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Let's talk about discipline
Chris Roland

Death to the concept question!
Tony Penston

Changing places
Alan Beckerleg

Can you manage?
Keiko Sakui

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Editorial

For teachers, it would seem self-evident that our students should be central to everything that we do, and it is the centrality of the student that is a recurring theme in this issue of ET*p*.

For many of our contributors, this means giving the students some degree of choice in what they do and how they do it. Chris Roland, in our main feature, addresses the question of discipline by showing his teenage students that they actively make choices about how they behave in class and are, therefore, responsible for making the choices that will benefit them the most.

Samantha Russell sees choice as a means of empowering the students to take responsibility for their own learning. She believes that providing her students with relevant and meaningful choices gives them a sense of being in control of their lives and education, which is highly motivational.

Liam Bourret-Nyfeller uses gaming strategies to institute a motivational system of points and powers, enabling his students to choose activities that will gain bonus points which count towards their final grades, or which they can trade for rewards.

Alan Beckerleg relates how a coursebook question about town planning was met with little enthusiasm until he made it personal for his students and gave them maps of the local area to redesign according to their own ideas and preferences. The activity then took off, with the students displaying great creativity and imagination in their reworking of their city.

Chaz Pugliese believes that in the current educational climate we are in danger of overlooking the centrality of the student as a human being. He fears that learning for intrinsic satisfaction is being ousted by an over-emphasis on achievement and preparation for the workplace. He calls for a return to learning for its own sake, and the encouragement of risk-taking and exploration by students who are free to make their own choices – choices which are not dictated by the market.

Don't forget that as a subscriber to ET*p*, you have access to the full content of our website at *www.etprofessional.com*, where you can find videos, blogs, a bookshop with discount deals and a complete archive of articles from previous issues of the magazine.



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MAIN FEATURE

Let's talk about discipline

Chris Roland uses reasoning and regard to keep his teenagers onside.

I'd like to talk about where love and logic fit into my idea of discipline. Definitions are fun, but they're only as useful as the work you choose to do with them. I use an expanded, multifaceted conception of discipline, and work with a number of overlapping formulations.

Discipline is about students consciously making decisions that help the functioning of the class.

This is my favourite definition. I like it because I believe that the sort of discipline that comes from the teacher is the sort of discipline that leaves you exhausted at the end of the week, the term or the year. The sort of discipline that comes from the students is the one that allows you to enjoy being in the room with them, to sit back and watch with pride, that makes you want to go out and tell a colleague at the end of the lesson how good they were. It's about people working better in groups, which seems to me the whole purpose of education, and it involves the self-discipline and mental training that educators like John Dewey talked about. It's all about the order necessary for effective learning, a sense of order that comes from practice, and this is a regularly occurring dictionary explanation of discipline.

This type of discipline, the type that involves students making conscious decisions, isn't something we can always control or enforce, but it is something we can encourage. I start by trying to make my students aware of the decisions they make, and my first move is to share the above definition with them and ask them what kind of discipline they want – the sort that comes from the teacher or the sort that comes from them.

I try to put discipline on the agenda and talk about it explicitly, in calm moments, when nobody's done anything wrong. This way, the students are less defensive and I am more coherent.

Logic

To do so, I use a sequence of arguments which are lines of reasoning from the perspective of the teacher – 'teacher-logic' if you like. I've illustrated these with accompanying clipart *PowerPoint* presentations, which you will find under the title of 'Logic' on my website. They work perfectly well as free-standing anecdotes that you can share in class without visuals, too.

Argument 1

This line of reasoning makes it clear to the students that they have choices:

Imagine a situation where Max and Anna are two students and they're talking. The teacher wants to get the attention of the class. Max and Anna both look at the teacher for a split second. Then they make one of two decisions.

Decision 1: They continue looking at and listening to the teacher and the class begins.

Decision 2: They momentarily look at the teacher then look back at each other and continue their own private conversation.

Both options involve real and conscious decisions.

Once students take on board the fact that they are making decisions, then they can start to take credit for the good decisions that they make and to be held accountable for the bad ones.

Argument 2

Another line of reasoning involves where the English comes from in a class:

Imagine a powerful eagle. It is a hunter. It can capture the food it needs from on the ground, out of water or in the air. Imagine a nest of chicks. They can't hunt. They need to be fed. Learning English is like this. The English you need is in your books, on the board and in the air around you (the sounds the teacher makes and the audio CD and what your friends have in their heads, too). Can you get it for yourself like the eagle, or do you need to be fed?

Argument 3

This one talks about attention-seekers:

Babies make a lot of noise. They do this to get attention from adults. Without attention they can't survive. Each baby normally has one or two parents. When babies don't get the attention they need, they cry even louder. Teenagers like attention from adults, too. They also often make noise to get it, but without that attention they will still survive – which is good because in a class there is only one adult for many teenagers.

When you don't get the attention you want, what do you do? Do you make even more noise like a baby, or do you accept the fact that there's only one adult and many students and that you will still survive?

Argument 4

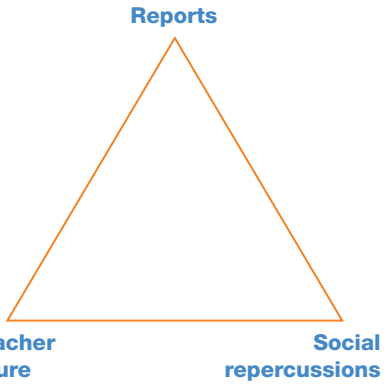
The final argument I want to share here comes from the study of primates, and addresses self-sabotage:

Macaques are a type of monkey. In the wild, macaques have natural enemies such as snakes, eagles and leopards. In captivity, for example in a zoo, they have no natural enemies. Sometimes they get nervous and invent enemies. They imagine that their own leg or foot is an enemy and from time to time they attack it. This is called Self-fighting Syndrome, and sometimes they hurt themselves quite badly.

Paco had a rubber. It was a good rubber that he could use to make changes to his work. Then he decided to make an enemy out of his rubber and scribbled over it with pen and stuck his pencil into it many times. Now he can't use it because it makes dirty marks on the paper. Instead, he has to ask other people for a rubber and wait to see if they say yes or no.

Destroying the things around you because you are bored makes your life more frustrating and difficult in the end.

Now obviously, these arguments in themselves are not what is going to keep your students manageable in class. What's actually going to keep them manageable is a kind of triangle like the one shown here, with reports (term marks, the fear of failure and the promise of a pass) at one corner, the teacher figure at another (the authority – and, we hope, the respect too – and the tellings off and the praise) and then, finally, social repercussions amongst a wider environment at the other (such as public praise or the humiliation of being made to look silly or being sent out, the fear that the director of the school might walk past and see me standing outside, or what my parents might think).



I'm not offering this triangle as a model of best practice, only as a realistic model of what happens. Most phenomena, most of what occurs in the world, can be seen as a kind of dynamic current squeezed between forces. I'm not saying get rid of this. Let's keep it. I'm saying that on top of this, we try appealing to the students' emerging sense of reason and citizenship through logic, and build some deeper awareness of why some of the rules are in place and how, even though they might not be breaking the existing rules, they might make the class an even better place to be for *them*.

What we're trying to do here is to shift the students' viewpoint *outside* of themselves, which is a challenge because a young person's viewpoint is very much anchored *in* themselves. What is certain is that they're not going to move closer to my viewpoint if they hate me. Or wait: let's try to make this as accurate as we can. They will not move closer to my viewpoint *if they think I hate them*. In fact, they're quite happy to hate *me*, but if they think I hate *them*, then that is truly unacceptable.

If your students are not sure that you don't hate them, you're never really going to get very far with them at all. Until you get past that point, you've just got a roomful of potential enemies, and presenting them with any kind of logic will just increase the chances of enmity.

Love

If you ask a teen *Why do you hate your teacher?* the most common reply will be *I hate my teacher because my teacher hates me*. This is entirely understandable. I went through a period of asking my academy students what kind of teacher they most respected at school, and why? The profile they came up with was of a teacher who was not afraid to tell the students off, but who didn't hold a grudge, have favourites or pick on people.

Now, for us, it should be fairly obvious that we don't hate our students – of course we don't – but for *them*, it's not so obvious. I can't reiterate this enough. There's a lot of value, a lot of use to you, in your students knowing that you don't hate them. And how do they get to know this? You tell them so.

When I want to tell a student to stop doing something, I start with:

Pablo, I like you, but please stop banging on that table.

or:

Let's talk about discipline

Ana, I like you, but I'd like you even more if you started this exercise.

When I ask them questions and they get the answer wrong, I often say:

No, but I still love you.

In fact, by the end of the course they often say it themselves. I shake my head because their answer's incorrect, and they say:

I know, teacher, but you still love me.

When I want to get a 16-year-old boy to sit somewhere else, I start with:

Lorenzo, you're a fantastic person. Could you switch places with Almudena?

How can he not switch places now? I've just told him he's fantastic! And if he doesn't want to switch places, then instead of asking him again, I just tell him he's fantastic again. And Lorenzo's shaking his head, even as he's switching places, and he's thinking:

What can I do? I don't want to switch places. I want to tell this teacher where to get off, but he's telling me I'm fantastic and I know he doesn't really mean it, but he can't hate me, at least, and nobody's told me that I'm fantastic all day, and IT'S THE ONLY THING I WANT TO HEAR!

You could try cutting deals. Alba's sitting head in hands because she can't bring herself to start the exercise. She's had enough. She's even happy to take the negative feedback I'm about to dish out to her. I can let the situation brew, just feeding the tension in the room, or I can say:

OK, Alba, I'll cut you a special deal, just today, because I can see you're shot through. Do the first two questions and I'll get off your case. It's a special deal, but next time you do the full exercise. OK?

I've just offered her a way out, and that locus of tension has gone.

Fernando's just staring into space:

What's the problem, Fer?

I've got to write about a film. I can't think of a film.

You really can't think of a film?

No.

OK, I'll cut you a deal. You go down to the library, have a look at the DVDs for five minutes, then come up and write your review.

OK.

Alberto's jumping around:

Alberto, go to the toilet.

What, teacher?

Go to the toilet, have a walk about, then when you come back, tell me one interesting thing you saw on the notice board.

But are you throwing me out?

No.

OK.

I'm throwing these kids lifelines, and they appreciate it. Unfortunately, on other occasions I do need a second and slightly harder-edged formulation:

Discipline is the minimum amount of order needed so that the teacher can dedicate an equal amount of their attention to each student in the class.

It's pure mathematics in action. Each student deserves an equal proportion of their teacher's time. The students who are detracting from the lesson, who are taking up the teacher's concentration unnecessarily, are actually robbing the other students of their share of the teacher's time.

If students can't regulate themselves, if they don't have enough self-awareness to limit the amount of your time they are taking up, then you need to regulate it for them. The authority for your disciplinary measures here comes from your responsibility to the *other* students. And that is exactly what I tell my classes every time that I have to send someone out.

On a practical note, if you *are* going to send a student out, the easiest way is to say to them: *Bring your stuff and come with me. Come on.* Then you lead them out of the room. They're not quite sure where you're going, but you're giving them a lead and it's easier to follow. If they don't follow you, you might just continue going wherever it is on your own – perhaps to the director's office – and that would be even worse for them because they will have refused to follow you. This is much easier than you, the teacher, staying where you are and telling the student to get out. There's no lead, they don't know where to go and they're much more likely to try to protest, to get you to let them stay – and there's nothing worse than trying to send a student out as a last-ditch disciplinary step and them refusing to go until you get really angry.

Sometimes sending a student out will work wonders, but you have to be careful. You don't want to turn that student into a martyr. The others might then unite against you. The first sign of this is that they ask you where their classmate has gone or why you sent them out. They want to know how that works. Is it personal or is there a wider rationale? A simple answer is to say this:

I like your classmate, but I sent him out because his behaviour was unacceptable. Your behaviour, up to now, has been OK. That's why you are still in the classroom.

★ ★ ★

You can see in the short reply above that, even here, when discipline has required that things get 'a bit ugly', we still have a clearly articulated reassurance of ongoing positive regard – what I loosely refer to as 'love' – the logic of our work in a group and the onus on students to be accountable for their own actions and decisions. It's my belief that when you *stop* talking about discipline with a class, then it becomes more of an issue. ETp

Allyn G, Deyme, A and Bègue, I 'Self-fighting syndrome in macaques' *Primates* 17 (1) 1976

Dewey, J *How We Think* D C Heath & Co 1910



Chris Roland is a teacher and teacher trainer based at ELI in Seville, Spain. He's interested in the areas of task micro-mechanics, engagement with text and the way that students and teachers talk to each other. The 'Logic' sequences and conceptual triangle diagram are available from his website at *www.chrisroland.net*.

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Preparing students for exams 1

Fiona Aish and **Jo Tomlinson** reveal how they prepare students for PTE Academic.

PTE (Pearson Test of English) Academic is a relatively new four-skills test of English, aimed at students wishing to go to an English-medium university. The test is done in one session, all online, and is scored within seven days, making it a growing choice for students in terms of convenience.

This growth has been seen in the numbers of students coming to our company for help in studying for the test. We have been preparing students for PTE Academic for over three years, and also working with Pearson – the developers of the test – to train teachers in how best to prepare students for it.

As with any new test, there are challenges and rewards. From getting to grips with the test structures and finding appropriate materials, to developing your skills as an exam/EAP teacher, one thing about PTE Academic is that it can be a fascinating experience for a committed teacher. This article looks at some of the key elements that we have found important in preparing students and teachers for PTE Academic.

1 Knowing the test

It sounds simple, but the best way to get to know a test is to do it yourself. Sitting PTE Academic is an invaluable experience for teachers. The test has specific question timings and some elements which can only really be understood after you have experienced it first-hand. A good example of this is the speaking section, which is done through a headset, with an audio input box and then a spoken output box. Although you can see these demonstrated in practice questions, the only way to fully understand how they work is to try it out yourself. Then, when students come to you with specific questions, you'll be speaking from real experience.

The test has specific question timings and some elements which can only really be understood after you have experienced it first-hand

There is plenty of information available on the PTE Academic website, and the Official Guide is an invaluable resource. This gives section timings, the number of items per question type, and scoring information. Although it may sound like a lot to take in, this information is really essential and doesn't take long to learn. Both you and your students should commit it to memory. Timing is especially important.

In our experience, while the time taken on speaking and listening is largely dictated by the audio recordings, the same is not true for reading and writing.

The reading section, for example, is timed as a whole, so test takers have to answer all the questions within a set time, and they cannot return to unanswered questions. This means that students need to set an approximate time allocation for each question. In our experience, some students can spend a long time on the first few questions, double-checking their answers, and then cannot finish. Understanding the importance of managing time and understanding the items is key, and test knowledge will help you pass on these skills to your students.

2 Adapting materials

As it is a relatively new test, there isn't a wide range of ready-made exercises or books on PTE Academic, but existing materials can be adapted and used in a PTE Academic context very successfully. The table opposite gives an idea of how you can adapt other materials into PTE items.

3 Building on existing foundations

Some question types are more difficult than others. It's always a good idea to build confidence by starting the students on the question types that they will be more at ease with. In our experience, these include: *Read aloud*, *Answer short question*, *Write essay*, *Re-order paragraphs*, *Fill in the blanks* (Reading and Listening), and *Highlight incorrect words*. These question types can be practised at any level of English proficiency, meaning that students at any level can be prepared for the style of exercise they will meet in PTE Academic.

With lower levels, it is useful to think of the functions the PTE Academic tests, and then exploit them in classroom and homework activities. Let's look at some examples of this:

Speaking: Read aloud

Reading aloud can be factored into day-to-day class activities quite simply. Get the students to take turns to read exercise instructions aloud or, when feeding back on activities involving sentences, ensure they read the entire sentence, and not just the answer. It seems simple, but it's a perfect extension to more pronunciation and fluency-based work.

PTE ACADEMIC	ADAPTATIONS
Speaking: **Describe image**	Turn any IELTS Task 1 writing exercises into spoken exercises. Use any graphs or charts and other types of images, like pictures and diagrams showing processes.
Writing: **Summarize written text**	Plenty of EAP activities have summarising and paraphrasing activities, and these can be adapted for PTE practice. Lower-level EAP books can be a great starting place for these kinds of tasks.
Reading/Listening: **Multiple choice, choose multiple answers**	Any 'select from a list' or matching question can be turned into this kind of question type. The only thing you need to ensure is that there is a selection of correct answers from a selection of options.
Listening: **Summarize spoken text**	A good starting point for these question types is to use a Part 4 IELTS listening (which is a lecture-style listening), and ask the students to summarise this. As a starting point, they could even use an IELTS question paper, which gives an outline of the lecture for students to then summarise from.
Speaking: **Answer short question**	Any vocabulary exercises can be extended by getting the students to write questions for each new word for a question bank. Recycle any vocabulary used during the week by getting the students to write questions testing the new words.

Listening: Write from dictation

Dictation is an activity which has been around for a long time, and students generally feel comfortable with dictation at a relatively low level. You can start small by dictating answer options for exercises to your students (just make sure they compare and check them), then you could move on to dictating sections of graded material, checking and then asking the students to sum up the paragraph (therefore giving you the perfect opportunity to highlight their first steps to question types such as *Summarize written text*).

4 Dealing with higher-level question types

At the other end of the spectrum, there are question types which are significantly more difficult for students to master, such as the summary activities that involve listening (Speaking: *Re-tell lecture*, Listening: *Highlight correct summary* and Listening: *Summarize spoken text*). To help students attempt such questions, grading and building is again an important technique.

We recommend starting with materials which are not official practice materials to build up the functions of listening, note-taking and summarising. You could start perhaps with a story, which students describe to a partner.

Moving into lectures from different genres can be a good approach, as the conceptual understanding of main points and direction can be dealt with more easily. News bulletins can be especially useful for this, in terms of understanding both main and more detailed points. Alternatively, give the students the opportunity to read or watch news reports and summarise them to others.

5 Getting students working outside the classroom

PTE Academic preparation doesn't need to stop outside the classroom. There are plenty of activities the students can do at home to enhance their test-taking skills. The list on page 10 gives some ideas of useful homework activities.

Preparing students for exams 1

★ ★ ★

We have found that PTE Academic is a rewarding test to teach. Although before you get to know the test, it may seem like a mountain to climb, once you gain test familiarity, the creativity that can be found in adapting and creating materials is endless. ETp





Jo Tomlinson and Fiona Aish are directors of Target English, a company specialising in exam preparation and academic English support. They are PTE Academic master trainers, IELTS teacher trainers and have co-authored a number of books including *Get Ready for IELTS Writing* and *Lectures*. They also created *Exam Ready*, a diagnostic tool for exam preparation. At present, their work includes running dissertation support workshops and tutorials for postgraduate students, consulting on test development in ESP and training teachers in preparing students for examinations.

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QUESTION TYPE	ACTIVITY
Listening: **Summarize spoken text**	Ask the students to find a short lecture on *YouTube* or *TED* on a subject they're interested in and to write a summary of the key points (listening as many times as they want). Then, in class, each student can read their summary aloud, before the class watches the lecture and decides how accurate the summary was.
Speaking: **Describe image**	Get the students to record themselves on their phones describing an image. They play the recordings back in groups in class and discuss areas for improvement. They can keep improving their recordings over a period of time so they can hear themselves getting better.
Reading: **Fill in the blanks**	Ensure the students keep a vocabulary record which includes word forms and examples of word forms in context sentences. Then ask them to find a text and type it up for class, with some of the words missing. Use these texts in class, getting the students to identify the missing part of speech in each gap. The students then have to think of contextually appropriate words that could fit in the gaps.
Writing: **Write essay**	Although essay writing is often done at home, get the students to rewrite each other's essays – not changing the focus or arguments, but selecting one particular area for improvement at a time. For example, ask them to think about how their classmate's essay could be better structured and how cohesive devices could be used to make it read more smoothly.

PTE Academic: Test Overview

The test, which is done entirely online, takes approximately three hours to complete. This includes an un-timed introduction to the test and one optional scheduled break of up to ten minutes.

There are three timed parts to the test: *Speaking and Writing*, *Reading* and *Listening*. Each part may contain a number of sections and each section is individually timed.

Speaking and Writing

Speaking	Personal introduction
Speaking & Reading	Read aloud
Speaking & Listening	Repeat sentence
Speaking	Describe image
Speaking & Listening	Re-tell lecture
Speaking & Listening	Answer short question
Writing	Summarize written text
Writing	Write essay

Reading

Reading	Multiple choice, choose single answer
Reading	Multiple choice, choose multiple answers
Reading	Re-order paragraphs
Reading	Fill in the blanks
Reading & Writing	Fill in the blanks

Optional Break

Listening

Listening & Writing	Summarize spoken text
Listening	Multiple choice, choose multiple answers
Listening & Writing	Fill in the blanks
Listening & Reading	Highlight correct summary
Listening	Multiple choice, choose single answer
Listening	Select missing word
Listening & Reading	Highlight incorrect words
Listening & Writing	Write from dictation

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Children of the century

Barbara Muszyńska

praises the benefits of bilingual education.

Traditional second or foreign language lessons for children in Europe focus mainly on language acquisition. American and Canadian immersion programmes differ significantly in that well over half the time is devoted to teaching *in* the second language, rather than the teaching *of* the language. The European answer to such programmes is the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) type of bilingual education. The idea behind this is to allow children to develop their first language and add a second one early in their school years. This can be described as 'additive bilingualism' and, as Jim Cummins reports, it has a positive influence on the students' linguistic, cognitive and academic growth. This early start seems justified as, by the age of four, children have generally mastered the basic structures of their first language and can ask questions, give commands, report real events and create stories. Cummins also emphasises that a child's first language does not need to be fully developed before a second language is introduced.

Education for a new world

In today's globalised world, we have come to value the significance of ideas, creativity, intelligence and the ability to communicate freely – and educational systems need to adapt to the changes that are taking place in our societies. In CLIL, the content is closely related to current ideas and the approach is linked to the way our brains learn. CLIL also promotes a more natural use of language, where learners learn and use languages for different purposes and in various contexts, which in turn leads to understanding and tolerance of other cultures.

Theory and practice

In CLIL, the teacher's role is to gradually maximise student learning, not just to present content and cover the curriculum. As Cummins points out, the approach generally integrates cognitive theory with communicative strategies and child-centred constructivist perspectives, where learning involves social negotiation and integration with others in authentic contexts that are relevant to the learners. A cognitive approach sees language as a process, and what we do with language as an integral aspect of our thinking and making of meaning.

By the age of four, children have generally mastered the basics of their L1 and can ask questions, give commands, report real events and create stories

CLIL adopts an inquiry-based approach to classroom teaching and learning. It is about learning by construction, rather than learning by instruction. It focuses on language learning, learning strategies,

multilingualism, multiculturalism and cooperation. Students build their content and language competences, as well as lifelong learning skills and strategies, such as dealing with the unexpected, observational skills, constructing knowledge, and so on.

