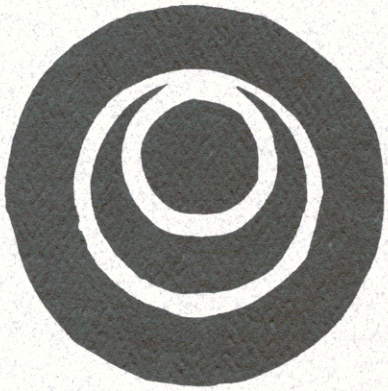
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE



TO LARGE, MULTILEVEL CLASSES

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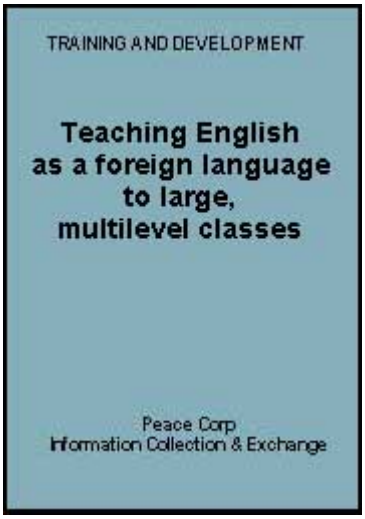

Teaching English as a foreign language to large, multilevel classes

MANUAL M0046

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Acknowledgements

This book was produced by a team of experienced teachers, materials developers, and teacher trainers working with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL).

We are grateful to Vincent Sagart, our graphic artist, for enhancing our work and stretching our words with his illustrations. We hope you will enjoy his work as much as we do.

We would like to thank Dr. Mary Schleppegrell, the Peace Corps Education Specialist who initiated this project. Mary's vision for giving students relevant English language education is woven into the fabric of this book.

We are also grateful to David Wolfe (Director, ICE), Dr. G. Richard Tucker (Carnegie Mellon University), Dr. Grace Burkart (Senior Advisor, CAL), Judy Benjamin (Materials Development, ICE), and Sonia Kundert (Production Specialist, CAL) for their contributions and support.

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This work is dedicated to family, friends, fellow teachers, and especially you, Peace Corps' remarkable TEFL/TESL Volunteers. As you read this book you will hear your own voices. We want to thank you for sharing your ideas with us and for giving us the opportunity to pass on your enthusiasm and hard-won wisdom.

Mary Jo Larson

Project Director and Peace Corps Education Specialist

November 1992

Introduction

Since 1961, thousands of Volunteers have joined the Peace Corps to promote global understanding and cooperation through education. Most Peace Corps Volunteers are willing to work under difficult conditions. They expect limited resources and ill-equipped classrooms. But few Volunteers are prepared to deal with these serious constraints and large classes of secondary school students with varying skill levels.

This teacher reference book has been written with an eye to the difficult teaching environments that challenge you as a Volunteer. Produced by a team of TEFL teacher trainers, most with Peace Corps experience, this manual provides practical strategies for coping with huge classes, outdated textbooks, irrelevant curricula, and no duplication equipment.

The collection of TEFL teaching suggestions, lessons, and activities in these chapters will give you an opportunity to learn from the experiences (and mistakes) of others. The ideas we have collected in these chapters offer:

- current approaches to large, multilevel classes,
- helpful management tips collected from experienced teachers,
- suggestions to help you assess student needs, appreciate their preferences, and design lessons to meet a variety of learning styles,
- information about planning and implementing a content-based, thematic curriculum that is relevant to the school and community setting,
- descriptions and samples of whole class, paired, small group, and individual study activities,
- information about ways to assess language skills, and
- listings of recommended resources and sources of support.

As you read through **Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) to Large, Multilevel Classes** you will find that this information is organized to help you answer four key questions:

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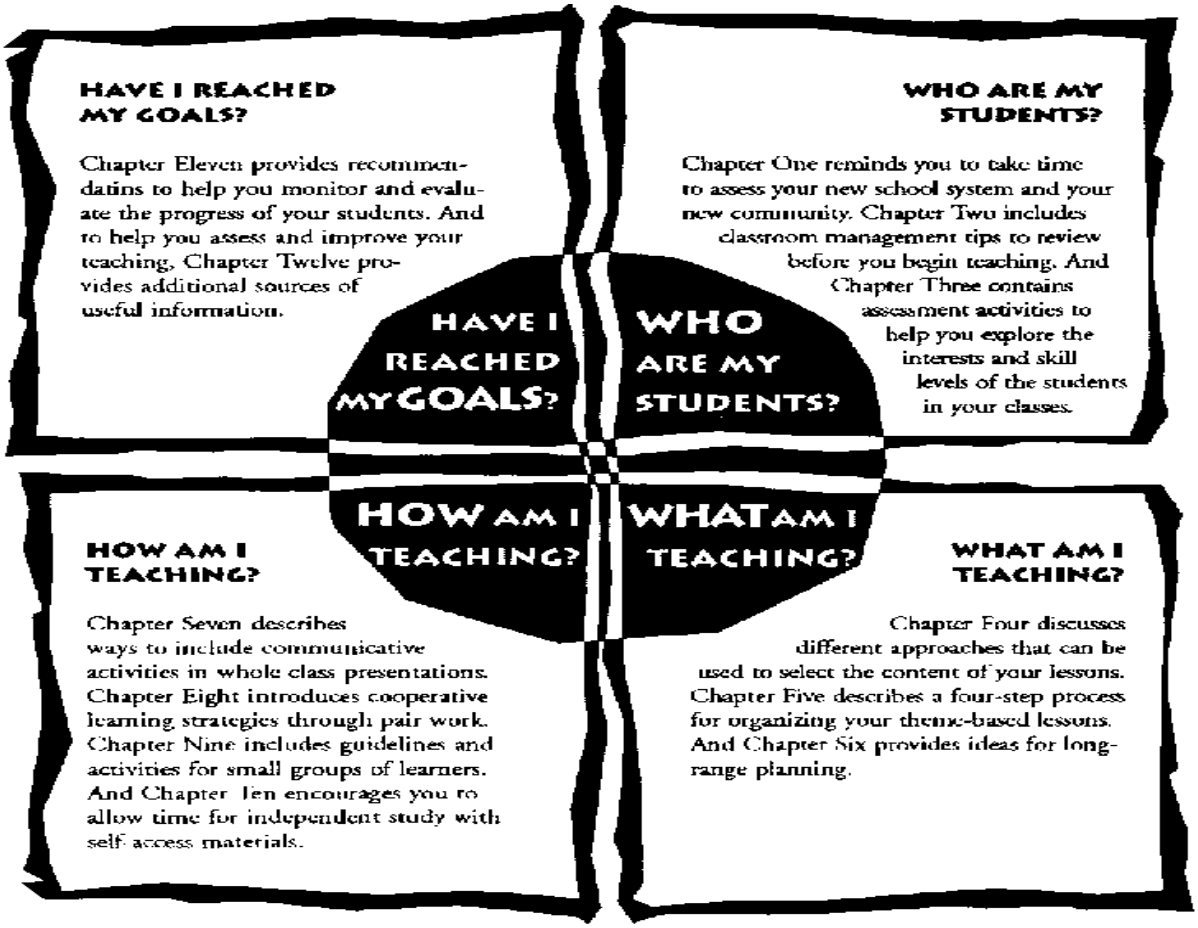

Your host country requested an English education project to improve opportunities for future development. English language skills provide access to information and technology from around the world. While your students are learning English, they also have an opportunity to stretch their minds in new ways. Through communicative activities, they have their ideas challenged and they are exposed to an active style of learning. And working with enthusiastic Peace Corps Volunteers like yourself, students and teachers raise their aspirations and ideas of what is possible to achieve.

As educators, we believe that one of the greatest obstacles to development is ignorance. And the only way to fight ignorance is through the determined efforts of teachers like yourselves. The dedication that you bring to your work has been a powerful impetus for change. But without a realistic, systematic plan of action, you can become exhausted and discouraged. We encourage you to be creative, yet caution you to organize and pace yourself. Plan your contribution in relation to the project plan developed by the Peace Corps, the Ministry of Education, and your local school system.

Recognizing that Volunteers are infinitely resourceful, we hope that this Peace Corps manual will inspire you to promote cooperation, address relevant issues, and challenge students to think critically about how to address the problems in their lives. And in the spirit of cooperation, as you develop effective lessons and materials, we hope that you will **organize yourselves to brighten the way for future teachers and Volunteers.**

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Taking stock

WHEN WE UNDERTAKE A DIFFICULT TASK, OUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE INCREASED IF WE UNDERSTAND THE LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY INVOLVED SO THAT OUR EFFORTS CAN EQUAL THE CHALLENGE.

KAY LEIGH HAGAN FUGITIVE INFORMATION

"What am I doing here?"

It may have already occurred to you that this "toughest job you'll ever love seems almost impossible. Look at some of the obstacles you may be facing. Your students are numerous; many may be older than you. Textbooks are scarce, and again, many may be older than you. The physical conditions are austere, with a tin roof that creaks as the temperature rises and obliterates all other sound when the rains come. Pictures and posters disappear from the classroom walls. Desks are too few. The blackboard has been worn to a light grey and chalk stubs are worth their weight in gold.

Your students have made it clear that they want just enough English to get a passing grade on the examinations. They cannot see any other reason why they should learn the language. Sometimes you agree with them. The national English curriculum looks like a grammarian's shopping list and only tells you what to do, not how to do it. You hear your predecessor praised and it's sometimes hard not to hear in that criticisms of your own efforts.

But large numbers of education Volunteers have enjoyed the challenge of making the impossible possible. They've developed coping strategies and ways of teaching effectively in very large classes. This book brings you some of those strategies in the hope that they will be of use to you. We have included practical, obvious, and bold suggestions that have been made by Volunteers Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in well-established programs such as in francophone Gabon, or Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) in newer projects such as Namibia.

The language learning and teaching theory you will find in this book has been used in classrooms similar to yours. We have consulted the works of educators teaching and writing in Europe, South America Africa, Asia Australia and the United States. The key question has been: Will this work for a Volunteer facing large multilevel classes? There are no pat formulas, no easy solutions to help you in your job, but in this book you will find many ideas and techniques to choose from.

In this opening chapter, we invite you to take stock of your situation: of the resources available to you from Peace Corps; of the educational ideas you may encounter in staff room discussions; and of the differences you may find between your own educational experiences and the ones in the educational system of your host country.

Taking stock of your peace corps resources

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you are part of an education project with country-specific objectives, and there are milestones and tasks that you and your group are expected to accomplish. These may include introducing new methodologies or working with other teachers to develop curricula, materials, or resource centers. Finding your strengths, learning about the strengths of others, and knowing whom to go to when you need help are a major part of how you are going to survive and flourish during your service.

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

As you explore your new environment and work on your project, you have access to a major resource: other Volunteers. Just as the cultures you are working in value community spirit, so too

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over the years Peace Corps Volunteers have developed valuable support systems. This system starts forming in pre-service training with group work in technical training sessions and continues in teaching practice with peer teaching, team teaching, and group feedback sessions. Sometimes Peace Corps support is offered informally, when getting together offers the chance to share the triumphs that only other English teachers can fully appreciate. "My second year students talk English to each other when they are waiting around in the school compound," said a TEFL Volunteer speaking of her successes. The other Volunteers in the room at the time cheered. They all knew what a breakthrough this was and how hard she'd worked to provide those casual student exchanges in English.

Sometimes support is offered more formally. Peace Corps is well aware that one of the difficulties you face may be a sense of professional isolation. You might find it difficult to get access to TEFL or TESL reading materials. But books and articles are available, and it is worthwhile to make sure that they come your way.

During pre-service training you may have been given a TEFL or TESL handbook developed by the staff in the country to which you have been posted. Or you may have a copy of the Peace Corps ICE manual, **TEFL/TESL: Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language (Whole Ice Catalog No. M 41).** Look through these manuals occasionally. Some of the activities you never really noticed before in the frenzy of training might be just what you are looking for. Do you read your copy of English Teaching Forum, the magazine put out for teachers of English by the United States Information Agency? It contains articles written by teachers in the field and focuses on the needs of those working outside of the States. Does your county have a TEFL or TESL newsletter' These are frequent sources of hands-on activities and hard-won advice. Check and see if back copies are available. What's in the "TEFL/TESL" and "Training" sections of the library in the Peace Corps office? Do other Volunteers have favorite books they dip into for new ideas? Are there titles in the Whole ICE Catalog that catch your eye? Do you know how to go about ordering books from ICE? With only a little effort and perseverance you could build a small professional library chat will be an invaluable resource. Some countries provide Volunteers with annual book allowances. Make sure that you know how the formal support system works. You've taken on a challenging job and you need all the help you can get.

Taking stock of your colleagues

The National Conference is emerging as a modern African form of government restructuring. It is closely modeled on village consensus politics. Under the silk cotton tree in the center of the village, every Elder in turn takes the Word and has his say. Each Elder carefully repeats the points he agrees with from previous speeches, then adds certain aspects that will be taken up and repeated in their turn. So finally the Chief interprets consensus. This is the decision of the village... It is slow but it works. Robert Lacville Guardian Weekly, October 27, 1991

At a recent TEFL workshop, a group of Cameroonian teachers was asked what advice they had for Education Volunteers about to start their first year of teaching. The unanimous response was "Work together." In Guinea-Bissau a Creole word is soon picked up by Volunteers and put in their survival vocabulary list. The word is "junbai," which means to sit around chatting with friends. And as any Volunteer in Guinea-Bissau can tell you, to "junbai" is to be part of the community "working together."

It sounds good. But some of the attitudes of your colleagues may be strikingly different from the ones you are used to. Volunteers often comment on staff room discussions which reveal differences in teacher-student relationships. They are also frustrated by the amount of time spent in meetings.

TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

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American educators advocate an ideal of close, friendly relationships between teachers and students. But this ideal is not necessarily shared by the majority of your counterparts. Many of these teachers put the highest priority on respect. This is not to say that they discount friendship with their students, but it has to be a friendship built on a respect which acknowledges the teacher's authority.

Does this mean keeping a distance from your students? Not necessarily. What it does mean is knowing the range of behavior that is acceptable and appropriate for your position as a teacher in daily contact with students. And should you decide to step out of that range, it also means knowing and accepting the possible consequences of your decision.

TIME SPENT IN MEETINGS

Another cultural difference frequently remarked on by Volunteers is amount of time spent in staff meetings. A former Volunteer in Ghana who later returned to Africa as a Peace Corps staff member, reminisced about his teaching days, saying:

When I was in Ghana, I would rather have hat my tongue nailed to a tree than sit through any more staff meetings. Though I've come to realize that these meetings aren't inefficient or indecisive. What seemed to me repetitious and pointless was a finely tuned communication machine in action... It would have been impolite not to let everyone have his or her say... Nowadays when I facilitate at In-Service Trainings, I sense our American impatience with the consensus process (of counterparts), but I've learned that I miss out on things and I'm not as effective if I don't listen carefully or don't respect a different way of communicating.

Volunteers report on a variety of staff meeting survival tactics. Some do Zen exercises in their heads. Others doodle. Some prepare lessons. Others plan their vacations. The winners are those who listen. Some listen for information. Others analyze the speakers' language skills, listening for clues to their students' use of language and rhetoric. Some listen to the group dynamics and the power plays. Others listen to the bits they are interested in and tune out for the rest. But just as you are taking measure of your colleagues, so they are taking measure of you. Your patience and politeness in dealing with what can be a tedious process will be noted and may well pay off when you need help or support from your counterparts.

"Working together" isn't always easy, but Volunteers who have followed this advice say that they have translated it into familiarizing themselves with the education system and with school rituals, so that they can ascertain exactly what is expected of them by supervisors, colleagues and students.

Taking stock of the system

By improving people's ability to acquire and use information, education deepens their understanding of themselves and their worlds, enriches their minds by broadening their experiences, and improves the choices they make as consumers, producers and citizens. By improving people's confidence and their ability to create and innovate, education multiplies their opportunity for personal and social achievement.

World Development Report, 1991 The World Bank

The American educational system aims to be inclusive, to answer the needs of the majority. Education is generally perceived as a service offered to the community, and in order to serve well schools should be in touch with the values and aspirations of the people they serve. In many local communities, school boards and parent-teacher associations have considerable say in the formulation of policies and in the hiring of teachers. Ideally, constant attention is paid to developing courses which will draw out the different talents of students from all ethnic backgrounds.

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The countries in which you are serving most likely inherited educational systems from Britain or France. The original goal of these systems was to provide education to the children of the local elites and to supply the colonial administrations and trading companies with clerical staff. Remarkable progress has been made since the former colonies achieved independence. Educational opportunities have been expanded at all levels as national leaders put a priory on productivity and economic growth. However, the colonial inheritance remains evident in some secondary schools, perhaps especially to American eyes, in the strong emphasis on centralized academic programs. For your students this translates into high stakes. If they fail in the academic system, there are few alternatives.

Agricultural and Forestry Volunteers talk about the dangers of monocropping-having everything riding on a single cash crop such as tea, coffee, tobacco, pineapples or cotton. Traditionally, farmers in developing countries have delighted in jumbling crops together and growing everything at once. Outside experts are beginning to appreciate the prudence of these strategies. Mixed cropping prevents the insects that attack particular crops from breeding to high levels. Losses in one crop can be balanced with gains in another. Varieties of food can be grown.

Monocropping can be used as a metaphor to describe educational systems in many developing countries. Education Volunteers are aware of the intense stress experienced by students whose families' hopes are pinned on their eventual success in a centralized academic system of education. The stress for you might come in trying to balance your students' expectations with your own inclinations, born of your experience in a system which, at least theoretically, aspires to equality and encourages diversity.

What are some of the concrete things that can be done to maintain your balance and help you develop a practical plan to establish your credibility and deal fairly with your students' and colleagues' expectations? Pulling together information about the system you are working in will give you a good head start. In developing a fact sheet about TEFL/TESL in your country, you might want to work with your host-country counterpart and other colleagues to find the answers to some of the following questions.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

What are conditions like in primary schools? How many hours, if any, of English language learning do students receive before they enter secondary school? Is primary education free? What's the student-teacher ratio? Are schools in rural areas different from schools in towns? Are there textbooks? Who wrote them? When? Do parents pay for them? Or are they issued free of charge by the government? What percentage of the population completes primary school? What's the ratio of girls to boys? Is there a national primary leaving examination? What happens to those who don't get into secondary schools?

