predicting teacher success than the adoption of any particular style or method of teaching" (Flanders, 1970).

The successful teacher in terms of student performance on achievement tests, Flanders found, was the teacher who used a broader variety of teaching methods. This, by no small coincidence, was the teacher who also provided learners with the greatest opportunities for total human development. Not being restricted to one type of teaching behavior, the range of behaviors used by the successful (flexible) teacher provided more opportunity for student participation and growth than did the restricted behavior of the less successful and more direct (command style in Mosston's terms) teacher. Thus, the successful teacher is one with a wide range of alternative teaching behaviors whose ability to react to the moment with appropriate behaviors results in better student performance on achievement tests and, more importantly, more potential opportunity for the total development of the student as a human being.

It is important to note that the flexible teacher can be as direct (use the command style) as any other teacher in a given situation. However, the flexible teacher has a broad range of alternative teaching behaviors from which to choose in other teaching situations. Less successful teachers are not found to be capable of this flexibility. Teaching style (or method) serves a purpose and belongs in the repertoire of every teacher. The issue here is *when* to select a given teaching method or style.

The ESL Teacher's Dilemma

When skill development is the only goal of an ESL educator or program, manipulation and control can follow all too easily. The educator (or program) determines which linguistic skills will be developed, how they will be developed, and what will be accepted as satisfactory evidence of their development. By far, the quickest and easiest route to student attainment of these skills is for the teacher to point the way, every step of the way. As Mosston has indicated, this is clearly the most comfortable method for both teacher and learner. Both know exactly what is expected of them—the teacher performs and the student responds as instructed—and there are no uncomfortable surprises for anyone. Regardless of how comfortably and quickly the language skills are learned, the emphasis in this situation is on external reinforcement—manipulating students in the right direction "for their own good." *If the teacher is* oriented exclusively towards skill development, there would appear to be no problem.

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Curtis H. Bradley received his Ed.D. from Temple University. He has authored numerous articles, manuals, and chapters focusing on humanistic concerns in education. He is currently Professor in the School of Education and Director of the Bilingual Vocational Instructor Training Program at Florida International University in Miami.

However, to the ESL teacher oriented toward the total development of the learner, the question is immediately asked, "How much can the teacher help the learner develop the linguistic skills needed and yet have the learner move closer to becoming an independent learner and user of the new lan-

guage?" This is not an easy question to answer.

Teacher approval, mimicking modeled behaviors, or simply avoidance of failure are each strong, and frequently used, sources of external reward in many ESL programs, including most traditional programs. However, learning based exclusively on external rewards creates *dependent* learners. As Bruner (1961) warned, learning based on external rewards can all too easily cause learners to simply seek cues as to how to conform to what is expected of them. External reinforcement, in the extreme, can produce individuals capable of little more than reproducing behaviors and products deemed desirable by others. Even if this were an acceptable outcome of "education", one must wonder what is to happen to the learner when the teacher–the source of reward–is no longer available?

The competent ESL instructor understands the dangers as well as the benefits of external rewards. This instructor considers the consequences of her or his actions in terms of the objective of helping learners to develop to their fullest potential. It is understood that this objective cannot be reached by exclusive reliance on external rewards. On the other hand, varying quantities of external reward *are* needed and wanted by learners in various settings. A tremendous amount of support, encouragement, help, and approval appear to be essential to some learners. Each step the teacher takes with or for the learner is a move toward greater dependence of the learner on the teacher. Yet a number of factors, including the needs and wishes of the learner for external rewards, encourage the teacher to take steps that foster dependence and block movement toward the objective of helping learners develop toward their maximum potential. This paradox is the ESL teacher's dilemma.

Two Filters That Help

The objective of a competent educator should be to help each learner grow maximally toward achieving his or her fullest potential. A method must be devised to determine how best to achieve this goal. How does one person help another grow toward achieving his or her own maximum potential? How does one determine which actions would be most helpful to another human being? Abraham Maslow and Douglas McGregor provide important filters through which any such decisions should be viewed.

Maslow (1968) described the greatest fulfillment of human potential as self-actualization. In his theory of growth motivation, Maslow places human needs in a hierarchy. Starting with physical needs at the bottom, an individual must satisfy each of the lower needs sequentially while moving upward toward higher needs. That is, physical needs must be satisfied before security needs. When both of these needs have been satisfied, that individual is then free to satisfy *social* needs. When social needs have been satisfied, he or she is then free to satisfy *self-fulfillment* (or self-actualization) needs. The first four needs (physiological, security, social and self-esteem) are identified as "D" or *deficiency* needs because these needs must be satisfied by other individuals. Satisfaction of needs by others can, of course, create dependency on others, and a dependent individual cannot satisfy the higher self-actualization or self-fulfillment needs. Yet dependency needs must be satisfied by others before the individual can become free to move toward self-actualization.