Therefore, if we think of the learning theory behind CLIL, we'd have to say that it mainly describes how learning, not teaching, happens. That is why, in my view, CLIL is more of an approach than a method with a set of rules. What is also significant is that it links two constructivist perspectives: Piaget's view of how people perceive and adapt new information (the process of assimilation) and how they refer to previously-learnt information to make sense of it (the process of accommodation); and Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective, which suggests that knowledge is constructed in a social context.

Effective content learning requires the acquisition of knowledge and skills, together with the ability to apply them through creative thinking, problem solving and cognitive challenge. In CLIL, the application of knowledge and thinking processes is based on Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. It divides educational objectives into three categories:

- cognitive (knowing/head)
- affective (feeling/heart)
- psychomotor (doing/hands)

It is suggested that teachers should focus on all three domains in order to create a more holistic type of education. Learners can move from a lower to a higher domain only if they have acquired knowledge and skills at the lower levels. Cognitive skills include knowledge (memory of previously-learnt material), comprehension (demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas through organising, comparing and interpreting) and critical thinking. Affective skills relate to the way people react and display empathy. Psychomotor skills involve the ability to manipulate objects physically. They focus on change or development of a behaviour or a skill.

In a CLIL curriculum, learning is a process of progress from simple information processing (organising information through *what*, *when*, *where*, *which* and *who* questions) to more advanced thinking skills (abstract thinking, reasoning and hypothesising – the *why* and *what if* questions). Good

In a CLIL curriculum, learning is a process of progress from simple information processing to more advanced thinking skills

questions for learners to address are those which allow for a range of possibilities and encourage different forms of thinking. Such questions are directed towards learning and evaluative thinking, rather than determining what has been learnt in a narrow sense. Open-ended questions are effective for encouraging creative thinking, because they stimulate further inquiry. In a process of bilingual education, it is important to remember that students not only need to develop a range of cognitive skills but also language for thinking.

Communication and interaction

Communication and interaction are at the core of CLIL teaching. The aim is to increase quality 'student talking time' and reduce 'teacher talking time', giving the learners opportunities to develop linguistically during lessons. The focus is placed on understanding content, as this makes it easier to grasp the meaning of a new word. Teachers do not, therefore, rely heavily on grammar, vocabulary or mechanical translation: they rely more on the situational context, brainstorming of meaning, roleplaying, etc. Learners are encouraged to ask and answer questions, which promotes meaningful interaction. 'Communication' is understood here as the world knowledge through which we can create messages and make meaningful contact with one another. This meaningful contact, which involves language use and function, is called 'functional bilingualism' by Joshua Fishman. It not only entails the structure of language but also the information of who is saying what, to whom and in what circumstances. This view is reflected in the work of Stephen Krashen and Merrill Swain. Krashen states that comprehensible input is crucial to language acquisition and to the development of language competence, as we acquire language by being exposed to samples of the language without consciously thinking about its form. Therefore, he argues, the input should be just above the current language competence level. Swain, on the other hand, considered that output was more important, as learners developed their language competence by expressing their understanding. In other words, the production of language made them process it more deeply. In the CLIL type of bilingual education, both views are embodied. The linguistic items should not be over-familiar, but a little over the learners' language level, so that they won't feel discouraged but, instead, will be motivated by succeeding in their learning. In this way, they are more likely to achieve language competence.

It is not an easy task to assess students in bilingual classes because we need to consider both language proficiency and content proficiency

Assessment

In CLIL, communicative competence is viewed as an integral part of language performance. Measuring communicative language competence cannot be done by performing classroom tests, as these are not a reliable means of measurement. In fact, measuring who is or is not bilingual is such a troublesome task that it is almost unachievable in many school contexts. However, in most school environments teachers are obliged to test and assess their students as part of their job. It is not an easy task to assess students in bilingual classes because we need to take into consideration both *language proficiency* and *content proficiency*. Traditionally, language proficiency is assessed through the testing of vocabulary and grammar. We can, however, test it through more authentic means, such as interviews, the use of pictures, storytelling, teacher observation, to name just a few. Assessing content proficiency, on the other hand, simply involves determining whether or not the students have acquired and understood the content, the subject matter, of what has been taught.

Children of the century

It is important for bilingual students to be involved in the design of the assessment as well as in the assessment itself. In this way, the students are involved in the decision-making process relating to their own educational and learning processes and, as a result, their metacognitive awareness of how they learn can be improved.

It is important that flexible assessments should be used with bilingual students. As Ofelia García asserts, the students should be given the opportunity to present their knowledge and ability with regard to language, academic and social skills. Ideally, the assessment should be ongoing: teachers should make notes concerning various aspects of their students' performance. The assessment should include a range of formal and informal procedures, should be diagnostic and should involve teacher feedback during the process of learning. This type of assessment is described as 'formative assessment'. It is usually contrasted with 'summative assessment' which takes place at the end of a unit of study and checks the retention of content. Do Coyle and her colleagues recommend using a mixture of formal and informal assessment measures, including peer- and self-assessment. During the process of peer-assessment the content is revised again, this time by the students themselves, which in itself improves their understanding of the topic material.

Language

When it comes to learning language, popular belief is that the younger the students start, the better. In fact, there is very little evidence for a 'critical period' hypothesis, apart from the development of a native-like accent. Adults are equally capable of becoming bilingual. However, second language programmes in schools should be based on realistic estimates of how much time is needed for the process of second language learning to take place. Only one or two hours a week is not sufficient to produce bilingual students, no matter how early they start. Cummins reminds us that time with our students needs to be spent on meaningful instruction, as this is more important for their linguistic success than simply teaching through one language or another.

In CLIL lessons, the content is likely to require new and specific language. Consolidating the students' learning is very important, as they are processing new information in a non-native language. Teachers need to have a clear understanding of what their students already know, and need to be able to support them by scaffolding the instruction, using ways which are meaningful to the students, for example visuals, mind maps, demonstration, computers, etc. The students should be encouraged to participate actively in the lessons, responding to situations and creating them, and the content needs to be sufficiently challenging to help them develop their thinking skills and 'create' their own knowledge and understanding of a topic. Cooperating with each other is vital, as CLIL learning is a social process.

Consolidating the students' learning is very important, as they are processing new information in a non-native language

The CLIL challenge

Integrating language and content learning is a complex matter. One of the things we need to be sensitive to is the level of language and the cognitive level. If the language level is too high and the cognitive level too low, then the learning process will be inhibited.

What makes the process of teaching even more challenging is the fact that there is not one preferred CLIL model nor one methodology of teaching, and the materials and activities depend on each particular group of students. However, this approach to teaching and learning creates a real need to communicate, it motivates the learners to acquire language in order to understand the content and share their knowledge with others.

CLIL is intended to be suitable for teaching languages in mainstream education, not a special programme written only for some schools, and it does not involve one single language. It also protects the development of the first language while exposing students to a second language, and encourages tolerance of other linguistic and cultural groups as well as an understanding of human diversity. Training students to think in a different language promotes the development of their mental processes and allows them to see the same phenomenon from different perspectives.

CLIL as an educational programme also has a strong political basis. As García points out, the position of the European Commission is clear: *'Learning one lingua franca alone is not enough. Every European citizen should have meaningful communicative competence in at least two other languages in addition to his or her mother tongue.'*

★ ★ ★

There is no doubt that CLIL promotes academic success. It produces confident bilingual learners, who are ready to explore the world. It is hard not to agree with Ofelia García, that bilingual education is the only way to educate *all* children in the 21st century. ETp

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Do something different with your coursebook 2

Rachael Roberts

continues her series on adapting your coursebook to suit your classes. In this issue, she does something different with Use of English exercises.

If your class is using a coursebook which aims to prepare students for a general English exam, such as Cambridge Preliminary (PET) or First Certificate (FCE), there will be plenty of exercises to practise gap-fills, cloze tests, sentence transformation and word formation, often labelled 'Use of English'. Students need practice in completing these activities to do well in the exam, but endless exam practice can be very uninspiring. There's also the question of whether we are actually teaching our students anything other than how to pass the exam.

Finding some different ways to use these activities can enliven your classes, provide a myriad of extra learning opportunities and foster greater learner independence.

Gap-fill and cloze tests

Strictly speaking, a cloze test has a word missing at regular intervals (eg every seventh or ninth word), rather than the gaps being chosen for linguistic reasons. So most 'cloze' exam tasks are, in fact, simply gap-fills. These tend to be of two types. Some have multiple-choice answers for the gaps, and some are called 'open cloze', where the student has to provide the word without any options to choose from.

Most students find a gap-fill with multiple-choice answers a little easier, or at least less threatening. In fact, as a rule of thumb, easier activities are generally more closed, and challenging activities more open. You can use this principle to provide alternative activities for mixed-ability classes. And, let's face it, aren't all classes mixed-ability to some degree? To make a gap-fill task easier, try the following:

- Give fewer options, just three instead of four, or even two. To make this really confidence-building, just provide the real answer and the option which is most obviously wrong.
- With an open cloze, give the first letter(s) of each word. Obviously, the more letters you provide, the easier it is. Or give the answers (or some of the answers) scrambled up at the bottom of the page for the students to choose from.

You can decide who needs the easier or harder tasks – I often prefer to give my students the freedom to choose their level of difficulty. This can help them to develop more responsibility for their own learning and a sense of motivation and progress, as they gradually develop the confidence to choose the harder versions.

It is also a good idea to get the students to check their answers together

in small mixed-ability groups. This gives those students who have chosen the easier version an advantage for once, as they are at least equally likely, and perhaps more likely, to have the correct answers.

Another approach is to try doing the gap-fill in a slightly different way. Instead of setting the test and then going through the answers with the class, you could give out the gap-fill with all the correct answers already completed and ask your students to discuss why they are correct. If you want to keep them on their toes, make one of the answers wrong and challenge them to find out which one it is. Or give out the gap-fill completed, but with *all* the wrong answers. The students then have to discuss why they are wrong and complete it with the correct answers.

Once your students have worked with a reading text in the coursebook, give the text a new lease of life by asking your students to make it (or a short portion of it) into a gap-fill test for their peers. Help them to see that in order for a student to be able to complete a gap successfully, there need to be clues. This will sensitise them to what they need to be looking for when completing gaps themselves. What they choose to blank out may also tell you what they themselves find difficult.

Finally, don't just see a gap-fill as something to be done once and never seen again. Do the same gap-fill again after a break to see how much the students can remember and where they still have problems. Or, if that doesn't sound very motivating, try doing it in a less predictable way. For example, the second time you do a gap-fill, do it orally. You read the text aloud and then stop or whistle, and the students have to write down what should be in the gap. Obviously this is much harder, as the contextual clues aren't as accessible. If the gap-fill has been done recently, though, it is achievable, and doing it differently can really help to make the collocations and structures more memorable.

Alternatively, try doing it again as a 'dictogloss'. This is different from a dictation in that you deliberately don't go at the speed at which students can easily write everything down. Read the text aloud at normal speed, and ask them to write down as much as they can. If you're feeling particularly helpful, you could read it twice. Then ask the students to work together in pairs or small groups to reconstruct the text. This will necessarily get them thinking about how the words go together to make logical and grammatical sense. When they've done the best they can, let them look at the original text (with the gaps completed) and compare it with their version, making any changes necessary.

Sentence transformation

Another common 'Use of English' activity is sentence transformation, or 'complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first'.

The key to this type of exercise is that the vast majority of examples revolve around a limited number of grammatical constructions, for example the present perfect with *since* and with *for*, comparatives plus *than* and *as ... as*, direct to indirect speech, and so on. Encourage your students to make lists of the different types, so they can easily spot what is being asked for (though there will always be some which are more lexical and less predictable).

A simple adaptation, which somehow seems to make practising sentence transformation more fun, is to do it as a kind of running dictation. Put the sentence transformations on the board, small enough so that they can't be read from a distance. The students work in pairs, taking turns to run up to the board and read each pair of sentences to be transformed. They then have to go back to their partner, dictate the sentences (no shouting across the room) and together write the correct transformation.

Alternatively, give each student in a pair a set of transformations which contains the same structures as their partner's set, but which are expressed in completely different ways. The activity then is for the pairs to work together to find which transformations cover the same point, and solve both transformations together. For example:

Julie thinks that Italian is easier than French.
Julie doesn't think that French is_____ as Italian.

I'm not very busy today compared to yesterday.
I'm not _____ I was yesterday.

Word formation

The last common 'Use of English' type task is word formation, where the students have to complete a gap, using a different form of a word given in capitals. For example:

Could you make a 1) _____ to the life of a lonely old person? Come to our training weekend and see for yourself. **DIFFER**

The most obvious way to approach this is to get the students to take each word in capitals and see how many words they can form which are in the same family, eg *different*, *difference*, *differing*. To make this more fun, you can do it as a team game, with points for each correct form. Alternatively, give the word and the part of speech and see which team can produce the correct form first.

Another activity which works well, and helps students to develop the necessary skills to deal with word formation exercises, is to divide up the task. Put the students into pairs. One pair identifies what part of speech is needed for the gap (they can't see the words in capitals). A second pair is just given the words in capitals, not in the same order as the text, and the necessary part of speech. Once each pair has completed their task, you make new pairs who can 'jigsaw' their information to complete the gaps.

Finally, here is a great activity from Jon Taylor's *The Minimax Teacher*. Take a song with plenty of different lexis and ask your students to write down the headings *Nouns*, *Verbs*, *Adjectives* and *Adverbs* at the top of four columns. As you dictate some key lexical items from the song, the students have to put them in the correct columns. You then ask them to fill in all the gaps in the other columns of the grid, helping each other as necessary. Then you play the song and the students tick the words that they hear. As you check the answers, ask the students to try to remember the whole line in which the word appeared. As with gap-fill tasks, you could come back to the song a week or two later and see if the students can remember what went in the gaps – or give them different gaps to complete.

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Rachael Roberts is an ELT teacher, teacher trainer and materials writer, and has published a number of coursebooks. She is particularly interested in ways of exploiting published material, and has a blog, *www.elt-resourceful.com*, with more practical ideas and downloadable material.

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Intrinsic motivation and autonomy

Samantha Russell

proposes five practical steps to implement student choice.

One key complaint of teachers worldwide is that their students are not motivated to learn. Students of any discipline are people with needs, interests, rights and responsibilities of their own. Cultivating a culture of respect in the classroom is central to helping them grow and motivating them in their education. Teachers can help with this, but not necessarily in the 'traditional' way. It is gradually being recognised that traditional models of reward and punishment do not foster motivation. Instead, it appears to be very important that students should be led to feel 'in control' of their own lives and education.

Autonomy

Research, for example that by Avi Assor, Haya Kaplan and Guy Roth, has shown that supporting students' autonomy in the classroom is an important part of developing intrinsic motivation for learning. This is a vital role for English language teachers, because for students to be successful in their language learning they must feel motivated not only to learn, but also to use what they learn in the classroom in other environments and take responsibility for exposing themselves to English outside school. As Marilyn Lewis points out: *'Language is a skill, and a skill needs to be applied, not just stored in the head or admired at a distance.'* Students need the motivation both to acquire the skill and to then use it. Feelings of autonomy are a key to this.

Put simply, 'autonomy' is when students take responsibility for themselves and their own learning. However, by enhancing a student's autonomy, a teacher is not minimising their own role. Instead, as Assor and his colleagues assert, they are modifying the 'educator' role: to be of use to students as they explore their own interests, goals and learning. There are a number of ways for teachers to be useful to their students and support autonomy. One popular method is the development of student-centred choice in the classroom. This article will specifically examine the role that student choice plays in feelings of autonomy, motivation and engagement, before recommending five practical strategies which any teacher can use to integrate student choice into their curriculum.

Choice

Typically, when something goes wrong in the language classroom a teacher's initial reaction is to try to regain 'control' of the situation and the students. When the two girls at the back won't stop whispering and the boy in the corner refuses even to look at the worksheet, it is common to reassert control by using punishments, possibly even punishments disguised as a choice, eg 'You can either do your work or stay in at lunch time.' In this way,

teachers can try to 'force' motivation to learn by offering even less desirable options. Alfie Kohn suggests that instead of 'reaching for coercion' in this way, teachers should try to work with their students to understand what is happening and give them real choices to help solve the problem. He notes that *'rewards and punishments are notably ineffective at maintaining behavior change, [but] people are likely to persist doing constructive things … when they have some choice about the specifics'*.

Kohn goes on to explain that students will participate more in learning if they have a say in what they are doing, rather than following orders or feeling outwardly compelled.

Variables such as age, culture, values and needs all play an important part in making the implementation of student choice initiatives successful

Furthermore, having choices makes students feel that they have some control and the ability to act for themselves, which can have powerful effects on their feelings of autonomy and their motivation, as well as a number of other positive psychological benefits. For these reasons, giving students choice in the classroom is widely recommended as a way to increase motivation and engagement and to encourage a wide range of positive behaviours.

Not all choices are beneficial, though, and how they are implemented in the classroom can have a large impact on how effective they are. Variables such as age, culture, values and needs all play an important part in making the implementation of student choice initiatives successful. Also, giving students autonomy and choice, while often very constructive, can be a lot of work for the teacher. However, the benefits are not just for the students. Giving choice and relinquishing control of the class has positive effects for the teacher too. It may decrease burnout, give teachers a more fulfilling relationship with their students and make lessons more interesting for everyone.

Implementing choice

Kohn says there are four key areas in which students can make academic choices. He specifies these as 'what, how, how well and why they learn'. Students can choose what they learn, how they learn it, how it is assessed, and can then discuss why they think it is important to learn. That sounds like a very well-functioning classroom. However, not all (possibly not even most) teachers have that much freedom with their curriculum. This should not be used as an excuse to avoid implementing student choice, but merely as a challenge to be overcome. Even in the most restrictive of environments, students can be allowed to criticise and question content and methods. If students are not comfortable with this, they can at the very least be encouraged to discuss what they already know about a subject and what they would like to know, and can suggest ways that learning about it may benefit them. In this way, although some choices, such as the topic itself, are curtailed, the specific questions explored in class can be chosen by the students. As Kohn says: *'What we are trying to promote are talking and listening, looking for alternatives and trying to reach agreement, solving problems together and making meaningful choices.'* To aid in this, here is an outline of five important considerations drawn from existing research.

1 Explain what you are doing.

The first thing for a teacher to do when planning to make student choice a part of the English learning experience is to explain it to the students. This may seem obvious, but teachers get so used to how they do things that often students have no real idea of what they are doing or why. In the interest of maximising understanding, participation and motivation, teachers should spend some time discussing plans and details with the class, while making sure they do so in such a way as to promote and value the students' opinions.

Choosing what colour pen to use may not be a meaningful choice, but choosing whether to write a poem, short story or song may have more meaning for students

The plan should be made explicit and the students should understand what they are choosing and why. Rebecca Oxford asserts that learning strategies are less effective when students are led into them 'blind', compared to when they know what is happening and the expected benefits and applicability of the strategy. There is no indication that using student choice to increase motivation and learning is any different.

2 Make it relevant.

Research conducted by Idit Katz and Avi Assor found that for choices to be effective and increase intrinsic motivation, the options on offer have to differ in their importance and relevance to the students. This is so that the students find at least one option that is appealing to them on a personal level. For example, choosing what colour pen to use may not be a meaningful or relevant choice, but choosing whether to write a poem, short story or song may have more personal meaning for students. Katz and Assor say that in their study, *'… when choice was offered in a way that met the needs of the students, it was found to enhance motivation, learning, and well-being'*. On the other hand, Keith Ciani, Jessica Summers, Matt Easter and Kennon Sheldon say that even something as simple as allowing the students to choose their own group members can help raise their intrinsic motivation. The general consensus in the current research is that choices are only motivating if the choice and its options are important to the students. If they have no preference for any choice, then choice will not affect motivation.

3 Ensure personal relevance.

We can see that relevance is an important factor to consider in student choice but, even if teachers are restricted in how much of an actual course they can let students decide about, studies show that choices do not have to be *instructionally* relevant to affect motivation positively. Choices must be relevant to the student, but do not necessarily have to be relevant to the content of the class. Decisions such as how the class gets split into groups or where the they can store their bags may be important to the students, and so giving them the power to choose these simple things can impact their feelings of autonomy, and therefore motivation, in the class.

Intrinsic motivation and autonomy

4 Keep it simple.

Student choice options should not be too complex or have too many alternatives. Research, such as that by Sheena Iyengar and Mark Lepper in 2000, shows that overly complex decisions reduce the motivational effects of choice, or can make choosing demotivating or undesirable. Yoella Bereby-Meyer, Avi Assor and Idit Katz found that children do better with fewer choices, but can handle more and more complex choices as they get older. This is an important consideration. Open-ended choices may baffle younger learners, and even some adults. A smaller range of choices (as few as two for younger children, and four to six for increasingly older children and adults), carefully designed to fit in with what the teacher knows about the students, may be more beneficial. In other words, if choices are too complex, students are more likely to choose randomly, poorly or not at all.

5 Avoid too much restriction.

Conversely, while it is important not to confound choice with too much openness or complexity, it is also important not to restrict students unnecessarily. Kohn specifies that *'as a general rule, it is more important for children to have the chance to* ***generate*** *different possibilities than merely to select one possibility from among those that have been set before them'*. So, while it is imperative not to befuddle learners with endless options, we should make sure that they have the space and opportunity to generate and express their own ideas during the process. Ideally, a teacher should both give options and allow space for the students' own ideas.

Barriers to choice

As previously mentioned, it is not always possible to give our students as much choice as may be optimal. This presents a 'barrier to choice', but one that can be worked around. There are still many ways to give students meaningful choices outside of giving them direct control over the curriculum. For example, they could be asked such questions as *What do you feel like doing today (even though we have to get it all done this week)? How long should this activity be? Would you like to write a roleplay or a short story about the topic?* and *Would you like to work in groups or alone?* All are easy choices to give a class, even within a set curriculum. At the very least, the class can participate in solving any problems, whether they be behavioural or pedagogical in nature.

A second common barrier to choice is the teacher. Educators may be afraid to give students meaningful choices in the class. If the prevalent teaching tradition is one that emphasises teacher control and the belief that any relinquishing of this will result in chaos, then reservations about letting the students take some of that control for themselves are understandable. One solution is to start small. A teacher can learn along with the students about how choices in the classroom can be made, and how a power balance can be found.

> *While it is imperative not to befuddle learners with endless options, we should make sure they have the opportunity to generate and express their own ideas*

It is important not to offer students false choices (such as *Stop that behaviour or miss lunch*), or choices that, effectively, result in nothing changing. Kohn points out that teachers should also avoid offering students choices and then carefully manipulating them to pick the 'right' one. These techniques will undermine intentions to motivate students through choice and autonomy.

Similarly, if the students have grown up in a regimented school system where the teacher rules supreme, the teacher may face not only restrictions from the school, but also from the students. Especially initially, students may complain that choosing is too hard or is the teacher's 'job', or they may give replies that are clearly not what they actually think but what they think is an acceptable answer. Overcoming these problems is a simple matter of patience, perseverance and being open with the class. Once again, discussing the ideas with the students and fostering an environment where every suggestion is heard and treated with respect can help to overcome this barrier. If a teacher honestly respects the students, this is not hard to do.