SECONDARY EDUCATION

How is secondary schooling organized? Are there different branches for sciences and the humanities? Are different emphases given to TEFL/TESL in these branches? How are teachers trained? Are copies of the national English curriculum available? Who wrote this curriculum? When? Are there plans to change this curriculum? Is there a national inspectorate? What do these inspectors want to see in EFL/ESL lessons? How many hours a week does each class study English'? Is EFL/ESL a popular subject? If so, why? What is the ratio of males to females? What do students intend to do with their knowledge of English when they leave secondary school?

PEACE CORPS

What kind of reputation do TEFL/TESL Volunteers have in the country, with the government, with counterparts, with students? How long has this program been running? What have been some of the problems encountered by TEFL/TESL Volunteers? What have been the major successes?

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INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS

Are records of your predecessor's work plans available? How closely must the national syllabus be adhered to? What items on the curriculum should be given priority treatment? What can be left out? What should not be left out? What school records are kept on students? Are they available? Are there set textbooks? What is the ratio of books to students? What do other English teachers think of these books? How much freedom is allowed in selecting teaching materials? What other teaching aids (chalk, notebooks, flip charts, hectographs) are available? How do you get hold of additional supplies and who pays for them?

TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

Are you the first Volunteer at this school? If not, did your predecessors leave any written comments on the school? Can you negotiate your timetable and teaching load with your supervisor? What is the dress code? What is the system for taking leave of absence? Outside of your teaching responsibilities, are you expected to proctor examinations or organize extra-curricular activities? Does the school have a discipline code? A master of discipline? How do other teachers deal with infringements of the discipline code? Who is responsible for roll call? How often are quizzes given? Who is responsible for keeping the record of grades? How are grade and promotion decisions made? If students fail English but pass other courses, are they moved to the next level? How often are staff meetings held? Is attendance obligatory? What does the department head expect of you? What can you expect from him or her? Do students visit teachers in their homes?

Final notes

This chapter has looked at some of the ways you can take stock of your situation as a teacher working in unfamiliar terrain. First, you have access to support from Peace Corps. It is worthwhile researching the formal support system. A general plea for help might get you tea and sympathy, but you can make it even easier for staff to help you by precisely stating what you need, when, how much it's going to cost, and how you'd like to get it. Second, your staff room colleagues may have ideas and approaches which are different from yours. There are no set ways of responding to these differences, but it is important to identify them and to work out ways of living with them. These colleagues are the people you will he working with. And third, the educational system in which you are working is different from the one in which you were educated. The values and assumptions which drive the system reveal themselves in facts about how the system works. By deepening your understanding of the system you can better define your role within it.

Questions to ask yourself

The following questions will serve as reminders as you take stock of your situation. As you discover the answers to these questions, you will have a better understanding of the expectations, opportunities, and constraints you will face in your new assignment.

- Are you participating in the informal support network offered by other Volunteers?
- Are you making full use of Peace Corps' formal support system for your professional development?
- Are you developing good personal and professional relationships with your counterparts and teaching colleagues?
- Are you gathering information about the educational system in which you are working?

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In this chapter, we've tried to reassure you that you're not alone. Volunteers and other teachers facing large classes have survived, many with confidence and management skills that have propelled them to the top of their fields. None could have made it alone though. They learned to network with other teachers and search out support systems.

As you read on, you'll find that we've collected hundreds of practical ideas, and you can choose the ones that you think will work for you. You know your own personality, your host culture, and your students. Read all you can, absorb all you can through training, and try some of these out. The first year you may make tons of mistakes (though we'll try to help you avoid that), but don't give up-you will get better and better. And as Corey, a former Volunteer who finally figured out how to teach under the worst possible conditions advised: **"TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!"**

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CHAPTER 2

Classroom management

WE CANNOT DIRECT THE WIND - BUT WE CAN ADJUST THE SAILS.

"How to avoid becoming a traffic cop?"

PARTICIPANT AT TEFL 1ST

At the end of Corey's first year as an English teacher, she was exhausted and disillusioned. "I joined the Peace Corps to help people," she explained, "and I was tired of fighting to control my classes." Corey requested a reassignment to one of the health projects, but her (Country Director wouldn't approve the change. Although he understood her frustration, he recognized her strengths and believed she had the potential to become an outstanding teacher. Not willing to terminate early, Corey agreed to go back to her site and try again.

Before the new school year began, Corey discussed her situation with Chris, an experienced teacher who seemed to know how to manage her classes. Corey described how she had tried to be both a teacher and a friend. She wanted to be a helpful resource, and building a good relationship with her students had been one of her primary goals. But by the end of her first year, the discipline problems had seemed insurmountable.

ESTABLISH RULES

Chris listened carefully, and then tried to put these experiences in context. "In a culture where students are accustomed to authoritarian teachers, your friendly approach is completely unfamiliar. Some students really don't know how to respond," she explained. "I've decided that first I have to establish clear rules. I can't teach unless the students are under control."

Chris described some of the policies she had developed to handle difficult situations. To discourage cheating, Chris first reminded the students to keep their eyes on their own papers. During the tests, she walked around with a red felt tip pen. If she saw a student cheating, she immediately wrote "?" on the test paper, and the student lost points. Her students had learned not to look around during tests. Chris had also developed a way to handle chronic tardiness. She closed the door a few minutes after her class began and refused to allow late students to enter.

Corey was struggling with the idea of being such an authority figure. The strict approach suggested by Chris made sense, but it would not be easy. As Corey and Chris discussed the problems of trying to manage their large classes, Chris admitted that she was able to relax with her students once the class was under control, but not before. "Don't worry about being well liked or popular," Chris emphasized. "Think about being consistent and fair."

Corey thought back to her first year. She realized that she had constantly been on the defensive. She was always reacting-to cheating, disruptions, and lack of student preparation. She was determined not to go through another year like the first one. Before the school year began, she had to think about the situations she would face and decide how she would respond. "The students are going to test you," Chris warned, "but just keep to the rules. And don't accept excuses."

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BE CONSISTENT

When her classes began again, Corey was facing the same situations, but this time she was gaining control. Just as Chris had predicted, some students really tested her. Others mentioned that they didn't like her as much as they had the year before. But Corey was determined to be firm and consistent. She didn't accept excuses and her responses to discipline problems were completely predictable.

Like Corey, many teachers facing large difficult classes have learned to adjust and cope. They may begin by feeling frustrated, but they back up and start all over again. In Corey's case, her teaching experience the second year was so rewarding that she didn't want to leave. In fact, she extended for a third year. When asked how she built up her management skills, Corey stressed the importance of finding support. She explained that she constantly sought the advice of other Peace Corps Volunteers, host country teachers at her school, and local friends and neighbors.

Throughout this book, we will continue to repeat the basic, practical advice that we received from experienced teachers: share resources, be realistic, pace yourself, look after your voice, eat a healthy breakfast, get some exercise, and (above all) maintain your sense of humor. In this chapter, we will describe management skills that are effective in traditional learning environments. We will also introduce another important source of teacher support: the students. The problems you face with large, multilevel classes are much more manageable if you can gradually enlist the help of your students.

Working with students

Students are very resourceful. They can create problems or generate solutions, depending on how you engage and maintain their attention. Getting students on task requires a repertoire of strategies that range from praise and encouragement to peer pressure or punishment. As we share some of these strategies, we'll begin by emphasizing traditional management techniques. Once you have gained control of your class, you can teach the students to manage some of their own activities.

Before we discuss management strategies, we'd like you to envision a learner-centered classroom. Try to picture a large class where the teacher has taught the students to take responsibility for doing their assignments within small cooperative groups. Throughout this book we will talk about the benefits of cooperative learning more fully, but for now we are introducing this model to prepare you for some of the language teaching approaches that will be developed in the following chapters.

CREATING A VISION

The picture of your desired classroom is a "vision." In many planning seminars, managers are reminded to envision or picture their goals before they attempt to frame their priorities. As you create a vision, you may not be able to duplicate the ideal situation in your mind, but you can come dose. Without a vision, your greatest efforts are often aimless.

When you are facing a crowded class of 60-150 students, you need help. And your most talented assistants can be found among the energetic adolescents you are trying to teach and control. Unless you plan to sustain mechanical drills throughout the year, you will need to create class "helpers" and develop their management skills. Don't limit your classroom role to teaching. Your success will also depend on your ability to manage students who have learned to take more responsibility for themselves.

Close your eyes and picture small groups of four to eight students working quietly together. Each group is trying to accomplish a clearly defined task. One student in the group seems to be managing the activity. Another is taking notes. A timekeeper keeps everyone on schedule. Everyone contributes by sharing ideas, offering suggestions, and making corrections. You have

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planned the activity, provided clear instructions, delegated responsibility for organizing and timing, and made the students accountable for the success of the group. Once you have set the stage, your students know how to take control of themselves.

In this situation, students are improving their language skills while they manage themselves in cooperative learning groups. They are responsible for accomplishing specific tasks, and the teacher is monitoring and acting as a facilitator.

Cooperative learning may not be familiar to your students, and they won't react positively if you try to introduce innovations too quickly. If your students expect the teacher to be completely responsible for controlling the class, you need to establish your competence in this expected role. Once you establish your credibility, you can begin to incorporate innovative approaches to language learning. So the first step in developing classroom management strategies is to become familiar with the traditional teacher-student roles in your school.

BEGIN WITH FAMILIAR ROLES

To find out more about the expected roles of teachers and students, we recommend that you do some investigation. Try to observe some of the other language classes. How do students behave with other teachers? How do the teachers manage their classes? What are the school policies regarding discipline? Before you can establish your credibility as a teacher, you need to understand what your students have been programmed to expect.

You and your students will start within those parameters. Once you understand how the other teachers control their classes, you can begin to plan your own strategies. As you learn more about the system, hold on to the pearls of wisdom and discard any harsh suggestions. We will try to help you address the obvious problems.

Learner-centered management is only possible if the teacher is willing to step back a little. But a teacher who has not first established control cannot possibly consider stepping back. If you are working in a system where students are accustomed to authoritarian approaches, DON'T make the mistake of walking in with unrealistic plans for learner controlled activities. Only after gaining respect can a teacher, gradually, with clear directions, begin to include less familiar activities that include pair work, small group work, and independent study.

During her second year of teaching, Corey learned that it is best to begin with firm, predictable rules. Every teacher can anticipate basic problems, including tardiness, disruptions, cheating, or lack of student preparation. From the beginning, establish a bedrock of rules that are clear and non-negotiable. Don't wait for a crisis to hit.

ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS

As you introduce yourself and your course objectives, establish a contract with the students. Emphasize that you will work hard to prepare the lessons, you will deal with the students politely, and you will create fair tests designed to evaluate what you have taught. By the same token, you expect the students to be prepared for each lesson, to behave in a manner that does not interfere with class learning, and to respond fairly with their own answers to tests.

Students need a written statement that clarifies school rules and procedures. Most high schools have a student handbook which contains the school rules. Parents and students are required to read the handbook and sign a statement of understanding.

Find out if your school has a handbook or written summary of rules. If your school does not have such support, you will need to talk to your colleagues and create an in-class substitute. Be sure to discuss your intentions with your school principal or director, who must approve your policies. Provide a copy of the contract to the school administration.

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Every student in your class needs to understand the class contract, which shouldn't include more than ten key disciplinary rules. Have your students copy the contract into their notebooks and sign their names. You may also want to sign those individual contracts or display a copy by the board.

The rules that you establish will be the result of discussions with school administrators and other teachers, but they must also reflect your own values and judgment. Some Volunteers have discovered that teachers in their schools use harsh physical punishments or require students to do chores at their homes. By American cultural standards, some of these disciplinary measures would be considered abusive. Volunteers have been disturbed by harsh punishments, but they draw on their own judgment and creativity to establish moderate alternatives.

Improving discipline

Disciplining students requires a lot of thought, planning, and self-confidence. Young teachers have the greatest trouble with this aspect of class management. If you are someone who finds it difficult to establish your authority, strengthen your resolve by considering how the students will act if you have no control. Again, create a vision in your mind. Picture a teacher's nightmare. (Go ahead, let your imagination go.) It's almost impossible to manage a large group of adolescents when you are reacting haphazardly.

Now, picture the steps you will take to establish and implement your rules. Actually imagine explaining the rules in detail. Think about creating a role play to demonstrate how a student loses points for cheating. (We will discuss role plays in Chapter Eight.) Once your students realize that you will be consistent about following the class rules, they will be less likely to bring trouble on themselves again. But establish your policies early. The old adage rings true REWARDS when it comes to discipline: "A stitch in time saves nine..."

REWARDS

Although we emphasize that you must establish rules from the start, there is no question that in your daily interactions, rewards are more effective than punishments. Good discipline is actually a careful balance of "the carrot and the stick."

We'll begin with the carrots, the rewards. How can you reward good behavior? Any good response deserves your acknowledgement. Teacher encouragement takes many forms: a smile, spoken praise, display of good work, a few comments on the student's paper, individual or group awards, free time to read (English) magazines or books, access to language games or fun activities, extra grade points, or arranging special events. Find out what the students appreciate and enjoy, and make them aware of your willingness to connect with these interests. By recognizing and rewarding good behavior, you provide motivation for the students to improve their social skills. Recognition of success also builds their self-esteem.

PUNISHMENTS

And how do you discourage or punish misbehavior? There is no cookbook for handling discipline problems, but we can offer the advice of teachers who have dealt with the extremes, including violent gangs of students. Your own discipline policies should reflect your sensitivity to local norms and expectations.

When a student is disrupting the class, first try some attention moves. Use direct eye contact from where you are, or move closer to the student. You may need to pause in the middle of your sentence and look directly at him or her. You can also startle the student by using his or her name as you give an example or by calling on that student to answer a question. A direct comment, such as, "Omar, do you need help with something?" can sound like an offer to help. All else failing, give a specific verbal reprimand "Please be quiet, Nadia"

Stronger responses are sometimes necessary. If a student continues to misbehave, write his or her name on the board and remind the student that you will meet after class. Your students can

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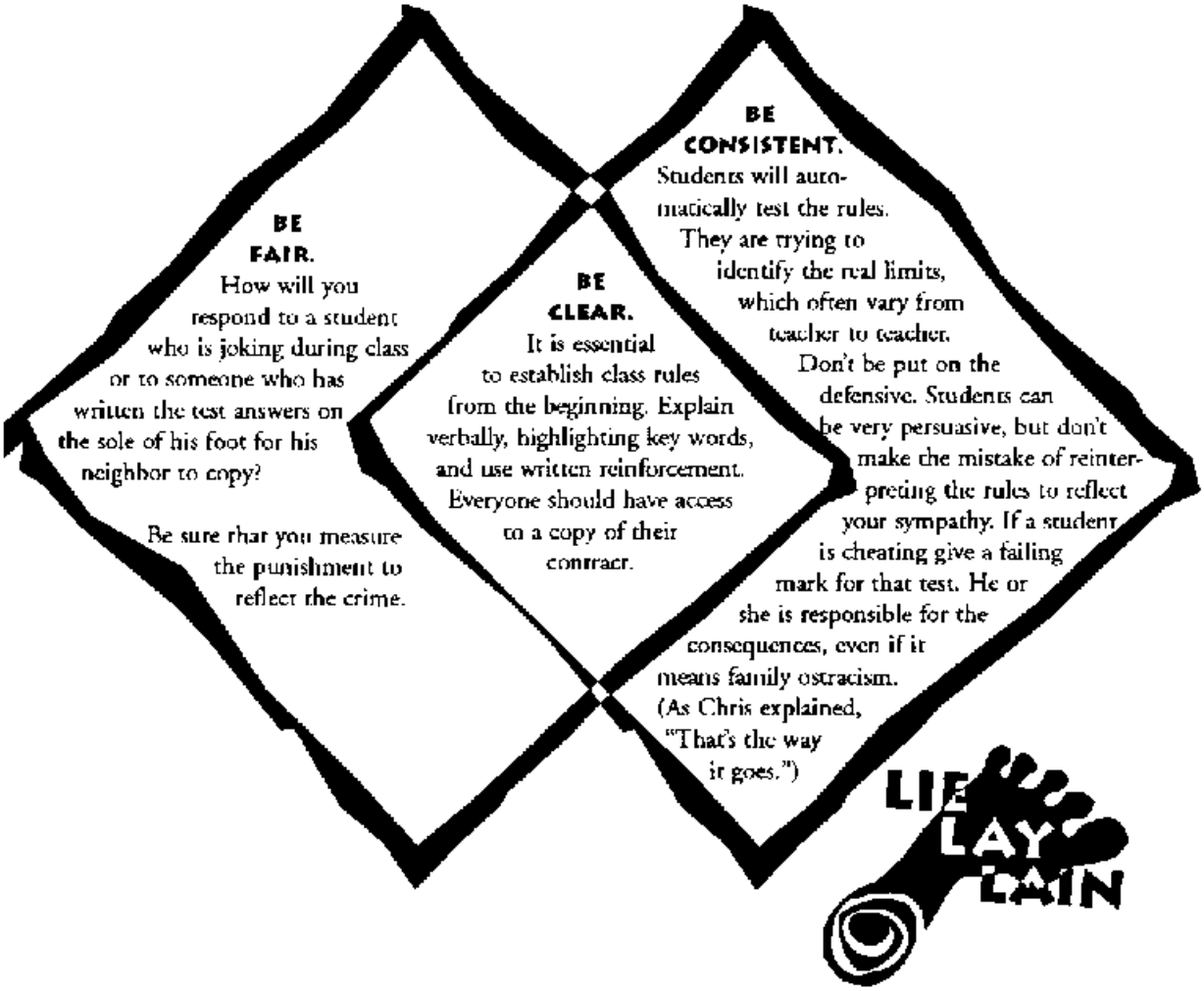
expect detention or extra assignments if you find it necessary to put their names on the board for misbehavior. When a name goes up three times, require the student to bring a parent or guardian for a conference. It is helpful to keep a log of students' behavior.

Suspension is a punishment that some school systems use when all else fails. For example, Chris described how she had tried unsuccessfully to deal with a rude, disruptive student. Finally, she asked him to leave her class, but he refused. Her response was to tell him that she planned to count... "One-one thousand, two-two thousand etc.," and that he would be suspended for as many days as the numbers she counted. The student was shocked. Students who were suspended were responsible for keeping up with their studies at home, and they received "F" for any tests given during that time. Chris did not back down, and her class troublemakers were soon discouraged or eliminated.

In reviewing the many different ways that teachers handle discipline, we have identified three basic principles:



As you think about discipline and all the factors that contribute to good management, remember to control your own patterns of behavior. Your reactions must be calm and predictable, with a balance of positive responses to good behavior and firm responses when the students break the rules.

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The key to good management is establishing respect and getting control. We cannot overemphasize this crucial point: well-managed classrooms require the firm guidance of a respected teacher.