The competent and fully effective language educator understands that it is absolutely essential to help learners succeed and satisfy their basic security, social and self-esteem needs. This, at times, requires direct suggestions and reassuring and reinforcing behavior on the part of the teacher before the learner is able to reach toward higher levels of growth and development. However, if the activities of the learner are constantly directed and redirected through extrinsic reinforcement, the learner will never find the freedom to grow toward higher levels of growth and development. This seeming paradox is kept foremost in the mind of the competent and fully effective educator. McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y help

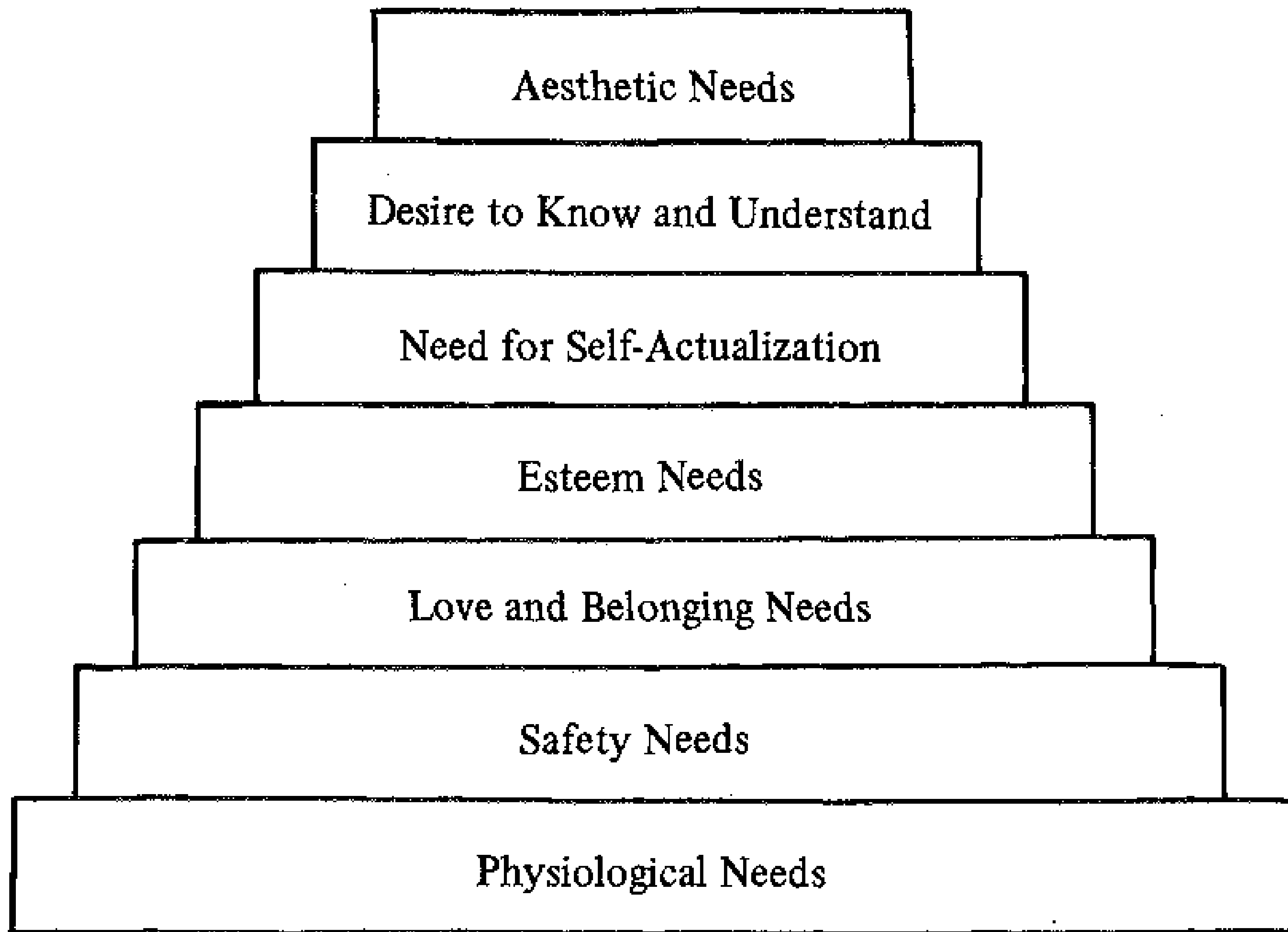

Figure 1

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

to make congruent decisions when faced with this paradox.

