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PROVIDING PRACTICE TEACHING THROUGH PEER TEACHING: A REALISTIC APPROACH

by Ted Plaister

Providing student language teachers with opportunities for meaningful practice teaching is a recurring problem for teacher trainers. Schools are understandably reluctant to let beginning teachers experiment or practice-teach on their students. In addition, there frequently are logistical problems connected with practice teaching; that is, the teacher trainees are in Location X, whereas the schools with available students are in Location Y with transportation from X to Y infrequent and expensive. All these obstacles are undoubtedly painfully familiar to the reader who has the responsibility for arranging practice teaching for neophyte language teachers.

The purposes of practice teaching may be summarized briefly as follows. First, it provides fledgling teachers with an opportunity to undergo the experience of "standing on the other side of the desk." Second, it lets prospective teachers discover for themselves whether or not they really like teaching. (It is a worthwhile idea to introduce practice teaching fairly early in teacher training programs so that individuals who realize that teaching is not what they want to follow as a career have an opportunity to change to another field before having invested too much time.) Third, it gives the practice teachers a means by which they can gain insights into how theory and practice are meshed. Related to this aspect of practice teaching is the chance for the beginning teacher to use instructional materials which may only have been objects of study. Finally, it provides a cumulative

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experience tying together all elements of the teaching act, especially if the practice teaching is of sufficient duration. Most teacher trainers would agree that one or two sessions of practice teaching, while admittedly better than none, are insufficient to give an individual a feeling for what it is like to teach on a day-to-day basis over a protracted period. How long is necessary for someone to teach in order to discover whether a career in teaching is one's ultimate vocation will vary from individual to individual.

One of the more common solutions to the problem of providing practice teaching is the use of peer teaching. In my experience, as well as in that of others, this approach has not been very successful. For example, in a teacher training program where all the teacher trainees are native speakers of English aspiring to become teachers of English as a second or foreign language, one common procedure is for the students to pretend that they don't know English while their peers go through the motions of "teaching" them English. This technique has been used rather extensively in a variety of programs. One instance of widespread use was in Peace Corps training programs of a few years back. Similarly, if all of the students are native speakers of a language other than English, the chances are that the level of English proficiency will be approximately the same for all. Consequently, the situation is somewhat analagous to that sketched above for native speakers of English. One of the main reasons for failure of this kind of peer teaching is that the teaching is fraudulent simply because it does not qualify as real teaching. The "students" know this; the "teacher" knows this; and the teacher trainer knows this. As a result, the entire experience becomes an academic exercise with little of real value resulting.

What is desired by teacher and teacher trainees alike is a valid teaching situation. Perhaps, over the years, we have been in error by insisting that the content of the practice teaching lesson, at least where peers are involved, be a regular English lesson involving grammar teaching, pronunciation teaching, vocabulary teaching, or the teaching of some other aspect of English. It is conceivable that one could construct a genuine vocabulary lesson using obscure vocabulary, but this approach is, at best, contrived.

I would like to propose that when using peers we abandon the notion of teaching English *per se* and in its stead teach something else. The rationale behind this suggested change is my conviction that some of the most fruitful language learning takes place when subject matter is taught in the language rather than the language itself being taught. Strong evidence for this comes from the results of well-planned bilingual education programs. Further evidence may be seen in the work of Richard A. Via in his use of drama as a vehicle for teaching English in Japan. Via, a professional theater man with no language teaching training or experience, worked with Japanese university students putting on a play. Hence, his focus is on the play and not on the direct teaching of language; consequently, he pays little or no attention to pronunciation in the beginning stages of work on the play, nor does he permit the memorization of dialogs in the usual sense. This procedure may come as something of a surprise to the reader, especially if the reader has used drama in what could be called a conventional way and is not familiar with Via's writings. (1976). Via's approach to language teaching requires that the students be involved in doing something. The results, which the present author has observed first-hand, are extremely good not only in terms of the amount of language learned, but perhaps more importantly, in terms of attitudes which the individuals develop about themselves.

In light of the above, I am arguing that practice teaching using peers should take a different form than that which has been traditionally followed. An example will clarify my proposal. Let us suppose that one has a class of twenty-five native speakers of English in an ESL/EFL teacher training program. Let us further assume that for them to "teach" English to each other is basically a sham; still we want them to experience meaningful practice teaching. Now, it is a reasonable assumption that each of these twenty-five

students knows something that the others don't know. This knowledge could either be something about a subject or expertise in performing some task. Even if the students all share a pool of mutual knowledge on a subject, certain individuals will undoubtedly know a particular body of knowledge in greater depth than others. Basically, my suggestion is that that "something" which each knows is perfectly adequate and appropriate material to use as a basis for peer teaching. My argument is that teaching is teaching and the content of the subject matter is of little consequence.

My own view of teaching is that it is a type of selling. I have come to believe that the differences between a shoe salesperson and a language teacher are not very profound in that both the shoe salesperson and the language teacher have something to sell. In the one case it is shoes; in the other, language. A successful shoe salesperson has to believe in the product being sold or the selling arguments he uses will not be convincing to his customers and not very many shoes will get sold. I submit that the qualities which go up to make a good shoe salesperson are, by and large, the same ones which are found in a good teacher. (Possibly the only substantial difference between a shoe salesperson and an English teacher is that really good shoe salespersons are probably more financially successful than are English teachers!)