> *It is the teacher's job to introduce choices gradually, discussing the process with the students to help tease out their own motivations and connections*

Sometimes, in their haste to support students' autonomy, teachers offer too much choice too quickly. They may mean to create space for their learners to pursue their goals and interests but, instead, create a void that the students are unable to fill, either because they are not able to connect the classwork to their goals and interests, or because they are not sure themselves what they want or enjoy. Therefore, it is the teacher's job to introduce choices gradually, explaining and discussing the process with the students to help tease out their own motivations and connections. This, in turn, will also assist the teacher in making the choices relevant. It is easy to see that giving students choices does not remove any work or responsibility from the teacher. An educator who wishes to implement student choice in the classroom must be prepared to put in a great deal of work, preparation and patience to support the learners.

Culture and choice

Cultural awareness is important in all classrooms, but is especially relevant to the ESL environment as often teachers and students come from different cultural backgrounds. Current research into increasing intrinsic motivation through autonomy support, and more specifically through the implementation of student choice, shows that not all cultures treat choice in the same way. Most research focuses on collective versus individual culture (often simplistically conceptualised as Eastern and Western culture, respectively). For example, some studies show that in a

collective culture, choices may become more about what the group wants, and less about what each individual student would like, whereas it is largely recognised that in individual cultures, such as that of Northern America, a lot of value is placed on individual freedom and voice.

One of the most comprehensive studies to date was conducted in 1999 by Iyengar and Lepper. To explore the collective–individual cultural aspects of choice, they conducted two studies using Asian-American and European-American children to represent each culture, respectively. They had the child, the experimenter or a member of the child's 'in-group' (eg a parent or classmate) make choices about activities the child was doing, from a limited range of options. In both experiments, the European-American children displayed more motivation when they were allowed to choose, whereas the Asian-American children responded best when an in-group member chose. Both groups had the lowest motivation when the experimenter (an 'out-group' member) chose for them.

Choice should be a positive thing, not something that causes stress or class disruption, or that leads to any kind of negative impact for the students

These findings have been interpreted in a number of different ways. Katz and Assor, for example, say that Iyengar and Lepper's results suggest that *'offering choices to people from highly collectivistic societies might … be detrimental, due to their construction of the self and their goal priorities'*. However, Assor, Kaplan and Roth argue that these findings (along with other similar findings that choice provision does not support intrinsic motivation in collective cultures) may be due to overlooking the importance of choice relevance.

An important point to take away from Iyengar and Lepper's research is that no matter whether the children's culture was collective or individual, both groups benefited from choice. The least motivating condition for both groups was when choices were made for them by an out-group experimenter (arguably similar to a teacher's role). Therefore, the answer for ESL teachers is less complex than the discussions raised by these studies. Once again, it comes down to careful and thoughtful class discussion, addressing both relevance and how students wish to make choices. Depending on the outcomes of this discussion, it may be appropriate to let the class or group make choices. In this situation, a teacher should not force individual options.

For those teachers who find it difficult to understand that students may want to make group choices instead of individual ones, Kohn argues that collective choice does not necessarily mean restrictive choice. He comments that it is an 'interesting reflection' on Western culture that we view choice only as 'individual choice'. He goes on to say that true democracy is an integration of community and choice. Possibly, because of their community focus, students from collective cultures that make choices at a group level more than individually may actually be better prepared to implement those choices as a class. So, group choice is an important facet of motivation for ESL teachers to understand and be prepared to implement – and perhaps even to encourage.

★ ★ ★

Regardless of culture, it is important for teachers to be careful when offering choices. Choice should be a positive thing, not something that causes stress or class disruption, or that leads to any kind of negative impact for the students. As Ciani *et al* put it, choice is best viewed as one part of an autonomy and motivation-supporting classroom environment. Assor *et al* agree with this assertion, saying that while choice is an important factor in autonomy support, and therefore intrinsic motivation, a supportive relevant environment is perhaps even more key. Implementing the two ideas together should yield positive student autonomy, motivation and engagement results. All teachers are encouraged to try giving their students choice as a motivational practice. As Kohn rightly points out: *'It is not "utopian" or "naïve" to think that learners can make responsible decisions about their own learning.'* ETp

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TALKBACK!

Do you have something to say about an article in the current issue of ETp? This is your magazine and we would really like to hear from you. Write to us or email:

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'Gamify' your classroom

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Liam Bourret-Nyffeler finds a way to motivate young learners.

Wouldn't it be nice to have lessons engage students with the same magnetism that video games do? Though learning should be enjoyable, motivating students can be difficult, with the degree of difficulty varying according to the age group – and with teenagers generally considered the hardest. However, research focusing on motivation has come up with a field that can help: *gamification*, a cross-breed of psychology and the kind of loyalty programmes employed in the commercial world, but applied to other areas of life.

As I studied gamification, I couldn't help but notice that concepts like learner autonomy and enjoyment kept popping up.

What is gamification?

Essentially, gamification involves applying techniques used in video game design in non-game situations, eg earning points for performing well or completing a task. What it isn't is playing games! I'm sure we have all played games in the classroom. Gamification is different; it turns the curriculum itself into a game.

Gamification in the classroom

The basic idea is that the students earn points for complying with the teacher's objectives, and they can use these points later to gain rewards.

Choose your objectives

It is fundamental to decide first what kind of behaviour you wish to promote. This might be things such as completing exercises correctly individually or in groups, paying attention in class or only using English during the lesson.

Award points for compliance

Here is an example of a simple system we can use which works quickly and needs little to get started. The target behaviour is 'only speaking English in class' and students win points for using English as much as possible throughout the lesson, but lose them for speaking in their first language. A record is kept on the board, and the person who has most points at the end of the lesson is given a reward, eg they can choose the topic of the next class presentation.

Name	Points
Thomas	IIII
Richard	~~IIII~~ I
Harry	~~IIII~~ IIII

Game elements 1: Experience Points (XP)
In video games, players can gain points for progression, by doing things such as completing mission objectives or harvesting a crop. In the classroom, the points are won by completing exercises, projects, homework, etc.

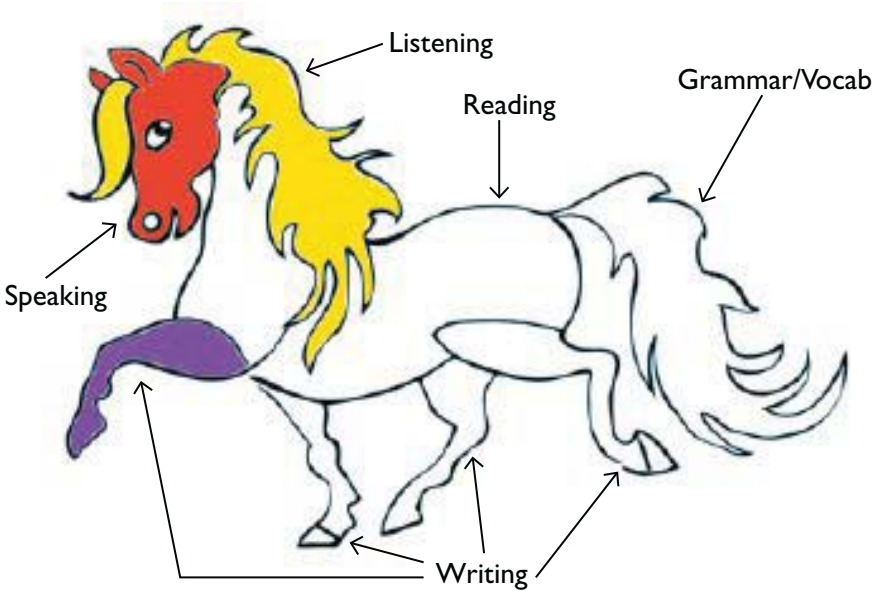
Identify their interests

Let's take this a step further and give our system a lick of paint by finding out what our students are interested in and using that as a theme to motivate them. Fiction and fantasy are common interests which can allow us to be someone other than ourselves. Find out what your students like – it doesn't have to be from a game, you can use anything. Some examples might be books (eg the *Harry Potter* or *Twilight* series), games (eg *Pokemon*, *Battlefield*), movies (*Toy Story*, *The Avengers*), life (animals). It is important that you as a teacher are comfortable with whatever theme is chosen, so don't choose sci-fi if you hate it. It is a good idea to pick general themes (eg magicians) rather than specific ones (eg *Harry Potter*) so that your theme stays relevant as trends change, especially if you want to use it for a long period of time.

So let's pick a couple of themes we can use as examples: ponies and superheroes.

Ponies

Draw a silhouette of a pony and divide it up into sections, with each section representing one of the skills that will be assessed at the end of the course or semester, as in the example on page. 23 Make a copy for each student. When they have earned a set number of points in each area, they are allowed to colour in the relevant part, and this will give a small bonus to their final grade in that



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area; the brighter the colour, the bigger the bonus, eg:

Blue (or other cold colours)	+0.1
Green (and warmer colours)	+0.2
Red (and hot colours)	+0.5

I limit these to one red, two yellow and four blue sections to choose from as they climb the points ladder. Do they choose to improve their weaknesses or boost their strengths? Guidance from the teacher is important here. The latter focuses on improving confidence by not spotlighting difficulties, and might be good for beginners or those prone to giving up. The former boosts good scores to allow the student to study the parts they really need to, without worrying quite so much about the parts they can already do.

Game elements 2: Rewards

In video games, players collect rewards. In the classroom, connect these rewards to further activities that involve the use and learning of English (which in turn earn points) to make classes and learning intrinsically rewarding, rather than being a means to get chocolate or other external motivators. Rewards might be using the students' favourite topics in class, such as movies or celebrities.

Superheroes

To introduce a little autonomy, get the students to make a poster of a superhero of their own design and to choose superpowers that give them bonus points. They can do this either individually or in groups that share points (keeping track of points becomes a little easier for five groups of six than for 40 individuals). You need to decide whether you want them to help each other or compete against each other.

In our example, the students (or groups) start with a number of small bonuses granted under certain conditions (see the table below). This way they can

Rank	Name: Gadget Girl			
Start	**Grappling hook 1:** Your hero gets out of sticky situations without help. You get 10% extra points for individual work.	**Leadership 1:** Your hero inspires others to keep going. You get 10% extra points when you help another student.	**Boomerang 1:** Your hero's boomerang has a second chance to hit enemies. Take one exercise home and earn the points anyway.	**Sidekick 1:** Add a sidekick to your hero's poster. This brave companion gives an opportunity to take a break. Take a well-earned rest once per class. Five minutes of games (Hangman/Bingo).
500 XP	**Grappling hook 2:** You get 20% extra points for individual work.			
1000 XP	**Grappling hook 3:** You get 30% extra points for individual work.			
2000 XP			**Boomerang 2:** Take up to two exercises home.	
3000 XP		**Leadership 2:** Get 20% extra points when you help a classmate.		
4000 XP				**Sidekick 2:** Give your hero an additional sidekick. Ten-minute word games break.

'Gamify' your classroom

read about each bonus and see which is more to their taste. Once they earn enough points, they can upgrade a power (a maximum of two times).

The table shows a possible path taken by a group of students to upgrade at each milestone.

Each column has a power with a different focus. This class preferred to work individually most of the time and upgraded the 'grappling hook' bonus, which confers extra points for work they do by themselves. However, they could have easily chosen to earn more points through cooperation with a different power. This affords them meaningful choices with regards to progression. I didn't generally award points for work which was not completed in class. The 'boomerang' power allowed those who were falling behind a little to earn points by finishing one exercise as homework if they ran out of time.

Finally, the 'sidekick' power offered a few minutes of fun and games as a reward.

If the theme of heroes is unpopular, you can modify it without changing the powers:

- ★ Make the powers magic spells for a magician theme.
- ★ When you create the table, have each bonus be represented by a different character like an elf, dwarf or hobbit for a fantasy theme, and change the names of the powers and their descriptions accordingly.

Game elements 3: Powers

Many fictional heroes are gifted with special powers or magic (eg the power of flight or a ring of invisibility) to help them on their adventures.

In class, the students can choose powers which confer a bonus to the points they earn, which, in turn, unlock other bonuses, giving them a degree of autonomy.

How many points should you award?

Let's say the school year lasts for 40 weeks, for a total of 120 lessons per year (assuming three lessons per week). Thirty points per class should be about right. I divide up the points when I plan my lessons. For example, if the plan is to complete two pages of work and make a poster on conservation, I might assign ten points per activity.

Over the year, this will only amount to a little under 3,600 points. The 10% bonuses should make up for that a little, but we don't want the students to reach 4,000 XP too early or they'll be inclined to ask *'Now what?'*

Experiment a little. Let the students know that things are subject to small changes in the name of being reasonable. They usually understand justifiable changes.

Keep a visible record of progress

It is important for the students to see their progress in a concrete way. With the pony idea, have the silhouettes on posters so that the students can easily check to see how much colouring they have done and how much is still left to do. It may be easier to have one poster for each small group of students and have them share points and rewards.

The criteria for acquiring points and powers must also be transparent and visible. You might display a checklist of the unit objectives (eg *Speaking*: Converse in an informal situation – inviting friends to a restaurant – and in a formal situation – booking a table at a restaurant) with associated points and rewards.

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Try it out for yourself! Experiment and practise. Only you know your students, so trust your instincts and, above all, have fun with this idea. Choose a simple system of points if getting bogged down in details or numbers makes your head spin. Gamification is no panacea, but an extra layer of fun can only be a good thing for everyone. ETp

FAQs

Q: How can I use this in classes of 30 students or more? I don't have time for all the calculations and paperwork!

A: Group students, and have the groups operate as one pony/superhero. Or have one for the entire class. Use the opportunity to have your students debate the best options.

Q: What if my students don't like pretending to be superheroes, or their interests are too diverse?

A: There's no need to have any theme at all – or you can have a more neutral one, with terms like bronze, silver, gold, or coloured stars.

Q: Can they not abuse the system to find ways to 'farm' points for little effort?

A: They can, so beware. Keep it simple to avoid this and adjust things a little as you go. Ask the students what can be changed, and get them to help you. In general, they will be helpful.

Q: Where can I find more information on gamification?

A: Professor Werbach runs an online course that goes into far more depth than I can at *www.coursera.org/course/gamification*. The games design videos by the team at Extra Creditz are also worth watching and will only take up around 15 minutes of your time:

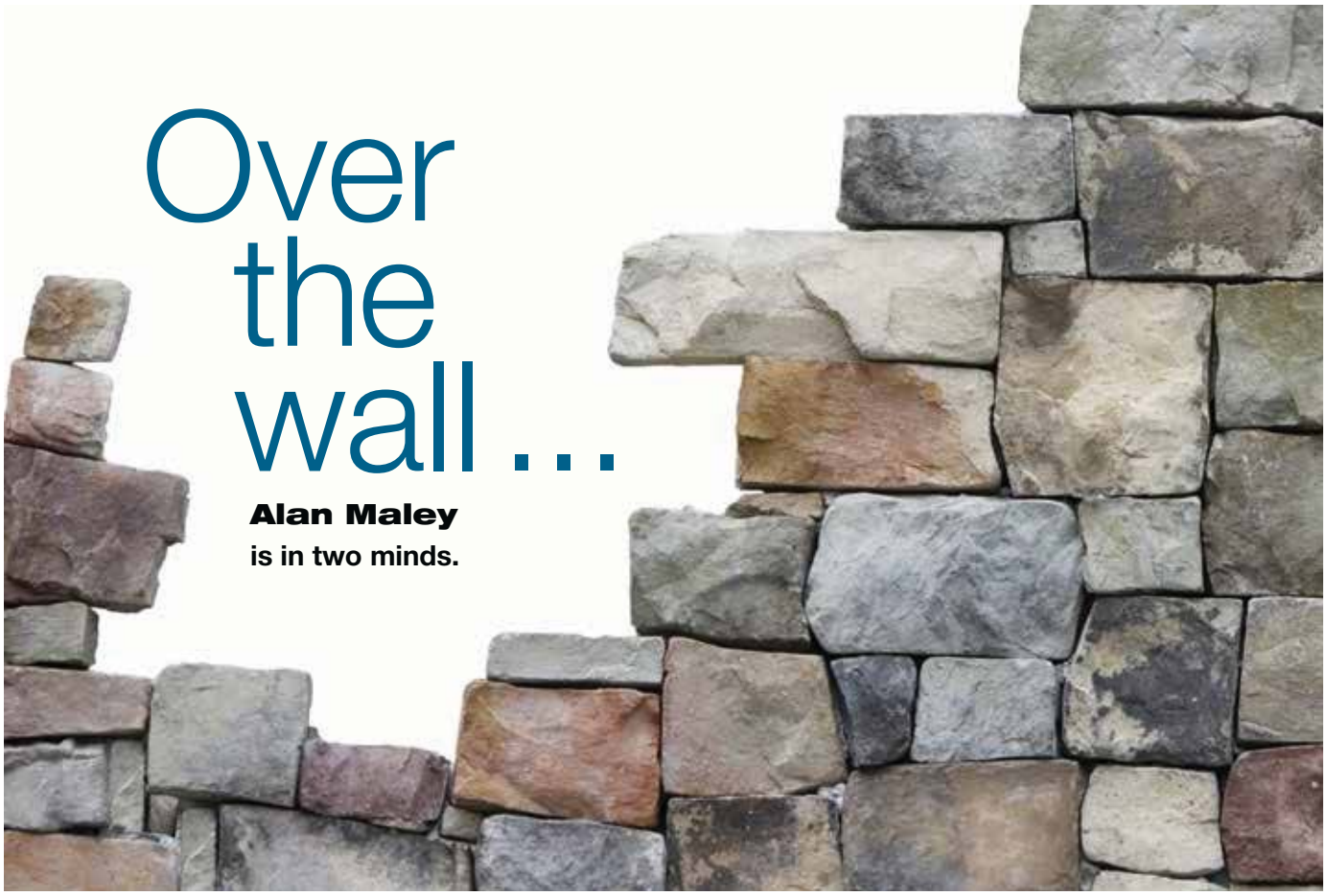
http://penny-arcade.com/patv/episode/gamification

http://penny-arcade.com/patv/episode/gamifying-education



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Over the wall ...

Alan Maley
is in two minds.

All the books reviewed here explore a particular aspect of the nature of thinking: the distinction between rapid, unconscious, intuitive thinking and a more deliberate, reflective mode. This raises many issues, not least the question of who does the thinking. If much of our brain activity is unconscious, then we are not thinking it, it is thinking us! So, do we have free will?

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking

This book, by Malcolm Gladwell, is the most accessible of these titles. It is written in an anecdotal style, with plenty of interesting narrative detail. He refers to our intuitive thought processes as 'the adaptive unconscious'. In this mode, the brain acts like an enormous computer, receiving, sorting, categorising and processing everything in our environment, and then acting on it at lightning speed without the need for conscious reflection. His objectives in the book are threefold: to persuade us that this kind of thinking is *'every bit as good as decisions made cautiously and deliberately'*; to alert us to the contexts in which the adaptive unconscious can let us down; and to show that we can educate and control this kind of thinking. Through numerous case studies, he shows how 'gut feeling', 'hunch' and 'nose' are often better ways of sizing up a situation than employing mountains of data. He illustrates this through reference to art experts detecting frauds, people unconsciously working out the odds of winning gambles, speed dating, doctors diagnosing diseases, and a host of other situations. How do we do this? Through 'thin-slicing' – that is, predicting outcomes on the basis of a few key factors selected from the mass of data by means of pattern recognition. The ability to 'thin-slice' is based on multiple encounters in our past experience. (Expert knowledge of this kind is also discussed in Donald Schon's *The Reflective Practitioner*.) Not only do we find it very difficult to explain how we can effortlessly act on our intuitions, but too much introspection actually blocks our ability to act spontaneously. Gladwell is up-front about the negative aspects of thin-slicing – the ease with which we are primed for certain types of biased behaviour and stereotyped associations, and the way we can be influenced by appearances. As he states: *'Taking our powers of rapid cognition seriously means we have to acknowledge the subtle influences that can alter or undermine or bias the products of our unconscious.'* And there are two contexts in which this system shuts down and leads us to make bad judgements, or to be incapable of making any judgements at all. These are when we are over-aroused by fear, threat or anxiety, as in police car chases, or when we have no time at all to process the information. Apart from the injunction that we should learn to slow down our reactions in such circumstances, he is adamant that we can train the ability to 'thin slice', especially in the area of micro-facial expressions, which can help us to 'mind read'.

Thinking, Fast and Slow

This is a mountain of a book, drawing on research from neuro-science, behavioural psychology and economics, and laced with some intriguing thought experiments. Daniel Kahneman's emphasis is on fast thinking and the many pitfalls it poses in everyday life, in economic decision-making and in the assessment of risk. He calls fast thinking 'System 1', and deliberate, slow thinking 'System 2'. In Parts 1–3, he analyses the weaknesses of System 1: easily suggestible, influenced by mood, overdependence on causal reasoning, jumping to conclusions, peer influences and the tendency to substitute



easier, affect-based questions for the target questions. He expands on this by looking at the law of small numbers (we are unduly influenced by rare events), anchors (the mention of a number will prejudice us in favour of choosing a similar number) and regression to the mean (what we take to be success or failure is more often a random event, not a reliable indicator). As a simple example, consider which of the following formulations would be more acceptable: *'This operation has a 90% success rate' 'This operation has a 10% failure rate'* or even *'Out of every hundred people who have this operation, ten will die'*. He makes it clear that we think we understand far more than we do, and is scathing of 'expert opinion', especially in the area of business and investment: *'... people who spend their time, and earn their living, studying a particular topic produce poorer predictions than dart-throwing monkeys.'* Part 4 deals with choices and risk. He distinguishes between 'Econs', rare creatures who make rational choices, and 'Humans', who are influenced by any number of illogical factors. In Part 5, he describes two selves: the Experiencing Self, which rapidly forgets what actually happened, and the Remembering Self, which recalls selectively in ways which bias our choices illogically. This is a sobering book which makes us reassess our ability to act in our own best interests. The author believes people need help in making decisions, and that such help can be made available.

Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind: Why Intelligence Increases When You Think Less

In this book, Guy Claxton discusses three kinds of thinking. The first kind is the unconscious working of the brain, which does much of our thinking for us. It is able to soak up complex information from the environment and take action or solve problems intuitively before we are consciously aware of them. Think of the strange sensation we feel when stepping onto an escalator which is not moving. The second kind he calls 'd-thinking', which is what we normally understand by thinking – deliberate, rational, clear and fast. The third is the ruminative, reflective thinking which characterises artistic creativity, scientific discovery and complex human situations. His main argument is that we are increasingly influenced by d-thinking in many spheres, ranging from business to education, and that we thereby neglect both the intuitive and ruminative modes, which are often more effective. *'If [the situation] is complex, unfamiliar, or behaves unexpectedly, tortoise mind is the better bet. If it is a nice logical puzzle, try the hare brain first.'* Chapter 4 is important for the clarity of distinctions between fast, unconscious intuitions and slow reflection – the need to bear in mind a problem over



a long period without consciously thinking about it. And Chapter 5 sets out the conditions under which creativity can occur. Like Gladwell, Claxton points out that requiring people to verbalise or analyse their intuitive judgement tends to impair them. Trying too hard can get in the way of fluid intuitive reactions. Another key chapter is *Paying Attention*, in which he looks at detection – how experts use attention to small key elements to solve problems; focusing on inner states; listening to your body; becoming aware of 'felt sense'; poetic sensibility; the need to let things marinate, and to be in a flow state; and mindfulness – being aware of what is happening 'in the moment'. His discussion of the notion of wisdom in Chapter 12 is also highly relevant in a world given to over-reliance on statistics and quantitative data. As he says, *'many unwise decisions have been made by clever people'*. He reminds us of the need to trust the 'undermind' more. The final chapter is an eloquent undermining of the current ethos, especially in education, with its heavy reliance on a content curriculum and standardised tests. Such tests *'favour those who are able to think fast, under pressure, on their own, about abstract, impersonal problems, which are clearly defined, have single right answers and have been formulated by unknown other people'*. Claxton argues that we need also to develop a learning curriculum with an emphasis on fostering resilience and resourcefulness in learners. *'The resourceful learner is able to attend to puzzling situations with precision and concentration, and also with relaxed diffusion ... to be able to "let things speak", to see what is actually there ... to make good sense of clues and hints ... to analyse and scrutinise but also to daydream and ruminate ... to ask questions and collaborate ... but also to keep silent and contemplate ... to be both literal and metaphorical, articulate and visionary, scientific and poetic.'* This is a highly significant book both for teachers and for 'everyman'. (If you enjoy this book, try also Claxton's *The Wayward Mind*, a fascinating exploration of the unconscious mind.)

★ ★ ★

Teaching is a field where we are constantly having to make split-second decisions. We 'suss out' our students intuitively in a matter of micro-seconds – and they 'suss out' their teachers! Any training that might improve the accuracy of this would be welcome. In the broader educational context, as Gladwell claims, *'we have perhaps come to confuse information with understanding'*. Statistics and elaborate data collection may be less reliable than we thought. This would suggest the need to reinstate reliance on intuition and teacher 'expert knowledge'. But Kahneman's conclusions suggest we also need to be circumspect! ETp

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Death to the concept question!

Tony Penston hammers a nail into the coffin of a popular technique.

In ELT teacher training there are some techniques perpetuated whose worth and validity are questionable. One of these is the dreaded 'concept question', and in this article I attempt to despatch it to the archives.

I wish to show that the concept question, by virtue of the fact that it rarely, if ever, occurs in real communication, has no place in communicative language teaching (CLT). Consider this exchange:

Teacher: *Where is the policeman?*
Learner: *He is in a hardware store.*
Teacher: *Right.* ***Can you buy a dress in a hardware store?***

The final question contains a typical concept question to check understanding of *hardware store* (the word *store* is already understood). This type of question would hardly ever be heard in normal communication, where the person on the receiving end of it would be nonplussed, as I fear many learners are – especially those under the impression they were in a CLT environment.

Making it authentic

I have for some time used 'immersion principles' as a simple indicator of the principles of CLT and to help trainees focus on factors of successful learning. The term *immersion* here applies to both L1 and L2 learning: L1 in the normal child–carer context, and L2 in a total immersion situation. In both cases, the learning is agreed to be enjoyable and successful, and one reason for this would seem to be the abundance of visual indicators and communicative interaction in facilitating understanding. Of course, the learning experience is not without mysterious encounters, whereupon the learner will occasionally stop and ponder an aspect of language; explanation may be sought and given, but such explanations would rarely be accompanied by a concept question.

Sadly, some teachers are the only creatures who consistently ask questions that would insult one's intelligence. It doesn't happen in an immersion situation, it doesn't happen in normal communication, so it shouldn't happen in a classroom. The exception is when language is being demonstrated, for example in 'display' questions such as *What colour is your sweater?* Here, the learner knows that the teacher is not colour-blind, and understands the need for, and purpose of, the question, knowing that there will be a move to real communication in due course. Toddlers are asked *Where is Granny?* when the answer is obvious, and they know this is a learning game (so it's not really an exception, then, happening in normal L1 learning). But let's look at another example:

Teacher: *Did the kids pay for the sweets?*
Learners: *No.*
Teacher: *Is this a crime?*
Learners: *Yes.*
Teacher: *Can you shoplift a washing machine?*

And again we are in the twilight zone. The learners don't know if this is a joke or a trick question, or perhaps they wonder if the teacher is curious about the semantic application of *shoplift* in their language. Unlike the 'sweater colour' question above, the learner can't see the purpose of the question. Communication has stalled or broken down, and this seriously undermines what we profess to be the rationale for CLT – learning communicatively.

Making it visual

Of course, we know the reason for the concept question: to check understanding. However, such checking should not be solely verbal, or delayed. Understanding should be facilitated 'optimally', by which I mean with visuals (where applicable) and meaningful interaction, in good time. For example, no teacher should teach *hardware* or any other concrete vocabulary without a visual. (Why? Because that's how *you* learnt it in your L1!) And this doesn't mean being obliged to have a stockpile of images ready for all eventualities; rather, that every language teacher should readily use gestures and mime and, importantly, should know how to draw basic shapes quickly to facilitate enjoyable language learning. 'In good time' means when the word is elicited/fed. The teacher should immediately supply or reinforce the concept with visuals and communicative interaction, typically including relevant examples.

Making it communicative

Checking nouns

Let's go back to the first dialogue above and see how the concept can be checked communicatively:

Teacher: *Where is the policeman?*

Learner: *In a hardware store.*

Teacher: *Yes* [draws a hammer quickly while talking]. *Is he looking for this? What's this?*

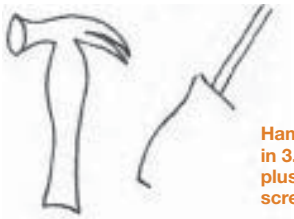
Learner: *A …* [delays]

Other learners: *A hammer.*

Teacher: *Yes, a hammer* [writes 'a hammer' beside the drawing, perhaps while having a learner spell it]. *What else is in a hardware store, anyone?* [Teacher

Death to the concept question!

continues to draw a screwdriver – more slowly to add a guessing game factor. The actions of hammering and screwing would be included as back-up explanation.]



Hammer drawn in 3.5 seconds, plus partly-drawn screwdiver

In the above interaction, there is fun (the worse the drawing, the more fun), but most importantly there is total and real communication. And, incidentally, you may have noted that the rapid drawing and writing are best done on a standard board, not an interactive one. Sarn Rich has convincingly argued for more use of the non-interactive board, supplying interesting examples.

Checking verbs

Regarding action verbs like *shoplifting*, the teacher would be expected to roleplay the shoplifter and mime the action (hence the visual). The context of the following interaction is when a student has asked for an explanation of *shoplift* after a text in which it occurs has just been read:

Teacher: *Ah yes, the children shoplifted the sweets. OK, shoplifted.* [hums innocently whilst miming walking in a sweet shop] *I'm in a sweet shop, yumm …* [looks at sweets, licks lips, looks furtively around, hums in a more menacing tone and then whispers] *Nobody looking, I'll do some shoplifting …* [snatches sweets and tucks them under imagined jacket, all done in an exaggerated fashion, played to the audience] *No police.* [walks away] *Good.* [adopts teacher stance again, turns to face student and speaks in a mock imperious manner] *Did you ever shoplift, Daniela?* [Daniela, like all the other students, understands the teacher's sense of humour]

Daniela: *What? No, no. I did not nev… I never shoplifted.*

Teacher: *No? Strange.* [winks to all, to indicate this is a joke] *I saw you in Tesco's yesterday.* [mimes shoplifting] *You like chocolate, don't you?*

Daniela: [laughing] *No, not me. Maybe **you** are … shoplift?*

Teacher: *Me, a shoplifter? Well, er …* [changes tone to mock disturbed, flustered] *Good question. Now, let's look at page 12.* [students chuckle]

In the above demonstration, there is again real communication (visual and verbal). It does require some work from the teacher, but for both teacher and learners the activity is much more enjoyable than the concept question procedure, and would seem to check and consolidate the understanding of *shoplift* better.

Checking knowledge

Other, more communicative types of question, such as 'knowledge/reference' questions (eg *Is there a hardware store near your house? Have you ever bought anything there?*) are sometimes included under concept questions, but I don't regard them as the harmful type (insulting one's intelligence) that are too often included in teacher training material. Knowledge/reference/opinion questions have a valuable place in information-gap interaction, and would be more suitable after the 'visual + interaction' check as consolidation, rather than acting as concept checks alone.

Checking grammar

Concept questions are also occasionally recommended for checking understanding of grammatical items. I shan't deal with this here, as the above examples with vocabulary should suffice to convey my opinion, but asking questions about grammar usually entails using metalanguage, and most experts agree that this should be minimised, giving priority to communicative interaction with relevant examples.

Checking abstractions

I have restricted myself here to concrete referent vocabulary because that is the type featured in examples I have seen on teacher training videos, in books and on the internet. However, *abstract* vocabulary can also be explained communicatively by means of context-rich examples and other communicative methods as contained in most training manuals.

Teacher training

It remains to discuss the role of teacher training in the implementation of the principles of CLT. In the above two examples of communicative concept checking, there is a need for generous amounts of boardwork training and even drama training. An intensive four-week pre-service course may need to dedicate more time to helping trainees develop their understanding of communicative interaction and an appreciation of its priority in teaching: leading, most importantly, to the building of the practical skills necessary for the implementation of real CLT.

Some trainers will say it's not feasible to expect trainees to learn how to draw and write fast while talking. But what's the alternative – non-communicative language? Solely verbal explanation? Of course, not all trainees will turn out to be actors, but a little miming can go a long way towards making the difference between the quiet, semi-bored class and the one where chuckles are heard and all are involved. I know that not all trainees, especially those from 'face-saving' cultures, will feel comfortable risking being laughed at, yet, curiously, they will expect students to roleplay without question. Be that as it may, the extra time spent concentrating on communicative teaching with visually-aided interaction would surely benefit all participants.

★ ★ ★

ELT teacher trainers must be faithful to the principles of CLT; to contradict any of them for the sake of some neat flow-chart or checklist is a serious wrongdoing and sends confusing signals to the trainees. Let's remember a simple maxim: *If it doesn't happen in real communication, then it shouldn't happen in the classroom.* It remains for the syllabus designers of teacher training courses to increase the time spent on building communicative teaching skills and reduce that spent on low-relevance theory and non-communicative teaching – starting with the elimination of the concept question! ETp

Rich, S 'The battle of the boards' *English Teaching Professional* 78 2012



Tony Penston is Director of Studies at Eden College, Bray, Ireland. He has over 30 years' experience of EFL teaching and teacher training. His interests centre on 'real' CLT, and he likes to write and self-publish in his spare time.

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Language Learner Literature Awards 2013

Congratulations to the winners of the 2013 Language Learner Literature Awards.

The LLL Awards are given by the Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF), a not-for-profit organisation that supports and promotes extensive reading in language education. The winning book in each of five categories is chosen by an international jury, taking into account the internet votes and comments of students and teachers around the world.

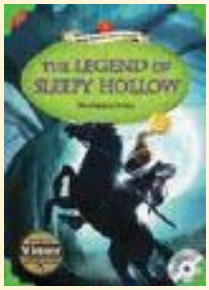
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Young learners

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by Washington Irving, retold by Casey Malarcher
Illustrated by Gustavo Mazali
Published by Compass
ISBN: 978-1-59966-678-5

Judges' comment: *Innovation and classic storytelling are mixed seamlessly in this story. The book includes a playlet for a class performance and wonderful illustrations.*

Finalists
The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde, retold by Jane Cadwallader (ELI Readers); *White Fang* by Jack London, retold by Jane Cadwallader (ELI Readers)

Adolescent and Adult: Beginner

★ **Winner** ★ ***The Girl with Green Eyes***



by John Escott
Illustrated by Dylan Gibson
Published by Oxford University Press
ISBN: 978-0-194-79434-3

Judges' comment: *Who is the girl with the green eyes? Why is she so interested in Mark? And is the man in the hotel really her stepfather? Find out when you read this story.*

Finalist
The Little Match Girl by Hans Christian Andersen, retold by Bill Bowler (OUP)

Adolescent and Adult: Elementary

★ **Winner** ★ ***Les Misérables***



by Victor Hugo, retold by Jennifer Bassett
Illustrated by Giorgio Bacchin
Published by Oxford University Press
ISBN: 978-0-19-479440-4

Judges' comments: *This well-written retelling is an excellent way to get to know this great story. The 'set-the-stage' sections help the reader quickly catch up on important events.*

Finalists
Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift, retold by Janet Borsbey and Ruth Swan (ELI Readers); *Marley and Me* by John Grogan, retold by Anne Collins (Pearson Education/Penguin Readers)

Adolescent and Adult: Intermediate

★ **Winner** ★ ***The Green Room***



by Robert Campbell
Illustrated by Valentina Russello
Published by Helbling Languages
ISBN: 978-3-85272-327-3

Judges' comments: *This is a story about adolescent conflicts and the growing up process. What makes it special is the clever way in which the author interweaves the main plot with the plot of the play-within-the story.*

Finalists
The Case of the Dead Batsman by Peter Viney (Garnet Education); *Owl Hall* by Robert Campbell from an original idea by Robert Campbell and Lindsay Clandfield (Macmillan Education)

Adolescent and Adult: Upper-intermediate and Advanced

★ **Winner** ★ ***Manhunt***



by Richard MacAndrew
Map artwork by Malcolm Barnes
Published by Cambridge University Press
ISBN: 978-01-107-62455-1

Judges' comments: *This original murder mystery, set in a rural community, is a compelling read for crime story enthusiasts.*

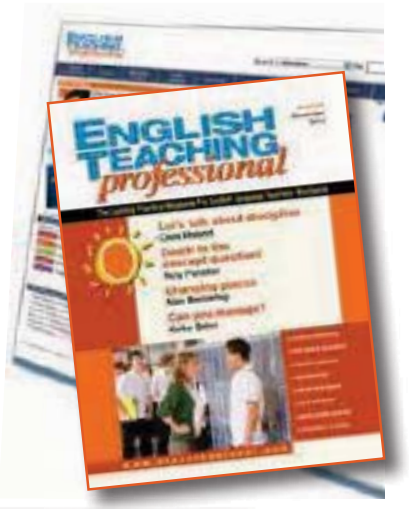
Finalists
One Day by David Nicholls, retold by F H Cornish (Macmillan Education); *Sherlock: A Study in Pink*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, adapted by Steven Moffat and retold by Paul Shipton (Scholastic)

2014 Awards

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- One page: around 850 words
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- Three pages: around 2,200 words

If illustrations or diagrams are required, please reduce the word count to compensate.

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IT WORKS IN PRACTICE

More tested lessons, suggestions, tips and techniques which have all worked for ET*p* readers. Try them out for yourself – and then send us your own contribution. Don't forget to include your postal address.

All the contributors to It Works in Practice in this issue of ET*p* will receive a copy of *Ready for First*, by Roy Norris, published by Macmillan. Macmillan have kindly agreed to be sponsors of It Works in Practice for this year.



Using songs in class

Songs are often used as fillers or something to use up a few minutes at the end of a lesson, but there are things that you can do that make them more than just entertainment for the students by adding an element of language practice. Here are ten ideas:

1. Jumble the words of the song title and ask the students to put them in the correct order.
2. Jumble the lines of the song and ask the students to use their knowledge of clauses, collocations or grammatical structures to put them in the correct order.
3. Get the students to identify and comment on any *incorrect* language usage within the song.
4. Encourage the students to do some research on the song. Who wrote the lyrics? Who wrote the music? Has it featured in any films? If it has won an award, what did it win and when?
5. Elicit the students' personal responses to the song. Do they like it? What do they think it is about? Do they think it is optimistic or pessimistic?
6. Choose a number of words from the lyrics and pair them with other words that might be mistaken for them, eg *words/worlds*, *eyes/ice*, *singing/sinking*. Make a list of these pairs and ask the students to underline the words they hear as they listen to the song.
7. Write some of the words from the song lyrics in phonemic script and get the students to listen to the song and write the words next to the phonemic symbols.
8. Ask the students to write sentences using new words they have learnt from the song.
9. Give the students a list of adjectives which include some from the song lyrics. Get them to listen and underline the ones they hear. Then ask them to say what the adjectives are describing.
10. Write definitions of some of the new words in the lyrics and ask the students to listen and find the words that match the definitions.

Helena Dobersek
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Attention! Extraterrestrials!

We do not have articles in our mother tongue, so it is often not an easy task to get my students to use them at all, let alone correctly. We learn all the rules and do all sorts of exercises, but, alas, when it comes to speaking and writing (it is especially noticeable in written assignments) articles seldom make an appearance. I have seen innumerable pieces of students' work without a single one! When my students are speaking and they miss out articles, I correct them, they correct themselves and then, in no time at all, they have forgotten and made the very same mistake all over again! Sometimes I feel desperate, but I have decided that the answer is simple: articles are just aliens – and it will take us more effort and more time to deal with them

One of the things I like to do is to choose a couple of paragraphs from the coursebook we are using – paragraphs we have dealt with before, not ones which are completely new to the students. I copy these out and omit all the articles. I usually let my students know the number of articles omitted and ask them to improve the paragraphs by adding suitable 'aliens'. They usually cope fine and, moreover, they revise the vocabulary they have learnt before – killing two birds with one stone, as the saying goes.

Another technique is to get the students to watch a film (our favourite out-of-class activity). I then write a short summary of the film – again with no articles – and ask my students to supply them whenever necessary. This has the same benefits – raising the students' awareness of the use of articles, plus revising vocabulary from the film.

I have tried this technique several times, and each time I was well satisfied with the outcome – and so were the students.

Nataliya Potapova
Uzhhorod, Ukraine

Twenty questions – with a difference

Everyone knows the guessing game 'Twenty questions', in which one person thinks of an object and the other players have a maximum of 20 *yes/no* questions to find out what it is. However, there are lots of ways to adapt the game for use in language teaching. Here are six variations:

1 Twenty question tags

Specify that the students have to start guessing the object by using negative statements and positive tags, eg *It's not green, is it?* When they are more sure of the answer, they can change to using positive statements and negative tags, eg *It's expensive, isn't it?*

2 Twenty grammar questions

Choose a short (four-word) question instead of an object, eg *Do you like icecream?* The questions the students ask to guess the object have to relate to grammar as well as content, eg *Does it have an auxiliary verb? Is the main verb regular? Is there a pronoun? Is the pronoun singular or plural? Is it present tense? Is it about food/drink/music? Is it about your preferences?*

3 Vocabulary twenty questions

This is similar to 'Twenty grammar questions', but the questions have to relate to spelling and word form, eg *Does it have an F? Does it have five letters? Does it start with a vowel? Is it plural? Is it a noun? Is it countable? Does it have a double letter? Does it have two syllables? Does it have a suffix?*

4 Conversation twenty questions

The questions have to be built into a conversation. For example:

A *Yesterday I saw something strange.*
B *Was it big?*
A *Well, yes, quite big. I was a bit afraid of it.*
B *Perhaps it was an animal. Was it alive?*
A *Yes, it certainly was. It was moving.*
B *I see. I wonder what it was. Did it have a tail?*

5 Competitive twenty questions

In this version, the aim is to get the answer *yes* as many times as possible. The students play in groups of three; one thinks of an object and the other two take it in turns to ask questions. Students score one point for each positive answer they get. The person who finds the word gets three extra points. The student with the most points at the end wins.

6 Twenty-five questions

This is the same as the traditional game, but the person thinking of an object is allowed to 'pass' on five of the questions. This adds interest to the game, because the passes can be used to prevent the guessers from getting helpful information. Alternatively, the passes can be used as 'red herrings' or distractors, to make the guessers think a question is important, when in fact it is not.

Finally, why not make up your own variation of the world's best-known language game?

Simon Mumford
Izmir, Turkey

Cartoon strip dialogues

This is a pairwork activity that encourages students to talk to each other as they prepare cartoon dialogues, and gives them an opportunity to present their work to the rest of the class.

You will need several cartoon strips which either have no dialogue or where the original dialogue has been obscured. Display these on the board.

Put the students into pairs and ask each pair to choose one of the cartoons strips. Give them five minutes to prepare a dialogue between the characters in their cartoon. Strong students can memorise their words, but weaker ones might want to write them down on cards.

Get the pairs to take turns to present their dialogues to the class.

T S Bindhu
Kollam, India

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Changing places

Alan Beckerleg charts his experience of maps that motivate.

I was halfway through a three-hour class with PET-level teenagers and the topic in the coursebook was *If you could change your town, what would you change?* This was greeted with a mix of silence and a few *I don't know*s. There were photos in the coursebook of places in towns, but I thought my students needed something more meaningful in order to get the topic to work. Then I had the idea of producing photocopies of a street plan of the city where they live.



Identifying

Giving them these photocopies immediately created interest, as they started finding the streets where they lived, their school, the main square, etc. We also looked at the map to find places you would normally find in a city, such as a hospital, a cinema and a fire station. (You could make a game out of this – the first team to find the place – but you would have to know the city as well as your students do!)

Redesigning

Then I asked them to find some things that I knew the city map didn't have. *'Where's the zoo?'* I asked. *'We haven't got a zoo,'* they replied. *'Where would you put a zoo?'* I asked. And from there they began to redesign their street maps. They drew buildings and statues and parks and anything they thought their city should have. This was very motivating, as it was their own city they were redesigning. What was a distant task in the coursebook became a personalised and 'hands-on' project. When they had finished redesigning their maps (which they did in groups) I photocopied the new maps and they wrote a text to explain the changes they had made. I told them to write the text in the second conditional (eg *If the factory was knocked down, we could build an IMAX cinema here*) but you could use the future passive or different grammar forms to present the maps. Each group then gave a presentation to the other members of the class.

Elaborating

Once they had finished presenting their redesigned street maps, I realised that there was so much more we could do with them. One week, they created a tourist route, drawing the route on the map, passing many of the buildings and monuments they had previously designed. Using prepositions of movement (a target language area in the coursebook), they then gave a guided virtual tour to the other students in the class, using short prepared texts to describe the history of each important site. For example: *'After we go past the park, we go up the hill where you can see the statue of Xavi, which was built in honour of his English exam mark.'*

Another use of the redesigned maps is to create what I call 'micro-stories' of the city. These are one-sentence descriptions of events that the students write on small pieces of paper and then stick onto the map to indicate where the event happened or will happen. Once given a few examples and suggestions, the students become very imaginative, particularly when they use the names of others members of the class – or even the teacher! My students wrote things like *'Xavi was seen giving money to a politician here'* or *'Claudia was photographed dancing here'*. The language area I usually practise here is the passive, and my students find this very motivating and much more enjoyable than doing gap-fills in a book. It also really helps them see why some verbs can't be used in the passive.