LEARNING NAMES

Students will respond positively if they believe you are genuinely interested in them. One way to build a respectful relationship with your students is to learn their names as quickly as possible.

Learning all your students' names may require some time, especially if you have four or five large classes of students. But make the effort and be diligent. Where needed, work on your pronunciation. Being able to call on students by name or greet a student outside the school is important for classroom morale and management.

Some people learn names quickly, and others do not. To improve your memory of names, think about your learning style:

- Do you learn names by association? If so, look at your students as you call roll and see if something strikes you. Marghetta is carrying an umbrella. Joshua wears blue sneakers.

- Do you learn better visually? Write down the students' names on pieces of paper. Arrange them in seating patterns while you are eating your dinner. Or, alphabetize them by first name.

- Do you learn aurally? Have a friend read your class list aloud while you try to picture each student in your mind. For one week or more, ask your students to say their names each time they respond to a question in class. Or, for variety, say the name of someone they are sitting next to.

Other suggestions include using your students' names for characters in your lessons, adding anecdotes about your students in letters or journals, and talking with fellow teachers about them. Using the names in context will be most helpful as you try to develop lessons with relevant content.

PROFESSIONAL STYLE

Your students want you to recognize their names and they appreciate your interest in their lives. They also want to know more about you. But be careful. You control student grades and you are ultimately responsible for discipline. Remember that you are an authority figure. As you think about building relationships with your students, we recommend a friendly but respectful style. In the long run, being respected is more important than being popular, although a nice blend is ideal.

Students react to everything about you: how you look, what you do, what you say, and how you say it. Style can be as important as substance. Your facial expressions, your (funny) mannerisms, your cone of voice, and your organization (or lack thereof) can easily enhance or distract from the content of your lessons. When you take stock of your teaching situation, don't overlook yourself. You need to assess your strengths and weaknesses and work to project an image that generates respect and credibility.

APPEARANCE

First and foremost, students notice your appearance. Your clothing and hairstyle will reflect your cultural background, but make sure that you look like a professional. Take your cues from the other teachers in your school. It's especially important to make a good impression during the first weeks of class. Some Volunteers may find the suggestions about appearance superficial. Others may resent any attempts to limit their freedom of expression. We are certainly not advocating a dress code, but we are stating a fact. Clothing is loaded with messages. (Why do you think judges wear robes?) If you want your students to treat you with respect, dress appropriately.

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BEHAVIOR

Your behavior is also a powerful source of communication. Where do you stand when you teach? Are you hiding behind a desk or are you standing close to the students? Do you move around? Noisy students can often by silenced without a word. Just move closer to them as you continue your lesson. Do you project your voice? Remember that a lower pitch commands more respect than a higher pitch. (Try giving an order with a high pitched voice.) Eye contact is an essential management tool. Look at the students when you are teaching. You won't know if they have understood you if you are looking at the board or over their heads. But remember, not all your students will look you in the eye. In many cultures, avoiding eye contact is a sign of respect.

Your behavior is noted both inside and outside the classroom. Just as you are trying to assess your students, they are trying to assess you. Your students will talk about your judgment and your manners. Remember your own reactions when you had "unfair" or "mean" teachers. Teacher responses to discipline problems are hot news. They are remembered and recounted in great (sometimes exaggerated) detail. And word can spread as quickly among 150 students as it does among 30.

Everyone appreciates a teacher who demonstrates poise and self-control. Students will test your patience, but by responding with polite behavior, you will begin to model patterns of respect. And when you make a mistake, whether it is related to coursework or cultural norms, be willing to admit your error and, if necessary, apologize. Students will learn that errors are part of the learning process. Gratitude is another welcome expression. Your students will appreciate your recognition of their progress with comments like, "Thanks for working so quietly today..." And if a student is rude or distracting in class, stay calm. Try speaking to him or her after class. Students hate being humiliated in front of their peers.

Although we have emphasized elements of style, we do not intend to underestimate the importance of your knowledge. A teacher's style is the way he or she communicates the content of the lessons. If you want to walk into the classroom with confidence, you absolutely must be prepared. Don't ad lib. Review each day's lesson beforehand so that you are knowledgeable about the topic being covered.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Being prepared also includes the skill of knowing how to handle questions when you don't know the answer. As your lessons encourage students to apply critical thinking skills, they will begin to ask questions about their true concerns. And you can't possibly have all the answers. Your students will develop greater respect and trust if you are comfortable with your own limitations.

For example, not every teacher is qualified to discuss AIDS or water sanitation procedures. If you don't know the answers, think of the alternatives. One way to is to allow the students to search for the answers. Students need to learn how to get and share information. Ask them to interview their relatives and neighbors, write letters of inquiry, take on research projects, or invite a guest speaker to visit the class. Encourage them to answer each other's questions. Have your students memorize and explain the proverb: "Give me a fish and I can eat for a day. Teach me to fish and I can eat for a lifetime."

Unexpected questions can be handled routinely by involving the students or making notes and following up later. But some unexpected questions are also inappropriate. If you don't feel comfortable answering a student's question, simply explain, "In my culture, that's not a polite question to ask..." These interactions are all essential in their content. You are teaching important cultural information when you remind language learners of social parameters.

ERROR CORRECTION

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Just as you are trying to establish your patterns and expectations, you will soon discover that your students bring their own expectations to your classes. One issue that should be clarified early is your attitude towards mistakes and error correction. Many students have been taught to avoid making mistakes, and they will be frustrated when you do not correct every error. Your students need to understand that mistakes are a natural part of the language learning process. To address the needs of students who expect mistakes to be corrected, explain that you will note errors, but plan to deal with them systematically. Establish a contract with your students.

First, explain that you are going to keep a record of the most persistent errors made by the class during the week. If you have a notebook in which you can be seen noting down errors, so much the better. Second, explain that during oral class work if someone makes a mistake, you wild simply correct it by modeling the right answer. (For example, a student says, "She like math"; you model the correct form of the third person singular, present tense, "OK, she likes math" and move on.)

Set aside 5-10 minutes to deal with The Selected Error of the Week. If possible, feature this same error in correcting written work that week. Your analytical learners' relief will be palpable and your credibility will remain intact. Everyone wins. The analytical learners see a systematic approach in action, and you can control the amount of time spent on error correction.

As you try to manage the preferences and expectations of learners in a large class, your strategies either pave the way or act as major roadblocks. Organize and monitor yourself carefully, keeping reminders and creating predictable routines.

Creating routines

Organization is a key element of classroom management that is associated with teaching style. Most of us, including our students, develop routines because we prefer the expected to the unexpected. Students respond positively when the teacher establishes logical, predictable patterns of behavior in the classroom.

Each day before you begin a lesson, explain your objectives. Give a short, simple explanation of what the students are going to learn, why it is important, and how you plan to proceed. No matter how you intend to proceed-whole class, pair work, small group, or independent study-begin each lesson by telling the whole class your objectives and wrap up each lesson by pulling the whole class together for a summary of what has been accomplished.

When students understand what is expected of them, your role as a manager is simplified. As you think of patterns, you may want to create not only daily routines, but also weekly routines. Some students find it easier to prepare if they know there is a quiz every

Monday or group work every Thursday. They might look forward to the reward of self-access games and puzzles on Friday if they have been productive throughout the week.

Think of predictable routines as a source of stimulus. For example, challenge your students by having a different brainteaser or proverb or test question on the board each time they walk into the classroom. Or use a large class calendar to help your students to anticipate guest speakers, class presentations, important tests, holidays, or monthly themes.

MANAGING FACILITIES AND RECORDS

The problems of managing or adapting space and materials require special attention. If you are lucky, you have your own classroom, a resource center, or a storage room that you can secure. In some cases, Peace Corps is able to negotiate with the host school so that the Volunteer has access to secure space. To be sure that you have a secure place for your materials, we recommend that you bring a footlocker and padlock from the United States. Another option is to try to engage your students or community in building cabinets or storage space.

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RESOURCES

The facilities in your classroom have a direct impact on the learning that can take place. If reading materials are readily available and visual aids reinforce your instruction, your students enter an environment where they feel stimulated. Try to display a map, posters, or a calendar, even if these must be stored at the end of class. Look around and use your imagination. There should be no wasted space. Arrange the students so that they can move into groups easily, and if the desks are not bolted down, look for ways to arrange the furniture so that you can set up a corner for books, magazines, games, and other resources.

In Chapter Ten, we have put together a collection of ideas for resource development. Some of the students in your class will enjoy creating and managing these class resources. They just need the opportunity. Create a system so that a group of students is responsible for monitoring the use of these materials. With your help, this "resource group" can manage their own lending library.

RECORDS

Student leaders can also take responsibility for record-keeping. Each week, a different student can note the names of students who are absent in the class book. The class book might also be used to ask students to self-evaluate their participation on an assignment. At the end of each day, you review the notes from the class book and copy relevant information into your own records. Another idea that allows students to participate in record-keeping is the portfolio.

As we will explain in Chapter Eleven, the portfolio is an individual folder where each student can keep papers and assessment sheets that reflect his or her work.

The class book that we have referred to is simply a large notebook that is left open to the students for public viewing. It might contain basic attendance notes and participation records. A section of the class book could also be set aside for student feedback.

GETTING AND GIVING FEEDBACK

One of the great frustrations of teaching a large class is trying to communicate with students on a personal level. A teacher of 150 students has little time for casual conversation or individual instruction. Yet because courses for large groups are not easily tailored to meet learner needs, the students in these classes encounter even greater problems with course materials, activities, and policies than students in smaller classes. Student should be given opportunities to keep you informed of their problems and needs.

CLASS BOOK

Place the class book where everyone will have access to it. Devote a section to "Comments and Suggestions" and encourage your students to write their thoughts. Tell them you will use the book to write your responses. Everyone will be interested in this dialogue. If the students seem hesitant at first, begin the process by writing an interesting observation about the class in the book. The students will want to write their responses and follow up with questions.

SUGGESTION BOX

One of the teachers we interviewed had placed a suggestion box near the door. The whole class was first asked to evaluate an activity that the teacher had introduced that day. Students were told to write something positive about the activity and then something they would change to make it better. They were not required to sign their names. As they left the room, they put their folded papers with comments into the suggestion box. After the teacher read the suggestions, he

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commented on them in the next class, thanked the students for their participation, and incorporated some of the suggestions in the next lesson. His students were encouraged to submit comments at any time, and periodically this suggestion box was used for feedback from the whole class.

JOURNALS

Many teachers use dialogue journals as a way to communicate with their students. Some of the writing topics they assign may be related to the content of the course, but at times teachers will ask students to give their opinions about class activities or ways to improve student behavior. The teacher then writes a few sentences in response to the students' ideas.

As a practical matter, a teacher of a large class cannot respond weekly to journal entries from every student. However, a rotation system, noted on the calendar, provides a useful alternative. All students are expected to respond to journal writing topics, but the teacher only collects the journals of one group per week. This system is simple and manageable, and it gives the teacher and students an opportunity to communicate on a more personal level.

FINAL NOTES

Most Volunteers want to develop supportive relationships with their students. They are anxious to introduce new ideas and want to challenge their learners with innovative teaching strategies. While recognizing the merits of these goals, we are suggesting that it is wise to begin by establishing clear, consistent, fair patterns of behavior. Help students to understand your expectations and emphasize that that you value a respectful classroom. By creating a manageable classroom environment, you are preparing students to respond appropriately when you introduce innovative activities.

Questions to ask yourself

As you try to assess and improve your management skills, ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you discussed classroom management and school policies with administrators, teachers, and other Volunteers?
- Have you observed other teachers to see how they manage their classes
- Do you have a written class contract that clarifies key expectations and rules,
- Are you calm and consistent when you respond to discipline problems?
- Do you provide encouragement for good behavior?
- Would your appearance and teaching style be considered professional by your students and colleagues?
- Are your lessons well-prepared and clearly organized?
- Have you established predictable class routines?
- Have you tried to provide a stimulating learning environment?
- Do you begin with familiar approaches to learning and then gradually introduce less familiar strategies?

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- Have you involved your students in trying to manage or improve the class resources?
- Do you provide opportunities for getting and giving student feedback?

In this chapter, we have included strategies to help you think about your management style, get organized, and establish your expectations early in the school year. In Chapter Three, we enter the classroom and emphasize the importance of getting acquainted with your students. As you understand more about your students' goals, preferences, and language skills, your lessons will become more focused and relevant to their needs.

CHAPTER 3

Getting to know your students

"WHEN A MAN DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HARBOR HE IS MAKING FOR, NO WIND IS THE RIGHT WIND."

SENECA

Recognizing opportunities

Before joining the Peace Corps, Kathleen had taught English as a second language to large classes of refugees and immigrants in Los Angeles. Her students had included Russian artists, Salvadoran migrant workers, Vietnamese grandmothers, and Ethiopian cabdrivers. Kathleen had learned to watch and listen as her students talked about the difficult task of adapting to the United States. The more she understood, the more she was able to adjust her lessons to their needs

When Kathleen arrived in country, she expected to be comfortable with a wide range of cultural differences. But she found her adaptation harder than she had expected. For a start, this time she was the outsider in the culture. While living with a host family during pre-service training, she was surprised by her reaction to the lack of privacy. She was also struck by the fixed roles of the husband and wife. Even the parents' expectations of the children seemed strange. Kathleen thought about the students she would meet in her classes, and remembered her own high school days. She wondered if her students would be anything like American teenagers. She knew she would have to observe carefully to find out.

Before Kathleen met her class, she decided that she had to get off to a strong start. First and foremost, she wanted to gain the respect of her students. During the first few weeks of class, she also wanted to learn about their interests and expectations, so she planned a variety of activities to help her get acquainted. She hoped chat in the process she would motivate her students to think about themselves in relation to their course goals.

In this chapter, we help you to step into the classroom and get acquainted with your students. We suggest chat you take time to plan activities, to assess your students' needs and interests, and identify their goals, preferences, and expectations. As you gather this information, you will begin to identify the themes that will unify your lessons.

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PREPARATION

Some teachers try to organize an entire course before they have ever met with their students. They feel more comfortable if they have detailed schedules that include clearly outlined objectives. At the opposite extreme, there are teachers who want to go with the flow. They like to improvise their daily lessons, depending on the interest or topic of the day.

Kathleen had already experienced the discomfort of both of these extremes. She began her preparation by designing the first few classes to include self-descriptions, pair introductions, and group discussions. With the information gained from these assessment activities, she could begin to design a curriculum that actually addressed her students' needs and interests. As Kathleen tried to find out more about her students, she also planned to introduce them to participatory activities.

Kathleen knew that materials were scarce, so she selected exercises that would provide a wide range of information with a minimum of paperwork. She set up a journal for herself and kept careful notes about interests, skills, and preferences, which she could refer to throughout the school year.

Kathleen's approach might seem familiar to you. From the very beginning, you realize that the more you understand about your students, the more relevant your classes will be. You are very concerned about getting organized and establishing your credibility. And as a language teacher, you want to know about the English skills of your students.

Concerns outside the classroom

Many teachers equate assessment with tests and exercises that identify levels of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. But don't limit your focus. Language skills are not the only areas to explore during your assessment. Before suggesting activities that will help you find out more about your students, we'd like to remind you of some of the other factors that affect the dynamics in your classroom.

SURVIVAL NEEDS

Some of the underlying conditions you need to explore are related to survival needs:

- Do any students come to school hungry?
- Do their homes have running water?
- Are there students with serious medical problems?
- Do any seem to need glasses?

SAFETY

Safety is another critical issue:

- Is crime in urban areas a problem?
- Is it difficult to commute back and forth to school?

GROUP ASSOCIATIONS

Find out about group associations or belonging:

- Where does the student live?
- With family?
- With other students?
- Who is responsible for the student?

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SELF-ESTEEM

Another important issue is self-esteem

- How do students expect to be treated?
- Do students recognize their strengths?
- How do they deal with their limitations?

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Your students have visions and goals related to self-actualization:

- What are their hopes for the future?
- What role does education play as they try to shape their own lives?

These questions are directly related to the success of your English classes. The answers may come through careful observation and informal conversations, but you will also need to encourage the students to open up to you through the assessment activities. To highlight the importance of these questions, we can categorize the needs of your students within a framework that identifies sources of human motivation. According to the psychologist Abraham Maslow, basic needs motivate human behavior. Maslow's pyramid is a clear visual reminder of basic human needs

Survival needs include drinkable water, adequate food, and necessary health care. Your students require a sense of safety and security. The need for love extends from the primary relationships within the family to a sense of belonging that is associated with friendships and peer groups within your classroom. And respect and self-actualization can be enhanced through education.

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As part of the assessment process, you need to become familiar wit the health, safety, family, friends, preferences, and goals of your students. Don't be surprised if some of your students are hesitant about sharing their personal goals or interests. Your encouragement will help them to explore these topics gradually. In the following chapters, as we discuss ways of integrating your students' interests and concerns in your EFL/ESL lessons, you will see that your language classes can provide opportunities for self-reflection, self-description, and self-development.

Cultural values and expectations

Whenever Volunteers interact with host country counterparts or students, they are walking through a minefield of unspoken assumptions. In communication, most serious misunderstandings are caused by contrasts in expectations, not by grammatical mistakes. Within the classroom, these cultural preferences can have a subtle, yet powerful influence on the learning that takes place. As you try to understand what motivates your colleagues and students, you need to become aware of the deeply rooted cultural values that are affecting their behavior.

An example of cultural assumptions is the American emphasis on individuality, which contrasts with the greater value that many other cultures place on the collective wellbeing of the group. Your students may not want to be singled out, even when being recognized for excellence. "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down" is a proverb that reflects this common attitude.

There are many cultural values that we take for granted. Is hard work highly respected, or do your students believe that their success will be the result of fate or luck? Are there superstitions you should know about? How is cheating viewed? Are students expected to help each other to succeed? Do students want direct feedback, or do they expect you to communicate indirectly to "save face"?

Americans assume that males and females will have equal opportunities in education, and it is hard to come to terms with other attitudes. Yet as you look around your classes, you may see that after three or four years of secondary schooling, the number of women in your classes drops off dramatically.

If there were easy answers to some of the cultural dilemmas you will encounter, we would give them to you. We can only advise you to be cautious. Try to avoid making value judgments. Antagonizing your students will push your world views apart, and you are trying to pull world views together. In the case of females, we encourage you to enlarge your students' expectations. Make sure that you introduce women's achievements and contributions to society in your lessons. Include a balance of male and female role models in your exercises. By avoiding stereotyping, you can go a long way toward raising awareness of cultural assumptions.

Most students are not conscious of the contrasting values that exist in other cultures. As part of the assessment process, include discussions that will generate greater awareness and understanding as you and your students try to communicate across cultures.