McGregor (1960) proposed Theory X and Theory Y as two diametrically opposed sets of assumptions about people. An individual accepting one of these theories would logically view human beings and their needs far differently than would a subscriber to the opposing theory. Exploration of these theories and their influence on leadership behavior is most helpful in assisting educators to consider the consequences of their own actions.

Theory X

1. Most people have an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if at all possible.

2. Because most people dislike work, they must be pushed, coerced or threatened with punishment to get them to work.

3. Most people are basically lazy, have little ambition, wish to avoid responsibility, and want security above all.

Theory Y

1. Most people find physical and mental effort as natural as play or rest and develop an attitude toward work related to their experiences with it.

2. People do not have to be threatened with punishment to be motivated to work. They will be somewhat self-directed when they are committed to the objectives.

3. Commitment to objectives is related to the rewards associated with their achievement.

4. Given facilitative conditions, the average person learns not only to accept, but to seek responsibility.

5. Most people have the potential to exercise imagination and creativity on the job.

The purpose of considering Theory X and Theory Y is not to select which is the "correct" theory, but rather to help educators clarify their own assumptions about human behavior and determine whether their own behavior is consistent with their assumptions and objectives. For those who accept Theory X, one-way communication with the educator handing down information, decisions and instructions to the learner makes sense. Theory Y suggests that two-way communication and the involvement of learners in decision making and goal setting is essential.

The filters provided by Maslow and McGregor can help the language teacher make appropriate instructional decisions. It is not at all unique for these two filters to help teachers in both traditional and innovative programs gain insight into their own teaching and supervising behavior. Many see a lack of congruence among their beliefs, objectives and behaviors. Once an educator realizes that incongruence exists, it is a relatively simple matter to select behaviors that are consistent with his or her own beliefs and objectives. The competent and fully effective educator is now able to help others in a manner appropriate to the everchanging growth needs of each individual. Such an educator is called *intentional* (Ivey, 1969).

The Intentional ESL Teacher

An intentional individual is one who acts spontaneously with an understanding of the power of her or his actions on her or him, her or his environment, and others (Ivey and Rollin, 1972).

The essential and distinguishing characteristic of an intentional teacher is that every behavior is generated for the express purpose of facilitating the development and movement toward self-actualization of the learners. The intentional educator is *aware* of the effect of those actions on others. It is the intentional teacher who helps learners grow maximally toward self-fulfillment. The intentional teacher can be described as one who:

a. Has a maximum number of ways to reach and teach others;

b. Is committed to helping others grow toward self-fulfillment; and

c. Views every teaching behavior in terms of its effect on the total development of learners.

Intentionality is simply a blending of behavioral alternatives aimed at helping others move toward becoming competent, self-actualizing individuals.

The intentional teacher is not committed to a single course of action. It must be re-emphasized that every possible teaching method, from the most direct to the most indirect, is an essential component of the intentional teacher's repertoire. To be able to generate these behavioral alternatives, one must have a wide background of teaching skills and knowledge from which to draw. The intentional teacher develops the ability to use and assess the effect of traditional as well as innovative teaching methods.

Moskowitz (1978) emphasizes the need for language classes which contribute to the positive self-concepts and self actualization of learners. She provides eight premises for a humanistic foreign language program.

1. A principal purpose of education is to provide learning and an environment that facilitate the achievement of the full potential of students.

2. Personal growth as well as cognitive growth is a responsibility of the school. Therefore education should deal with both dimensions of humans—the cognitive or intellectual and the affective or emoional.

3. For learning to be significant, feelings must be recognized and put to use.

4. Significant learning is discovered for oneself.

5. Human beings want to actualize their potential.
6. Having healthy relationships with other classmates is more conducive to learning.
7. Learning more about oneself is a motivating factor in learning.
8. Increasing one's self-esteem enhances learning.