★ ★ ★

These are just a few ideas for how you can use street maps in class, but there are many more possibilities and language points that you can teach with them. You can design the city according to how it will look in the future, working with future tenses, or use comparatives and superlatives to compare each group's map, eg *Which has the tallest building?* The students can be asked to prepare questions about their maps for other groups.

I believe the main reason for the success I have had with these street maps is that they are motivating because they are personal: the students are using their own ideas and imagination and creating their own grammatical sentences. All the teaching comes through the maps and the students' own work, and it is work that can be revisited and used time and time again. Try it! ETp



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ENGLISH TEACHING CONFESSIONAL

Jeremiah Gonzalez relates the story of an inspirational student.

To teach is to become involved in the lives of your students and to share in their successes and failures. Throughout my teaching career, I have had the opportunity to share in many memorable experiences with my students. I have been there when young children read for the first time, when young adults wrote their first college paper, and when adults learnt their first words of English. Although all of these experiences have been filled with challenges, rewards and frustrations, one of my most significant experiences involved a young father named José.

José was born in Ciudad Juárez in Northern Mexico. He moved to the United States with his wife and two young children, in search of work and a better life for his children. When I first met him, I was struck by his friendly manner and strong desire to learn the English language. I was teaching Adult ESL in San Fernando, California – a small community in the San Fernando Valley, with a strong Mexican presence. José was quick to introduce himself to me, but struggled to communicate beyond simple greetings and basic conversation. Although his English skills were limited, he had a big heart and was a hard worker.

In a class made up almost entirely of young male immigrants from Mexico, José stood out. Although his physical features and cultural identity strongly resembled those of his peers, his maturity and humility distinguished him. As a teacher new to San Fernando Adult School, I was surprised when one day José invited me to his home for dinner. He told me that his wife wanted to meet me, and invited me to bring my wife, too. Although I was initially hesitant to accept this offer from a student, I consented, not wanting to offend him.

When my wife and I arrived at José's apartment I was struck by the challenges facing the family. The apartment, which had only one bedroom, was shared by José, his wife, his two children and his brother. The living room lacked a couch, so the family sat on a mattress and box spring that would later serve as a bed for the children. José's wife was busy in the kitchen, preparing enchiladas, rice and beans for the dinner. Although it was September, the apartment was sweltering, as the heat from the stove and the back of the refrigerator radiated into the living room. Although the conditions were cramped, it was clear that what I saw as uncomfortable was invisible to José and his family.

Throughout the semester, José continued to improve in his command of the English language. His commitment to learning was inspiring, and although he worked a full day prior to each class, he was rarely absent and always participated. One day, he arrived at class with a noticeable limp. I asked him what had happened and he told me that he had accidentally shot himself in the knee with a nail gun while at work. I asked him if he had been to the doctor and he said that he did not have insurance, so his wife just removed the nail and wrapped his knee in a gauze bandage. Despite José's struggles, he never ceased to inspire me by his attitude and perseverance.

After that semester, José advanced to the next level of ESL and left my class. I was sad to see him go, but I knew that he would continue to succeed. A few months later, I received a phone call from him. Work had slowed down and he was unable to earn enough to pay the rent. He told me that he would be moving back to Juárez with his family. I told him that I would miss him and that I wished him good luck. He thanked me for teaching him English and offered me a place to stay if I ever visited Juárez. I haven't seen José since.

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Although my career has been filled with many rewarding and challenging experiences, the story of José stands out for me as one of the most significant. Although I was the teacher, I think perhaps I gained more from our brief encounter. José taught me about dealing with hardship, the power of humility and about the optimism of the immigrant spirit. While I may never see him again, I am often reminded of him by other immigrant students in my classes. Their faces inspire me and remind me that what I do matters. That is why I teach.



Jeremiah Gonzalez has served in a variety of educational roles, including elementary school teacher, instructional coach, EL coordinator, ESL instructor, teacher advisor, community college instructor and adjunct university professor. He has a PhD in Urban Education from Claremont Graduate University, California, USA.

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From the general to the particular

Marjorie Rosenberg makes general activities relevant for specific purposes.

It is generally taken as fact that speaking skills are important in the world of business. Most businesspeople would agree that a large percentage of business is done in English and involves both native speakers and non-native speakers, who need to find ways to communicate with each other to get their point across. In addition, small talk is essential in many cultures (and sometimes poses a problem in the mother tongue) and business may also be done on the telephone, adding an additional challenge for the non-native speaker of English.

Specificity

The fears and problems confronting businesspeople have many similarities to those faced by students in general English classes. Learners are afraid of making mistakes, demonstrating a lack of necessary vocabulary or not using the correct register – factors which they feel can put them at a disadvantage in both social and business situations. Other problems which arise can be incorrect pronunciation and structures, making it difficult for these speakers to get their message across.

However, the business English classroom also brings a number of additional problems to light. Business communication is task-related, goal-oriented, purposeful, culturally sensitive and based on relationship-building, which means that the job of the business English trainer may take on a completely different dimension. The functions and skills necessary for our learners are similar to those taught in general English classes – but they are looked at quite differently when they mean gaining or losing business. Turn-taking, actively listening, responding correctly, exchanging information accurately, asking for and giving opinions relevant to the topic, speculating and hypothesising, negotiating and being able to reach consensus in a group are vital skills. In addition, business English learners must be able to master a number of business skills, such as giving presentations and speaking confidently in front of an audience, abilities which may also be challenging in their mother tongue.

Successful businesspeople are generally open to trying out activities as long as they understand there is a reason for doing them

Challenge

The necessity of teaching business learners to speak can, therefore, be taken as a given. However, what can we do in the classroom to provide engaging, challenging and relevant lessons for our learners? The learning context also differs widely for business English teaching. Classes may consist of small groups from one company, in which each learner's position in the company will also affect their willingness to speak, express opinions and take chances on trying out new language in the classroom. The lessons might take place during working hours, where interruptions can occur; they may be in the evening, after people have already put in a full day's work; or they could be one-to-one classes, designed to train someone for a specific task. They may even involve secondary- or tertiary-level learners who have not yet experienced the reality of the workplace. As business English trainers, we really need to stay flexible and adapt our lessons to what our learners need.

Specific activities

Trainers starting out in business English are sometimes reluctant to incorporate ideas which they have used successfully in general English classes because they believe that business English has to be 'serious stuff'. However, successful businesspeople are often creative, innovative and communicative, which means that they are generally open to trying out activities as long as they understand there is a reason for doing them. Helping learners to become more confident and fluent often entails helping them to get over the fears mentioned above. Providing them with tasks which require them to use their communicative skills, as well as problem-solving strategies or negotiation skills, is crucial as these skills are just what they have come to class to learn. Making these activities engaging will start the ball rolling, and when the learners begin to experience their own progress, they will generally continue on this path.

Information gap

One idea which works well in a variety of business English classes is to use information-gap activities. These can be set up in a variety of ways. One way is to put the learners in pairs, ask them to sit

back-to-back and give one of them a drawing which is relevant to their job. They have to describe it to the other learner, who then draws it. The person doing the drawing can ask as many questions as they like, but cannot see the original drawing until they have finished. As long as the vocabulary is relevant, business English learners enjoy doing this activity – it can be related to telephone conversations in which the speakers need to give exact instructions or information without seeing the other person face-to-face.

There are a number of information-gap exercises in which business English learners can practise asking for and giving information: using real timetables to find out about flights or trains, saying numbers necessary for financial documents, drawing charts or graphs, etc.

Situational roleplay

Persuasive language is another area in which most businesspeople immediately see the relevance of activities. Phrases used by salespeople can be brainstormed with the class or given on a handout for the learners to look at. These can be further broken down into hard- or soft-sell categories, and the learners can be asked which of these phrases they react best to or tend to use themselves. The second part of the activity involves dividing the class into two groups: buyers and sellers. The sellers are either given cards with pictures or descriptions of items, or told to look around the classroom and find something to sell, such as a pencil case, data projector or even just a paper clip. The sellers are then told to find buyers and sell them as many items as they can. While the learners are working, the teacher can easily listen in to the conversations and make notes on useful language to teach after the activity is over. An important aspect of this activity is the de-briefing, in which the sellers talk about how successful they were and the buyers say what convinced them to buy an item. In this way, they not only practise language but also learn valuable skills when trying to persuade someone to do something. As the conversation is purposeful, learners generally feel that is a useful activity, which encourages them to put aside their inhibitions and allows them to use whatever English they have at their disposal, often a realistic situation in a business context. In my classes, several participants have been extremely creative with their descriptions of the objects they chose to sell, as well as with their sales arguments.

Catch the word

Another way to encourage conversation in the classroom is to brainstorm words or phrases that the learners have heard or already know on a particular topic and write them on the board. Then a soft ball is thrown around the classroom, and each learner who catches it has to choose one of the words from the list to use in a sentence. They are told that they must create sentences which follow on logically what has been said before in order to come up with an anecdote about the topic. For example,

> *We can come up with as many ideas as we like, but if we cannot motivate our learners to try them out, then we have little chance of reaching our goal*

if the topic is 'business trips', the first learner might begin with the word *check-in* to talk about a trip they have taken. The second learner may choose the word *delay* to describe the next step in the trip. This activity can continue until there is a complete story or until all the words have been used. This encourages the learners to think on their feet and to build a complete story, rather than simply practising chunks of language or individual sentences. This is a good technique for working on cohesion, relevance and linking words.

Presentations

The following idea is adapted from Sheelagh Dellar and Christine Price's book for CLIL. The learners are asked to think of a topic that they feel they are experts in. This can be done spontaneously in the classroom, or the learners can do some research at home on the topic before the lesson in which the activity will be carried out. One learner then announces the topic that they are expert in, and the others are given five minutes to write on the board some questions they would like answered about the topic. The learner whose topic it is then has to speak about the topic and incorporate the answers to these questions in a mini-presentation. This is an excellent way to prepare learners for the Q&A sessions following presentations, when they may be taken by surprise by some of the queries that come from the audience.

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To sum up, perhaps the most important challenge lies in motivating the learners. We can come up with as many ideas as we like, but if we cannot motivate our learners to try them out, then we have little chance of reaching our goal. We need to make sure there is a *reason* to speak; this can include a problem that needs to be resolved, the goal of selling an item, trying to get an opinion across, describing something, asking questions to clarify information, etc. Another part of our job is to provide *support*. This is true in any classroom, but when we work with those who are decision-makers with power in their working lives, we have to ensure that they trust us enough to take chances in the language. As they are used to being 'right', it is necessary to help them understand that learning a language also means making mistakes.

Making business English lessons fun can help us to break down barriers and establish a feeling of trust in the classroom. When learners laugh, they relax – and language may come more easily to them. ETp

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Generating genuine growth

Chaz Pugliese wants to turn the tide of education.

Here is a question for you: *Do our schools promote our students' growth?* My answer is: *No, they don't.*

I'd like to explain why this is so, and to offer one or two ideas that may contribute to changing the status quo. First, though, we need to clarify what is meant by 'growth'. The best definition I have found is that given by UNESCO: *growth is learning to know, learning to do, learning to live, learning to be.*

Achievement or learning?

Let's take a look at what has happened to our schools over the last few decades. In a steady, unrelenting process of commodification, education has become just another product to market and sell. On the one hand, we've allowed universities to be run as corporations, chasing profits, competing for students and, in so doing, often lowering their standards. On the other hand, we've allowed corporations to negotiate with educational authorities and, in some cases, impose their curricula or make dodgy deals. An American public school in Portland, Oregon, wanted to purchase new audio/video equipment, but they didn't have enough cash. The biggest local TV channel stepped in and offered to buy the goods for them and the school accepted. However, there was a catch: every day the students have to watch a 20-minute broadcast packed with commercials! This is not an isolated case, either. The *New York Times* reported that in New Jersey an educational cable TV channel gave an elementary school $7,100 to buy 30 classroom word processors – in exchange for weekly focus groups with students for market research purposes.

In addition, it seems to me that education's primary role has been reduced to serving the needs of corporations. Nowadays, a widely acepted idea is that a school's main mission is to prepare the students for the workplace. (This is one of the reasons why ministries of education, publishers and a conspicuous part of the ELT 'intelligentsia' have been pushing for more CLIL-based teaching.) Personally, I see this as a very dangerous trend, simply because the students will adopt a utilitarian view of education. They will stop following their hunches, and they won't study what they're really interested in unless it is something that they perceive as being valued by 'the market'. In other words, they will just study for grades, they won't take any risks, they won't experiment, they will just want to 'make it', whatever 'making it' means.

We've managed to install a culture of achievement to the detriment of learning, and this industrial culture that emphasises grades and tests has done significant damage to our schools: we've produced a generation of stressed-out students. Back in my student days, you went to college to get an education and discover yourself – but also to hang out with friends, play hard and be extreme, in more ways than one. There didn't use to be this obsession with grades which now seems to dominate our schools and which constitutes the *de facto* antithesis of education.

Discovery or conformity?

A few years ago, Denise Pope, from Stanford School of Education, shadowed several of the most brilliant students at a top-notch high school in California in order to see what they were doing in school. She wrote a book about it – and frankly, the portrait she paints of these students is rather depressing. Students, she concluded, even the best ones, are anxious, angry, caught in a grade trap and frustrated and resentful that their future depends on their test scores. As a result, they will try anything under the sun to outdo the system: they're constantly cutting corners, sucking up to their teachers and employing all the legal tactics to beat the system. This attitude is what Pope calls 'doing school', also the title of her book.

We've managed to install a culture of achievement to the detriment of learning, and this has done significant damage to our schools

Hands up who hasn't had students ask these questions: *Are you going to grade us on this?* (The implication being: *If you aren't, I'm not going to bother with it.*) Or, my all-time favourite: *Sorry I couldn't come to class last week. Did I miss anything?*

Kids nowadays learn something only if they know they're going to be graded on it. But can we call this *learning*? Isn't *memorising* a far better word to describe what they're doing? But, again, is it the students' fault? I don't think so: they are merely responding to external pressure. We've manufactured a generation of stressed-out students (SOS, as Pope calls them) for whom achievement, not learning, is the most important thing. We've allowed the emphasis to shift from discovery to comformity, from creativity to standardisation. This type of

21st-century school frustrates the students, as well as alienating the teachers from their work by stripping it of any creative endeavour and reducing teaching to merely following scripted lesson plans.

Reward or satisfaction?

Schools have greatly exaggerated the importance of extrinsic rewards. As a result, students don't study for intrinsic reasons any more. In a way, they don't behave as students any more and perhaps, as Al Kohn suggests, we should call them *point collectors* instead. This is what happens when we play down the fact that engagement in school should provide intrinsic satisfaction.

One of the most well-established findings in the field of motivational psychology is that the more people are rewarded for doing something, the more they tend to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward. Study after study has found that students – from elementary school to graduate school, and across cultures – demonstrate less interest in learning as a result of being graded (see Carl Benware and Edward Deci). Interestingly, child psychologists say the same thing about motivating children. They recommend that if your child is a slow eater and rarely finishes a meal, you shouldn't offer a reward for finishing, not even praise.

Furthermore, grades don't encourage students to be autonomous. Fostering autonomy is an uphill battle, because modern society doesn't encourage it. Philosopher Charles Taylor has referred to this as the *'malaise of instrumental reason'*. Everything is evaluated in terms of its bottom-line yield. The cost–benefit ratio, if you will. What a horrible metaphor for education! We need to change this.

Human beings or students?

I think a lot can be done to redress the status quo.

Firstly, let's make sure we ask the right questions. Forget about: *What's good for the corporations?* and replace it instead with a much more sensible: *What's good for our kids?* Let's ask ourselves: *What's the purpose of education?* Is it to prepare someone for the workplace? Or is it, as John Dewey said, preparation for life? Or is it life *itself*? Nel Noddings once said the purpose of schools should be to produce competent, caring, loving and lovable people. I'd like to add that schools should not just have an economic role, the role of churning out future workers to fatten up corporate profits. I believe they should, instead, help to create and sustain a democratic society.

Secondly, maybe it's time we started looking at teaching as a social act again. I'm advocating a type of teaching that is uncluttered, that doesn't just focus on the needs of the student, but on the needs of the human being as well. This is the only way we can try to wean our students away from the grade trap. We need to muster up the courage to look at a lesson plan as, at worst, a straitjacket and, at best, a wish list, with items and outcomes that may happen, or not. Teaching should involve making things meaningful for the students, provoking activity in their minds and helping them to create meaning. Learners construct meaning from context and experience. Humanistic teaching is just that: experiential in nature. I'm aware that we will need a powerful shift to pull this off: we will have to redesign the teacher's and the students' roles.

> *The more people are rewarded for doing something, the more they tend to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward*

Thirdly, it would help if we looked at teaching as *spontaneous expression*, as a conversation. A key responsibility of the teacher is to enable these conversations to happen and to create pedagogic surprises. But to achieve this, we need a paradigm shift: teachers need to be adequately trained, they need to learn how to deal with the myriad unpredictable outcomes. In Issue 82 of ET*p*, Adrian Underhill and Alan Maley highlighted the need for teachers to focus on improvisation skills to deal with the 'dark matter' of a lesson, the unexpected events. In other words, teachers need to be more creative. Creativity is a tool that will help them to find their individual voice and to teach from the heart.

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> *I'm advocating a type of teaching that doesn't just focus on the needs of the student, but on the needs of the human being as well*

In *Educating Rita*, a movie loosely based on George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*, Rita, a hairdresser in her mid-20s with no formal schooling, decides to get herself educated. When asked by her tutor during their first meeting what made her decide to go to school, she says: *'I figured there must be better songs to sing out there.'*

The changes I have suggested above may look like a tall order. They *are* a tall order. It would take a *tsunami* to change the system that much. But, come to think of it, even a long stretch of light rain, if incessant, would do. It may be late, but we can make it. If we get this right, then our students, like Rita, may have a chance to look at a different songbook altogether. ETp

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LANGUAGE LOG

All you need is *get*

John Potts charts the intricacies and idiosyncrasies, the contradictions and complications that make the English language so fascinating for teachers and teaching. In this issue, he gets us thinking about *get*.

There's a story, no doubt apocryphal, that a learner of English once said: *'English is easy – all you need to learn is* ***get.****'* And you could say he'd *got a point*, because 'get' is one of the most frequently used verbs in the language. In addition to its range of meanings, it also forms a multitude of phrasal verbs, fixed expressions and other collocations and, consequently, it ranks in the top 50 in word frequency tables. (The Oxford English Corpus places it at 47, while the American English data from *www.wordfrequency.info* put it at 39. Both tables rank it as the seventh most frequent verb.)

Get is sometimes called a 'delexical' or 'light' verb, one of a small group of (high-frequency) verbs that, in themselves, may appear to have low or little semantic content: other examples are *make*, *do*, *have*, *go*, *give*, *take*, *set* and *put*. This article will focus on *get* – we'll *get to grips with* some of the others another day.

To *get an idea* of the scale of *get*, let's *get started* by looking at what dictionaries *have got* for us: the *Macmillan Dictionary* lists 15 entries for *get* (v), plus six phrases, and then dozens of phrasal verbs and expressions using *get*, while the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* lists 27 entries for *get* (v), followed by 16 idioms (with the note that most of the idioms using *get* are to be found at the entries for the noun or adjective in the idiom) and, again, dozens of phrasal verbs. Princeton's *WordNet* lists 37 entries for *get* (v), while the *Oxford English Dictionary* has 81 for the verb, each often with several sub-entries.

Enough there to *get our teeth into*, surely. Indeed, rather too much – our learners could easily *get discouraged* if they are simply presented with a long, long list of expressions to learn and told to *get on with it*.

As can be seen from the examples above, *get* can combine with nouns or adjectives in order to create new lexical items – *get* itself often doesn't contribute a great deal to the semantic meaning of the item, though there is usually an element of concepts such as *(come to) possess or obtain*, *receive*, *become* or *reach*.

Very often, the *get* construction is informal, and there are corresponding and more formal versions that don't employ *get*: for example, *get tired → become tired → tire*; *get started → begin*; *get a job → find employment*, etc. This informal aspect of *get* led my teachers at primary and grammar school to insist that there was always a better, more precise, verb than *get*, and I would dutifully rewrite my *get* sentences: *to obtain a prize*, *to reach one's destination*, *to become older*, etc. Today, as a language teacher, I find myself sending a somewhat similar message to my business English and Cambridge exams students – though I phrase it rather differently, emphasising appropriacy, formality, written English and the like.

To *get a little historical and literary perspective*, illustrating something of its respectable pedigree, let's go back to the turn of the 17th century: Hamlet famously told Ophelia to *get thee to a nunnery*, while *Get thee gone* occurs in *Romeo and Juliet*. The King James Bible of 1611 has numerous examples, including *Get thee behind me* and *Get thee hence*.

However, there are other features of *get* that need attention as well. For example, the use of *get* instead of *be* in informal passives, such as *The parcel got damaged in the post*. And the subtle but important difference between *have something done* and *get something done*: for example, *I finally got my qualifications recognised*. There are other frequent patterns, too: *to get somebody to do something*, where *get* has a sense of anything from 'persuade' to (almost) 'force'. There's a nice distinction between *get* + object + adjective, as in *This gets people angry*, and *get* + object + past participle, as in *He got her sacked*. Another pattern is *get* +

LANGUAGE LOG: All you need is *get*

object + present participle, as in *It got me thinking*. These various patterns highlight just how tricky the verb can be, as the constructions can easily become confused.

Then there's *gotten*. This innocent past participle seems to *get some people's goats* – or at least *get on their nerves*. Many British English speakers see it as a quintessential Americanism (and, regrettably, for some British English speakers things don't *get worse* than that!) but actually it's *got* a long history in British English. It was used from the 14th up until the 19th century, since when it seems to have *gotten* neglected in British English, while remaining current in the North American variety. In fact, *gotten* is still used in some British dialects, and remains in standard British English in a few expressions, such as *ill-gotten gains*.

In American English, *gotten* is used to express something that has been obtained, acquired or reached – *she's gotten us some good contacts*, *it's gotten dark*, etc – whereas *got* is used to show simple possession (= *have*): *she's got two sisters*, *I've got a question for you*, etc. Some American English speakers omit the auxiliary *have*, especially in spoken informal language: *I got a question for you*. Or as Sonny and Cher sang, back in the sixties: *I got you, babe*. In very informal written language, *got to* becomes *gotta*, as in *When you gotta go, you gotta go*!