English language skills

We have thought about "what" our students may be able to share with us, now we need to consider "how" they will shape their ideas into a second language. Having discussed the broader context of basic needs, goals, interests, and cultural values, we are now ready to consider language skills.

During the first few weeks, you are trying to identify the language skill levels of a large crowd of students. Do not exhaust yourself. Conduct activities that will help you to take stock of the whole picture and identify the major strengths and weaknesses of the group as a whole.

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Keep in mind that in the first few days of class, the overall level of your students' language skills may seem lower than expected. Because you are an American, your mere presence is a diversion. Your style and mannerisms are curious and your accent is strange. If your students respond with blank stares, be patient. Slow down and keep your sentences short. Try to leave space between sentences. Select vocabulary carefully, avoiding slang. You may need to repeat what you have said in different ways or demonstrate what you mean. It is important to probe beyond first impressions. Students can generally understand at a higher level than their responses would indicate.

There are many English language tests that have been developed to measure the language skills of students. Options include multiple choice tests, completions, cloze exercises, dictations, essay writing, and oral reports. Because of the time and energy required co correct test papers, especially when you are facing large groups of students, we recommend that you limit the use of structured evaluation instruments. Instead, we will describe an assessment process that takes place primarily through participatory activities.

Recommended class activities

To begin her classes, Kathleen selected assessment activities that were interesting, informative, and easy to do. She was able to identify class strengths and weaknesses, group similarities, and individual needs. She discovered background information about her students and learned about their personal goals, interests, and preferences. At the same time, Kathleen was able to note specific language skill levels. The initial assessment included the following activities:

- A Student Questionnaire
- Pair Interviews
- Small Group Discussions
- Whole Class Activities
- A Writing Sample
- A Personal Interview

You may find that some of these recommendations are very helpful, and others are simply impractical or too advanced for your students at this time. As you tailor your own initial getting acquainted lessons, be sure that the information you are soliciting is appropriate for your situation. For example, you might include simplified segments of these activities as you introduce new vocabulary to basic level students, or you may decide that a formal test required by your school is an appropriate addition to this assessment.

A student questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to elicit personal information about your students. It is not a test of language skills. Although data may be available from school administrators or other teachers, you will find it helpful to collect additional information in order to start individual and class profiles.

The format of a questionnaire is fairly straightforward, but you should be sensitive to your cultural environment. In order to learn more about your students, ask for the following information:

- **student's name, age, home address**
- **parents' I guardians' names**
- **special interests, such as dance, music, art, sports, etc.**
- **course goals and expectations**
- **a "can do" checklist to assess student's language skills**

Use a questionnaire form or have students write some of this information on index cards. These cards can then be filed alphabetically for easy reference or used in class to help you remember names as you call on your students.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME_____
AGE_____
ADDRESS_____
PARENTS/GUARDIANS_____
SPECIAL INTERESTS: _____
 DANCE
 MUSIC
 SPORTS
 ART
OTHER: _____

REASONS FOR STUDDING ENGLISH:
 LISTEN TO RADIO
 WATCH TV
 TALK TO PEOPLE
 GET A JOB
 READ BOOKS AND MAGAZINES
OTHER_____

IN ENGLISH, I CAN UNDERSTAND (INDICATE FROM 100% TO 0%)
THE RADIO AND TV_____
MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES_____
SOCIAL CONVERSATIONS_____
THE TEACHER_____
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS_____

GOAL IN FIVE YEARS_____

AN OBSTACLE IS SOMETIMES AN UNRECOGNIZED OPPORTUNITY

The information gained through a questionnaire or index cards will help you identify some of the factors that motivate your students. Many of the questions will elicit responses that will heighten your understanding of students' living conditions and needs.

The questionnaire is easy to administer. Explain that you are interested in learning more about your students. Take time to go over the vocabulary on the questionnaire. This process may take an entire class period. Model the exercise by allowing the students to question you as you complete a sample form. Your students will enjoy asking you some of these questions. (When you answer the "can do" self-assessment, refer to your proficiency in their native language!)

Allow your students to help each other as they fill out their own forms. Advanced students may need to translate for some of the others, and that is fine. Try to anticipate any problems, especially THOSE related to social skills. For example, if your students seem to make a lot of noise, be explicit as you tell them to "Work quietly." Your instructions are opportunities for them to develop language skills and self-management techniques. As your students go through this process, you are introducing them to cooperative learning in a multilevel classroom. In Chapters Eight and Nine we will explore the many individual and social benefits of collaborative language learning.

When you collect these forms, the information that you gather provides an introduction co the lives of your students. You will discover facts that affect their physical and emotional wellbeing and their performance in your class. Some students travel great distances to come to school. Some are being raised by grandparents. You may find that you have a talented artist or musician

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in this group. When coping with a large class, you are not expected to absorb all of this data at once. You have simply collected useful information that can serve as a reference when needed.

Pair interviews

The student questionnaire provides the basic text for the next assessment activity. Tell the students chat they need to interview each other. The whole class can work together to create questions from the questionnaire. Write these questions on the board and encourage the students co revise or make any corrections, as needed.

Add to the list by asking the students to think of questions about their study habits. "Do you get everything done on time, or leave everything until the last minute?" Prioritize the questions together, and eliminate those chat seem less important to the class. Your list of questions may be similar to the following model:

- **WHERE DO YOU LIVE?**
- **DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL INTERESTS OR HOBBIES?**
- **WHY DO YOU WANT TO LEARN ENGLISH?**
- **HAVE YOU READ ANY BOOKS OR MAGAZINES IN ENGLISH?**
- **DO YOU LISTEN TO THE RADIO OR WATCH TV IN ENGLISH?**
- **WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WHEN YOU LEAVE SCHOOL?**
- **WHO ARE YOUR HEROES?**
- **WHAT DO YOU LIKE/DISLIKE MOST ABOUT SCHOOL?**
- **CLOSE YOUR EYES. IMAGINE YOURSELF FIVE YEARS FROM NOW. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?**

Tell the students that they are going co interview each other. Ask them co pair up with someone sitting nearby, preferably someone they don't know very well. Don't force any students to work together. If you have an odd number of students in your class, put three together and have them interview each other.

As soon as the students have finished the interviews, explain chat you want them to introduce each other to the class. Set a time frame. "You have two minutes to introduce your partner." Have them write key words on a piece of paper. A model on the board might include the following:

After the students have had a few moments to get organized, ask for some volunteers to come forward. If you are dealing with beginning level students, allow one student to ask questions while the partner answers. More advanced students can give brief descriptions that summarize their interviews. Whether they are trying to introduce each other to the class or listening to those presentations, all of the students are strengthening their language skills during this process.

With 30 to 75 pairs of students, not everyone will have an opportunity to give a presentation. However, if the students seem to enjoy speaking English in front of their classmates, allow them to sign up on your class calendar to be "guest speakers." Schedule no more than two pairs of students for each class period and limit their speaking time. The presentations are more enjoyable and interesting if students are not required to sit through too many introductions in one day.

Small group discussions

Small group discussions provide your students with opportunities for self-discovery and understanding of differences. By chinking about how to present a well-organized, coherent point of view, students improve their language skills as they analyze and discuss problems. When using group discussions as part of the assessment process, try to focus on values, attitudes, or behavior. Topics can include cultural values, learning objectives, or environmental issues. Such

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topics will motivate students and stimulate conversational responses which grammar lessons seldom generate.

Before asking your students to form discussion groups, be sure chat they understand how to behave in small groups. You might want to ask four to eight students co come to the center of the class to provide a model of a small group discussion. More detailed suggestions about giving students in pairs or small groups specific tasks and roles are described in Chapters Eight and Nine.

ANALYZING CULTURAL VALUES

Cultural values can be a thought-provoking, highly revealing topic for small group discussions. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, you need co understand how your students feel about traditions, superstitions, use of time, competition, individuality, and equality of the sexes. One example of a cultural survey places values on opposite sides of a continuum:

People must accept their lives as they are	1	2	3	4	5	People can improve their lives.
Teach children to be independent	1	2	3	4	5	Teach children to depend on their elders
Marry first, then love.	1	2	3	4	5	Love first, then marry.
Discuss differences.	1	2	3	4	5	Ignore differences of opinion.
Use the land to meet the needs of people.	1	2	3	4	5	Protect the land.
Competition motivates me.	1	2	3	4	5	Competition bothers me

Ask the students to circle the number closest to their own position. As the students analyze the options, tell them to think about their individual preferences first. Then have them compare their answers with those of someone sitting nearby, and finally, put the students into small groups and request a small group consensus This sequence is called **THINK-PAIR-SHARE**. Students might complete three sentences to reinforce the process:

My reaction ----------
My partner's reaction ----------
Our group's reaction ----------

Have one of the students record some examples to support the group consensus. Because the members of the group must come to an agreement, this activity also gives you an opportunity to introduce social skills, including appropriate terms for suggesting, agreeing, and disagreeing.

An analysis of cultural values will give you and your students an opportunity to demonstrate respect for and acceptance of differences, including the differences that may surface between your American values and those values generally accepted by the class.

MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

Small group discussions can also be used to highlight the reasons students are learning English. To find out more about the expectations chat your students bring to their English class, use a ranking system and ask groups co prioritize their reasons for studying English. Statements co rank might include these:

Ranking from "1" = most important to "5" = least important

- **To pass the National Exam**
- **To read magazines and books**
- **To listen to the radio and watch TV**

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- **To talk to people in English**
- **To get a job that requires English skills**
- **To move to an English speaking country**
- **To understand other cultures (Other)**

This discussion topic will require students to chink about the possible benefits of your class. It will also give you a point of reference as you plan activities to motivate your students.

Prioritizing is an activity that can be used to encourage critical thinking and discussion about what and how and why students are learning. A similar group activity is to ask students to analyze eight sentences and come to a consensus about the four chat they believe are the most important:

1. **A good teacher helps students to become independent learners.**
2. **Students can help each other to learn English.**
3. **Teachers are the only source of knowledge in the classroom.**
4. **The best way to learn English is to study grammar.**
5. **The best way to learn English is to read and talk about interesting topics.**
6. **Teachers must correct all grammar mistakes.**
7. **Everyone learns a language the same way.**
8. **Social skills are an important part of language learning.**

As the students discuss these sentences, they will begin to analyze the alternatives to traditional teacher-centered lectures. When the whole class comes together co discuss and summarize the small group decisions, you will have an opportunity to challenge the students to think about their roles and responsibilities.

If you plan co include environmental themes in your lessons, you might ask students to respond to statements chat require them to reflect on their attitudes toward environmental threats. The Peace Corps ICE Manual **Environmental Education in the Schools: Creating a Program That Works!** (forthcoming) includes a variety of environmental topics that would be appropriate for small group surveys and discussions in your English class. Students can discuss these issues and try to come to a consensus which is shared with the entire class.

Small group activities improve social skills, critical thinking skills, confidence, and achievement. They should be introduced carefully to establish successful patterns of behavior. Be sure to read Chapters Eight and Nine for detailed guidelines that will help you to organize and facilitate participatory work effectively.

Whole class activities

Although your students will benefit from individual work, pair work, and small group activities, it is important that a large group of students also develop a whole class identity.

Questionnaires, interviews, and group surveys can result in whole class profiles. Ask groups of students to create simple charts that can be used to record data about interests, preferences, special skills, and study habits. Class charts are simple assessment tools that build cohesion, develop greater understanding, and provide the basis for future class goals.

One participatory whole class activity that provides an alternative to written or oral assessments is Total Physical Response (TPR). As the name implies, students communicate by moving their bodies in response to a stimulus. With TPR, you and your students can demonstrate skills or learn interesting information about each other.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

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Whole class TPR assessment activities can be quite simple. For example, if you want to know how many students have studied English for over three years, write the word "Quietly" on the board (to keep the noise level down) and then write "Studied English for more than three years." Then tell the students to stand up quietly if they have studied English for more than three years. Ask one of the students to count and write the number of students on the board. Thank everyone, and tell those students to sit down. You might ask the students to raise their right hands if they listen to English on the radio, or ask them to lift their pencils in the air if they speak English outside the class.

Some teachers have enjoyed teaching their students games, such as "Simon says..." This is a non-threatening activity chat helps teachers identify the listening comprehension skills of their students. This game can also form the basis for future lessons.

TPR activities can be used to identify whole class preferences or attitudes. Your awareness of dominant learning style preferences, for instance, will help you to organize your presentations so that you gradually move from familiar co unfamiliar approaches co learning. To identify learning style preferences, which are described in more detail in Chapter Four, place signs that reflect each of the four major preferences at four points in the room. In the front of the classroom, you might have a sign that says "Talk to someone about it", at the back of the classroom, " Read the directions", facing the class, to the right, "Try it!", and on the opposite wall to the left "Wait & watch..." Put a large piece of paper next to each of the signs so that the students can sign their names.

Using this circle as a visual aid, point out the four points and four learning preferences. Then hold up a picture or piece of equipment (health or agriculture items related to your lessons) and ask the students to imagine that they must learn how to use the equipment. Emphasize the word "quietly" and tell the students to stand up and move next to one of the four state meets-the one that best reflects their first preference when they must learn something new. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. Students may place themselves on a continuum between two preferences, or stand in the middle if they might use all four approaches.

Most students (and teachers) are fascinated by analyses of learning styles. Within their groups, ask the students to talk about why they chose to stand next to a particular learning preference. Share your own style preference, and emphasize that in your class, you will be integrating activities that meet the needs of all four learning styles, including talking and working together, analyzing grammar rules and taking lecture notes, watching and listening to other students, undertaking group projects, and creating class presentations.

Ask the students in each group to write their names on the large piece of paper hanging next co each sign. This information will be useful co you as you create groups of students who will work together throughout the year. You may also decide to follow up with a more detailed self-evaluation after reading Chapter Five.

A writing sample

In addition to the holistic assessment of listening and speaking, we recommend that you give your students an opportunity to write about themselves. The autobiographical writing sample can take many forms, depending on the proficiency levels and style preferences in your class. No matter which option you choose, keep in mind chat the students will greatly appreciate and benefit from an introductory model that includes your own autobiographical information. For instance, if you request an autobiographical letter from your students, first read them a short autobiographical letter that you have written co them. Provide a spoken rather than written model, or the students will make an exact copy of your writing. Provide models, whether you are asking students co write sentences, paragraphs, or essays. And try to be specific about the length of the writing assignment. Students in secondary schools are often asked to write essays of 150-180 words. Students like the precision of this instruction, and teachers with 60 to 100 essays to look at appreciate the brevity.

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These are possible topics:

- **Think of five people or things that are very important to you. Write at least one sentence for each.**

- **Write me a letter telling me about your life now and your plans for the future**

- **Write a letter with any suggestions that will help me to improve this class.**

- **Imagine that; it is five years from now. Where do you want to be., What would you like to be doing? Describe your future self-image and explain the steps that you will take to get there.**

- **Think of an experience that has had a significant impact on your life. Describe the experience and compare your attitude or behavior before the experience to the way you are now.**

Students should be given adequate time to write their papers. Then collect the papers, and using a holistic scoring scale (see Chapter Eleven), note your assessment of each individual's skill level. This writing assignment should be returned to the students with a personal comment or response from you, but with no corrections of the language. To provide students with an opportunity to improve their own work, allow time later for revisions and editing.

Allow the students to work together as they go through the writing process and encourage them to take pride in the final paper. If the students don't have notebooks, set up a system so that each student keeps his or her own writing assignments together for future reference. For more details about the writing process, see Chapter Eight. Additional information about Teaching Writing is also available in Chapter Six of the Peace Corps ICE Manual **TEFL/TESL: Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language. (Whole ICE Catalog No. M0041)**

A writing sample gives students the opportunity to share personal experiences and expectations. This activity provides some of your more reserved students an opportunity to connect with you for the first time. You may also be surprised to discover that students who seemed uncertain during conversations and presentations actually have a fairly strong command of the written language.

Because the writing assessment gives you the greatest insight regarding your students' structural control of English, take time to note major grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. You want to teach the students to take more responsibility for correcting their own work, so don't correct the papers. Just make notes in your journal or notebook so that you can address these points later through exercises integrated into your lessons.

Personal interview

Finally, our most challenging recommendation is that you include time for a series of personal interviews. If you cannot possibly meet with the students individually, try to meet with them in groups of six to ten. You may be able to do this during each class period while other students are working on an assignment, before or after classes, or during lunch.

Personal interviews can be completely informal or carefully structured to include oral assessments. You may want to include a blend of warm-up conversation, controlled topics (with references to pictures or realia) and open-ended questions. The interviews provide students with teacher attention which is rare in a large class. This personal contact with students will improve your students' understanding and support throughout regular class activities.

As you are building understanding with your students, be sensitive to the attitudes toward teacher-student friendships. Set up appointments to be conducted at school, not in your home.

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To avoid charges of favoritism or resentment from host-country teachers, it is important to maintain relationships that are acceptable within your new cultural norms.

Record keeping

Another factor to consider during the assessment is record keeping. You are not scoring for a grade, which must be emphasized to the class, but as you begin to identify individual students, make a simple notation next to their names. Symbols such as a plus (+), check (V), and minus (-) can reflect your reaction to overall speaking ability. By walking among the students and observing carefully during the interview process, you will learn a great deal about their language skills. You may want to keep your own notes on these observations, or share your assessment with the students. Some teachers create portfolio folders to keep a collection of each student's accomplishments. We will discuss portfolio assessment in more detail in Chapter Eleven.

Understanding the social dynamics in your class is a major objective of the needs assessment. Try to identify class leaders and helpers. These students have the potential to become mid-level managers as you organize your class into groups. As you take notes, try to identify important social skills and preferences.

- **Do your students enjoy working together?**
- **Did any students avoid each other?**
- **Who are the leaders?**
- **Which students were confident enough to come forward and give presentations?**
- **Do any advanced students seem particularly helpful?**
- **Which students will need additional assistance'**

Final notes

Kathleen's careful planning was fueled by one of her most important long-term goals: survival. She knew that her early efforts would help her to avoid the frustration and exhaustion that accompany the appearance of disorganization. Each morning during the first weeks of class, she became her own enthusiastic cheerleader as she tried to create a momentum for her entire course.

The getting acquainted activities described in this chapter were selected to provide a wide range of information with a minimum of required resources or paperwork. Be sure that you keep careful notes in a journal or notebook so that you can refer back to or add to your assessment throughout the school year. And as you collect and organize your information, try to find answers to the following questions:

Questions to ask yourself

- What are the primary reasons that the students want to learn English?
- What are some topics of special interest to the students?
- What are the basic language skill levels of the students?
- Which students are strongest in listening and speaking? Weakest? Average?
- Which students have the strongest reading and writing skills? Weakest? Average?
- What are some of the problems you will face as you work with this group of students?
- Are any of the advanced students willing to assist the less capable language learners?
- Which students are the class leaders?
- Do any students have special talents (art, singing, acting, musical instruments)?
- Are there any cultural values or assumptions that may be in conflict with yours?
- Are there any cultural values that will support your teaching objectives?
- How did students react to pair and group activities?