Several language educators have recognized the importance of providing students with learning activities which enhance student's self-concepts (Moskowitz, 1978; Savignon, 1972; Friedenberg & Bradley, 1981; Horwitz & Horwitz, 1977; Puhl, 1975; and Brown & Dubin, 1975). These activities provide students with opportunities to express emotions, opinions, experiences, values, hopes, fantasies, feelings and memories. They also help students to become accepting of others. Humanistic language teachers recognize the importance of focusing on (at appropriate times) the student's message in the target language and not on the degree of grammatical perfection. That is, they have learned how to listen to *what* the learner is saying instead of *how* the learner is saying it.

The intentional language teacher, then, is one who knows when it is appropriate to use structured, highly controlled and manipulative techniques and when it is appropriate to allow students to use the target language for personal expression, based not on the students' level of linguistic competence, but on the students' needs as human beings. This teacher knows when to correct student errors and when to focus solely on their intended messages. She or he recognizes the importance of linguistic skill development as well as the importance of the students' total human development. Intentional language teachers have developed a repertoire of teaching methods, including recent innovations, which will increase their potential to reach others. Above all, intentional language teachers *care* about the total human development of their students and possess the *flexibility* needed to help students function to their fullest capacity.

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Laugh and Learn

by Jerry Steinberg

Bill, a former student of mine, once confessed, "Every time we sang a song, listened to one of your corny jokes, or played a game (all in the target language, of course), we thought we were just fooling around and not working. Then, I realized that everyone was paying attention and participating, and that as much learning was taking place during the fun times as during the formal lesson. We were laughing *and* learning. You tricked us!"

You're right, Bill. I did trick you. And in doing so, I made learning more fun for you, and teaching more fun for me.

The Pedagogical Value of Games

Everyone knows that games are fun, but some people think that they are *only fun*–lacking any pedagogical value. Not so! Games are a viable (and enjoyable) method of achieving many educational objectives. For example:

I use games to **reinforce** newly acquired information, immediately after it has been taught.

Days, weeks, months, even years after something has been taught, a game is a delightful way to **review** that material.

A game makes an excellent **reward** to encourage students to co-operate (or to thank them for co-operating) during less enjoyable activities.

After a grueling oral drill, or other energy-draining exercise, a quiet game is a fun way to **relax**.

Games tend to **reduce inhibition**, especially if the competitive element is diminished or eliminated. The shy or linguistically weak student will feel more at ease and will participate more freely, if the object is just to have fun, and not to score points and win. Although competition often adds excitement and increases participation, it also intensifies the pressure to perform well, thereby excluding the timid student and the one who is less sure of his facility with the language.

No matter how dynamic a teacher you are, there are bound to be occasional general lapses in attention. A short, snappy game will **raise attentiveness**, revive the class, and make them more receptive to further learning.

A game provides the teacher with a method of **rapid rectification** of students' errors. Correcting errors immediately prevents them from becoming deeply rooted in students' memories.

Students tend to remember best the things they enjoyed doing. Hence, games **aid retention.**

Playing games takes the drudgery out of learning and, thus, **provides motivation.**

Students are very co-operative during games, since no one wants to risk being responsible for bringing a pleasurable activity to a premature end. Consequently, games help to **restrain rebellion.**

When to Play Games

Games can be played at any time. I frequently play a short game with my students at the beginning of the lesson, especially on Mondays, to welcome them back, refresh their memories, and warm them up for learning new material. You know only too well how much can be forgotten over the weekend, and how difficult it is to "get their motors started," particularly on Mondays. What better way to review last week's (or yesterday's) learning than by playing a game which requires students to recall and use that information repeatedly?

Also, occasionally, I will interrupt a lesson to play a short, snappy game when I find students' attention waning. I then return to the lesson with alert and attentive students.

Saving a game for the end of the session also has its advantages. It will encourage students to co-operate during the lesson and, by ending on a "high note," it may entice them to return for the next session.

In summary, the best time to play a game is *any time* that a game will benefit your students.

Game Essentials

Here are three important things I look for in games to play with my students:

1. **Ease of Explanation:** The rules of a game should be few and simple. If you are fortunate enough to be able to speak the background (native) language(s) of all of your students, I would suggest you take a few minutes to explain the game in that/those language(s) and use the remaining time to play the game. (I would rather spend a few minutes explaining the game and have lots of time left over to play it, than use up all the time explaining it in the target language and have no time left to play.)

   If you cannot communicate with students in their own language(s), use the simplest vocabulary possible, utilizing lots of visual aids and giving lots of concrete examples to ensure comprehension.

2. **Absence of expensive or complicated materials.**

3. **Versatility:** I like games that can easily be adapted to suit the number, age, and linguistic level of my students.