Well, that's all *I've got space for* in this issue. Time for me to *get going*! I'll leave you with an extract from a letter from the celebrated American writer, Willa Cather, written to her brother Douglass in 1916:

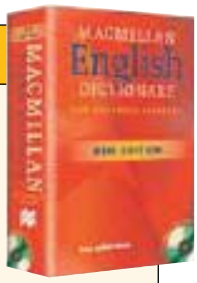
I want to stay at home for a month or two, if it is agreeable to everybody, but I won't stay after I begin to get on anyone's nerves. I shall always be sorry that I went home last summer, because I seemed to get it wrong at every turn ... Be sure to meet me somewhere if you can. I think you'll find me easier to get on with. (quoted in the *New York Review of Books*, 11 July 2013)



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COMPETITION RESULTS



18 B	21 I	7 Z	4 A	3 R	3 R	24 E		14 W	24 E	5 L	9 C	17 O	23 M	24 E
24 E		24 E		4 A			26 S	24 E	4 A		17 O			11 N
2 F	3 R	4 A	10 G	23 M	24 E	11 N	19 T		26 S		4 A	6 D		19 T
17 O		5 L		22 P			4 A	11 N	19 T	24 E	5 L	17 O	22 P	24 E
3 R		17 O			26 S	4 A	9 C			25 X		20 V		3 R
24 E	13 Q	8 U	21 I	22 P			1 K		26 S	21 I	5 L	24 E	11 N	19 T
	8 U	26 S			19 T	17 O		3 R	17 O	19 T	24 E			4 A
	24 E		8 U		12 H		3 R		5 L		20 V		22 P	21 I
15 J	4 A	23 M	18 B	17 O	3 R	24 E	24 E		24 E		24 E	20 V	24 E	11 N
	26 S		21 I		17 O		5 L		23 M	4 A	3 R		4 A	
	16 Y		13 Q		8 U	26 S	24 E		11 N		4 A	5 L	26 S	17 O
23 M		3 R	8 U	11 N	10 G		20 V			24 E	10 G		4 A	12 H
17 O			21 I		12 H	24 E	4 A	3 R	19 T		24 E		11 N	
5 L	4 A	26 S	19 T				11 N			12 H		4 A	19 T	
24 E		17 O	16 Y	24 E	7 Z		19 T	4 A	1 K	24 E				

Congratulations to all those readers who successfully completed our Prize Crossword 59. The winners, who will each receive a copy of the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, are:

Catherine Trecul, Mazangé, France
Halina Muszynska, Katowice, Poland
Renata Hejna, Piaseczno, Poland
Chana Eisenstein, Bnei Brak, Israel
Karine Vallée, Villefrancoeur, France
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1 K	2 F	3 R	4 A	5 L	6 D	7 Z	8 U	9 C	10 G	11 N	12 H	13 Q
14 W	15 J	16 Y	17 O	18 B	19 T	20 V	21 I	22 P	23 M	24 E	25 X	26 S

16 Y	17 O	8 U		4 A	3 R	24 E		11 N	24 E	20 V	24 E	3 R		19 T	17 O	17 O	
17 O	5 L	6 D		19 T	17 O		26 S	24 E	19 T		4 A	11 N	17 O	19 T	12 H	24 E	3 R
10 G	17 O	4 A	5 L		17 O	3 R		19 T	17 O		6 D	3 R	24 E	4 A	23 M		4 A
11 N	24 E	14 W		6 D	3 R	24 E	4 A	23 M									

C S Lewis

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SCRAPBOOK

GEMS, TITBITS, PUZZLES, FOIBLES, QUIRKS, BITS & PIECES, QUOTATIONS, SNIPPETS, ODDS & ENDS, WHAT YOU WILL

You know the sort of thing, I'm sure – you're visiting a country new to you, and somehow you suddenly realise that your carefully acquired vocabulary of *Yes*, *No* and *If you say that once more, I shall exfoliate your grandmother's cat* isn't quite up to the job of finding your hotel.

Two things come to your aid: gesture and facial expression. It is possible to communicate a world of things with these most valuable tools – and to receive similar depth of communication in return. I vividly remember my first solo visit to Paris: I have a good ear



for accents, so when I spoke French it was easily understood. Sadly, it also led to the assumption that my grasp of the language was fluent – which was far from the case. I rehearsed my question to the local policeman, and apart from what I felt was an excusable, if tactless, blunder involving the use of the word *tombe* (meaning 'fall') instead of *tombeau* (tomb) (NOT a good idea if, as an Englishman, you are looking for the tomb of Napoleon …) the catastrophe came when, for directions, I received a whole wheelbarrowful of words, of which I understood only two! Sadly, neither of these were correct, as when I thanked the gendarme and turned smartly left, his expression told me that turning right would have been a better return for his efforts!

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Facial **expression** and facial **expressions**

The voice is capable of such expression that a phone call is infinitely preferable to an email when trying to put across tricky ideas or thoughts. One thing is better still – being able to see the expression on someone's face.

Let's consider what you use to make a facial expression: your eyebrows (especially if you have trained them to work independently!), eyes, mouth, angle of head, movement of head ... To cope with this demanding job, the face has quite a few muscles. The usual number is an impressive 43 although, interestingly, some people have many fewer – in some cases, fewer than 30!

One of the most recognised facial expressions worldwide is a smile. It can take more than ten muscles to display even a tight restrained smile. And of course, a smile is not merely a 'smile'. It comes in a wide variety of flavours – genuinely pleased, happy, sardonic, grim, fake ...

Being able to see someone's mouth is very important when trying to assess their mood or character, and this is acknowledged in several English expressions or idioms. Even though it does not involve actual lingual contortions, saying something 'tongue-in-cheek' only really works face-to-face. The contrast between the apparent sincerity of what's being said and the accompanying facial expression is what makes this and so many other ways of speaking work. Another amusing expression that suggests a considerable degree of contortion is 'to open one's mouth and put one's foot in it', often shortened in conversation to: 'Open mouth, insert foot.'

Equally important indicators, if more subtle, are the eyes; while they don't actually change *themselves*, the surrounding muscles can convey a huge range of emotions, and will often qualify what the rest of the face is doing. People are said to 'smile with their eyes' – so when you receive a smile without the eyes' participation, beware – there may be trouble ahead (without moonlight or music!).

Expressive **intonation**

***Emphasis* can also help or cause confusion, when trying to express yourself. Consider the sentence *I told you that I would do that for you.* On its own, it is a flat and lifeless thing. However, try emphasising different words in turn:**

I told you that I would do that for you. *(Don't listen to gossip.)*

I told you that I would do that for you. *(Why didn't you believe me?)*

I told you that I would do that for you. *(Message not passed on!)*

I told you that I would do that for you. *(Why let her do it – she's such an idiot!)*

I told you that I would do that for you. *(I would have got round to it …)*

I told you that I would do that for you. *(No more, mind you.)*

I told you that I would do that for you. *(There you go, being independent again!)*

I told you that I would do that for you. *(For the Queen, now, probably not ...)*

Self-expression

There are some expressions that are very useful in a particular context: a kind of false innocence is often used in comedy to belie what has been said, frequently for a 'double-entendre' joke. Reactions to other characters are often vital to the punchline of a joke – this is especially true of television, where the screen allows us close-ups of every little facial twitch and nuance. Indeed, I often admire the ability of really good actors to produce infinite gradations of expression to order, time after time. I suspect that it indicates too long spent in front of a mirror, but I suppose not everyone shares my self-examination allergy (watching myself shaving is torture, and my expressions bear this out …)!

Electronic facial **expressions**

Just looking at a brief list of the most common emotions that we display in everyday life is pretty impressive: pleasure, affection, love, distrust, dislike, hatred, rage, joy, sadness, happiness, puzzlement, satisfaction, smugness, questioning, disbelief, warning, encouragement, comedy, tragedy, shiftiness, fear, anger, disgust, surprise.

Recognising the shortcomings of most electronic communication, which is very largely in written form, emailers have adopted the emoticon. These variations on the smiley face have been developed to show a wide range of emotions, including most on my brief list.

See if you can match the meaning with the emoticon:

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



a) happiness
b) disgust
c) anger
d) puzzlement
e) sadness
f) fear
g) surprise
h) contentment

Answers 1e, 2g, 3c, 4f, 5a, 6h, 7b, 8d

Say **cheese!**

Humans have an amazing repertoire of communications not found in nature, although I found that my little Norfolk terrier (sadly, no longer with us) could produce a pretty impressive repertoire herself, but she needed to use her body generally to convey it. Interestingly enough, dogs are alone (I think) in being able to recognise a human smile.

All people smile in the same language. Proverb

Peace begins with a smile. Mother Teresa

If you're not using your smile, you're like a man with a million dollars in the bank and no chequebook. Les Giblin

Wear a smile and have friends; wear a scowl and have wrinkles. George Eliot

A smile is a curve that sets everything straight. Phyllis Diller

A laugh is a smile that bursts. Mary H Waldrip

And **finally …**

What is the longest word in the English language?

Answer
Smiles
(there's a mile between the first and last letter)

Scrapbook compiled by Ian Waring Green

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Reviews

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Effective International Business Communication

by Bob Dignen with Ian McMaster
Collins 2013
978-0-00-746056-4

This book has been written for non-native speakers of English (B2–C1 level on the CEFR scale) who want or need to become more effective communicators in the business world. So, would they be so after working through this self-study book? Yes, I believe they would.

Effective International Business Communication is divided into three sections:

1 The Basics – units focusing on listening and speaking skills.
2 Face-to-Face Skills – eg managing conflict.
3 Virtual Skills – unit topics including telephoning and emails.

These sections are followed by an answer key, a reference section, a further reading list and a glossary.

Each unit starts with a 'reflective' section, which poses leading questions to help the reader focus on the theme of the unit. As each unit has the same format, it is easy to navigate through them. This format consists of:

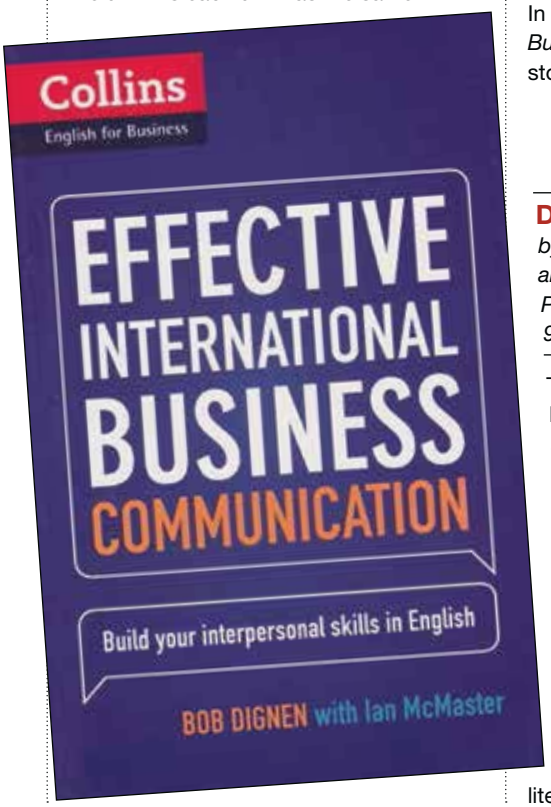
- An engaging opening – an illustrative photo, followed by a quotation and reflection section.
- Topic-specific content.
- A functional language menu.

As well as being ideal for self-study, this title would also be a useful addition to a business English teacher's bookshelf as it covers a range of theoretical aspects of business, eg relationship-building styles, and also contains a selection of up-to-date functional language. Needless to say, it is also a good source of lesson ideas.

I also believe that some of the content would provide an informative initial insight into management concepts for people moving into the realm of management.

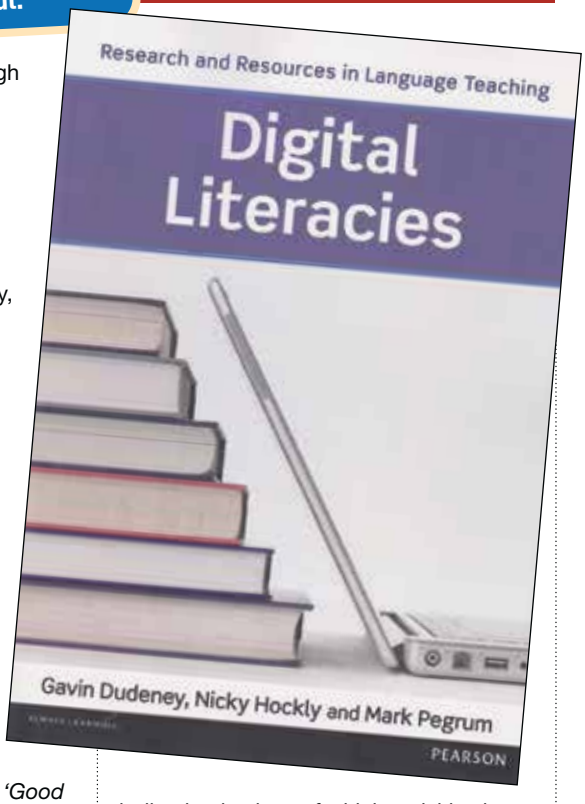
To quote the back cover copy: *'Good international business communication is not just a question of how good you are at English. You need to understand communication processes and styles too.'* In my view, *Effective International Business Communication* is a stepping stone on the way to achieving this goal.

Julie Allen
Exeter, UK



Digital Literacies

by Gavin Dudeney, Nicky Hockly and Mark Pegrum
Pearson 2013
978-1-4082-9689-9



This book is part of a new series from Pearson Education entitled *Research and Resources in Language Teaching*. The main emphasis of this book is to introduce students to a wide range of digital literacies which they will need in the 21st century.

The book consists of four parts. *Part 1: From Research to Implications* provides a solid definition of digital literacy and explains many different literacies. It divides 16 literacies into four foci: Language, Information, Connections and (Re-)design. Each literacy is clearly explained, and an indication is given of which activities in the book's next section correspond to it. Another feature of this section worth mentioning is the shaded boxes which appear throughout, covering common questions such as *Does Facebook belong in my classroom?* and *Can we trust Wikipedia?* Even more information can be found via the QR codes that are distributed throughout the book.

Part 2: From Implications to Application contains 50 activities that can help students achieve the digital literacies described in Part 1. These are listed in a convenient grid, which displays all the activities by technology type, topic, aims, language and time.

All the activities include teacher's notes, and many have accompanying handouts.

Part 3: From Application to Implementation gives teachers assistance with incorporating the activities into their syllabus, as well as creating new digital activities and handling assessment. This section contains some valuable advice about coursebooks, teaching contexts and student levels.

Part 4: From Implementation to Research is for teachers who want to do research related to digital literacies. In addition, there is some information about

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Reviews

PLNs (Personal Learning Networks), together with using *Twitter* and *Facebook* to continue professional development.

One of this book's strengths is its practicality. The authors have put together a lot of activities that are easy to use in the classroom. In addition, they make every effort to link the digital literacies to traditional language skills. The digital activities grid in Chapter 2 makes it simple to find activities that match a particular topic or language point.

I was also highly impressed with the diversity of activities. Some are quite entertaining, such as *I'mma let you finish*, where students create an amusing remix of images from a real-life incident. Others are more serious, such as *A good cause*, where students reflect on global issues, online campaigning and 'slacktivism'.

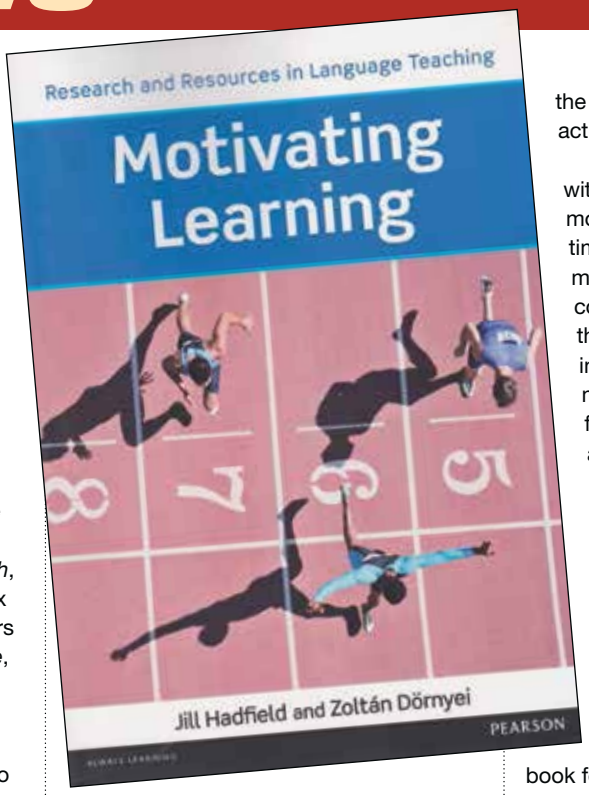
Overall, I found this book to be an extremely comprehensive introduction to digital literacies. While the aim of the book is to help students develop their digital skills, it also has a lot of information to improve *teachers'* knowledge. I picked up many new terms, including *U-learning*, *homophily* and *linguistic whatever-ism*. I highly recommend this book for any teacher who wishes to learn more about teaching digital literacies and using technology in the language classroom.

Motivating Learning

by Jill Hadfield and Zoltán Dörnyei
Pearson 2013
978-1-4082-4970-3

Motivating Learning is another volume in Pearson's *Research and Resources in Language Teaching* series. The two authors, Jill Hadfield and Zoltán Dörnyei, are both well-respected names in language teaching, and this book excels at presenting both research and resources on motivation in language learning.

The book is based on a model of motivation involving the 'Ideal Future Language Self' (see Jill Hadfield's articles in ET*p* Issues 78–82), in which students visualise themselves as successful language learners, thus increasing their motivation to learn.



Part I, *From Research to Implications*, summarises the research literature on language learning motivation. It also gives a concise overview of the L2 Motivational Self System, upon which the 'Ideal Future Language Self' concept is based.

Part II, *From Implications to Application*, presents three chapters containing a wide range of practical activities (99 in all) to help students visualise an ideal future language self and build motivation from it. Chapter One, *Imaging identity: my future L2 self*, contains five sections designed to guide students in creating a complex but realistic vision of their ideal selves. In Chapter Two, *Mapping the journey: from dream to reality*, students learn practical ways to reach the goals set in Chapter One. Chapter Three takes the vision of the Future L2 self even further, extending it and making it part of the learner's everyday life.

Part III, *From Application to Implementation*, describes how the activities in the previous chapters can fit into a syllabus, as well as how they fit into different types of classes. The authors also show how the activities in the book can be used as models to generate even more activities.

Finally, Part IV, *From Implementation to Research*, covers the research behind the book and suggests ways to do action research on motivation.

Overall, I was quite impressed with this book's unique take on motivation. The authors took a lot of time researching the 'ideal self' in motivation and developing a clever collection of activities to flesh out the theory. Each activity is explained in clear steps, with aim, level, time, materials and preparation provided for the teacher. Quite a few of the activities have a reading handout or worksheet.

My favourite section of the book was the section on language strategies (*From Plans to Strategies*). The activities here give a fresh take on study habits, time management, distraction, relaxation, positive thinking and more.

One quibble I have is that the book focuses on only one theory of motivation. Some readers might first see the title, *Motivating Learning*, and open the book expecting an overview of motivation and language learning.

Also, while the 'possible self' theory is well supported by research, as mentioned in the book's first few pages, not all teachers and students may find it appealing. I suspect some classes might not take to talking about their 'self barriers' and 'ought-to selves'. However, many activities can be used without devoting a whole course to the 'ideal L2 self' theory.

Another problem I want to point out is the citation of URLs for *YouTube* videos used throughout the book. The authors list extremely long URLs that are time-consuming to type. A better approach would be to list the title of the video, along with the name of the person who uploaded it. Or use the *tinyurl.com* website to create a much simpler URL.

I would definitely recommend this book to teachers looking for an organised system for motivating their students. While the 'ideal L2 learner' theory may not appeal to everyone, this book contains more than enough material to motivate learners (and teachers) to improve.

Hall Houston
Luzhu, Taiwan

Text messages 1

Nick Dall unpacks some key features of text messaging.

The text message is now undoubtedly one of the most commonly-used written genres the world over. It goes without saying that coursebook writers and materials designers should pay it some heed, and they have. I have seen quite a few articles in journals and pages in coursebooks dedicated to the genre. Unfortunately, they all seem to focus on emoticons and abbreviations – which are, in fact, used by a very small sub-set of texters – instead of highlighting the very real features which are common to many (if not most) text messages.

Surely, I thought to myself, there is some corpus-based analysis of the genre which could be used to create more relevant materials. And so it was that I happened upon the work of Caroline Tagg. She analysed a corpus of over 11,000 text messages, most of which were written by tertiary-educated young British adults (an unfortunate limitation, but not an entirely undesirable model for most learners of English) and in her analysis she unearthed some things which could be very useful to us as teachers.



1 Re-spellings

In her analysis, Tagg notes *'the **absence** of unconventional spellings from many messages'*. While we could ponder the reasons for this (eg predictive text dictionaries, questions of style/formality), the fact remains that in a teaching context, learners do not need to be able to produce any but the most commonly occurring re-spellings. However, being able to recognise and understand re-spellings of words is essential.

As Tagg's study was not designed for teachers, I have compiled my own list of the most frequent re-spellings in her corpus. The words, listed in descending order of frequency, are all among the 110 most commonly occurring words in her corpus. Interestingly, the only re-spellings which are more prevalent than their standard forms are *tho* and *cos*.

Word	Re-spelling	Percentage of re-spellings
you	u	39
to	2	14
for	4	17
be	b	24
are	r	29
see	c	20
your	ur	26
yes	yeah	40
tomorrow	tomo	41
what	wot	18
about	bout	16
night	nite	18
you're	ur	47
though	tho	70
because	cos	71

Tagg also identified some contracted forms which are in fact more common than their full variations. The only two which occur regularly enough to be relevant to us are *gonna* and *wanna*.

2 Ellipsis

Ellipsis in Tagg's corpus takes many forms, but subject pronouns, auxiliary verbs and determiners are the most commonly omitted words. They can be omitted from both statements and questions:

- *[I] Like your car.*
- *[I've] Been shopping.*
- *What [are] you up to?*

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3 Wordform frequency

Tagg compares the frequency of wordforms in her corpus with their frequency in other English corpora. She finds that: *'the generally stable distribution of the most frequent wordforms is turned on its head. Unlike other corpora, not only is "a" more frequent than "the", but "you" [is] more frequent than "I"; "have" more than "is"; "me" more than "my"; and "just" more than "so".'*

Tagg places particular importance on the role-reversal of *a* and *the*, which she attributes more to their occurrence in certain phrases which recur throughout her corpus than she does to other factors. These phrases should be of particular interest to English teachers as they can be taught lexically, thus giving learners a significant head-start in writing and reading text messages. Tagg names four primary functions of these chunks:

Function	Example chunks
Expressing wishes and sentiments	*hope you had a good ..., hope you have a good ..., hope all is well, i love you so much*
Framing current interaction	*just to let you know (that)*
Future (or other) shared interaction	*see you (soon, then, in a bit), looking forward to seeing you, do you want to meet, on my way*
Future (texted) communication	*let me know when you, let me know if you*

A significant, and perhaps surprising, difference between speech and texting is that texters go to great pains to include wordy pleasantries such as *enjoy the rest of your week* or *see you in the morning*, while speakers don't do this quite as much. Interestingly, these lengthy formulaic chunks are often used in full, alongside brief expressions (eg re-spellings, ellipsis), thereby sacrificing overall brevity.