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Your observations throughout the assessment process have uncovered students' interests, backgrounds, language skills, expectations, and attitudes. All of this information will help you to identify themes and content for your lessons. In the following chapters, we will help you to understand different approaches that can be used to teach large classes. We will then share practical ideas that will help you to adjust your lessons and curricula to meet the needs and interests of your students.

CHAPTER 4

Approaches to large classes

TEACHERS HAVE NO COPYING FACILITIES, NO HOME BASE, NO SUPPLIES OF ANY KIND.

UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS, MUCH OF WHAT IS WRITTEN ABOUT LANGUAGE TEACHING IN JOURNALS AND BOOKS IS IRRELEVANT, EVEN LAUGHABLE.

DAVID CROSS TESOL EFL NEWSLETTER, SPRING 1992

Peace corps training is short and sweet

This chapter looks at two approaches to TEFL/TESL. The first type of approach applies a formula with an explicit plan for the orderly presentation of language teaching. We have selected the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) as typical of this approach. The second type of approach theorizes about language learning, but has no compulsory procedures for applying these theories. The Communicative Approach is a model of this option.

Two other Peace Corps ICE Manuals, TEFL/TESL Teaching English as a Foreign OR Second Language (Whole ICE Catalog No. M0041) and A Language Training Reference Manual (Whole ICE Catalog No. T0056) discuss in detail other approaches to language teaching. However, we

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decided to emphasize ALM and the Communicative Approach because these are the two approaches most commonly used by TEFL/TESL Volunteers.

When Volunteers talk about their teaching experiences, certain patterns emerge. At least initially, the majority of Volunteers, intent on surviving 17-20 hours a week of teaching in classes of anywhere from 60 to 150 students, are interested in what works. Under these circumstances, Volunteers want a step-by-step process for surviving a 50 minute lesson. This situation is where the teacher-centered ALM formula with its oral drills and ready-to-wear lesson plans fits in.

PROBLEMS WITH ALM

Later on, many Volunteers report that they begin to notice the problems with ALM. Its strengths during the uncertainty of those first few months of teaching have become its liabilities. The drills are monotonous and sometimes border on the absurd. The lesson plans smother interesting input from students. At this point, Volunteers say they start reviewing their situation. They are looking for answers, not the answer, and are confident enough to judge what will and what will not work in their classes. The learner-centered Communicative Approach, with its emphasis on meaningful exchanges, variety, and relevance, provides a range of options.

In the final phase of their service, most Volunteers adapt and synthesize activities from both ALM and the Communicative Approach. The result is usually a pragmatic model that emphasizes the need for strong organization and does not lay the burden of responsibility for learning solely on the teacher. The combination of both approaches, with sporadic use of grammar/translation, gives students who work at their English a fair shot at learning the language and at succeeding in the national examinations.

In this chapter, we will follow the case of Jeff as he applies ALM and the Communicative Approach to one of his large classes. Jeff graduated from a liberal arts college and worked as the manager of a video store for six months while waiting to join Peace Corps. He enjoyed pre-service training-well, most of it-and he was posted to a secondary school in a provincial capital. He thinks he will probably become a good teacher. But as he starts his teaching career, Jeff is the first to say that he has a way to go. Jeff started out by trying to put some life into his lessons. He introduced pair work, competitive team games, and group projects, but he really wasn't quite sure of what he was doing, and the results were a lot of unproductive noise which had brought complaints from the teacher in the room next door. Matters went from bad to worse. Every encounter with his classes left Jeff's control over the situation more tenuous. So he decided to clamp down, set up rigid routines, and just plough his way through the curriculum. Jeff became a traffic cop.

By turning to the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), Jeff believed that he had found an effective means of asserting his control. ALM was developed during the Second World War, when the U.S. Armed Forces needed to train thousands of military personnel in foreign languages. Linguists from the Department of Defense teamed up with behavioral psychologists to develop a primarily oral drill system of instruction, and ALM, the "scientific answer" to language learning, came into being. In ALM, a series of sentence patterns are presented orally in dialogues of increasing grammatical complexity. Each dialogue has accompanying drills (repetition, substitution, or transformation) that provide practice of the materials contained in the dialogues.

Jeff found that it was easy to take the textbook and write lessons using the standard three steps:

PRESENTATION
PRACTICE
PRODUCTION

For the presentation, he wrote dialogues which his students had to memorize; for the practice, he launched into drills; and for the production, he usually gave written exercises, such as fill in the blank, complete the dialogue, or match the word with the definition. After he had worked his way through a set of dialogues and drills in class, he usually gave students homework from the set

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textbook either answering comprehension questions on a reading passage or completing the grammar exercises. Since less than half the students had books, it took them at least a week to circulate the books among themselves and complete the work. This process only seemed to make them more appreciative of the extra work Jeff did in writing dialogues and taking an oral-aural approach in class.

Jeff found that his students seemed more manageable when he established and stuck to an ALM routine. The extroverts in the class had a great time acting out the dialogues. Everyone, Jeff included, liked knowing what was expected of them, and while the lessons didn't provide much challenge for the better students, the majority seemed to be soothed by the regularity and predictability of the oral drills. Jeff, too, felt a sense of accomplishment as dialogues were copied into notebooks and memorized, language patterns were drilled, and the material tested at the end of each unit.

ALM TEACHER

MODEL OF THE LANGUAGE
DIRECTOR OF DRILLS
CORRECTOR OF ERRORS

Controlling the class was much easier since ALM puts the teacher center stage. Jeff served as a model of the language, a director of drills, and a constant corrector of errors. The error _ correction was particularly handy when it came to showing who was in charge. Trouble makers soon learned that disruptions could be followed by assignments that included individual repetitions of pronunciation drills.

But after ten weeks of ALM, Jeff found that he had major problems on his hands. He was bored with dialogues and drills, and so, he suspected, were the majority of his students. As the teacher, he was tired of being the sole source of enthusiasm, and he was uncomfortable with the effort it took to keep control. He was also disturbed by the realization that while his students could memorize dialogues and manipulate drills, they could not function outside of these fixed routines. He wasn't sure that this accomplishment would get them through the national examinations since his students couldn't cope outside of a very narrow range of situations.

ALM provided no legitimate way of exploring the language, no way of making mistakes, no way of knowing that sentence patterns can change, be recombined or used in other ways in real communicative situations. His students were not learning how to communicate, how to take ownership of English, to tolerate the ambiguities of language learning. They couldn't use the language to say what was on their minds. They had no confidence when they weren't familiar with what they were saying.

It also bothered Jeff that his students viewed English as an academic subject with no relevance to their personal growth. They clocked into class, memorized a dialogue, took a test, and clocked out. They had no control over what happened to them in class and did not seem to make any connection between their English language learning and their lives outside of school.

Jeff wanted to maintain the control of ALM, particularly the fast paced drills where everyone participated, the memorization which played to some of his students' major strengths, and the solid sense of predictable structure in the lesson plans. But at the same time he wanted to change his teaching approach by actively engaging students in the learning process, and making communicative skills and relevance priority goals in English lessons.

The issues he wanted to tackle were interwoven. He wanted to promote

- **meaningful interactions,**
- **discussions of relevant issues, and**
- **critical thinking skills.**

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Jeff realized that no single teaching methodology would meet all his needs, but he decided to take a closer look at the teaching principles of the Communicative Approach

Communication and the communicative approach

Jeff wanted to find an approach that included something more than grammar drills. The Communicative Approach's emphasis on using language for real conversations and exchanges was what he was looking for. Just as ALM had grown out of the social upheavals of the Second World War, so too the Communicative Approach grew out of movements of large populations. In western Europe the economic boom of the sixties and seventies enticed migrant laborers from southern Europe and northern Africa to leave their homes in search of work. Very often these workers had to learn a new language-not to pass examinations, but to live and work in their new surroundings. Their needs revolutionized language teaching for adults and these revolutionary changes affected the way languages are taught in schools.

Students learning foreign languages in school are now taught to use target languages as dynamic systems of communication. It is no longer enough to know the grammar rules, translate classical writers, or rattle off memorized drills. In a Communicative Approach, learners are encouraged to demonstrate their ability to greet someone, complain, talk about recent events, plan, invite, apologize, order a meal in a restaurant, read a train schedule, express their feelings, give instructions, write letters to the newspapers. A Communicative Approach opens up wider perspectives on language learning. In particular, teachers have become aware that learners must also develop strategies for relating learned structures to their communicative needs in real situations, with real people, in real time.

Jeff wanted his students to communicate in English, and the ALM exercises just weren't satisfactory. He could see the point of pre-communicative exercises in the early phase of practicing new materials, but he didn't want to stop there. He wanted to push on and encourage his students to play with the language and to use it as a real instrument of communication.

Given the lack of books, Jeff knew that his teacher talk was a primary source of communication for his students. He never used anything other than English in his class, though he did occasionally permit students to use the local language if they got stuck. He knew that speaking only English was a contentious issue among TEFL Volunteers. The topic could get quite heated as some Volunteers maintained that control could only be kept through using the local language. Jeff was honest enough to admit that sometimes it did move matters along if he relaxed the "English Only" rule. Basically though, he thought that by using English for classroom management and for giving instructions, he had an opportunity to demonstrate English as a means of communication. He said something, students reacted-meaningful communication had taken place.

MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS

Jeff's first concern was promoting real communication with his students. He did not want the full burden of responsibility for his students' learning, so he felt that he needed to develop a partnership in which his students were actively engaged. In his book Communicative Language Teaching An Introduction, William Little wood lists examples of this development:

- The teacher's role in the learning process is recognized as less dominant; more emphasis is placed on the learner's responsibility for his or her learning.

- Communicative interaction provides opportunities for cooperative relationships to emerge among learners and between teacher and learners.

What interested Jeff was the implication that if students must actively engage in their own learning, they must be involved in meaningful communication. He was more than willing to take

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responsibility for planning, organizing, and monitoring the work, but he wanted to build into the structure of each lesson ways for his students to participate more actively in the learning process.

Jeff wondered about his questioning techniques and how he could use them to promote real communication between himself and his students. Dealing with large numbers slows everything down, and, being pressed for time, he had frequently caught himself asking only the best students questions because it was quicker to do so. He didn't want to deal with too many mistakes or blank incomprehension, so he deliberately passed over the students he thought would not know the answers.

Jeff decided to implement the following questioning techniques in order to ensure participatory communication, even in his large classes.

1. He resolved to avoid asking questions to which he already knew the answers. Once he had made the shift in his head, he was surprised at how simple it was. Instead of asking Apolo, who was wearing a blue shirt, "Apolo, are you wearing a blue shirt?", he asked Apolo's neighbor, "Jok, do you like Apolo's blue shirt?" Students responded with interest to questions that involved their opinions or preferences.

2. He resolved to stop asking students to give full sentence answers. Instead he asked for natural response patterns, such as: Of course. Of course not. No, I haven't Yes, I have. That's right. I don't think so. That depends. Yes, I think so. In this way he was able to model and promote language that did not sound artificial. He also found that shorter answers meant less error correction and more opportunity for a greater number of students to speak.

3. He resolved not to make a big deal out of error correction during question and answer time. If a student made a mistake, Jeff modeled the correct answer and then moved on. For example, if a student responded to a question, saying, "When they finished to work," Jeff would say, "Yes, when they finished working."

4. He resolved to use questioning techniques that ensure attention and involvement from the whole class. He would walk around the class (space permitting), asking his questions before naming the student who was to answer. He asked for a show of hands in response to yes^no questions, afterwards choosing individual students to justify their responses. And he used red (no) and green (yes) cards to request yes/no responses from the entire class of students.

Jeff's goal was to involve students in real communication through the Communicative Approach. Specifically, he wanted to start by asking meaningful questions, encouraging natural language in the responses, and creating space in which as many of his students as possible might join in a dialogue. He hoped chat as a result of these techniques, his students would become more involved and more prepared to share the responsibility for their learning.

RELEVANT CONTENT

Jeff's second concern was to introduce relevant issues into his English classes. When he lived with his host family during pre-service training, Jeff had been impressed by a conversation he had overheard about education. One of the younger members of his extended host family dropped out of school at his father's insistence. The father reasoned chat with the present national economic situation it was not worth paying fees for his son, who he thought had little hope of getting a job after his secondary school education. The father also feared that once educated in the formal system, his son would drift off to the towns and away from the family. It was therefore decided that the boy should stay at home and work on the family farm.

The situation was disconcerting. On the one hand, Jeff could see why families wouldn't want to pay for an irrelevant, alienating education for their children. But on the other hand, without a commitment to education and human resource development, how could the country pull ahead in its race for economic survival?

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Rather than simply include discussions on topics such as the relevance of education or the relevance of English classes, Jeff decided to use a structured approach. Jeff thought about the needs assessment and reviewed his notes. He identified relevant topics and then considered possible approaches. One option that appealed to him was problem-posing.

PROBLEM POSING

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, believes that learners should be given the opportunity to think critically about the problems they face in their lives. Freire does not view learners as empty vessels waiting to be filled by the teacher. Instead he proposes a dialogue approach in which teachers and students participate as co-learners. Freire's views have been taken up by ESL teachers in the United States, such as Elsa Roberts Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein. They have developed a problem-posing approach in which learners develop their critical thinking skills in order to take action, make decisions, and gain control of their lives. This approach has been successful with immigrant and refugee students of English as a second language. Many of these students have limited access to education, and in the U.S. they often work in low-skilled jobs. Yet, with curriculum centered on the sharing of their problems, these same students have been able to fashion individual or community responses to their problems.

Paulo Freire's ideas are well-known in other Portuguese-speaking countries such as GuineaBissau, Mozambique, and Angola In Guinea-Bissau, Peace Corps TEFL Volunteers, fueled by concern that their English lessons should be relevant to their students' needs, incorporated a problem-posing component into their Communicative Approach. As one Volunteer reported:

It (problem-posing) wasn't flawless, but since I had no desire to stifle the enthusiasm of the students, not to mention myself, I continued to use it for the rest of the year. I learned so much about students' attitudes, and overall I was greatly encouraged by the sense of optimism and the range of options the students presented to the problems posed.

The steps in problem posing

1. A problem is presented in a dialogue, a paragraph, or a photo. The problem should be one that students can identify with, such as the value of education, cheating, ill-health, financial need, unfair punishment, or preserving the natural environment. No solution is provided.

2. Five sets of questions are presented. They are designed to move students from simple description to taking action for change. These five sets of questions help students:

   a Describe the situation;
   b. Identify the problem;
   c. Relate the problem to your experience;
   d. Analyze the underlying reasons for the problem;
   e. Look for change.

Jeff wanted to help his students deal with problems that confronted them. In problem-posing he had found a model for developing critical thinking skills and for allowing his students to explore for themselves ways to change their lives. A full example of problem-posing is given in the first lesson man of Chanter Five

CONTENT-BASED ENGLISH

Another avenue for bringing the "real" world into a TEFL/TESL classroom is opened by introducing content-based English lessons. The content of the lesson can be science, geography, health science, math, or ecology-topics that are taught in other courses. English then becomes a vehicle for communicating this content. It is helpful to choose a subject area that the students are interested in or are currently studying. In this way, a Volunteer does not need to be an expert in the topic, but can use students as informants. The content-based English lessons reinforce what

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is learned in other classes, with the Volunteer providing the appropriate activities to strengthen communication skills.

Environmental themes lend themselves well to this approach. While improving their language skills, students can reinforce subjects such as art, geography, mathematics, and science. For example, if your students seem interested in wildlife, you might decide to develop a unit to learn about the endangered species of your host country.

To combine listening skills and art, ask your students to listen carefully and draw a picture as you describe the shape of an endangered animal. To improve map reading skills, have your students go to a map and identify the region where the endangered animal is found. Students can read a passage to answer specific questions about the habitat preferred by the animal and the geographic features of the region. Comparisons of distances, weights, and lengths reinforce mathematical skills. Using numbers and units of measurement, students might Brace and measure migration patterns. Discussions about the characteristics of an animal (mammal, reptile, insect, etc.) help students to review scientific categories. Another assignment that improves public speaking skills is to ask students to adopt an endangered animal and give an oral report that includes a visual aid and a description of the animal and its behavior

PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONTENT

For the past few years, Peace Corps has worked seriously at responding to the challenge of raising awareness and promoting the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that will help remedy the ills facing the environment. The Office of Training and Program Support (OTAPS), at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., now has a team of environmental educators whose task is to lead in the development of environmental education projects. Peace Corps has written a manual, Environmental Education in the Schools: Creating a Program that Works (forthcoming), for education Volunteers interested in environmental issues.

Education Volunteers and their counterparts have participated in workshops in such places as Gabon, Hungary, Sri Lanka, and Poland, exploring ways to incorporate environmental education into TEFL and TESL. Volunteers report on the successful establishment of ecology clubs as a popular extracurricular activity. In Sri Lanka, TESL Volunteers and their counterparts are working with national environmental agencies to produce materials on environmental themes for students training to be primary school teachers. Environmental education also offers an opportunity for interdisciplinary activities. In (Gabon, some EFL teachers, collaborating with colleagues teaching math or science, are reinforcing topics students study in other classes.

During content-based English activities, the material presented in the English language class is drawn from the coursework learned in another course, and the information must be discussed, analyzed and summarized in English. As students shift their thought patterns from the language of the content course to English, they strengthen their higher order cognitive skills.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Jeff's third concern was to promote critical thinking skills. He wanted to structure his class activities to incorporate reasoning skills, such as categorization, prioritization, comparison, contrast, and generalization. Jeff appreciated communicative lessons based on problem posing and content-based English because they allowed his students to analyze and discuss information and derive their own conclusions.

Communicative activities are authentic when they involve language used for real purposes. Intermediate to advanced level students might be asked to use language for study-related purposes, such as describing the steps in a gardening experience or retelling a significant event. These students might use English to report or explain, to compare or clarify, and to synthesize ideas or evaluate them. An analysis of critical thinking skills developed by).M. O'Malley provices a helpful reminder of the ways student experiences and knowledge of facts can strengthen students' reasoning ability.