Optimal Group Size

During my demonstrations of linguistic games for the language class, teachers have often expressed the concern that it is next to impossible to play games with classes of 30 to 40 (or more) students.

Although some games are well-suited to large groups (YES/NO PING-PONG, LETTERGORY and WHAT'S NEW?, to name a few), to ensure *total* involvement and participation of *all* students, teams of no more than 10 sutdents are recommended. This enables each and every student to take an *active* part in the game and to contribute to his team's effort, in addition to permitting the teacher to monitor each individual's performance.

So what should you do if you have upwards of 30 students in your class? Send half of them home? No! I suggest "Activity Stations."

Divide your class into equal teams (as nearly as possible) and assign each group to an Activity Station. By way of illustration, a class of 40 could have 4 teams of 10 students each. Team A could go to Station One, where they could, for example, listen to a taped story and answer written questions about the story. Team B, at Station Two, could do crossword puzzles. Team C would play T.V. DEFINITION (or another suitable game) against Team D under the direction of the teacher at Station Three.

After a given length of time (for example, 15 minutes), the groups would move on to the next station in a clockwise direction:

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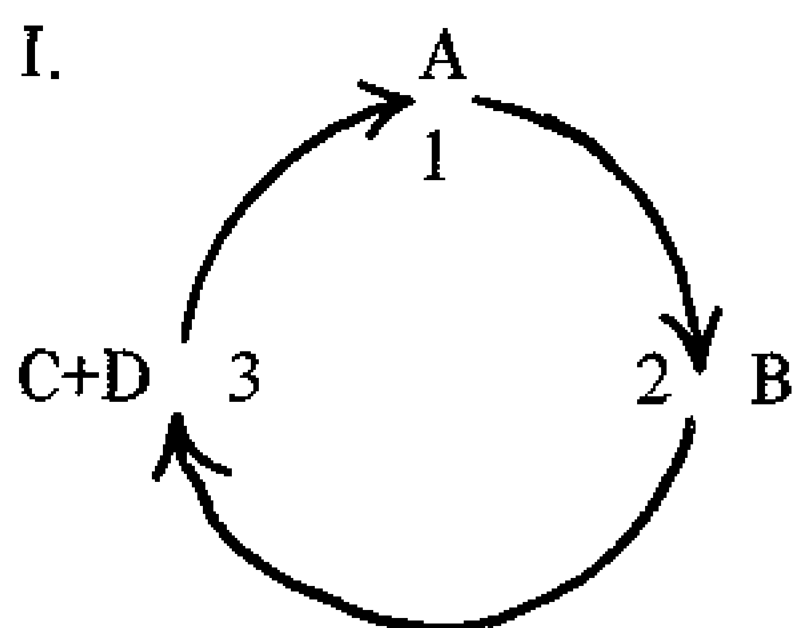
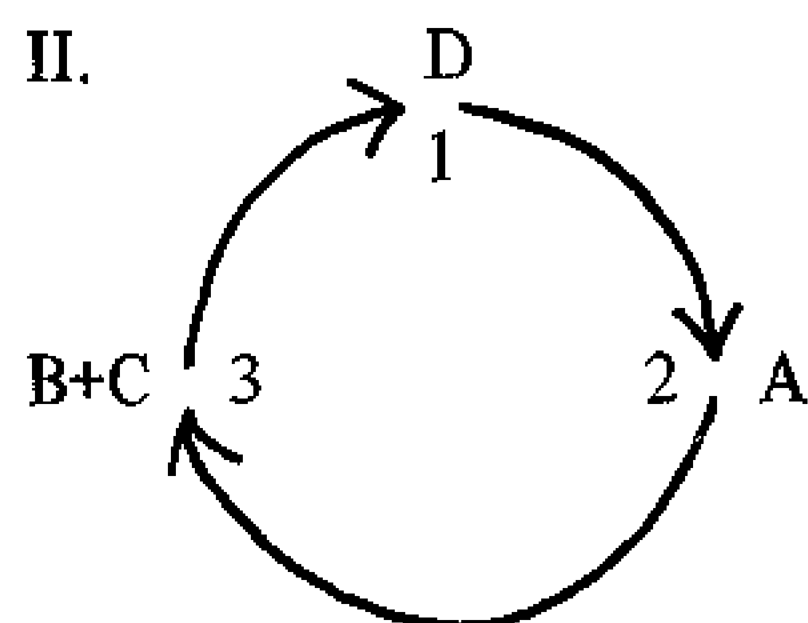
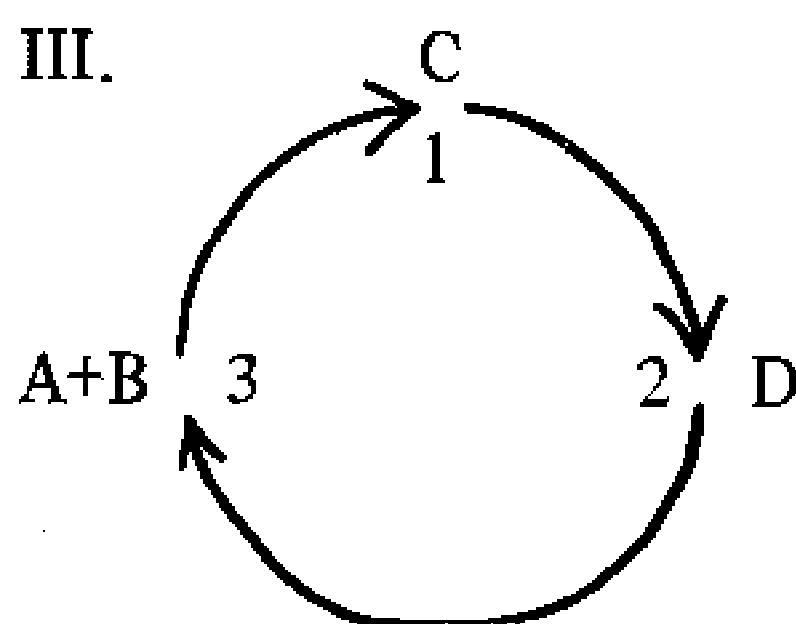