My article in the next issue of ETp will feature full lists of the most common chunks in Tagg's corpus.

4 Clause combinations

About 20 percent of the messages analysed by Tagg showed no clause combination at all as they comprised only one clause, eg *Now that's going to ruin your thesis!*

The remainder of the messages could be placed on a spectrum between 'speech-like' clausal combination and 'text-like' clausal combination. Speech-like texts contain one train of thought, which is strung out over a few clauses, connected either by commas or connectors (*and*, *but*, *so*). For example: *If you see X, don't mention that you spoke to me as she wants me to go to the pub and I can't be bothered and my mom goes on holiday tomorrow.*

Text-like clause combination is quite different (and more frequently-occurring). Text-like messages contain multiple trains of thought, which often are not at all linked. For example: *I hate not knowing. What did X say? How would she know? They'd be crazy not to take u. I'm worried.* To me they resemble bullet points, and in this case the texter is obviously responding to another 'bulleted' text. Here's another example: *Hey, did you have a good time in Prague? I'm in Ireland at the mo with the in laws. Going ok. Yes love being on hol 2!* Understandably, these are the messages which students have most trouble decoding.

5 Response tokens

Response tokens are defined by Ron Carter and Mike McCarthy as *'words or phrases used to acknowledge what a speaker says, and to indicate ... interest or engagement in what is being said'*. In text messages, they are often used at the beginning of the message, and are followed by a fuller utterance. Consider the following example:

A: *Can you get bread on the way home?*
B: ***No problem.*** *Think I'll be home around 6.*

Examples of frequently-used minimal response tokens noted by Tagg are as follows (in descending order of occurrence):

- *yes* (*yeah*, *ya*, etc)
- *ok* (*okay*)
- *no* (*nah*, *nope*)
- *no problem*
- *oh*
- *ha* (*haha*, *hahaha*, etc)
- *lol*
- mm (*mmm*)

While a lot of these forms are typical of speech, some of them (eg *lol*) are peculiar to text messages.

6 Greetings and sign-offs

Tagg found that greetings, vocatives and closings play a larger role in texting than in speech. Over ten percent of messages in her corpus start with greetings: *hi*, *hey*, *hello*, *hiya*, *heya*. *Hey* is most commonly followed by a vocative, eg *hey dude*, *hey babe*, *hey gorgeous*.

The most frequent sign-offs in text messages fall into two categories:

- *see you* / *c u* + *time expression* (eg *see you later*; *c u tomo*)
- *x*, *xx*, etc (to signify a kiss/kisses)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, phrases from each of these categories are often combined, eg *See you soon. xxx*

★ ★ ★

Some of the features identified by Tagg came as no surprise to me, while others were quite unexpected. But with a bit of imagination, I found it a relatively straightforward matter to design materials which focus on the six features above – and freer practice was a breeze, as a full text message comprises no more than 160 characters!

More on all of that in the next issue, where I will cover teaching and using features of text messaging in the classroom. ETp

I would like to thank Alex Tilbury for his help during the process of researching and writing this article.

Carter, R and McCarthy, M *Cambridge Grammar of English* CUP 2006

Tagg, C *A Corpus Linguistics Study of SMS Text Messaging* University of Birmingham 2009



Nick Dall has taught and lived in Italy, Argentina, Bolivia, Vietnam and his native South Africa. His interests include flyfishing, languages, American fiction and wine. He currently divides his time between writing and teaching, but this is the first time he has written about teaching.

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Teaching one-to-one

Ingrid Wisniewska

enumerates five key roles for teachers with just one student.

For some teachers, teaching one-to-one can be the most enjoyable and rewarding type of teaching they've ever done. Yet others say it can be exhausting and lacks the excitement of classroom teaching. One reason that one-to-one teaching evokes such a variety of responses is because it is so dependent on the individual student's personality, background, interests and reasons for learning. Yet despite that, there are some factors that all one-to-one teaching has in common. In many of the conversations I have had with one-to-one teachers in different countries, one thing seems to predominate as the most vital element in making a success of the one-to-one teaching environment. That is the relationship that you have with your student, and knowing how to negotiate your own and your student's roles within that relationship.

Five teacher roles

In this article, I am going to discuss five different roles that a one-to-one teacher can choose to emphasise in their relationship with their student. I'm going to describe these roles by contrasting them with the way they would be used in a group-teaching context.

While researching my book *Learning One-to-One*, I surveyed teachers about the roles that they felt they played in their one-to-one lessons. These teachers all taught general or business English, or ESP, and usually taught a combination of skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in their lessons. Although the teachers mentioned a wide variety of roles – from psychologist to cheerleader – a pattern began to emerge of the five roles that they considered to be the most important.

1 Conversation partner

This is the role that almost always comes to mind first for teachers as well as for students. One-to-one teaching really draws on your conversational skills. Establishing rapport, finding things you have in common, sharing personal experiences, showing interest, maintaining a dialogue, ensuring that both participants speak equally – these are all skills that a one-to-one teacher uses to create a friendly and relaxed learning atmosphere. Unlike group teaching, a one-to-one lesson can seem more like a continuous conversation and can be far less structured. This has benefits, as learning can seem to take place naturally, almost implicitly, and without much effort. A drawback may be that students don't always recognise their progress, and some structure may be needed to help draw explicit attention to what they have learnt.

2 Feedback provider

When teaching a group of students, teachers can give feedback on language performance throughout the lesson. While monitoring groupwork, they can give feedback to individuals, or they can

Unlike group teaching, a one-to-one lesson can seem more like a continuous conversation and can be far less structured

give it to the whole class at the end of an activity, by reading out examples of errors (anonymously) or writing them on the board to be corrected by the class. In one-to-one teaching, however, you are giving feedback to the same student *all the time*, and this can be quite overwhelming for the student. The plus side is that you can give instant feedback at exactly the time it is needed, and focus only on errors that are relevant to your student. The negative side is that if you do this too often, it becomes discouraging and can decrease its effectiveness. As a result, the one-to-one teacher has to be able to manage feedback effectively so that it is *not* overwhelming. One way is to divide the lesson into clear fluency- and accuracy-based phases, creating an agreed space for activities where no corrective feedback is given, where attention is focused on fluency and on creating a natural exchange of communication, and distinguishing them from activities where the emphasis *is* on accuracy. Although

In one-to-one teaching you are giving feedback to the same student all the time, and this can be quite overwhelming for the student

this is easy to do in a group class, it can take a little more effort to signpost these different phases in one-to-one lessons.

Another advantage of one-to-one is that you can ask your students *how* they want to receive feedback and *what kind* of feedback they want. They may want you to focus on pronunciation, for example, or on grammar, and you can decide together what type of feedback will be most useful. They may appreciate spoken intervention at the time of speaking, or prefer written notes that you provide at the end of the lesson. Both the content of the feedback and the method of providing it can be discussed and negotiated in a collaborative manner.

3 Observer and listener

As teachers, we regularly observe and listen to our students to see how well they're following the lesson, and to watch out for problems. So what's different about this in one-to-one teaching? In a group-teaching context, there are phases of the lesson, when your students are involved in pair- or groupwork for example, when you can step back and observe, but in one-to-one lessons, you're usually interacting with your student all the time. That's one reason why teachers can find this kind of teaching to be very demanding. To deal with this, the one-to-one teacher needs to create time and space to step back in order to observe and listen. This might mean including a speaking activity where your student talks without interruption while *you* listen and take notes, or a listening activity where you observe how *your student* takes notes.

Students get a boost in confidence when they feel they have taught me something I didn't already know

4 Mentor and guide

In my own experience, I feel that an important part of my lesson is about helping my students learn how to learn independently. The role of mentor and guide – which I am using here in the sense of an experienced person who helps someone less experienced – is one that is perfectly suited to one-to-one teaching. Rather than teaching and explaining, teachers can follow the student's lead and give tips for improving their study skills, perhaps giving examples from their own language learning experiences, or modelling strategies informally to help the student study more effectively. Taking notes, using an English–English dictionary or using online resources are all skills that can be developed by emphasising this role, and can help your student become a better learner.

As part of your role as a mentor, you may also need to encourage and motivate your student, to help them feel a sense of progress. This is especially important for one-to-one students because they do not have the opportunity to measure their progress against others, or to get support by seeing other learners dealing with similar difficulties. Teachers can help to compensate for this by using strategies that help the learners feel a sense of progress. One way is to keep a student portfolio – a record of the student's written and spoken work. This can be online, or in an actual paper folder. Audio recordings can be included and transcribed. I've found it to be a great motivator to record all or part of my very first lesson and listen to it later, to show my students how far they have progressed.

5 Learner

One of the most fascinating aspects of teaching one-to-one is how much I can learn from my students. On occasion, I have found myself learning about everything from copyright law to computer programming. It's also fascinating to learn about a student's hobbies and special interests, whether it's sci-fi literature or war-gaming. It's a chance to learn about their culture, and their own personal perspective on their own culture and mine. Not only does this create an authentic exchange of information, but viewing myself as a learner can also help to equalise the power relationship between me and my student. What is more, students get a boost in confidence when they feel they have taught me something I didn't already know. Just listening attentively and showing genuine interest seems to have an instantly beneficial effect on their language performance.

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Thinking about which roles you choose to emphasise can help to add variety to your lessons. It can also help tailor your lessons to the specific needs of your student. Your role will vary according to your own personality, of course, and your view of yourself as a teacher, as well as the personality and learning needs of your student. In my own experience of teaching and working with teachers, I have found these roles to be a useful framework for reflection and for planning. Making small changes to the way you think about your role can lead to surprisingly creative results – and add an extra dimension to your teaching. ETp



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Can you manage?

Keiko Sakui looks at the career path from classroom to office.

In 1997, Bill Johnston asked *'Do EFL teachers have careers?'* This was an important and provocative question. His findings suggested that a career in English language teaching was difficult to develop in Poland at the time of his study, the attrition rate being relatively high. Sixteen years later, growing research results seem to suggest that the ELT field has been maturing, and now offers different opportunities for teachers to stay in the field and to move up the career ladder.

Most of the research on career paths in ELT has been carried out on topics such as teacher development and teacher training. In contrast, a relatively small number of studies are available for another path: that of a teacher becoming a manager. A manager, in this article, is loosely defined as someone who is in charge of academic and/or business matters in an institution. A manager has responsibility for overseeing the performance of a section and works with a team of other teachers and staff members.

The questions

This article attempts to investigate the career transition from language teacher to manager by focusing on the questions of what a manager in the ELT field actually does, what the similarities and differences are between being a teacher and being a manager, and how teachers handle the transition.

The study

I conducted a study to investigate the experiences of a number of managers by means of interviews. The participants were recruited through recommendation. Several criteria were set for possible interviewees: they were to have experience of being a language teacher and a reputation for being a 'good manager'; they were to be female; and they were to be working for tertiary-level institutions, which includes language schools attached to universities.

The rationale for identifying good managers was simple; we can gain valuable lessons from their experiences and insights. Since the participants' geographical and socio-cultural backgrounds were diverse, other factors such as gender and the types of institutions they worked in were controlled.

Name	Country	Job title/type of institution
Fiona	UK	Director of a language school attached to a university
Jan	UK	Director of a university postgraduate programme
Rose	New Zealand	Director of a language school attached to a university
Helen	New Zealand	Director of a language school attached to a university
Susan	New Zealand	Director of a self-access centre in a university
Yoko	Japan	Director of a foreign language education centre in a university

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the participants in Japan and New Zealand, and Skype interviews with the UK participants. Each interview lasted from an hour to an hour and a half.

Results

This section discusses some key issues identified from the interview data in order to illuminate the nature of the participants' work as well as their career paths.

What is a manager's work like?

The interviews revealed that the most notable characteristic of the participants' work was that it was hectic and complex. They needed to attend to various demands, including meetings with different people, satisfying teaching commitments and carrying out academic and administrative responsibilities, all of which could happen in the course of a single day. For example, this is how Jan described her day:

'I had a group of Korean university students from the Faculty of Education. I had to chair a session on activity-based learning. Then I had lunch with them, and in the afternoon I met a number of support staff who were thinking about doing some research. Then I spent most of the rest of the afternoon answering emails. I do a lot of work on distance-learning programmes, so I spend a lot of time on emails.'

This was a description of her Monday – and the rest of the week was no different, perhaps even busier. Other interviewees also reported how difficult it was to plan their day because they needed to respond to unexpected demands. Susan reported that her day was organised according to the most important and pressing tasks, saying *'very seldom at the end of every day do I feel that I've done what I set out to do'*. Similarly, Yoko described her role as a 'dogsbody' because she needed to perform small tasks throughout the day, even though she wished to spend more energy and time on teaching her undergraduate English classes. By a 'small task' she meant something like the fact that when a student made a formal complaint about a teacher, she had to pass on the information to the teacher, then liaise with them and decide how the complaint should be dealt with. Another example she gave was that when there was a streaming test which a student with a sight problem was scheduled to sit, she had to set up a special procedure to aid that student.

Susan, director of a self-access centre, also listed her responsibilities: she teaches groups of students at the self-access centre; she is sub-editor of the departmental magazine, which comes out twice a year; she belongs to a reference group for university language assessment; she has various responsibilities in various faculties, because they are interested in language support for their international students; and she participates in university-wide promotion activities, such as orientations and welcome events.

The following comment from Rose sheds light on the fact that a manager's life extends far beyond the classroom and, as a result, different types of responsibilities, as well as information, become available to them:

'As a teacher, you're in your own little world, your own little room, your own little classroom, and what you do doesn't affect anyone else. And maybe you just don't hear about these things, but certainly as a manager, I'm suddenly privy to all this information ...'

Yoko provided a further example of the weight of information and responsibilities. One of the teachers in her institution caught a student cheating on a test and reported this to her. Yoko had to handle this case confidentially, together with some of the office staff, until an investigation proved that the student had indeed violated the school rule; and the student was then punished. Other teachers heard a brief report of the punishment in a meeting, but Yoko said they would not have known how much work went on behind the scenes in the decision-making process.

Were they happy with the change from teacher to manager?

Most of the interviewees wanted promotion from teacher to manager, as Fiona commented:

'I realised I did not want to go back to teaching any more. I moved from small children to adults, and that was fun. I moved to teach general English to business people, and that was fun. Then I realised teaching business people was not what I wanted to do all day every day any longer.'

Fiona listed two reasons why she wanted to move from teacher to manager: the flexibility that a managerial position offered and her personality. She claimed that whereas a teacher needs to be in a classroom at a certain time, a managerial position offers a little more flexibility to organise your day. The other reason was because of her personality. She said:

'I am the eldest of my family and my family constantly tell me how bossy I am. I always enjoy telling people what to do, and watching them enjoying doing it.'

Yoko echoed Fiona, claiming that she liked to promote change and transfer ideas and plans into actions. Some of her colleagues handled administration tasks in the past and Yoko saw no change as the outcome. Witnessing this, she thought it better for her to handle these tasks herself, so she decided to be a manager.

Rose was happy being a teacher and teacher trainer in the earlier stage of her career, and she turned down an offer to be a manager while she was in Hungary, because she thought *'I don't want a timetable, I don't want to manage teachers. I'm quite happy to just be a teacher and do teacher training'*. However, when she came back to New Zealand after 13 years of working abroad, she changed her mind. She took up the opportunity to become a manager after debating whether to pursue becoming a solicitor (her degree was in law) or to be a manager at a language teaching institution. So Rose decided to go into management because of a personal challenge; like Fiona, she wanted something different in life. Another reason for Rose was financial:

'I was in Hungary for five years and I think I was earning like 20,000 NZ dollars a year. And it didn't bother me there, but coming home, being a bit older, it's got to a stage where I've become quite frustrated, with skills and capabilities and financially it's not recognised, and I work hard.'

In contrast to these participants, Jan did not necessarily want to take up a manager position, but it was something expected at her workplace. She described

Can you manage?

how universities in the UK usually expect faculty members to carry out three responsibilities equally: teaching, researching and administrative work. She described her struggle to come to terms with these different roles:

'The problem I have is almost a three-way split because ... when I first started working at a university, one of the difficult things I found actually was reconciling my teacher identity and my academic identity. That is something I still struggle with. Now I add managerial ... I must admit I don't actually experience my managerial role as being really part of who I am, if you like. It is one of the things we have to do as part of the job.'

Jan went on to comment that she did not want to advance herself any further – if she became a deputy dean of postgraduate programmes, for instance, she would have to spend most of her time in committees and meetings and would not be able to teach or do research. She didn't want that to happen and she wanted to carry on with the level of management that she does now, but not any further.

What makes a good manager?

All the participants asserted the importance of good communication skills for a manager:

'I think being conciliatory and listening to other people is [important], as well. Being open to people and being open to ideas. I tend not to overdo anything ... I always have ideas how it should be done. But I am always willing to listen to what other people think.' (Jan)

'I think teachers are quite a difficult group of people to manage because they are very independent. And certainly, as a manager, I'm trying to make a lot more decisions based on consulting teachers about what they think about things ... it works, but then it takes time.' (Rose)

Yoko also talked about the ability to be able to listen to others, while acknowledging the importance of having one's own ideas. She argued that her own ideas have inevitable limits: others may have different ideas, so it is important to take an extra step to make sure to ask other people's opinions. She went on to say that a good manager is able to listen to different opinions and then make a final decision, persuading others that it is the optimal solution in a given situation.

Helen added that to be able to communicate well with other teachers, it helps if you have been a teacher yourself. When teachers ask for certain things to be done, Helen can make informed decisions because she understands the position these teachers are in, having taught the same courses herself in the past.

In addition to valuing communication skills, the participants suggested that a sense of commitment is an important mindset for a manager. Fiona claimed that she loved solving problems and that she was the kind of person who wanted to try her best: she wanted to make her school the best in the UK. Similarly, Helen reported wanting the best outcome possible, saying that even if she was frying chips at McDonald's, she was the kind of person who would want to cook the best chips ever. She said that she applied the same aspiration to her current work, wanting her school to be the best ever.

Was the transition easy or difficult?

While some of the participants were more than willing to take up a managerial position, others did so as part of expected assumptions at their institutions. In either case, did they find the transition easy or difficult? What skills are transferable from being a teacher to being a manger? What difficulties did they face?

Yoko's prior professional experience made it easy for her to move from a teacher to a manager. She was a high school teacher for four years before she became a university lecturer, and this experience taught her about administrative duties, such as overseeing a sports club, organising fieldtrips and other cultural events, or participating in PTA activities. Although these are not the same kind of administrative tasks as she now does in her university, she had a mindset that administrative work is an integral part of being a lecturer.

Susan claimed that having 'incredibly supportive staff' helped her become a manager. When she did not know what was happening and what to do, her staff's supporting and affirming attitudes helped her carry out her tasks. This sometimes happened formally (eg in meetings) but also on informal occasions like *'sitting around having a little celebration or someone's birthday'*.

Jan similarly talked about the importance of group cohesiveness for making her feel confident about her work as a manager. She claimed that most of her colleagues had similar opinions to hers and they had a sense of being a team, rather than a collection of individuals. She was aware that not all groups have the same level of cohesiveness and she considered herself lucky to be working in such an environment.

In contrast to group cohesiveness and teamwork being an important factor for a smooth transition, Yoko reported that a sense of isolation could be a difficult factor to overcome in the transition period. She observed that, as other managers at her institution moved up higher in the institution, it became less easy for them to eat lunch with other colleagues at the school cafeteria.

The sense that, as managers, they no longer fully belonged to a teachers' group was also articulated by Rose:

'You have to realise that you're not going to be liked all the time ... I find that quite difficult because I try to make people happy. I would hate for someone to go away and say "she's such a bitch". And I think that does happen in management.'

Helen also shared a story about a time when the school had done well in terms of student enrollment and she and another manager put a box of chocolates and a hand-written card on every teacher's desk in order to show appreciation. The next day, though, she found one of the chocolate boxes in the staffroom, with a note saying *'You cannot buy us with chocolate'*. She found this a very discouraging experience and one that was difficult to comprehend.

Reflections

Career shift

Some of the participants were determined to make the move from teacher to manager because they perceived that being a manager was a worthwhile and challenging task, raising their status as well as bringing a financial reward.

Fiona and Helen thought that they had done enough teaching and they felt it was time to take up a new challenge. For Rose, too, the personal challenge and betterment of herself was the strongest reason for taking up a managerial position, but she also argued that financial reward was one of her considerations. The teachers that Bill Johnston studied in 1997 reported that being an EFL teacher did not provide enough income to support a family and that they needed either to juggle a couple of jobs or would eventually have to do something completely different to make ends meet. In the present study, however, the participants recognised that a managerial position in ELT was a rewarding one for personal challenges as well as for financial reasons.

Skills shift

These participants identified several factors, either personal traits or work habits, which were transferable from teacher to manager. They pointed out that communication skills, such as listening well and interacting with people, were common assets. Classroom management is a large part of a teacher's responsibilities, and the expertise in dealing with students' needs and the ability to communicate with them that they learnt as teachers proved equally useful when they entered management. In addition, as Helen mentioned, having a good understanding of teachers' work conditions, enables you to make sound judgements as a manager.

Responsibility shift

In spite of easily transferable skills and common traits, fundamental differences do exist between the roles of a teacher and a manager. Good teachers set a routine in a classroom at a fairly early stage of a semester so that the students understand the rhythm of the classroom activities and one activity flows from another fairly smoothly.

In contrast, the participants' reports inform us that a manager's role is quite different from a teacher's. Unlike teachers, who are expected to be in classrooms following a fixed timetable, managers have more dynamic schedules, roles and routines. Their days and weeks seem like a chaotic patchwork of different responsibilities. Managers need to be flexible, their jobs extend from teaching to negotiating; their duties can involve marketing, finance and dealing with other teachers, to name just a few. They have to be ready to respond to unexpected demands and need to change their priorities, depending on external factors and pressures. The dynamics of the managerial role are something that new managers need to be aware of; they need to accept that their work will not be as static and governed by routine as it was when they were teachers.

Unlike teachers, who are expected to be in classrooms following a fixed timetable, managers have more dynamic schedules, roles and routines

To make the situation more complex, these participants often not only carry out managerial duties, but also continue to teach. This entails maintaining their familiar professional identity as teachers at the same time as building a new identity as a manager. These identities co-exist and need to be negotiated. Yoko expressed the desire to put more time and energy into her teaching, but she recognised that she needed to attend to her managerial duties first. Jan had an additional identity as a researcher, and reported her struggle to make sense of how these multiple identities could co-exist and how an intricate balance could be maintained.