There are differences between the language learner and the shoe buyer. Presumably the buyer of shoes knows something about shoes, but not in any comprehensive way. It is the salesperson's job to draw to the buyer's attention unknown qualities and advantages to a particular kind of shoe. Does the language learner know something about learning language? The obvious answer is yes. However, the language learner sometimes finds it difficult to express what his feelings and knowledges are. Just as the expert shoe salesperson can point out unknown features of shoes, so can language teachers show language learners things about language. A very simple example of this would be the use of the dictionary. Another would be an explanation of abbreviations.

I was reinforced in my belief that teaching is teaching, no matter what the content of the subject matter is, while taking a course in needlepoint some time ago. While taking this course I recall clearly being exasperated at the teacher's presentation. The teacher had a small, portable blackboard which was used exclusively to illustrate the various stitches used in needlepoint. While we sat waiting, more or less patiently, the teacher would take a good ten minutes to sketch a representation of a piece of needlepoint canvas on the blackboard, which was then followed by a demonstration of whatever stitch it was we were to learn. The teacher was a very neat person in everything he did, therefore it took him considerable time to draw the lines up and down forming a grid representing the canvas. I recall thinking to myself, "Why doesn't he paint those lines on the blackboard so as to save time and then devote valuable classtime to showing us how the stitches are made?' In another example, I thought the instructor could have used colored chalk which in this instance would have cleared up a lot of misunderstanding on how the various stiches were to be made. There were other instances of poor teaching, all of which, I might add, interfered with my learning of needlepoint. I liked the instructor as an individual and admired his own needlepoint, but I found his teaching methods aggravating. In fact, I became so upset and annoyed by his teaching that it distracted my learning processes. (I was the slowest student in the class!) I'm sure that students everywhere feel similar frustrations because of poor teaching.

Returning to the discussion of our class of twenty-five students, let's imagine that one of them knows how to make a particularly good potato salad. In the kind of practice teaching approach I advocate, this student's task would be to teach the peer class how to prepare potato salad. Further, all the elements of good teaching can be looked for in the presentation. One has only to use one's imagination a little to visualize a well-organized and well-taught lesson on the preparation of potato salad. In fact, one might even want to go so far as to get the students into a laboratory situation and have them prepare the salad and serve

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REPETITION WITHIN A FUN CONTEXT

by Emilio G. Cortez

Although new curricular and pedagogic developments abound within the field of English as a Second Language, one characteristic concerning the second-language learner remains a constant. Namely, the learners' need for repeated exposure to the target language.

Repetition can become tedious for the adult, and can be perceived as sheer drudgery by the young second-language learner. Thus, elementary-school E.S.L. teachers present the same vocabulary items in varied ways. Such diversification provides pupils with opportunities for extensive repetition in addition to promoting pupils' sustained interest.

The language game constitutes a versatile teaching aid which fosters the repetition of lexical items within a fun context. Consider the following games which may be easily integrated into the elementary-school E.S.L. setting. The "open-ended" nature of these games enhances their utility; either written words and/or depicted words or expressions can be featured.

BEHIND YOUR BACK

The teacher writes eight words on the chalkboard. A child is chosen to stand with his/her back to the chalkboard in front of the class. Another child is chosen to come up and to point to one of the words for the class to see. The teachers mouths (pronounces the word silently) the word for the child who has his/her back to the chalkboard.

If the child guesses correctly, he/she is allowed to point out a word behind another child's back 1

COLLAGE

The class is divided into two teams. A portion of the chalkboard is divided into two parts by a long diagonal line.

Adapted from Leslie Landin, *100 Blackboard Games* (Palo Alto, California; Fearon Publishers, 1956), p.6.

The same six words are written on both sides of the line, in random order. Opposing team members are chosen to go the chalkboard. The teacher reads aloud one of the words on the chalkboard and the two students underline it. The first pupil to correctly underline the word is awarded a point. The first team to score ten points is the winner.

SAD FACE

The class is divided into two teams. Each of six picture cards (or written words) is shown to the students and verbally identified by the teacher. The teacher's oral model is repeated four times by the entire class.

Both teams start the game with five points. A picture of a "sad face" is included with the other cards. All the cards are shuffled and then placed face down in a pile. Individual team members take turns turning up the top picture card and identifying it. After a picture is identified, it is put aside. If the "sad face" picture care is turned up by a pupil, then his team loses one point. The team which loses all five points loses the game.

In the event of an incorrect identification, the teacher calls upon the whole class to identify the picture. (This game may be adapted so that points are awarded--instead of a "sad face," include a "happy face" card.)

GUESS WHICH ONE

The class is divided into two or more teams. Each of six picture cards is shown to the students and verbally identified by the teacher.

The picture cards are then placed across the chalkboard. The teacher announces to the class that he/she is thinking of a specific picture card. Individual team members take turns guessing which picture card the teacher has in mind. Points are awarded for correct guesses. The first team to score five points is declared the winner.

When appropriately implemented, language games can be very effective for motivating the young second-language learner.