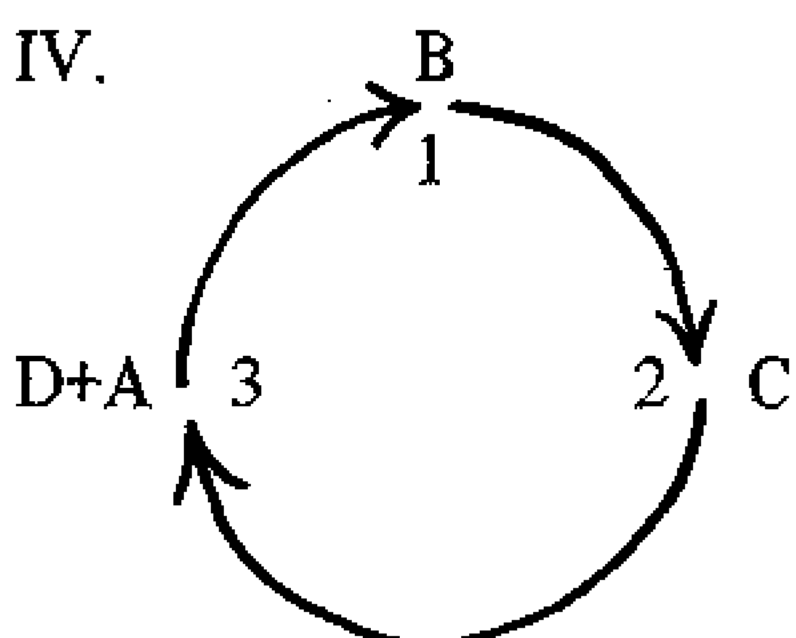
Team A would advance to Station Two, B to Three, and D to One, leaving Team C at Station Three to compete against Team B. This rotation could even take place the next day, depending on your schedule. This system takes a bit of organization, but once learned, it functions quite smoothly, and students move form one station to the next with a minimum of noise and confusion.

Here is how the rotation would work. Each diagram represents one session.









And here is a partial list of *alternative* activities which students at Stations One and Two could engage in while waiting to play at Station Three. (All are to be done in the target language, of course.)

- Reading comic books;
- Listening to a taped song and doing a cloze exercise;
- Watching a video-taped program and answering written questions;
- Creating a dialogue or skit on a given theme;
- Reading a story and answering written questions;
- Doing written exercises on grammar or vocabulary;
- Listening to a taped dialogue and answering questions;
- Creating a story on a given theme;
- Reading a newspaper article in preparation for discussion;
- Listening to a taped newscast and answering questions;
- Doing word searches or crossword puzzles;
- Reading a dialogue and answering questions;
- Playing quiet games which don't require the teacher's presence or supervision.

Some Sample Games

Here are three good games for making ESL students laugh and learn. All three are definition games, but they develop various language skills.