Another difference between a teacher and a manager is a sense of belonging. As Rose put it, she is no longer 'one of them'; being a manager often means not belonging to a teacher group any longer, because being a manager sometimes involves making decisions about other teachers' working conditions that they may not like. This does not apply to all the participants of this study, however, and some of them reported maintaining group cohesiveness with their colleagues. This variation in the sense of belonging seems largely dependent on what range of responsibilities a manager is expected to carry out in a given institution. In the case of Jan, who leads the postgraduate programme, the interests of most of the programme's participants were in alignment with her own, so her decisions rarely threatened her colleagues' working conditions. In contrast, Rose, Helen and Yoko all needed to evaluate their fellow teachers and they made decisions which might possibly affect these teachers' working conditions. As Ron White and his colleagues argue, teachers who are promoted to a managerial role *'struggle with the fact that their friends in the staffroom are no longer – at least at work – their friends. There is not necessarily any solution to this problem except for an awareness that it will occur, whether you like it or not'.*

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Management is increasingly becoming an important aspect in ELT. Learners and teachers have been the main characters appearing in narratives in the field, but I hope that teacher-managers' stories will be added to future collections. I also hope that further research will investigate career paths in our profession in order to support those teachers who aspire to pursue their careers as far and wide as possible. ETp

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TECHNOLOGY

Five things you always wanted to know about BYOD (but were too afraid to ask)

In this series, Nicky Hockly explains aspects of technology which some people may be embarrassed to confess that they don't really understand. In this article, she explores BYOD (Bring Your Own Device).

1 Tell me about BYOD – what is it exactly?

BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) is a simple idea which is becoming increasingly popular. Rather than schools having to invest in and maintain expensive suites of computers, laptops or tablets, students are encouraged to bring their own devices (such as laptops, mobile phones or tablets) to school. You may also hear the term BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology). Although BYOD and BYOT are often used interchangeably, there is a slight difference: BYOD usually refers to students bringing devices to school from a range sanctioned by the school. For example, the school may allow the use of student-owned laptops or tablets, but not mobile phones. BYOT usually refers to students bringing any technology they want to school, with no restrictions placed. In this article, I will use BYOD as a catch-all term, as is common in the field.

2 Why is BYOD becoming popular in education?

Increasingly. cash-strapped institutions are looking for alternatives to buying expensive technologies. Particularly in the developed world, students often own laptops, smartphones and/or tablet computers already. Why not have them use their own devices in class, too, the thinking goes. Students are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the hardware and software – and best of all, they already know how to use their devices effectively and don't need to be taught. What's more, research has shown that the sense of ownership that students have with their own devices means that learning itself is more likely to cross the boundary between classroom and home.

The trend towards BYOD is particularly noticeable in the USA and the UK, where it has been piloted at secondary and university level in a number of institutions, and even across school districts. In developed countries, BYOD tends to revolve around laptops, smartphones and/or tablets. But BYOD initiatives are also apparent in developing countries, where large-scale projects using basic feature phones and SMS have been implemented to help learners access English outside the classroom (see this column in ET*p* Issue 76).

3 Is it as easy to implement as it sounds? Are there downsides?

There are some challenges associated with implementing a BYOD approach. First of all, there are *hardware and software* issues. Students may bring very different devices to school, which may make carrying out the same activities difficult for everyone. For example, if your students bring mobile phones to class, some may have only basic feature phones, while others may own smartphones. Issues of device inequity may arise, with some students showing off the latest smartphones, while others are only able to afford more basic models. And even if your students all have smartphones, they may have different operating systems and some apps may not be available for each. Teachers are often concerned that they will need to provide technical support for students with a range of devices as well. A related hardware issue involves access to reliable Wi-Fi or 3G networks – and the possible associated costs with the latter for phone users.

A further area of concern for teachers is that students could misuse their devices in class, for example by texting friends or checking their *Facebook* accounts instead of doing class tasks.

With younger learners, potential misuse might include *safety* issues such as cyber-bullying of classmates, or accessing inappropriate content on the web. In some contexts, asking students to bring valuable technology to school may make them targets for mugging or robbery.

4 BYOD sounds challenging! How might I deal with these issues?

Looking at how institutions and individual teachers have dealt with some of the challenges associated with BYOD is enlightening. Task design can help with issues of hardware and software. For example, almost all mobile phones have audio and video recording facilities and can take photos. Tasks which revolve around students producing photos, audio or video can be carried out regardless of the OS. Some institutions take a hybrid approach, with students who already own smartphones or tablets using their own, and with 'top-up' class sets of smart devices available for other students to use when necessary. Pairing students together with one device is another option. Issues of classroom management and safety are often dealt with by a school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which usually forms part of a wider digital strategy within a school.

5 How can teachers make BYOD work in their school?

Rather than having individual teachers applying an ad hoc BYOD approach with individual classes, it makes more sense for a school to consider strategically and gradually implementing a well-thought-out BYOD policy, underpinned by a clear pedagogic rationale. The key stakeholders – teachers, students (and parents of learners under 18) plus the IT team – need to be brought on board, and an AUP hammered out. A small-scale evaluated pilot phase is advisable. But perhaps most importantly, teachers need to be clear on why they are getting students to use their devices in the first place. The devices – whether student- or school-owned – need to be secondary to pedagogy and learning. The most important elements in the equation are the students and the teacher, and we need to keep this firmly in mind when planning a strategic BYOD policy.



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That was the week ...

Christina Gkonou

and her students picture the week that was.

In an increasingly technological age, the marriage of the internet and foreign language teaching is common practice. The internet can indeed supplement aspects of the classroom learning experience and energise classroom language learning. This article will focus on my experience of using the BBC's *Week In Pictures* news section with advanced EFL learners. Through an outline of my rationale and lesson plan, I aim to demonstrate that whilst a wide range of internet material is not overtly pedagogical, photos of current events can prove to be much more than passive visual input featured in the pages of an online news website.

The background

I was extremely glad to be assigned the task of teaching English to advanced adult students after a long period of time teaching only elementary and pre-intermediate learners. I cannot deny that teaching at CEFR levels A1 and A2 can sometimes be challenging – and perhaps much more of a daunting task than teaching students whose level of proficiency in English is high and therefore allows them to converse with little difficulty. However, this final point, that higher-level students can *converse*, is precisely what I felt added to my pleasure in teaching advanced English.

There were no in-house materials available to use at that level, nor had any specific coursebook been prescribed for use in class, so I found that I had to design my own materials, and select photocopiable activities from published textbooks. I also had some materials already at hand which I had planned to use with learners in Greece in the past, and which I thought I could try out.

After the first two sessions, I felt that I had to spice things up a little, as my students were more vocal than I had expected. They also had a level of intellectual capability that could be 'exploited' to perform activities combining logical reasoning, critical thinking, guessing, storytelling, and a whole range of real-life, authentic tasks. While browsing through the BBC website, I came across the 'Week in pictures' web page and thought that this was something that could be used creatively to provide a rich source of stimulating classroom tasks. What follows is a shortened version of my lesson plan, along with comments about the lesson from my retrospective teacher's diary and some notes on the educational value of using pictures and the internet in the language classroom.

The lesson plan

Stage 1: Guessing and note-taking

The task at this initial stage is for the students to look at the photos on the BBC's 'Week in pictures' section and devise scenarios to describe what they see. Their guesses about the stories depicted should include answers to all possible *wh-* questions (ie *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, as well as *how*). The students are shown the first photo (review the web page first and take care not to project photos of a political or religious nature or those that may cause offence or distress) and are given 30 to 60 seconds to write down their thoughts on it. The explanatory captions are masked so the students cannot see them.

Clarification questions about the photographs are not allowed, nor should the teacher corroborate any information that the students provide. The process is repeated for each picture.

Stage 2: Discussion in pairs

The students are paired up with the person sitting next to them and are asked to tell their partner a story based on each picture. The purpose of this stage is to increase the students' oral fluency and competence. I also believe that this stage plays an important role in creating student support systems and releasing tensions.

Stage 3: Feedback and key vocabulary

The teacher shows the students each picture again, this time revealing the captions. The students check their answers against the real stories behind each picture. They are awarded three points if they have guessed a story correctly, and either two points or one point depending on the extent to which the stories they have made up are imaginative and clever enough to explain the photo. The teacher elicits or introduces useful vocabulary that is necessary to describe the true story that each picture depicts.

Stage 4: Follow-up

The final stage of the lesson focuses on writing a story. The students each choose one of the pictures, and are asked to turn their notes into a coherent two-paragraph text, incorporating in it any new vocabulary introduced in the previous stage. This stage aims at consolidating taught input and at guiding the students to the production of meaningful output. They should be reminded to use past tenses throughout their texts, and to employ logical connectives to ensure coherence.

The evaluation

The lesson worked well with my students, who seemed to enjoy it throughout. I expected that those students who generally follow the news would outperform their less-well-informed classmates. However, it turned out that the latter displayed vivid imaginations and came up with some of the most interesting stories. The students were eager to compare their versions to the true stories, and this stage generated a lot of laughter and conversation.

Picture choice and the way teachers approach picture-based activities is key to their success. Although some photos arouse curiosity, as explanations for them are not readily apparent, there are other, more mundane photos which will fail to do so. Questions such as *What is going on here?* about pictures where it is obvious what is happening will not work and may produce only short, one-word answers from the students. Nevertheless, questions like *Why do you think this was on the news?* may stimulate detailed and rich discussion of the target topics, recycling of already-taught input, and extended language use – and this is the goal that teachers should strive to achieve.

The pedagogical value

I see the following as the advantages of implementing the lesson outlined above for both the students and the teacher:

- The lesson provides an interesting conversation stimulus as well as a motivating context for improving the students' oral fluency.
- The students have the opportunity to get involved in genuine communication through storytelling. They also learn about real events and people through the medium of English.
- The students unconsciously use both top-down and bottom-up strategies in order to complete parts of the task. The lesson caters for schematic representation of knowledge and for activation of knowledge of the world, as recommended by Jo McDonough and Christopher Shaw.
- The lesson gives the students the chance to study and use English through a series of activities that deviates from what is found in traditional coursebooks. I don't mean to imply that coursebooks should be avoided – personally, I approve of their use. However, it is my contention that, every so often, students should tackle engaging, practical, current and, at the same time, manageable tasks using authentic materials.
- The major part of the lesson is learner-centred and teacher talking time is reduced to a minimum.
- Finally, the lesson helps the students to contemplate future goals, enhance their metacognition and become autonomous. They are exposed to authentic English language learning platforms on the BBC website, which they could later use for self-study outside class.

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This article describes a way to use online news pictures in the language classroom. The activities described here are straightforward and simple to implement, whilst at the same time allowing for contextualised study of skills and language points. I believe that teachers across the globe could adapt this sequence of activities to make it relevant to their own teaching situation. All you need is access to the internet, creativity and goodwill. ETp

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Webwatcher

Russell Stannard makes sure we don't go wrong on copyright.

There is a lot of confusion surrounding the legal use of photos and illustrations. Teachers often don't know what the rules are regarding the use of copyright images or where they can get images that are copyright free. Whenever a discussion on technology comes up, inevitably someone asks me about copyright. So in this issue I am going to outline the basic rules, and point out some useful sources of copyright-free images – even images you can use commercially. The laws may vary around the world, but these general principles should help you.

The basic rule

Any image you use, no matter where it is from, was originally made by someone and, therefore, someone owns the copyright to it. This means that whenever you use an image that is not yours, you should ask for permission to use it, since you don't own the copyright. Even if you take an image from the internet and change or adapt it quite radically, you do not own the copyright to your new image. It is the owner of the original image who owns the copyright, and you still have to ask for permission to use it. These same rules apply to video and audio – and even text.

Fair use

In reality, of course, contacting the owner of every image (or other digital product) you use in your *PowerPoint* slides or on your blog could take you ages, and there is something called 'Fair use' which makes things a little easier. It is understood that, in certain spheres, a limited amount of copyrighted material will probably be used. For example, if you review a book for a newspaper, then you are quite likely to need to use quotes or extracts from that book in your review – and this would be deemed fair use.

In education, we are to some degree protected as well. The problem is there is no hard or fast rule about the amount of copyrighted material that it is deemed 'fair' to use, and so you have to use your own judgement. If, for example, you are using a number of images for a set of *PowerPoint* slides that you will show to a few groups of students on a certain course, then you are probably safe, since they are not being used commercially or being displayed in any sort of public forum beyond your classes. If, however, you used the same images on a blog that anyone in the world could access, then this might not be deemed 'fair'.

The key factor is often whether the images are being used for commercial purposes. This is when the owners of images *do* get upset, since they see a person or organisation benefiting from something that *they* created. Using six or seven images in a *PowerPoint* presentation is very unlikely to get you into trouble, but what you can do, at least, is to acknowledge the source of the images, even if you don't have the time or information to get permission from the creator.

No problem

You can actually avoid the problem altogether. Few people realise that when you use *Google Images* it is possible to do quite sophisticated searches. Type in the name of the sort of picture you are searching for and then click on 'Search tools'. You will see a whole range of options, including size, colour, type (such as clip art or drawings) – you can even search for images produced at a certain time. Choose some of the options and you will notice that your images are filtered. I find this very useful as I often make use of the 'size' filter, since I sometimes need images of a particular size. On the right-hand side, you will see a little 'wheel', and if you roll over the wheel, it should say 'Options'. Click on 'Advanced search', which is one of the choices under 'Options'. Right at the bottom you will find 'Usage rights'. Use this to search for images that are copyright free and for those that you can even use commercially.

Usage rights

You will notice that there are various degrees of usage rights. Some owners of images don't like their images to be modified but are happy for you to use them in their original format. Others are happy for you to modify their images, but you are not allowed to use them for commercial purposes. You will need to choose the right option for you. I have provided a help video (see the end of this article) that will take you through a *Google Images* advanced search.

ELT Pics

Another useful source of images for teachers in ELT (and, in fact, for all teachers) is *ELT Pics* (*www.eltpics.com/index.html*). This is a website of images created through the contributions of teachers. The images are copyright free but cannot be used for commercial purposes. You are expected to show the source of the image you use (see the 'Image attribution' section of the site). In addition, you can upload any of your own images that you are happy to share. The site also provides lots of useful information about downloading and using images.

Help videos for Google Images searches:
www.teachertrainingvideos.com/googleimages/index.html



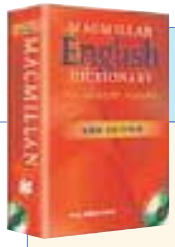
Russell Stannard is a Principal Lecturer in ICT at the University of Warwick, UK, where he teaches on the MA in ELT. He won the Times Higher Education Award for Outstanding Initiatives in Information and Communications Technology in 2008, TEFLnet Site of the Year in 2009 and a 2010 British Council ELTon award, all for his popular website *www.teachertrainingvideos.com.*

Keep sending your favourite sites to Russell:
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Prize crossword 62



ET*p* presents the sixty-second in our series of prize crosswords. Send your entry (completed crossword grid *and* quotation), not forgetting to include your full name, postal address and telephone number, to Prize crossword 62, English Teaching *professional*, Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd, Rayford House, School Road, Hove, BN3 5JR, UK. Ten correct entries will be drawn from a hat on 10 February 2014 and the senders will each receive a copy of the second edition of the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, applauded for its unique red star system showing the frequency of the 7,500 most common words in English (*www.macmillandictionary.com*).

5	13	2	26	17	■	20	5	16	18	11	15	5	16	12
16	■	12	■	20	5	21	9	■	■	18	■	20	17	22
16	5	15	■	1	■	12	■	■	11	26	12	11	25	5
17	■	17	21	12	■	12	6	13	26	15	■	12	■	4
23	■	11	5	16	■	8	■	■	15	■	11	26	9	4
15	17	26	9	25	24	12	11	11	■	■	16	24	13	12
24	■	25	■	■	12	■	■	16	5	11	14	■	9	21
26	■	■	23	12	25	12	17	21	■	■	17	7	■	5
16	5	20	5	24	■	■	■	26	■	16	17	24	■	25
12	■	21	13	11	25	■	5	20	11	17	24	13	25	12
■	21	13	24	12	21	■	19	12	■	21	■	■	12	■
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21	12	5	24	26	11	25 T	■	17	21	26	4	5	23	26
5	■	24	17	7	25	10	■	19	5	2	■	3	■	25
13	■	24	5	■	12	■	13	■	9	17	25	12	■	21
2	5	10	2	21	12	5	23 M	■	25	21	5	9	16	12

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23 M	24	25 T	26

To solve the puzzle, find which letter each number represents. You can keep a record in the boxes above. The definitions of the words in the puzzle are given, but not in the right order. When you have finished, you will be able to read the quotation.

VERY FREQUENT WORDS

*** Something that a person or animal carries
*** A container with straight sides and a flat base
*** *'Our lives begin to end the day ___ become silent about things that matter.'* Martin Luther King
*** To make music using your voice
*** A place where children go to be taught
*** A short letter to someone
*** *'Success consists ___ going from failure to failure without loss __ enthusiasm.'* Winston Churchill
*** To allow something to happen
*** *'__ I ruled the world'* (song from the musical *Pickwick*)
*** *'The worst thing I can be is the same as everybody ___.'* Arnold Schwarzenegger
*** Employ something for a purpose
*** To allow someone to have what they want
*** Notes and coins
*** A group of people who play against another group
*** *'Excellence is not __ act, but a habit.'* Aristotle
*** The past tense of *run*

FREQUENT WORDS

** A fact that helps someone solve a mystery
** A first payment made when you agree to buy something expensive
** A soft hat with a peak
** A light wind
** The crime of obtaining money by trickery
** To express your opposition to something
** To provide someone with the things they need for a particular purpose
** A large farm building where animals or machines are kept
** Used to draw straight lines
** Very great or complete; used for emphasis
** A long passage inside a building

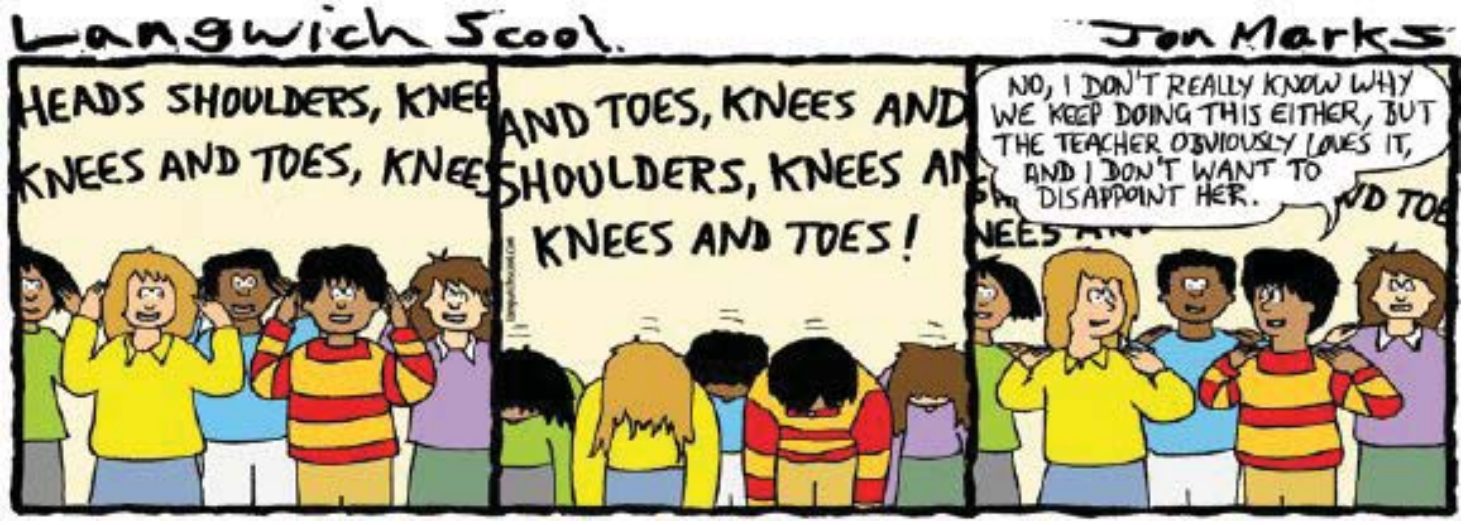
FAIRLY FREQUENT WORDS

* To say something is better, larger, etc than it really is
* To move forward by jumping from one foot to the other
* To drink in small amounts
* A feeling of great respect and admiration
* A disease that makes you feel hot, weak and tired
* A religious woman who lives in a convent
* Someone responsible for looking after someone else's money or property

LESS FREQUENT WORDS

– A small group of people who work secretly to gain power
– A large rock from space that enters the Earth's atmosphere
– A large bird with shiny black feathers
– The sixth note in the sol-fa musical scale
– Relating to sound that is recorded or broadcast
– A small baby's bed
– Part of a plant or animal shaped like a bag
– Abbreviation of *near*
– Someone who accepts situations as they are
– Extremely violently
– A state in which someone can move and speak but is not conscious
– Someone who helps another person commit a crime
– A bishop's hat
– Very tall or based on high moral standards
– To attack with claws and teeth
– The rough red substance that damages iron and steel
– Lacking any purpose or use
– A small building for pigs
– The sound made by someone who is thinking what to say next
– A thick pile or ball of papers
– A pass between high places in mountains
– Rock or earth from which metal can be obtained
– To climb down a rock-face or building, holding a rope
– A short sleep in the middle of the day
– Abbreviation of *gram*
– The key you press to move backwards on a keyboard
– The Japanese art of paper folding
– Used to express pain
– To push something into place with great force
– To think about something pleasant when you should be doing something else
– Someone who copied documents before printing was invented
– An informal way of saying 'thank you' (British English)

5	■	2	26	7	7	12	21	12	9	25	■	24	5	9	4	13	5	4	12	■
26	11	■	5	■	2	26	7	7	12	21	12	9	25	■	3	26	11	26	17	9
■	17	7	■	24	26	7	12	Federico Fellini											



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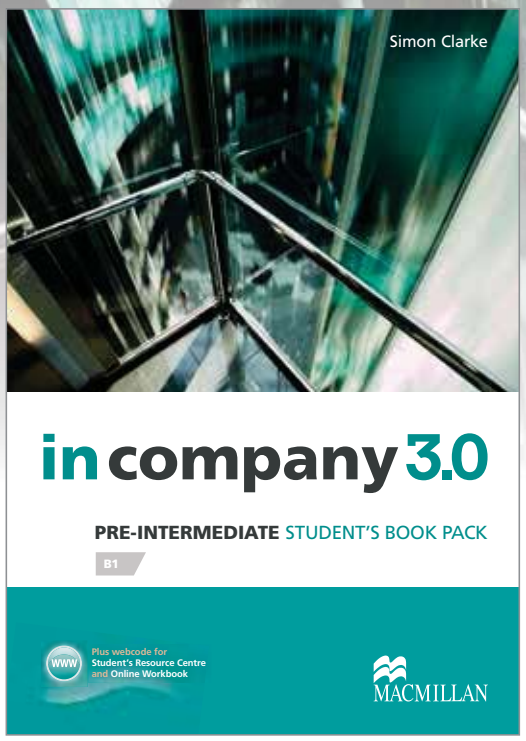
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