SECTOR ANALYSIS AND WORKING SENTENCES

by Lynn E. Henrichsen

(This is a continuation of "Sector Analysis and **Working Sentences**" *which appeared in the Spring 1977* **TESL Reporter.** *Part I dealt with the textbook* **Working Sentences** *and sector analysis, the grammar upon which the text is based. Part II proceeds to explain some of the results of using* **Working Sentences** *in a developmental ESL writing course as part of an in-country bachelor's program in American Samoa.)*

In American Samoa, *Working Sentences* worked very well. It was used with two groups of students in an attempt to bring their writing skills up to a college level. All students in both groups were adult learners, teachers or principals in American Samoa schools. Most had received substantial exposure to, and much instruction in, English over the years. Consequently, their basic conversational skills were quite good, and in a casual conversation they could do deceptively well. But when it came to formal writing, their scores on the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency and their performance in writing essays demonstrated a substantial deficiency and a definite need for specialized instruction in writing.

Since English is one of the languages of American Samoa and is widely used in the island schools, most of the people in the classes had been speaking English for many years. To many, improving their language ability in a few short weeks seemed improbable. The first group met for nearly three hours every afternoon for seven weeks, but half of that time was spent in a reading improvement course held in conjunction with the writing class, and 30 minutes every day were spent working in the lab.* Only about 28 hours of actual classroom instruction and practice with *Working Sentences* were given. The second group met during Christmas vacation and after school for three weeks following the vacation for a total of 23 class periods. Away from class, the students still had to work in school all day long and were involved in a number of

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*Along with *Working Sentences*, another approach to writing improvement *Composition: Guided–Free*, levels six and eight, (Gerald Dykstra, ed.) was used and proved to be a good companion to *Working Sentences.* Each day, students in the first group spent 30 minutes (second group students spent 45 minutes every day) in what was called lab, working on the *Guided Free* series. Since the series is highly individualized, each student was able to advance at his own speed. One student completed 81 steps, another only 20.

Basically, the *Guided–Free* series consists of a series of steps or tasks (transformations, substitutions, combinations, or additions) of increasing complexity which are performed by the student on a number of models supplied in the book. Starting with simple copying, the student gradually advances to free writing at the end. In the beginning and intermediate steps, there is only one acceptable finished product for each step/model combination. Any deviation from the correct product, any error, however minute, earns the student a horizontal arrow, indicating that he must repeat the same step with a different model. Initially, many mistakes are due to simple carelessness, but students soon learn to double check their work. This teaching of care in writing may be one of the greatest unsung advantages of the Dykstra series. The series also has the advantage over other similiar programs in that it advances gradually, giving the student adequate practice, and the instructions use a minimum of grammatical terminology and are supported by readily-understood examples.

(For further information about this series and its possibilities in the classroom see Gerald Dykstra, "Toward Interactive Modes in Guided Composition," *TESL Reporter* (Spring 1977).)

community and family responsibilities. With these circumstances in mind, the gains made by the students must be considered quite impressive.

The Michigan test was given to all students before the class actually began. It was also given at the conclusion of the class. On a scale of one to one hundred, representing an extremely broad range of English language skills, the first class' mean raw score improved from 61.5 before the class to 70.7 at its conclusion, an improvement of 9.2 points, a respectable gain even when an allowance is made for practice effect. The mean raw score of the second group improved from 63 to 67.8, a gain of 4.8 points.

The range of student scores, especially in the second group, was very broad. Initial raw scores on the Michigan test ranged from 37 to 87. It should be noted that students scoring below 55 experienced substantial difficulty with the content of *Working Sentences* and, as a group, did not benefit from the instruction nearly as much as those whose scores were in the sixties, seventies, and low eighties.

Using the rank-difference method, a number of correlations were computed (see table). Some of the results were quite surprising. With the first group, the highest correlation was between attendance and Michigan test score improvement, and the second highest correlation was between improvement and homework completed, both suggesting that *Working Sentences* was the key factor in student improvement. The number of *Composition: Guided–Free* steps completed by the students did not correlate very highly with either Michigan test score improvement or final Michigan equated score. With the second group, however, these figures were almost reversed. The highest correlation was between number of *Guided–Free* steps completed and final Michigan test equated score, the next highest was between *Guided–Free* steps and Michigan test score improvement, and attendance and Michigan score improvement did not really correlate at all.

With the second group, attendance didn't correlate highly with anything; perhaps, because, since attendance was so good (average attendance was above 90%), there wasn't a wide enough range, not nearly as wide as the range of student abilities. Besides that, even some of the low scoring students were very stalwart attenders.

The same thing was true with homework. Low correlations in the second group may be explained by the fact that some of the lowest scoring students did all their homework. They could have done it wrong, but they did it all, whether they understood it or or not.

A statistical look at the Michigan test items most frequently missed by students is also revealing. The test consists of three parts: grammar (40 points), vocabulary (40), and reading comprehension (20). Twenty-nine items were missed by half or more than half of the students in the first group taking the test at the end of the class. Of these 29, only six (15%) were in the grammar secton of the test. Thirteen (33%) were in the vocabulary section, and ten (50%) were in the reading section. Both of these comparisons seem to show that, as a group, the class did better on the grammar portion of the test, the portion most directly affected by their instruction in the writing class.

It must be admitted that the students in this class were highly motivated. Their eventual receipt of a B.A. degree depended on their performance in the class. However, in this respect, they were not radically different from many students. Much credit must be given to the motivation inherent in the materials used. Mention has already been made of the teachability and consequent "understandability" of sector analysis as presented in *Working Sentences.* The students did not complain about the exercises being boring or meaningless; perhaps because they could see the immediate applicability of what they were learning.