Editor's note: These three sample games are from Jerry Steinberg's book of 110 games, entitled ***Games Language People Play.*** *(Available from Dominie Press Limited, 345 Nugget Avenue, Unit 15, Agincourt, Ontario, MIS 4J4, Canada, for $6.95 plus $1.50 postage and handling)*

T.V. Definition
(Reading)

LEVELS: all

OPTIMAL GROUP SIZE: ten (for larger groups, see adaptation section below)

OBJECTIVE: For advanced classes, to introduce or review idiomatic expressions. For beginners and intermediate classes, to review vocabulary and spelling.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Blackboard or overhead projector, and several T.V. definitions.

DESCRIPTION: The group is divided into five teams of two players each. In turn, one player from each team will give away a a letter of the alphabet he hopes *isn't* in the solution. If that letter indeed isn't in the solution, his partner will take a letter he hopes *is* in the solution. If it is, the correctly taken letter is written into its place(s) in the solution, and that team can guess at the solution. If a letter is given away and *is* in the solution, that team loses its turn, and the next team has a free guess at the solution, in addition to their regular turn to give away and take letters.

If the taken letter *isn't* in the solution, that team loses its chance to guess at the solution. For example:

Definition: *What students are when they fall asleep in class.*

Solution: _ _ _ _ _   _ _   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

(Each dash represents a letter of the solution.)

The group is broken up into teams A,B, C,D and E. Player A1 is asked to give away a letter he hopes *isn't* in the solution. He gives away *Z*. There is no *Z* in the solution, so player A2 can now take a letter he hopes *is* in the solution. He takes *E*. There are two *E*'s in the solution and they are written into their spaces:

_ _ _ E _   _ _   E _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Team A, having given away and taken correctly, can now guess at the solution, but it's really too early in the game to have much of a chance of guessing correctly. So, Team A passes.

B1 gives away *Q*. There are no *Q*'s in the solution, so player B2 takes *O*. There are three *O*'s in the solution, and they are now written into their spaces:

_ O _ E _   O _   E _ _ _ _ _ _ O _

Team B passes on their guess, since there still isn't enough information to help them make a correct guess.

Player C1 gives away *B*, but there *is* a *B* in the solution. The *B* is written into its space and Team C loses its chance to guess. Team D then gets a free guess.

B O _ E _   O _   E _ _ _ _ _ _ O _

They decide to pass, since they aren't really sure of the solution, and they take their regular turn at giving away and taking letters.

Player D1 gives away *X* correctly, and D2 takes *M*. As there are no *M*'s in the solution, Team D loses its chance to guess.

Player E1 gives away *J* correctly, and E2 takes *U* correctly. All *U*'s are written in (there's only one):

B O _ E _   O _   E _ U _ _ _ _ O _

Team E takes a wild guess at the solution, but is wrong. Player A1 now gives away *R* by mistake. There *is* an *R* in the solution, and after it is written in, Team B has a free guess:

B O R E _   O _   E _ U _ _ _ _ O _

They guess BORED OF EDUCATION and win the match, since that is the solution to *What students are when they fall asleep in class.*

Here are some other T.V. definitions that I have used with my students:

A Russian garden
. . . . a communist plot

Refusing to sleep
. . . . resisting a rest

Afraid to eat at Colonel Sanders'
. . . . chickening out

Alimony
. . . . the high cost of leaving
Drink for a small person
. . . . shrimp cocktail
What sleepy drivers do
. . . . .they rest in pieces

SUGGESTIONS: I write the alphabet beneath the solution dashes and erase each letter as it is given away and taken. That way, it is given away and taken only once.

For beginners and intermediate groups, instead of using puns of idiomatic expressions, I simply challenge them with:

It's an animal: — — — — — — — —
or
It's a language: — — — — — — — — —

To help students be more successful in the game, I suggest that they give away letters which are not frequently used, such as *X, Q, Z,* and *J*; and take vowels first, since every word must contain at least one vowel.

Students are encouraged to confer with their partners as to which letter to give away or take, and, of course, when they guess at the solution.

ADAPTATION: When an entire class is involved, teams could consist of five to seven players each, instead of two as outlined in the example.

NOTE: This game is an adaptation of the television game DEFINITION. Hence, the name T.V. Definition.

Dictionary
(Listening, Speaking)

LEVELS: all

OPTIMAL GROUP SIZE: unlimited

OBJECTIVE: To develop critical listening skills and comprehension of definitions.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Provide a dictionary geared to the linguistic capabilities of your students; preferably one which, in addition to defining words, shows the word in context. One that I have found quite suitable for most ESL classes is the *New Horizon Ladder Dictionary of the English Language,* (New York: New American Library, 1970.) Almost any dictionary will do, and in a pinch, the teacher can make up definitions for each word.