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1. SEEK INFORMATION	explore the environment or acquire information
2. INFORM	report, explain, or describe information or procedures
3. ANALYZE	separate whole into parts
4. COMPARE	analyze similarities and differences in objects or ideas
5. CLASSIFY	sort objects or ideas into groups and give reasons
6. PREDICT	predict implications
7. HYPOTHESIZE	hypothesize outcomes
8. JUSTIFY	give reasons for an action, a decision, or a point of view
9. PERSUADE	convince another person of a point of view
10. SOLVE PROBLEMS	determine solution
11. SYNTHESIZE	combine ideas to form a new whole
12. EVALUATE	assess the worth of an object, opinion, or decision

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

As language teachers, we recognize the importance of reinforcing through visual aids abstract classroom discussions that include analysis, categorization, prioritization, comparison and contrast. Graphic organizers are outlines or designs that help students categorize their ideas visually.

Visual aids can be used to reinforce a unit on decision making. For example, to discuss a health topic such as smoking, ask your students to draw a word web that reflects their sources of information about smoking cigarettes. They might identify friends, parents, advertisements, and institutions.

Graphic organizers

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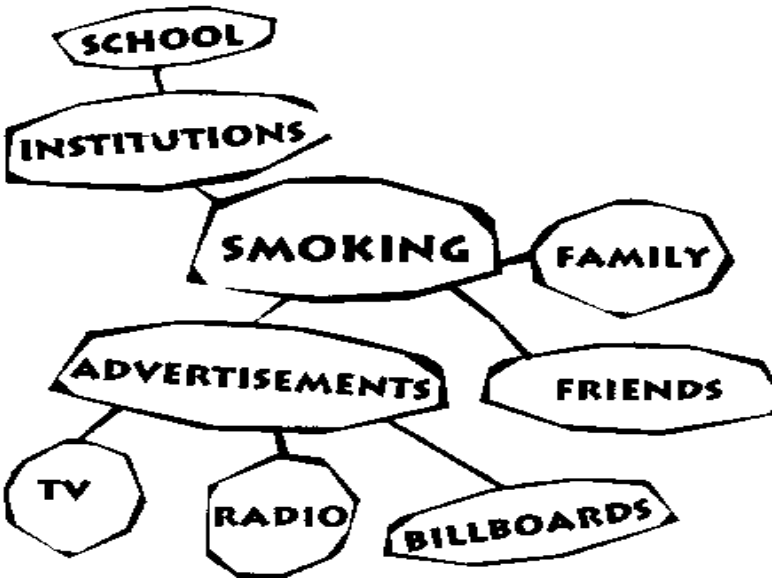

By putting two categories on the board, Causes and Results, you can focus the students on these questions: Why do people smoke? What are the results?

Students can interview each other, parents, doctors, and other sources of information and do some research to find out more about the reasons people smoke cigarettes and the effects of smoking. You might invite a guest speaker to your class or find a video or audiotape with some information they can analyze.

Ultimately, your students will fill in a graphic organizer that helps them to analyze the question: Should I smoke?

Students summarize the information that they've learned about cigarettes in two categories: positive and negative. They list the pros and cons of smoking and then come to a conclusion. At the bottom of this graphic organizer, they write their decision.

Final notes

These, then, were some of the reasons why Jeff decided to shift from ALM to the Communicative Approach. He appreciated the lessons he had learned from ALM, particularly in handling large classes. In view of the dearth of textbooks, the oral drills and teacher-centered activities would always have a measure of usefulness. However, he was confident enough now to expand his techniques. He wanted to make his classes places where his students communicated in English, played an active part in lessons, and studied topics of interest. Jeff was convinced that his students' motivation would grow in direct proportion to the relevance of the issues discussed during English lessons.

Questions to ask yourself

- What are some of the advantages of ALM?
- What are the advantages of the Communicative Approach?
- How can you make your questions more communicative?
- Why does a problem-posing approach stimulate student participation?
- How can you introduce content-based language teaching in your English lessons?
- Are you reinforcing critical thinking skills with visual aids such as graphic organizers?

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In this chapter, we've looked at two of the most common TEFL/TESL approaches used for large classes. We've analyzed the predictable grammar drills of ALM and the real-life interactions of the Communicative Approach. In our next chapter, we will demonstrate how these approaches can he used to develop lesson plans. Chapter Five will analyze learning style preferences and discuss the implications for lesson planning. Through a lesson plan designed to improve responsibility for the environment, we'll demonstrate how activities can be organized to help diverse groups of students improve their English language skills.

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CHAPTER 5

Learning styles and lessons plans

MATCHING INSTRUCTION TO EACH STUDENT'S UNIQUENESS IS, IN MOST SITUATIONS, AN UN REALIZABLE OBJECTIVE. HOWEVER TO IGNORE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN LEARNERS IS FOOLISH

PEOPLE TYPES AND TIGER STRIPES GORDON LAWRENCE

Teaching students to celebrate diversity

When Paul was at college, he took a management course that introduced the concept of learning styles, and he was intrigued by what he discovered about himself and his classmates. He had found a framework in which he could talk about preferences without being threatening or feeling defensive. Some of the students had concerns about stereotyping and putting people in boxes, but Paul thought that the problem was not in learning style theory, but in how it is applied. Paul tried to use the information he gained about learning styles to see people more clearly and to solve problems, not to push them away.

During pre-service training, everyone worked in practice teaching groups. This had not been a particularly productive experience at first. The trainer was an organized person who liked everything laid out in black and white, with all the details squared away. Paul was organized too, but if a lesson wasn't going well, his instinct was to try other ideas and change his plans in the middle of a lesson. This had led to several disagreements between Paul and the trainer. Eventually, Paul found himself spending more time and mental energy fighting the trainer than preparing for his lessons. But by stepping back and thinking about different learning styles, he was able to put the problem into perspective. It became less of a personal confrontation and more of a discussion on different ways of tackling situations.

When he arrived at his site and started teaching classes of 60-80 students, Paul realized he needed all the help he could get. Right from the start, he began pulling in information about his students' learning styles and preferences. (Chapter Three describes informal ways of finding out about students' learning styles.) Paul followed up on these ideas, looking for the signs of different approaches to learning. He found that some of his students absorbed information through stories, others through theory. Some liked to take their time before answering questions, others thought while they were talking. Some liked to work in groups, others liked to work alone. Some hated making mistakes, others thought nothing of it. Since he was dealing with such large numbers of students, it was essential to have certain landmarks that could indicate how he could best help them. With these thoughts in mind, he looked more closely at learning style theory and in particular at the work of David Kolb and Bernice McCarthy.

In this chapter we discuss learning style preferences to help you organize lessons that will meet the needs of a variety of students. We take a look at the learning style theory of David Kolb and show how the four-step model developed by Bernice McCarthy organizes activities that appeal to these different styles. Once you recognize the preferences associated with imaginative, analytic, common sense, and dynamic learners, you can vary the activities in your presentations to ensure that you are playing to the strengths of all of your students.

Learning style theory

David Kolb is an exponent of experiential learning. He hypothesizes that people learn by going through the steps of the Experiential Learning Cycle, in which we start by having some sort of experience, then we reflect on this experience, generalize from it, and finally apply what we have

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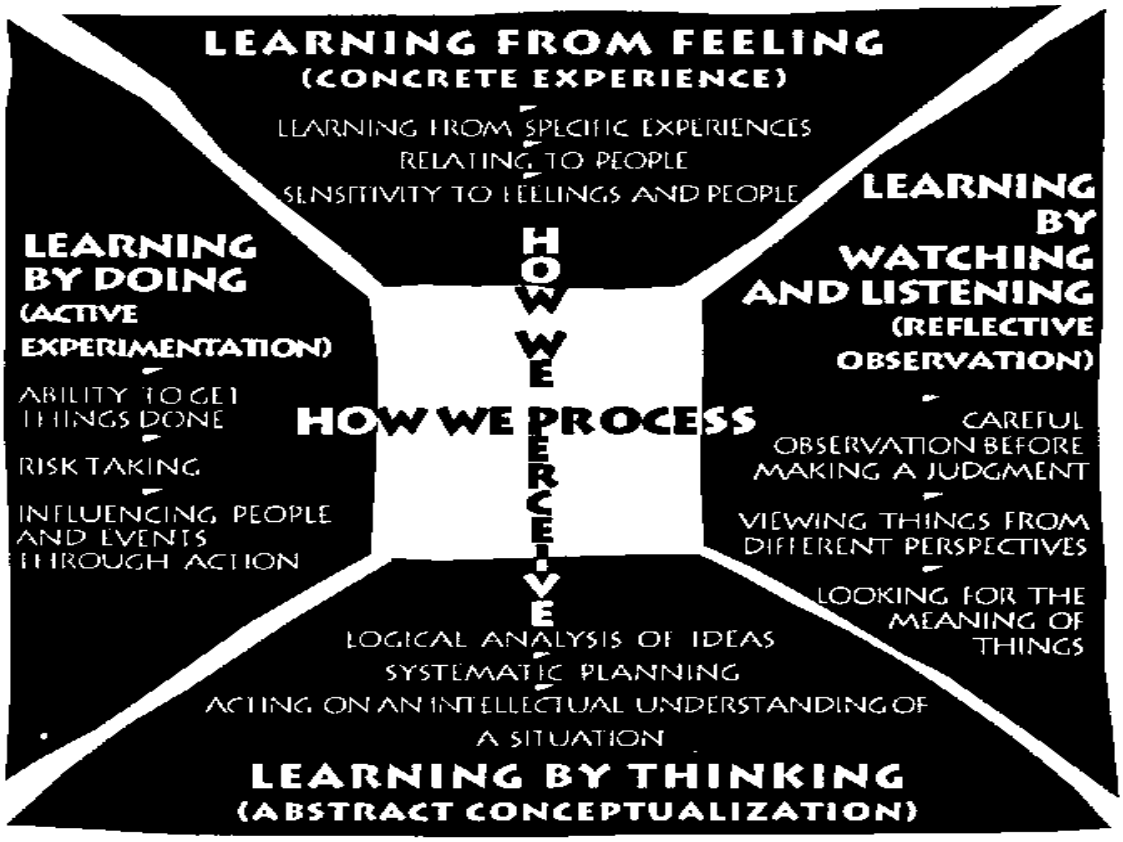
learned from it to a new experience. Paul's Peace Corps experience is a case in point. He was teaching large classes, and at the same time reflecting on some of the problems he was facing (What is happening?). He was analyzing the causes of these problems (Why is this happening?), and was planning what he could An to overcome these problems (What happens next?).

Kolb thinks that people have different preferences for learning. Some of us have experience after experience but hardly reflect on them at all. Some of us are good reflectors, but like a quiet life and shy away from experiencing anything too unusual. Others reflect and analyze, but stop there, without making decisions to apply the reflection and analysis to new situations. Kolb states that for a full learning experience to take place, learners must complete all four steps of the Learning Cycle. He suggests that teachers can facilitate learning by consciously taking students through the Learning Cycle of experience, reflection, analysis and application.

What kind of learner are you? Do you like to learn from specific experiences, and from how you feel about these experiences? Do you like to learn from watching and listening, and make your judgments only after careful observation? Do you like to learn through a systematic analysis of a situation? Do you like to learn by doing things?

Learning style theory measures preferences. If your preference is for learning by observation, don't think that this means you can't take any action. It simply means that you prefer to learn by watching and thinking, not that you are incapable of action. If your preference is for learning from feelings, this does not mean that you cannot learn from thinking. The theory simply states that, starting with yourself, the more you know about different learning styles, the more you can help others identify and build on their learning style preferences.



Learning style preferences

Kolls learning Cycle has been further developed by Bernice McCarthy. McCarthy has applied experiential learning theory to the classroom and described four learning style preferences. Each

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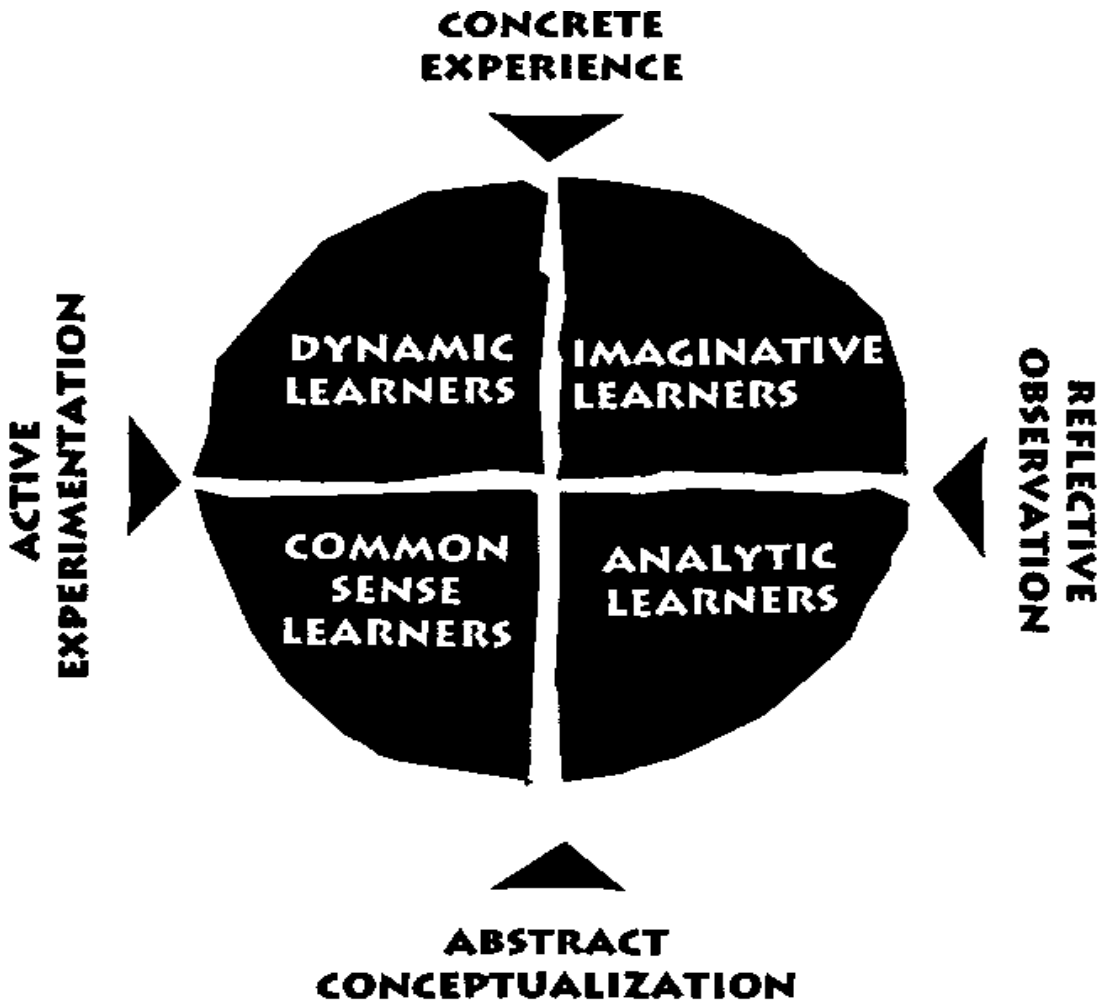
of the four learning styles is based on a step in the Learning Cycle. She calls these styles, Imaginative Learners, Analytical Learners, Common Sense I earners and Dynamic Learners.



IMAGINATIVE LEARNERS

Imaginative learners are most comfortable in the first step of the Learning Cycle, in the quadrant between Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation. The special skills of these learners lie in observing, questioning visualizing imagining inferring diverging brainstorming and interacting. They respect the authority of a teacher when it has been earned.

You can recognize these imaginative students by how well they respond to stories and poetry, and how they like to turn ideas on their heads to see if the ideas remain intact. An activity that these learners excel in is Plus/Minus. Put a statement on the board, like "The teaching of English should be stopped immediately," or "Parents should arrange their children's marriages." Give students three minutes in which to come up with as many ideas as they can on why they support this idea, and then three minutes to come up with as many ideas as they can on why they disagree with this idea. The imaginative learners enjoy the chance to come up with divergent ways of looking at life.

In the film, The Dead Poets Society, the teacher stands the students in front of a display of photos of the 1920s school football teams. He asks these students to lean close and listen to the voices of the young men in the photos. Imaginative learners understand immediately what is expected of them, and have little difficulty in responding to this kind of activity.

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Later in this chapter, you will see how to use problem-posing activities which connect students' personal experiences with learning English. These activities are particularly effective with imaginative learners who perceive the problem-posing dialogues on a direct and immediate level and connect them seamlessly to their own experiences.

ANALYTICAL LEARNERS

Analytical learners are most comfortable in the second step of the Learning Cycle, in the quadrant between Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualization. The special skills of these learners lie in patterning, organizing, analyzing, seeing relationships, identifying parts, ordering, prioritizing, classifying and comparing. They prefer a teacher to maintain a traditional role and to run lessons with a clear chain of command.

Analytical students tend to get restless if they think too much time is being spent on fun and games. For these students schooling is a serious business. They enjoy analyzing the structures of English, taking the language apart and putting it back together again. They appreciate a straight-up approach to grammar, explaining the rules and also the notions and concepts behind them. Their eyes light up at the mention of categorizing. They enjoy the following kind of exercise:

Modal auxiliaries must/can/have to/could/should/have got to/ought to/had better/

Directions: The modal auxiliaries given above express ability, advisability, and necessity. Discuss the differences in meaning, if any, in the following sentences.

a. I had better do my homework.
b. I can do my homework.
c. I must do my homework.

As native speakers of English, some parts of English grammar may be news to you. You know what's right, simply because it sounds right, but you can't always explain why. You acquired the language as you grew up and did not have to consciously learn the rules. However, the analytical learners in your class expect you to be explicit and clear in your analysis of the language.

There are simple ways of maintaining your credibility in the face of these expectations. For example, take the issue of error correction. Your analytical learners have probably been told to avoid making mistakes and this has doubtless been reinforced by your predecessors. However, research shows that language learning is a process, and mistakes are part of that process. Learners have their own internal syllabus and will eventually correct themselves as long as they continue to be exposed to meaningful language. Your analytical learners will not believe this, and you have to cope with their disbelief. The suggestions for error correction in Chapter Two will help you.

In Chapter Seven, we discuss ways of giving effective lectures to large classes. This traditional form of transferring information is reassuring to analytical learners. They are comfortable with the teacher being in charge. Helping them make good use of this approach by teaching them good note-taking techniques is an effective way of playing to their strengths.

COMMON SENSE LEARNERS

Common Sense Learners are most comfortable in the third step of the Learning Cycle, in the quadrant between Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation. The special skills of these learners lie in exploring and problem-solving, experimenting, seeing, predicting, tinkering, recording and making things work. They see a teacher's authority as necessary to good organization.