Much of what was presented through sector analysis in class was also very useful to students in the lab as they worked through *Composition: Guided–Free.* The lab and the class were mutually supportive, presenting and practicing many of the same things. In fact, one student inquired if the two books had been designed to be used together. The lab increased the motivation for learning what was taught through *Working Sentences,* and when a student failed to pass a step in the lab, sector analysis provided a very good vehicle for explaining

COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATION

	Group 1	Group 2
Michigan Test Score (Equated) Improvement and Attendance	.76	– .03
Michigan Test Score (Equated) Improvement and Homework Completed	.44	– .14
Final Michigan Test Score (Equated) and Attendance	.31	.07
Final Michigan Test Score (Equated) and Homework Completed	.38	.02
Michigan Test Score (Equated) Improvement and *Composition: Guided–Free* Steps Completed	.08	.45
Final Michigan Test Score (Equated) and *Composition: Guided–Free* Steps Completed	– .06	.82
Initial Michigan Test Score (Equated) and *Composition: Guided–Free* Steps Completed	–.11	.58

why he did not pass and what he should have done.

The combination of *Working Sentences* and *Composition: Guided–Free* was a success in American Samoa; the one providing valuable instruction, and the other, a great deal of carefully-guided, individualized practice. This balance of emphases was only one reason for the class' success, however; other reasons being the compatibility of the materials used, their practical design, the soundness of the grammar and learning theory behind them, and the motivation built into them. When used by students who are at the right level, these materials, combined with enthusiasm and hard work on the part of both students and teacher, should result in improved writing by adult ESL learners, not only in American Samoa, but wherever they may be.

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Editor . . . . . Alice C. Pack

Staff . . . . . Greg Larkin
Lynn Henrichsen
Sid Jenson

Articles relevant to teaching English as a second language in Hawaii, the South Pacific and Asia, may be submitted to the editor through Box 157, Brigham Young University–Hawaii Campus, Laie, Oahu, Hawaii, 96762. Manuscripts should be double-spaced and typed, not exceeding six pages.

THE TESL TEACHER AND ENGLISH PREFIXES

by Muhammed Ali Al-Khuli

A large percentage of English lexicon starts with a prefixed morpheme, i.e., a prefix, which has a meaning of its own and which recurs in dozens, and sometimes thousands, of different words. If the TESL or TEFL teacher can bring these prefixes to his students' conciousness, this will help them learn English vocabulary more easily, develop their ability to guess lexical meanings correctly, and make them abler to derive new words from familiar ones. This will also help in reducing students' mistakes in spelling and pronouncing these prefixed morphemes.

Therefore, it may be helpful to us as TESL or TEFL teachers to list down such common prefixes with their most common meanings and with some examples of each prefix. We shall also state the part of speech with which each prefix is connected and the possible effect of this affixation on the morphological or syntactic class of the original word, i.e., the root, since some prefixes may cause a change in the class of the root. For example, (dis-) in (discourage) has changed the class from a noun, i.e., courage, to a verb, i.e., discourage.

Dr. Al-Khuli received both a B.A. and an M.A. at the American University of Beirut and his Ph.D. in TEFL methods and curricula at Kuwait University. He is presently assistant professor at Riyad University, where he teaches TEFL methodology and supervises teaching practice.

1. *ante = before.*
   ante + V V (antedate)
   N N (anteroom)
   Adj Adj (antenatal)
2. *anti = against*
   anti + N N (anti-Semite)
   Adj Adj (anti-Semitic)
3. *arch = head*
   arch + N N (archbishop, archdeacon)
4. *be = all around*
   be + Adj Adj (beflagged)
   Adj V (belittle)
5. *bi = having two or coming twice.*
   Adj (biannual, bilateral)
   N N (bicycle, biplane)
6. *by = less important.*
   by + N N (by-road, by-product)
7. *co = together.*
   co + V V (co-operate)
   N N (co-author)
8. *de = away, double.*
   de + V V (decentralize)
   N N (decompound)
9. *deci = one tenth.*
   deci + N N (decigram, decilitre)
10. *demi = half.*
    demi + N N (demi-monde)
    Adj Adj (demi-official)
11. *dis = not.*
    dis + N N,V (dishonesty, discourage)
    Adj Adj (disadvantageous)
    V V (disapprove)
12. *ex = formerly.*
    ex + N N (ex-president, ex-wife)
13. *fore = in front, the front part of.*
    fore + N V (forefoot, fore-runner)
    V V (forecast)
14. *grand = great.*
    grand + N N (grandson, grandfather)
15. *hecto = one hundred.*
    hecto + N N (hectogram, hectometer)
    V V (hectograph)
16. *hydro = related to water.*
    hydro + Adj Adj (hydropathic)
    N N (hydrophobia)
17. *il = not (before words starting with L).*
    il + N N (illiterate)
    Adj Adj (illegal, illiberal)
18. *im = not. (before words starting with b, m, p).*
    im + N N (immobility)
    V V (immobilize)
    Adj Adj (immortal)

19. in = not.

in + N	*N*	*(inability)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(inaccurate)*
V	*V*	*(incapacitate)*

20. in = in.