DESCRIPTION: The teacher finds a suitable word in the dictionary, names the part of speech (noun, verb, etc.) and the first letter, and reads the definitions (and the sentences using the word in context, if necessary). The students try to guess the word being defined. The first student to correctly identify the word chooses the next word and reads the definitions. For example:

"My word is a verb and it begins with the letter *t*. It means: 1. produce thoughts; form in the mind. *I often* ____________ *of home.* 2. reason; consider. *He is* ________ *about the problem.* 3. believe; have faith in something. *He* _________ *he can do it."*

SUGGESTION: For classes that tend to get over-excited, I divide them into two teams, subtract two points for each wrong guess and add five for each correct guess. This encourages students to listen carefully and to think, instead of calling out every word they know that begins with the named letter.

Seven Definitions
(Listening, Speaking)

LEVELS: intermediate and advanced

OPTIMAL GROUP SIZE: ten (for larger groups, see adaptations section below)

OBJECTIVE: To give practice in defining words. (This skill is essential in second-language communication, especially when *the* word for a concept isn't known by one of the communicants. For example: "What does *motley* mean?" or "what do you call a young dog?"

MATERIALS NEEDED: A pile of cue cards with seven items of vocabulary on each

(continued on page 60)

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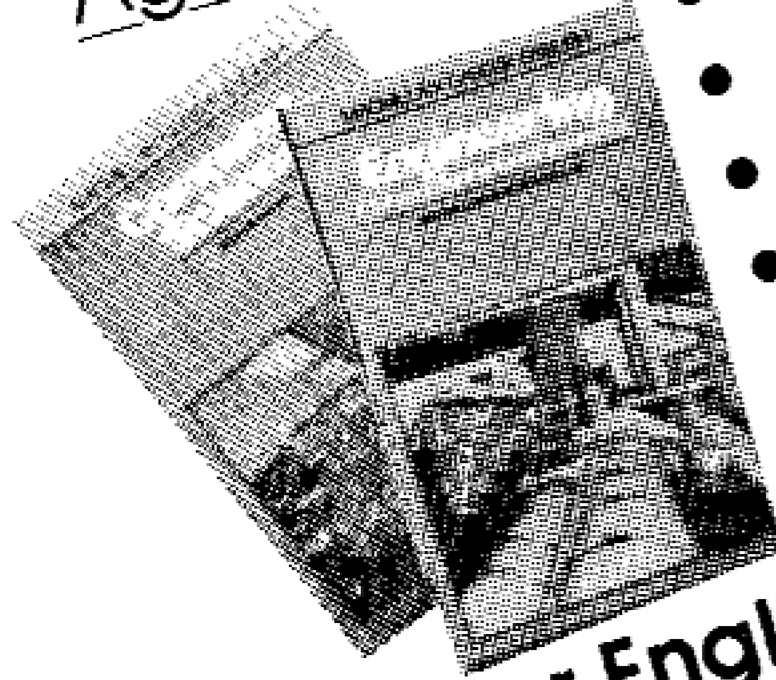

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LAUGH AND LEARN
(continued from page 58)

(verbs, adjectives, nouns, prepositions, adverbs, etc.). Example:

lunch	laugh	funny
egg	candle	dictionary
happy	fork	under
far	between	shoe
fast	heavy	wash
cry	desk	typewriter
long	eat	slowly

DESCRIPTION: Students are paired off and one partner is given the cue card. Within a time limit of sixty seconds (more or less, according to their abilities), the student must define each item on his card. His team gets one point for each item correctly defined by his partner. For example:

Student A1: *Student A2:*

"It's the meal after breakfast."

"Supper?"

"No, between breakfast and supper."

"Lunch?"

"Yes."

"You eat this at breakfast."

"Cereal?"

"No, you eat it with bacon."

"Eggs?"

"Singular!"

"Egg."

"Yes."

SUGGESTIONS: I have my students sit back-to-back to avoid the use of gestures and increase language dependency.

ADAPTATIONS: For groups that have more than ten students, five equal teams could be formed. The members on each team take turns giving the definitions to the other members of the team.

A2		B2		
A3		B3		
A4	A1	B4	B1	etc.
A5		B5		
A6		B6		

For less fluent students, the definitions could be written out before the game is played.

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