Though this book has plenty of ideas on producing worksheets, cue cards, case studies, maps, crosswords and games, you probably will never produce enough to keep your common sense

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learners happy. These learners eat up small concrete tasks. They also tend to rely heavily on kinesthetic involvement to learn, using body senses as a focus for understanding. These are the students who usually know where their belongings are, and seem to take pleasure in turning over the needy copied pages of their notebooks.

You can respond to their preferences by developing elaborate and even elegant ways of using your blackboard. Splurge. Buy colored chalks, or ask friends in the States to send you some. Use both upper and lower cases. Highlight important points with asterisks, underlining, boxes. Take special care over the presentation of the notes and tasks you reproduce with your hectograph, and you will be rewarded by seeing the pleasure and appreciation on the faces of your common sense learners.

Making your classrooms visibly attractive might be an uphill battle, particularly if your school does not have a tradition of putting up pictures, posters or displays of students' work. Recruit common sense learners as your allies. Put them in charge of your visual aids. Problem-solve with them on ways to make and keep your classroom a visually interesting place to be.

Try to present activities that have end-products, something tangible that these learners can show themselves for their efforts. Drawings, charts, questionnaires, cartoons, will all appeal. And if some of your hectographed papers eventually get used to wrap up packets of groundnuts sold at the school gates, well, that should appeal to your common sense and appreciation of recycling.

DYNAMIC LEARNERS

Dynamic learners are most comfortable in the fourth step of the Learning Cycle, in the quadrant between Active Experimentation and Concrete Experience. The special skills of these learners lie in integrating, evaluating, verifying, explaining, summarizing, re-presenting and focusing. They tend to disregard authority.

The dynamic learners will present you with your biggest challenge. These students tend, for better or for worse, to be the most physically active and to possess charismatic leadership qualities that attract the attention of their classmates. When you use Cooperative Learning techniques, you will find that these students can make or break group work. But when they do get positively involved, they are invaluable, particularly since with large classes you need midlevel managers to help you. Use them as much as you can as reporters who summarize and report back to the whole class on the group's activities.

A debating society can be a good place to channel the energy of dynamic learners. Use the information you have gathered about your students' concerns to select debate topics that will capture attention, for example: Should pregnant students be expelled? Or, Should secondary school students receive scholarships from the government? Or, Should a student with AIDS be allowed to attend school? You already have enough to do, so keep your role in the debating society to that of an executive director with the final say or any decision. Encourage your students, particularly your dynamic learners, to set up a committee to deal with the organization and day-to-day running of the debating society. If the committee can arrange debates between classes, or even in exchange visits with other school debating clubs, so much the better. If the topics are sufficiently interesting you may find your debating society attracting quite a following, especially if your dynamic learners are drumming up business and pulling in the crowds.

Dynamic learners will keep you honest with their need to use real world English. It's easy enough in anglophone countries to extend activities beyond the classroom walls and get students out interviewing local officials and experts, carrying out surveys and bringing in outside speakers. But it's a little more difficult to pull this off in countries where English is not generally spoken.

One way around this problem is through the use of "authentic materials" (TEFL/TESL speak for newspapers and magazines). If you are fortunate enough to have access to English newspapers published in neighboring countries, take full advantage of this and use articles from these magazines and newspapers in your English classes. If you don't have access to English

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language publications from neighboring countries, use articles from the American press, though these may need simplifying. Or translate articles from newspapers published in your host country.

One caveat in using authentic materials is to avoid discussing the politics and prominent individuals of the country in which you are serving Look out instead for the more generic and sensational items of news. Inquiring minds want to know, even in the village, or maybe especially in the village. You will hear loud responses to articles on the problems faced by the national women's soccer team; the dilemmas of wives and children forced out of favor by a husband's infatuation with a new wife; inheritance disputes; slum landlords gouging rent out of poor tenants; and university students protesting for better conditions. Share news stories that include practical medical advice or information about scientific breakthroughs. The airing of views on any of these topics can be a good pre-writing activity which leads to the writing of letters or articles rebutting or supporting the newspaper reports. And it is often the dynamic learners who will take lead roles in this kind of activity.

By being aware of the Experimental Learning Cycle, the four learning styles, and the preferences of your imaginative, analytic, common sense, and dynamic learners, you can vary your activities so that you are playing to the strengths of all of your students.

Lesson planning

Bernice McCarthy has also developed the 4MAT lesson plan, which is based on the Learning Cycle and learning style needs.

The 4MAT cycle can be used to organize daily lessons, theme-based units, or long-term planning. To develop a theme-based unit, for example, take a single theme and develop four sessions on that theme. Each of the four sessions corresponds to a step in the Learning Cycle, and each session focuses on the strengths of one of the four learning style types. The four steps in the cycle are: motivation information, practice, application.

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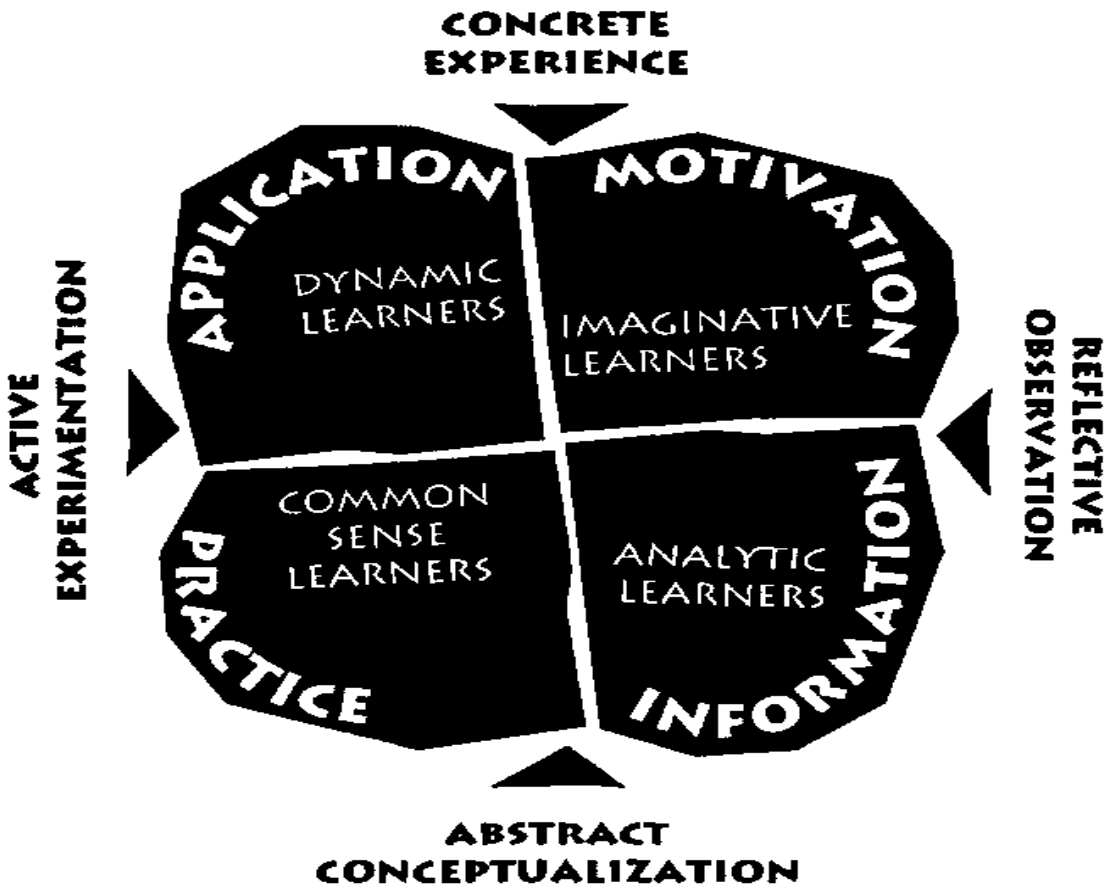

Each step in the cycle is an inseparable part of the whole unit. Each step builds on and expands the materials of the previous lesson. We recommend devoting one lesson to each step in the cycle, but you can adapt this as you see fit. Volunteers report dizziness and breathlessness if they try to fit all four steps into one fifty minute lesson, but it has been done. It is much easier to fir all four steps into a double lesson. Alternatively, some Volunteers expand certain steps, and may in some cases spend two hours on the Information step The final decision is up to you. We can only say that a practical rule of thumb is one lesson for each step in the cycle. The important thing to remember is the flow and sequence of the Learning Cycle itself. As long as you follow that, the timing can be altered to suit your needs and the needs of your students. Let's look at each of the steps in turn.

MOTIVATION

In this step, provide a concrete experience and shift gradually from Concrete Experience to Reflective Observation. All of the students start here, but this first step appeals most to imaginative learners. Your role as the teacher is to motivate, to engage your students and allow them to enter into the experience BEING introduced. Then students are given the opportunity to reflect on that experience.

The activities which can be used in THIS step include problem posing, presenting a poem, reading an excerpt from a book, looking at pictures, discussing experiences, answering questionnaires, listen to songs, webbing.

INFORMATION

In this step, students shift from Reflective Observation to Abstract Conceptualization. All of the students work through this step, but this second lesson appeals most to analytic learners. Your

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role is to inform, to move your students from specific personal reality to the theoretical, and to an understanding of abstract conceptualization.

This is the point at which students link their subjective experience with the content at hand.

The activities used in this step include lectures, notetaking, deductive formulations of grammatical rules, mechanicals drills, vocabulary expansion, and presentation of new concepts through diagrams, tables and charts.

PRACTICE

In this step, students shift from Abstract Conceptualization to Active Experimentation. All of the students continue with this step, but this third lesson appeals most to common sense learners. Your role is to coach, to organize materials and activities so that your students can test their understanding of what they have learned. They have been taught skills and concepts and now they are asked to manipulate materials based on those skills and concepts. Students are then given the opportunity to extend what they have learned through selecting and individualizing their own experiments and manipulations.

The activities used in this step include worksheets, pair work, small group work, project planning, writing, creating cartoons, case studies, keeping records, polling classmates, formulating questions on a text for others to answer.

APPLICATION

Here students shift from Active Experimentation to Concrete Experience. All of the students continue to finish the cycle together, but this fourth lesson appeals most to dynamic learners. Your role is to evaluate and remediate. Students are required to apply and refine in a personal way what they have learned and then to share with others.

The activities in this step include gathering materials for projects and implementing project plans; sharing written work; critiquing each other's projects and being members of the audience in final presentations; and reporting back to the class on a project.

TEACHER/STUDENT ROLES

As you can see, the role of the teacher and students switches in the learning cycle. In the first quadrant, the teacher takes a leaf role, planning the experience as well as the reflective discussion that follows. In the second quadrant, the teacher teaches, linking the experience and reflection into the concepts to be taught and then teaching the required skills and concepts. Don't worry if you seem to be center stage in these two quadrants. You are supposed to be. You are giving your students what the linguist Stephen Krashen calls "comprehensible input." This means giving your students the chance to hear English in a context they understand. So long as they can tolerate some ambiguity, understand the gist of what you say, and follow the main ideas, everything is okay. Their productive level of English is not expected to be as high as their receptive level. And it is the receptive level that you are catering to in the first half of the cycle.

In the third and fourth quadrants, the students take the initiative and take possession of the skills and concepts they have learned. They try them out for themselves and share with each other the results of the learning cycle. This is where you step back and leave room for groups and individuals to play with the language.

Sample lesson plans

The following lesson plans illustrate 4MAT in action.

Topic: The School Compound

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Issue: Care of the environment as a personal responsibility, not a punishment.

Objectives: At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- recognize and use vocabulary related to the school compound;
- recognize and use vocabulary describing school punishments;
- describe how students feel at being punished;
- give reasons for keeping the school compound dean;
- suggest ways (other than punishment) of keeping the compound clean;
- Express pleasure at actions which result in a clean compound;
- Indicate ownership using the possessive pronouns;
- Make polite requests.

This topic is a popular choice among teachers at Environmental Education conferences, maybe because it's a good entry point into conservation. We cannot have an instant impact on efforts to preserve the ozone layer, nor to protect chimpanzees. But we can make personal statements about concerns for the environment by doing something about our immediate surroundings.

It has been pointed out many times, however, that caring for the environment is often a punishment given to students. This set of lessons explores ways in which students can turn this situation around and make care of the environment a positive experience. This approach to the problem of caring for the environment has the additional advantage of interesting students. While they may not care too much about litter in the compound, the issue of punishment ties into a major concern among students-one that they will explore with a passion and energy special to adolescents.

MOTIVATION

This problem-posing lesson is for low intermediate level EFL students. A good class with a fast-paced teacher can cover this material in 50 minutes. But on a very hot day with a slow class, it may take two lessons to do so. The technique described here is problem-posing, which has been used so effectively by Paulo Freire. The five sets of questions are designed to move students from a straight description of a problem to ways of actively doing some thing about it.

Start by setting the scene. Ask students about posters they may have seen, encouraging people to keep the town dean. Ask about efforts to organize the community into keeping streets and compounds clean. Ask why students think it is important to keep public places clean.

As you elicit answers, put key vocabulary on the board in a web. Continue building this web throughout the lesson.

Draw (or ask a good artist student to draw) a picture for "Keep Your Environment Clean" on the board. If quick art work is not your forte, prepare for this lesson by drawing the picture on newsprint or brown paper. Ask the following questions:

DESCRIBE THE SITUATION

1. How many students can you see?
Answer = Eight.

2. What are they doing?
Answer = Some are cleaning/sweeping the compound/cutting grass. Others are standing and laughing.

3. Who else do you see in the picture?
Answer = A teacher.

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4. What is he doing?
Answer = Looking at the students.
Shouting at the students.
Pointing at the students.

5. What else do you see in the picture?
Answer = School buildings.
A trash can.
Trees.

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

1. Why do some of the students look unhappy?
Answer = They are being punished.
They don't like cleaning/sweeping the compound.
They don't like being laughed at.
They don't like cleaning the compound.
They will get their clothes dirty.

2. Why are they cleaning the compound?
Answer = They have been bad.
They have broken the rules.
They are being punished.

3. Why are the rest of the students laughing?
Answer = They are laughing at the students who are cleaning the compound.
They think it's funny to see people being punished.
They think it's funny to see students cleaning.

4. Why does the teacher look angry?
Answer = He is angry with the students.
He is the one who punished the students.
Perhaps it is Saturday and he wants to go home.

5. Why do you think the students are being punished?
Answer = Perhaps they were late.
Perhaps they didn't do their homework.
Perhaps they cheated during a test.
Perhaps they talked or shouted in class.
Perhaps they were rude to a teacher.

RELATE THE PROBLEM TO YOUR EXPERIENCE

1. What punishments are given in this school?
Answer = (Write answers on the board)
Cleaning the school compound.
Carrying water to the teacher's house.
Cutting grass near the teacher's house.
Cleaning the classroom.
Copying pages from a book.
Memorizing passages from a book.
Writing lines.
Being beaten.
Kneeling in the sun.

2. Let's have a quick show of hands. According to you, which is the worst punishment?
How many of you think physical labor, such as cutting grass, is the worst punishment?

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How many of you think that additional school work, such as copying passages from a book is the worst punishment?
How many of you think that corporal punishment, such as being beaten or kneeling in the sun, is the worst punishment? (Write results of poll on board.)

3. Look at the words I have written on the board. Which ones describe how students feel when they are being punished?
(Ask individual students to come to the board and circle the words they think appropriate.)

4. What kind of work do you do when you feel angry or humiliated?

If you do good work, raise your left hand. If you do bad work, raise your right hand.

What kind of work do you do when you feel indifferent?

If you do good work, raise your left hand. If you do bad work, raise your right hand.

What kind of work do you do when you feel happy or pleased?

If you do good work, raise your left hand. If you do bad work, raise your right hand.

5. Answer “Yes" or “No."

Do you think the students in the picture will do a good job cleaning the compound?

UNDERLYING REASONS FOR THE PROBLEM

1. What happens if the school compound isn't kept clean?
Answer = It'll look dirty.
It'll be full of trash.
It won't be a good place to be.

2. What kind of trash will you find in the compound?
Answer = Paper, leaves, food, plastic, empty cans, bottles.

3. What will happen if this trash isn't picked up?
Answer = It'll attract flies, mosquitoes, rats.
It will smell bad.

4. What will happen to you if the compound is full of flies, mosquitoes and rats?
Answer = We'll get sick.
We'll get fever.
We'll be afraid to come to school.
We'll have to spend money at the doctor's.

5 Why is it important to keep the compound clean? Why is it important to keep the classroom clean?
Answer = Because we work here all day.
Because we want it to look nice.
Because we don't want flies and rats.

6. Why don't students like cleaning the compound?
Answer = Because it's a punishment.
Because it's not their job.
Because people will laugh at diem.
Because they will get their clothes dirty.

LOOK FOR CHALICE

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We agree that it's important to keep the compound clean. We want the compound to look nice. We don't want flies and rats in the compound. We also agree chat students don't like cleaning the compound as a punishment. What can we do to change this situation?

1. How can we keep the compound dean? Look at the ideas I've written on the board. Let's have a show of hands. Which of these ideas is best? (Write the following options on the board.)

    1. Pay someone to clean it.
    2. Leave it to get dirty.
    3. I don't like either of these ideas.

(Write results of poll on board.)

2. Those of you who said to pay someone to dean the compound, please stand up. How much will you pay to have the compound cleaned? Where is the money going to come from?

Select one or two students to answer your question. Thank the group and ask students to sit down.

3. Those of you who said to leave it dirty, please stand up. Will you give us the reason for your decision?

After the explanation has been given, thank the group and ask students to sit down.

4. Those of you who don't agree with either of these ideas, please stand up. What other ideas do you have?
Answers:
Classes can take it in turns to be responsible for cleaning the compound.
Classes could be allocated small areas of the com pound and then have competitions to see which class keeps its area cleanest.
Students who volunteer to clean the compound could be given extra grade points.
Each student can be responsible for picking up litter.

Note: It might take patience with low intermediate students to elicit these ideas, but by this point your students should understand the issue being discussed. Don't worry about the mistakes made during this brainstorming session. Just listen for the ideas.

Explain that you will continue with this topic during the week, and that by the end of the fourth lesson on this topic, you expect the class to come up with and implement a plan of action.

Wrap up your lesson by checking that students have copied into their note books the following items:

1) the drawing of the students cleaning the compound
2) the words used to describe feelings

Information

This information lesson covers vocabulary, grammar and functions. The pace of this lesson will depend on your energy levels and the speed with which your students pick up the material. At the outer limit, it should not take more than two 50 minute lessons to cover this material.

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Start with a quick review of the topic caring for the environment-by asking students to look on the floor around their desks to see if there is any litter. Pass around paper or plastic bags and ask students to put the litter into the bags.