in + Adj	*Adj*	*(inborn)*
N	*N*	*(inbreeding)*
V	*V*	*(incarnate)*

21. ir = not (before words starting with R)

ir + Adj	*Adj*	*(irrelevant)*
N	*N*	*(irregularity)*
V	*V*	*(irrationalize)*

22. kilo = one thousand.

kilo + N	*N*	*(kilogram)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(kilogram)*

23. mal = bad, badly, un-.

mal + N	*N*	*(malformation)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(malodorous)*

24. micro = very small, one-millionth.

micro + N	*N*	*(microphone)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(microscopic)*

25. milli = one one-thousandth.

milli + N	*N*	*(millimeter, milligram)*

26. mis = badly, wrongly.

mis + V	*V*	*(misuse)*
N	*N*	*(miscalculation)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(misanthropic)*

27. multi = having many.

multi + N	*N*	*(multimillionaire)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(multilateral)*

28. non = not, neutral, negation.

non + Adj	*Adj*	*(non-logical, non-human)*
N	*N*	*(non-acceptance)*

29. over = excess over the desirable limit.

over + N	*N*	*(over-anxiety, over-confidence)*

30. pan = of all.

pan + Adj	*Adj*	*(pan-Islamic, pan-American)*
N	*N*	*(pan-Hellenism, pan-cosmism)*

31. poly = many.

poly + Adj	*Adj*	*(polyatomic)*
N	*N*	*(polyglot)*

32. post = late, after, behind.

post + N	*N*	*(post-graduate)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(post-natal)*
V	*V*	*(post-fix)*

33. pre = before.

pre + V	*V*	*(pre-define, pre-estimate)*
N	*N*	*(pre-election, pre-digestion)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(pre-human, pre-ocular)*

34. pro = siding with, in front of, instead of.

pro + N	*N*	*(pro-leg)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(pro-British)*

35. pseudo = false, falsely.

pseudo + N	*N*	*(pseudomorph)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(pseudo-classic)*

36.re = again.

re + V	*V*	*(rearrange, reaffirm)*
N	*N*	*(reconstruction)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(reproductive)*

37. radio = of rays or radiation.

radio + N	*N*	*(radio-therapy)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(radio-active)*

38. self = automatic, reflexive action.

self + N	*N*	*(self-dependence)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(self-evident)*

39. semi = half, imperfect, imperfectly.

semi + N	*N*	*(semi-circle, semi-vowel)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(semi-official, semi-cylindrical)*

40. sub = under.

sub = N	*N*	*(subagency, subheading)*
V	*V*	*(subdivide, subclassify)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(subnormal, subhuman)*

41. super = beyond, over.

super + V	*V*	*(superimpose)*
N	*N*	*(superintendent)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(supernatural)*

42. tele =far.

tele + V	*V*	*(telephone, telegraph)*
N	*N*	*(telecommunication)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(telescopic)*

43. trans =across, beyond.

trans + N	*N*	*(transformer)*
V	*V*	*(transcribe)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(transcontinental)*

44. tri = three.

tri + N	*N*	*(triangle, trioxide)*
V	*V*	*(triradiate)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(trifloral, trilateral)*

45. ultra = beyond, excessively.

ultra + Adj	*Adj*	*(ultraviolet)*
N	*N*	*(ultramicrometer)*

46. un =contrary to.

un + N	*N*	*(unrestfulness)*
V	*V*	*(unjust, unkind)*
Adj	*Adj*	*(unbind, uncork)*

47. under = below, insufficiently.

under + V	*V*	*(under-develop)*
N	*N*	*(under-production, under-ground)*

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DISCOURSE STRUCTURE IN READING

by Ron Shook

(This is the third and concluding part of "Discourse Stucture in Reading")

In earlier sections of this paper I have discussed two problems I feel ESL reading exercises often have: an oversimplified syntax and a proliferation of useless detail. In this final section of the paper I would like to discuss what is perhaps the most important of the objections I wish to make, but at the same time the least amenable to analysis, and that is the reading exercise as a discourse unit.

To construct an acceptable sentence in English is one thing, but to construct an acceptable sequence of sentences is quite another. When two sentences have nothing in common, it is easy to see that good sentence A and good sentence B cannot simply be jammed end to end to form discourse. When we read, "What were you doing last night? I like butter on my toast." we realize that something is wrong. However, there are more subtle problems which can befall a series of sentences, such that it can become difficult or even impossible to make sense of them.

Specifically, there are two problems I feel ESL reading exercises suffer from, and I am going to call them problems of *coherence* and problems of *inference.*

Coherence

In an earlier section of this paper (Spring 1977), I noted that syntax was important to an understanding of reading. At that time, I was primarily concerned with the syntax of the sentence. Much the same approach will be seen in this section of the paper, but the focus will be on the syntax of the paragraph--an until recently neglected area of linguistic research.

We normally think of a paragraph, or any discourse unit above the level of the sentence, as a series of sentences devoted to the expansion of what is basically a single idea. The expansion may take several forms,--the expository modes: narration, description, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, and the like. These various developmental schemes have a number of things in common, and one of the most important, and least understood, is that they use the same intersentential syntax to achieve coherence. That is, no matter how different the structure of a paragraph may be, the sentences will be bound together by a limited number of transitional elements.

These transitional elements may be explicit or implicit. If implicit, they can be made explicit by the addition of certain words or phrases. Implicit transitional devices, I think it can be seen, require that the reader and writer share a lot of knowledge and require also that the writer be posessed of some degree of skill.

The nature and function of these transitional devices is very well illustrated in an article by W. Ross Winterowd, entitled "The Grammar of Coherence"(1973), in which he suggests that there are really only seven relationships that can hold between sentences, and that each of these relationships has a sign, usually a word or phrase, by which it can be expressed. The seven relationships, are as follows:

1. **Coordination.** The normal pattern of discourse. May be expressed by *and.*

2. **Obversitivity.** Reverse of flow of propositional content. May be expressed by *but.*

3. **Causitivity.** Statement of cause/effect relationship. May be expressed by *for.*

4. **Conclusivity.** One proposition is the conclusion of an inductive or deductive sequence. May be expressed by *so.*

5. **Alternativity.** One proposition weighed against another. May be expressed by *or.*

6. **Inclusivity.** One proposition is included in another. May be expressed by the colon.

7. **Sequential.** One proposition is logically or temporarily prior to another. Expressed in adverbs or phrases.

As an example of how this "grammar of coherence" may work, let us use Winterowd's seven categories as a heuristic, and apply it to a reading exercise gleaned from a venerable source, the McCall-Crabbs reading series. Consider the following paragraph:

> *(1) Protected by a wall of sand and glass, a man was working with radioactive materials. (2) A pellet about the size of a match head cracked, releasing a small amount of dust. (3) A little breeze carried this hot dust over the wall. (4) A red danger signal flashed. (5) An alarm bell rang. (6) The man tore off his uniform, jerked open a locker door, grabbed his street clothes, ran out of the room, and quickly took a shower bath. (7) He did not realize that his street clothes too were now carrying some of this death-bearing dust.*

Notice that there is no overt indication at all that Winterowd's transitional devices are being used to establish the relationships between sentences. Each sentence stands by itself, connected to its neighbor only by such tenuous threads of continuity as are provided by propinquity and chronology. The paragraph is, in the vernacular of the composition teacher, "choppy."

But it is more than that. It is also confusing to the reader, because the flow of ideas is halting at best. In this paragraph there are propositions arranged not only in a definite concrete spatial order, the words on paper, but in a definite abstract developmental order. The problem with this paragraph is that the concrete order does not help establish the abstract.

Let us apply such of Winterowd's seven categories as they may fit, and see if this abstract order can be made clearer. It is clear, for instance, that the relationship between sentences (1) and (2) is a sequential one, and could be expressed by adding *suddenly* to the beginning of sentence (2). Sentences (2) and (3) also form a sequential relationship, which is the normal sentence pattern for time-oriented discourse. It also partakes somewhat of the nature of a co-ordinate relationship, as they are very close, and both may be expressed by the use of *and.* However, the pattern departs significantly in the relationship between sentences (3) and (4). This is a *causitive* relationship. That is, sentence (3) doesn't only occur before sentence (4), the events in (3) caused the events in (4) to happen. For the development of the paragraph, this is important, yet it is not signalled in any way in the discourse. The relationship between sentences (4) and (5) is obviously one of coordination, and why the two were not made one sentence is a mystery. (As a matter of fact, this harks back to an earlier point in this paper when I was discussing the childish syntax of reading exercises). With the relationship between sentences (5) and (6) we are back to a cause and effect relationship. If we count the unfortunately awkward sentences (4) and (5) as one sentence, we see a pattern emerging. Not only do we have events happening in time, but we have each event being caused by the one before it, and in turn causing this one after it. This pattern is continued in sentence (6), which is a series of intrasentential causitive propositions. However, with the relationship between sentences (6) and (7), there is a major break in the pattern. This relationship is an obversive one; it is a pattern of change, of reversal of expectations expressible by *but.*

In short, the paragraph contains a series of causitive relationships culminating in a single, climatic reversal. Rather, it *should* contain such a series. To the beginning reader, however, I am afraid it may be just a series of isolated propositions stacked together like bricks without mortar. The paragraph doesn't cohere. Because it doesn't cohere, though single facts may be understood, the sense of the whole paragraph may

(continued on page 13)

PROVIDING PRACTICE TEACHING THROUGH PEER TEACHING

(continued from page 3)

it to each other.

Conceivably a situation might occur where a student professes not to have any special knowledge or skill from which to prepare a lesson or lessons. If such a case arose, the student in consultation with the teacher trainer could select a suitable subject, do the necessary research on it, learn the subject matter, and subsequently teach it to his peers.

Practice teaching, no matter what the mode, is a stressful situtation. It follows that giving individuals the opportunity of doing what they know best is one means of reducing tension and instilling confidence in them so that they can handle a teaching situation. Teaching may be viewed as a sharing experience in that the teacher shares knowledge with his students. As stated earlier, it is my view that perhaps there is more than sharing involved and that something else is "selling." Thus, if the practice teacher is dealing with a subject ("product") which he knows well, the outcomes of the teaching should have a reasonable chance of success.

If the teacher trainees are not native speakers of English, the approach to peer teaching advocated in this paper has certain advantages over one where the students speak English natively. In a very real sense, a lesson on the preparation of potato salad, constitutes a legitimate English lesson in that new structures and new vocabulary along with the pronunciation of all linguistic forms, will automatically appear. Consequently, in the peer teaching situation the students would be learning some English from the person doing the practice teaching. This is an added reason why this approach to practice teaching is beneficial.

What might be termed "artificial" practice teaching, that is, the type mentioned in the first part of this paper, is very difficult to evaluate in a meaningful way because it is not real. How can the evaluation be real? In contrast to this, the kind of practice teaching which I have suggested can be evaluated meaningfully because the situation is real. Indeed, a three-way evaluation is possible: one by the teacher-trainer, one by the trainees, and one by the practice teacher. Where native speakers of English are doing the peer teaching, evaluation would necessarily be somewhat different from that where non-native speakers of English are involved. For the non-native speakers of English, one would want to evaluate not only the overall teaching, but also the way in which the language component was handled.

Professor Charles Blatchford has pilot-tested this approach to practice teaching in his ESOL methods class at the University of Hawaii with promising results. The subject matter taught ranged all the way from art (teaching the class how to draw a face) to zoology (a lesson on the aquatic creatures in the waters of Hawaii). The teaching skills demonstrated by the students also reflected a considerable range. Thus, we have some, admittedly limited, evidence that the technique is practical and works.

The provision of practice teaching is an example of a complex problem in language teaching education. As with most problems in education, there are no simple answers. The responsibility of the teacher trainer is to search for ways of coping with complex problems in as reasonable a way as possible. What I have suggested does not qualify as a complete and totally satisfactory answer, but I do feel it has merit and at least provides a partial solution to the placement of beginning teachers in bona fide teaching circumstances.

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DISCOURSE STRUCTURE IN READING

be lost.

The lack of coherence in discourse, then, is more than an impediment to grace and style, more than awkwardness, more than choppiness. When we remember that the flow of sentences is very closely connected to the flow of thought, we can understand that lack of coherence in discourse may not only contribute to lack of coherence in the thought, but may block the emergence of the thought altogether.

Inference

If we could rebuild choppy writing by plugging in the appropriate transitions and introductory clauses, the problem would be easily solved. However, it isn't as simple as that, because there is another facet to the dilemma. Although the writer may or may not place conscious signals to the reader in the form of transitional devices, discourse also operates on a much more subtle level--that of inference.

Inference, the term I have chosen, designates a class of shadows, the things the reader draws out of the writing, whether the writer intended him to or not; whether the writer wants him to or not. They are an amalgam of the reader's reference frames, information store, ignorance or knowledge, personal construct of the universe, emotional balance, time, country, religion, family, education, and a host of others. To deal with them in this paper is not possible, and the reader is advised to consult some of the very good works on speech act theory or linguistic pragmatics.

However, there is one area of inferences that I can touch on lightly, and that is *formal inferences.* In American English prose nonfiction, for example, there are certain formal requirements. Some things may be done, and some things may not be done. Keith Fort, for instance, in his "Form, Authority, and the Critical Essay" (1971) suggests that form exerts a sort of tyranny over what is acceptable and what is not. The writer may say anything he wishes, as long as he observes the proper formal constraints. Fort is saying that the reader's expectations dictate the form the writer may use.

Although Fort calls this a tyranny, it is not. Rather, it is a contract between reader and writer. This contract consists in a number of agreements between reader and writer about what will pass between them. Since so much of reading occurs in the mind rather than on the page, such a series of agreements is vital. By the same token, when these unspoken agreements are not kept, then much of the presuppositional structure on which discourse is based is lost. If the writer disappoints the reader's formal expectations, then the communication suffers.

Form in discourse, Burke tells us (1953) is "the arousing and fulfilling of desires." In order for a piece of writing to be formally adquate then, it must fulfill those desires it has aroused. One does not bring something into a piece of text that has no business being there. One does not raise a point and then ignore it. One does not skip hither and thither in either time or space without some sort of motive.

Let me give an example of what happens when this formal code is broken. I would like to use a reading selection from Samuels and Edwall (1975).

Lost in the Woods

John and Bill carefully slid their boat onto the muddy land. They jumped ashore followed by their dog. For hours the boys and their dog wandered through the woods looking for the beaver pond. As the sun started to set John and Bill became aware they were lost. Bill called the dog and told him to go back to the boat. The dog sniffed at the trail as he ran through the woods and in a short time led them back to the boat.

Samuels and Edwall are concerned with the nature of the questions that are asked after the reading exercise, but I

want to concentrate on the text itself. Note that it procedes in a number of discrete steps, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The boys land.
2. The boys search for the beaver pond.
3. The boys become lost.
4. The dog leads the boys back to the boat.

The reader who expects continuity in this text will be disappointed. To be sure, it has a continuity of sorts. Things do happen in a kind of chronological order, but the writer has held out and then ignored several promises to the reader. The competent reader would include these among his expectations of what the text should reveal. On the basis of these promises and hints, he would then seek fulfillment and clarification in the text. Such fulfillment is not forthcoming. The glaring example is the fact that the boys spent all those hours searching for the beaver pond; had come all this way to find it. The search for the pond, we infer from its position, is a central idea in the text. Yet is never comes up again.

Note the procedure: the writer implies, the reader infers. The reader, on the basis of the discourse creates a theoretical structure of meaning. He guesses what the meaning of a piece of text might be, and then confirms or rejects that hypothesis as he progresses. Early in this little piece, the reader infers that the beaver pond is going to be important. He puts this information into short term memory, and then because STM fades quickly, he must keep recycling it, renewing it, while he waits for confirmation. The two items: *Beaver pond,* and its syntactically derived importance, thus become impediments to the assimilation of information. They become "noise." The writer has made a promise to the reader which he has not kept. The reading has a formal flaw. Beyond being irritating, such behavior frustrates any attempt to set up the correspondences and heirarchies which are so necessary to reading.

Conclusion

What I have been saying in this paper can be easily summarized. *In order for something to be a piece of good reading, it must be a piece of good writing.* My experience with reading exercises and tests has been that they are often too short, unorganized, sloppy, choppy, and in general formally inadequate.

Perhaps I have been unduly pessimistic in my analysis of the present state of the art, but I have not found any set of reading exercises that I consider fully acceptable to mature ESL readers. It may well be that there are several excellent sets of reading exercises or texts floating around for ESL students that I am not aware of. But I will continue to remain pessimistic because the objections that I have made to reading exercises come not from my research into reading theory, but from research in other fields, especially psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, syntactic theory, linguistic pragmatics, semantics, discourse theory, and rhetoric (classical and modern). Until we bring the focus of these disciplines to bear on reading, we may have to wait a while longer for the perfect reading exercise.

Postscript

(added with the permission of the editor)

If any of the readers of the *TESL Reporter* think they have the perfect (or a very good) set of exercises or texts, why not send the bibliographical information to me c/o the *TESL Reporter?* I will review and try them out, and if the list is large enough, perhaps write up a bibliography for inclusion in a future issue of the *TESL Reporter.*

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English Prefixes

(continued from page 9)

48. vice = acting in the place of, next in rank to.

vice + N	*N*	*(Vice-Admiral, Vice-President)*

49. en = give, make, put in.

en + N	*V*	*(encourage, enslave)*
Adj	*V*	*(enable, enrich)*

The TESL teacher may handle these prefixes when they occur as parts of new words he intends to teach. He may teach each prefix with respect to its meaning, pronunciation, and spelling. Of course, in the case of pronunciation, the prefix is spoken of as an inseparable component of the word during students' practice. However, segmentation for the sake of focusing during the teacher's explanation remains possible. Such focusing on the prefix is expected to result in enriching learners' knowledge of vocabulary derivation and vocabulary comprehension. Further, it may result in reducing mistakes of the spelling of these prefixes, which have a high frequency of occurrence in the spoken or written forms of English.

BOOK REVIEW

Pack, Alice C. *Dyad Learning Program: Prepositions*
Newbury House Publishers (1977)

Price $ 4.50

The first in a forthcoming series of *Dyad Learning Program* books which focus on pronouns, articles, determiners, verb forms, verb choices, and coordinators; *Prepositions* offers a number of advantageous features to the ESL student–student interaction, clozure, individual pacing, and immediate feedback.

Using this field-tested approach to learning the appropriate uses of the many English prepositions, students participate actively in the learning process, working together in two-student teams, alternately in tutor and respondent roles. The respondent reads the sentences provided in the book and inserts the proper prepositions in the blanks, while the tutor listens and immediately corrects the respondent (in a non-threatening manner) if the wrong preposition is selected. The program provides the answers for the tutor, so it is not essential that he know more English than the respondent. In fact, it is not even necessary that each member of a dyad be working on the same level at the same time. When the tutor and respondent work on different levels, the tutor receives a valuable preview of what he will later practice or a review of what he has practiced already.

With *Prepositions,* even in the largest classes, each student is able to advance at his own speed. Concentrating on a particular step, which focuses on only a few prepositions, until the uses of these particular items have been mastered and then moving on, the student is never left behind. The book provides 35 steps, each with at least 6 alternate selections, which practice 30 key prepositions.

Without focusing attention on syntax, *Prepositions* also reinforces the use of proper English word order as students work through the book, reading correct English sentences to each other.

Designed for use in either a classroom or laboratory situation, the *Dyad Learning Program* has already proven itself to be an effective learning tool. It comes highly recommended for ESL students who experience problems with English prepositions.

Lynn Henrichsen

WINTEROWD TO HIGHLIGHT HAWAII "YEAR OF COMPOSITION" WORKSHOP

Brigham Young University–Hawaii Campus is pleased to announce that Ross Winterowd of the University of Southern California will be a featured participant at the "Year of Composition" workshop this coming February. Dr. Winterowd is very well known for his work in rhetoric and linguistics, which he has been particularly adept at applying directly and practically to the composition process.

W. Ross Winterowd is Professor of English and Director of the Composition Program at the University of Southern California. He is a regular contributor to journals of rhetoric and literary criticism, and two of his latest books, *Contemporary Rhetoric,* and *The Contemporary Writer* have received critical acclaim in academic circles. In addition, he has developed and guides the innovative and highly successful Ph.D. program in Rhetoric, Linguistics, and Literature at USC.

Dr. Winterowd will make two specific presentations at the workshop. The first will be a luncheon speech on language production and memory, focusing on the psycholinguistic reasons for the power of the sentence combining method of teaching composition. His second presentation will be a workshop session on an in-service teacher training and program design, which includes a sophisticated program in sentence combining. Those attending the workshop will be able to experiment with all of these materials.

Many other workshop sessions and speakers are still being planned and contacted, involving other important scholars and teachers concerned with composition. We hope all readers of the *TESL Reporter* will make plans now to attend the "Year of Composition" workshop in Laie, Hawaii, February 17-18, 1978.

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