VOCABULARY

Review and extend the vocabulary of the first lesson with a diamante - a poem in the shape of a diamond. Write the diamante on the board or a flip chart. Ask an outgoing student to read it.

Check that your students understand the change described in the diamante by asking the following questions:

This poem describes a dirty place. Give me the names of three types of litter described in the poem. What do people say when a place is dirty? People don't care about this place. What do they do that shows they don't care? What should they do to make the place clean? What will people say if the place is clean' What will people see if the place is clean?

Ask your students to copy the diamante into their notebooks.

GRAMMAR POSSESSIVES

Task 1 Introduce the following jazz chant, adapted from Carolyn Graham's Jazz Chants.

Taking Credit

Whose book is this?	(Part A)	
It's mine.		(Part B)
It's mine.		(Part B)
Are you sure it's not his?	(Part A)	
No, no, it's mine.		(Part B)
Whose trash is this?	(Part A)	

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This dirty trash!	(Part A)	
It's his! It's his!		(Part B)
It's hers! It's hers!	(Part B)	
Are you sure it's not yours?	(Part A)	
Of course it's not mine!		(Part B)
It's certainly not mine!		(Part B)
Not mine, not mine!		(Part B)
Not yours?	(Part A)	
Not mine!		(Part B)
Are you sure?	(Part A)	
It's his!		(Part B)
It's hers!		(Part B)
Not yours?	(Part A)	
Not mine!		(Part B)

Step 1: Give the first line of the chant at normal speed. Students repeat in unison. Repeat for each line of the chant.

Step 2: Establish a clear strong rhythm by clapping or tapping on the desk. Repeat step 1.

Step 3: Divide the class into TWO equal sections. Establish a clear steady beat. Give the first line of the chant. The first section of the class repeats the line. Give the second two lines of the chant. The second section repeats the lines. Continue this pattern for the rest of the chant. Model the Part A lines for the first section and the Part B lines for the second section.

Step 4: Conduct the chant as a two-part dialogue between yourself and the class. You take Part A and the class takes Part B. Repeat, reversing the parts, so that the class takes Part A and you take Part B.

Step 5: Divide the class once again into two sections. The chant is now conducted as a twopart dialogue between the two groups of students. The first section cakes Part A. The second section takes Part B. "Conduct" the chant, keeping a unifying beat, and bringing in the two sections at the appropriate TIME. Repeat until everyone knows the words.

Task 2

Write the following table of possessive pronouns on the board:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
This is my book. It's mine.	This is our book. It's ours.
This is your book. It's yours.	This is your book. It's yours.
This is her book. It's hers.	This is their book. It's theirs.
This is his book. It's his.	

Conduct the following drill:

Divide the class into two equal sections. Hold up an object such as a book, a pencil, a notebook, a key. (Your pockets or your bag are probably full of items you can use.) Give the prompt, "their."

The first section of the class responds, naming the object you have in your hand: This is their paper.

The second section adds, It's theirs.

Repeat until you have used each of the possessive pronouns several times. You can also vary this drill by asking a student to come up front and take the lead role of holding up an object and providing a prompt.

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Ask students to copy the table into their notebooks.

FUNCTIONS - MAKING A POLITE REQUEST

Write the following dialogue on the board

Sammy	Excuse me.
Gaby	Yes?
Sammy:	Is that trash yours?
Gaby:	Yes, it's mine. So what?
Sammy:	Could you put it in the trash can?
Gaby:	What?
Sammy:	I said, could you put it in the trash can, please

Ask two of your best students to come to the front of the class and read the dialogue. Ask the student who reads Sammy's part to be polite and the student who reads Gaby's part to be angry.

Divide the class into two sections. Ask the first section to read Sammy's part and the second section to read Gaby's part.

Repeat with another pair of students. This time ask the student who reads Sammy's part to be angry, and the student who reads Gaby's part to be polite.

Repeat with the whole class divided into two sections.

Continue with other pairs of students. Ask them to portray indifference and fear.

Repeat with whole class divided into two sections.

Write the following on the board:

Will you put it in the stash can?
Would you put it in the trash can?
Can you put it in the trash can?

Explain that these are more polite ways of asking people to do things.

Ask two students to come to the front. Ask one student to drop a piece of litter. Ask both students to recite the Sammy/Gaby dialogue, but this time substituting one of the new terms of polite requests. Repeat with other pairs of students.

Divide the class into pairs. Ask each pair to go through the dialogue four times, using a c different form or polite request each time.

Ask students to copy the dialogue and the three additional forms of polite request into their notebooks.

Practice

You, the teacher, will be able to step back a little in this practice lesson and give your students the opportunity to manipulate the materials they have learned. This is a good session in which to use some of the group work and pair work activities described in Chapters Eight and Nine.

Start by dividing your class into small groups. Set the task of asking students to work in groups and recall and write down the text of the chant on trash, presented in the previous lesson.

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Choose a fast writer from your students to come and write his or her group's version on the board. Ask the rest of the class to check the work for correctness of text and spelling. Ask all students to copy the chant into their notebooks.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Write the questions below on the board. instruct students to answer individually, then to share answers with a partner, then to share with their small group.

1. Where do people in this town throw their trash, If you don't know the words, draw small pictures. In a pit In the yard On the street In the garden Anywhere/everywhere In a pile In the river In the gutter

2. Where does all the trash come from? Draw a map of the town and show as many places as possible chat have trash to throw away.

Houses	Shops	Garages
Offices	Market	Hospital
Bus station	Taxi park	Schools
Restaurants	Street stalls	

3. List ten items of trash chat you see in town. If you don't know the words, draw small pictures.

Paper	Old shoes	Bones	Plastic bags
Bottles	Newspapers	Cloth	Rubber tires
Cans	Cardboard	Food	Bottle tops
Tickets	Bandages	Boxes	Old cars

Activity 2

Write the following paragraphs on the board or on worksheets. Ask students to work in pairs and fill in the blanks in the following sentences, using the words in the box.

- angry/well/walked/dirty/glass/cut

Mrs Akwa is_____. Yesterday, her daughter Dorothy_____ to school as usual. But on the way, she fell down and_____ her knee on a piece of_____. Today Dorothy doesn't feel _____. Her knee hurts. Mrs Akwa says, "The streets are_____! They are full of trash! Something must be done!"

- anywhere/oil/boss/garage/gas

Mohammed works in a_____. He pumps_____and changes the _____in the cars. At the end of the day, his _____asked him to throw away the old oil. "Where shall I throw it?" asked Mohammed. " _____said his boss. "It doesn't matter."

Activity 3

Write the following sentences on the board or on worksheets. Ask students to work in pairs to find the conversation.

A.	B.
Whoa, it's hot.	Yeah, I left mine at home.
	or
	Yeah, I'd love a drink.

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Let's get a Fanta	Good idea.
or	or
Let's run.	That's too bad.
I feel better now.	Yes, please.
or	or
How do you feel?	Me, too.
What shall we do with the bottles?	Would you be quiet.
or	or
What shall we do with the sun?	Could you give them back to the storekeeper?

Application

This application lesson can be problematic for some EFL teachers, since ideally, this is the point at which students might go beyond the classroom and use the English they have learned in the real world. If this is not a possibility in your situation, you will have to be a little creative. Look for ways in which your students can share the results of their work with each other. In this particular series of lessons you will be on the lookout for signs of improved English skills - and some kind of action on the litter front.

ACTIVITIES

Some suggestions for activities include:

- Organizing an anti-litter campaign
- Making posters, trash sculptures
- Painting an anti-litter mural (ask local business people for paint)
- Asking local business people for 55-gallon drums to use as trash cans in the school compound
- Organizing a Clean Class competition and getting a student to announce the competition rules and rewards, in English, at the school assembly; writing and distributing flyers, again in English, about the competition
- Calling in outside speakers to speak on school environments
- Planting, watering, guarding and protecting trees on the compound
- Writing letters in English to the head of the English Department, asking that cleaning the compound no longer be given as a punishment, or environmental organizations in the US or in their country, asking for information on environmental issues
- Organizing a field trip to the local (official or unofficial) garbage dump, followed by a report, with drawings or charts, on what was seen
- Conducting a schoolwide survey on people's thoughts about litter in the school compound.

Final notes

Bernice McCarthy's 4MAT model follows a predictable cycle. Students reflect on a concrete experience, analyze information, practice new skills, and take independent action. While participating in the different phases of this process, your students have opportunities to develop their learning style strengths. This framework is a particularly useful tool when you are organizing lessons for large classes of learners with different style preferences.

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Once you've tried the 4MAT lesson plans, you will see how easy it is to take activities from other sources and slot them into a unit. With the 4MAT system firmly in place, your teaching will take on coherence and logic, and yet at the same time you will still have the flexibility to take occasional flights of fancy. Remember the boomerang principle: the enjoyment that you put into your teaching is what your class will project back at you.

Questions to ask yourself

- What are your own learning style preferences?
- Can you identify different learning style preferences among your students? Which are the imaginative storytellers? Which are the analytic grammarians? Which are the common sense group workers? And which are the dynamic activists?
- What do each of these groups expect of you, their teacher?
- What activities will you use in the Motivation lesson? The Information lesson? The Practice lesson? And the Application lesson?

In the next chapter, we take a look at how 4MAT lessons fit into long-range planning. One of the major problems reported by Volunteers is the lack of appropriate TEFL/TESL curricula Sometimes they don't exist; sometimes they are irrelevant to student needs. Frequently, the curricula come without textbooks to back them up. And most often they are tied to National Examinations. In the next chapter, we'll look at how Volunteers have made pluses out of those minuses by using 4MAT lesson plans to turn the situation around.

CHAPTER 6

Log-range planning

ONCE THE ESSENTIAL RHYTHMIC PATTERN OR BASIC TONES WHICH GIVE A PIECE ITS IDENTITY HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED, OTHER PATTERNS MAY BE IMPROVISED...

KWABENA NKETIA THE MUSIC OF AFRICA

Creating a plan of action

I discovered upon arrival that the courses I teach existed only in title. How lovely to have complete control over course content, materials and the freedom to adjust as I see necessary. No one supervises me in any sense. The drawback is recognizing my own limits and wanting professional guidance or at least interchange from something other than a book picked up from somewhere.

A TEFL PCV in Guinea-Bissau

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Where There is No Doctor by David Werner is a useful book to have around when your body is behaving peculiarly and you've no idea what to do about it. Unfortunately, Where There is No Curriculum has not yet been written. And while you may be giving fairly credible performances in your English lessons, your big picture, the curriculum which outlines your year's work, may be shifting like a mirage in the sun, and you may have no idea what to do about it.

Sandy was having just that sort of problem with her curriculum. She had been a journalist before becoming a Volunteer. Working with words came easily to her and she enjoyed her teaching. But after six months in the secondary school classroom, although she had ironed out many of the bugs in her day-to-day work, she still lacked a satisfactory overall plan of work.

During her Pre-Service Training, a TEFL inspector from the Ministry of Education had given a talk on the national EFL curriculum. It had all sounded very logical, though as she said later, she was in a tizzy about practice teaching that day, and being such a newcomer to TEFL she was hardly in a position to judge whether the inspector made sense or not. Some of the inspector's points stuck in her mind though. It seemed to her that he described a top-down approach to curriculum development in which experts outside of the classroom set the objectives. These objectives were reflected in the national examinations and in commercially produced textbooks which were selected by the Ministry of Education. The present curriculum had been in place for fifteen years, which was when the government received its last funding to buy large amounts of TEFL text books.

After six months of teaching, Sandy was in a better position to clarify some of her thoughts on the curriculum. She could see drawbacks to this top-down approach. The curriculum was out of touch with the realities of classroom constraints and the changing needs of students. It seemed to Sandy that a monolithic curriculum drawn up years ago could not take into account the growing numbers of students in each class and the approaches and activities necessary to cleat with them; nor could it compensate for the datedness of the textbooks. Working in journalism had given Sandy an appreciation for the speed with which ideas come and go, and she knew that education was no exception. What was state of the art fifteen years ago was old hat now.

The inability of the system to address what actually takes place in a classroom bothered Sandy. She couldn't take on a massive movement to reform the curriculum. She was not qualified and she probably wouldn't stay in the country more than three years. However, she knew that she had to plan more than one lesson at a time. And she wanted to address the interests and needs of her students white incorporating any national curriculum objectives that might be required for the exams. For her purposes, long-term planning indicated an open ended process of refinement and re-creation in which small scale attempts could be made to improve different parts of the curriculum jigsaw. Sandy saw this renewal as a bottom-up movement which shifts emphasis from the ready made curriculum packages and gives teachers and students active roses in the development of programs.

This chapter will give you ideas on how you can take an active part in renewing a curriculum. Building on your knowledge of the learning cycle and 4MAT lesson plans, it presents the four questions which underlie a curriculum renewal project:

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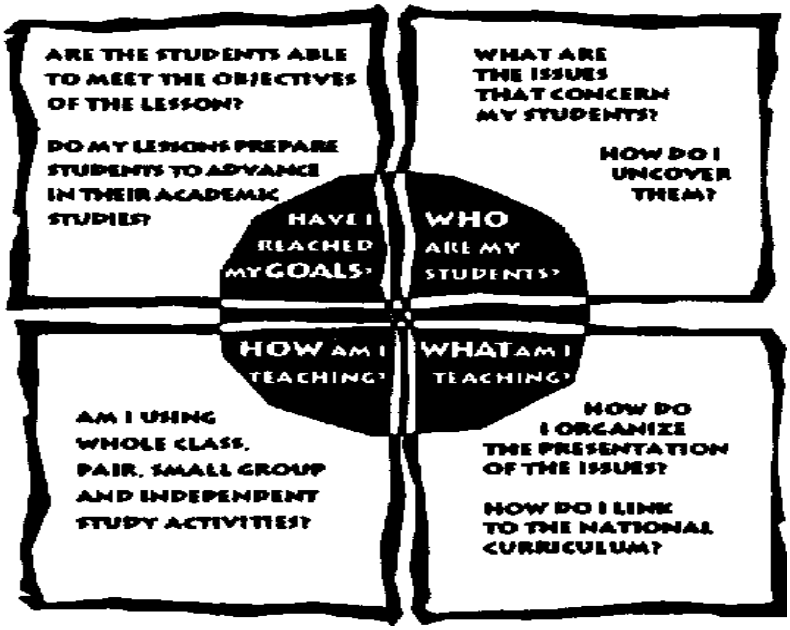

1. Who are you teaching? What do you know about your students, their world views, their expectations?

We will share with you how Volunteers have identified motivating themes and organized their work to create learner-centered materials which address students' interests and concerns.

2. What are you teaching? How do you select the functions and grammatical structures you present during your lessons? Are you referring to the national curriculum and examinations when you prepare your lessons? How are you sequencing and organizing your materials?

We will share with you examples of how Volunteers work with national curricula, incorporating required reading texts, functions and grammatical items into new materials relevant to their students' lives. We will give you examples of how to break down your school year into manageable units of teaching time, and systematically start work on renewing your curriculum.

3. How are you teaching? Are you using techniques and activities that will develop your students' abilities to communicate in English? Are you creating a learning environment in which your students exercise control of their learning?

We will share with you principles to consider when using communicative activities in large classes. We will also show you examples of those principles at work.

4. How do you evaluate the success of your lessons? How do you know when you and your students have reached your goals? How do you spot what needs to be improved?

We will present some of the ways in which you can judge how successful you've been and how well your students have been learning English.

Quite simply, we propose that you put the learning cycle to work in your long-term planning and develop a series of 4MAT lesson plans. These plans form the basis of your long-range planning. We don't pretend that on reading this chapter you will immediately be able to produce an elegant curriculum. But we do guarantee that the information in this chapter considers your constraints and gives you a road map to follow. We also realize that the printed words in a manual such as this look neat and may give the impression that if you follow the instructions, your end-product will be picture perfect. We apologize in advance for this impression. If you are enhancing a curriculum, sections of which you may be teaching tomorrow morning, you are engaged in a

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process, and processes tend to be messy at times. There may be days when you can't see the forest for the trees, but frustrating as this may seem, don't give up. You have the opportunity to craft a plan of action that responds to your students' needs, and your plans can be left behind for your successor to tinker with and renew.

1. Who are my students?

The African continent is shaped like a giant ear. I have often wondered if there is something to be learned from this geographical fact, a reminder, perhaps, that Africa reveals its secrets only to those who listen.

Thomas Bass, The Voice of the Ear

There they sit in your English class, members of the up and coming generation, separated from you by language and culture. At times they are demanding and difficult, at times vulnerable and naive. How do you know what's important to them? What keeps them awake at nights?

And how can you speak to their concerns and dreams so that your English classes become places where your students can learn about themselves, as well as learning the English language?

Sylvia Ashton-Warner, a New Zealander who pioneered a new approach to literacy, had some ideas on the subject She believed that to engage learners' motivation and involve them in the learning process, it is necessary to place their concerns and dreams at the heart of a curriculum

Working with Maori children who had been labeled "backward" because they could not read, Ashton-Warner thought that the problem lay not in the children's abilities, but in the cultural divide between the school books and the children's life experiences. So she put the official texts to one side and began to develop what she described as an "organic reading" method, in which she elicited from each child key words which were of particular importance to that child. She then used these same words to teach the children to read. As she writes in her book, Teacher:

Pleasant words won't do. Respectable words won't do. They must be words organically deaf up, organically born from the dynamic life itself. They must be words that are already part of the child's being... No time is too long spent talking to a child to find out his key words, the key that unlocks himself, for in them is the secret of reading, the realization that words have intense meaning.

The implication is that a good teacher and materials developer will design materials and structure tasks in such a way as to include students' existing knowledge and experience. Part of your job is to be a social anthropologist, to get to know the school community, and to bring its values and concerns into English lessons. These values and concerns are the themes around which your 4MAT lessons can be built.

The problem posing approach, described in Chapter Five, illustrates a way to bring up these concerns and help students take actions to change their lives. In Guinea-Bissau, Peace Corps Volunteers confronted by the problems of low student motivation to learn English, no textbooks, and only a sketchy national curriculum, set up a summer project for themselves: to write and distribute 4MAT lesson plans for the first year of English As one of the co-editors of their successful publication, **Speaking English in Guinea-Bissau, says:**
First, the interests and concerns of students are identified. Then a series of lesson plans is developed based on these needs and interests... Thus, as the curriculum evolves, an ideological progression from the personal to the political or public realm is manifested. (Problem-posing) dialogues at the beginning of the year are centered around family and friends; lessons later in the year explore problems within local communities and eventually greater social questions.

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In the first six units developed for Guinea-Bissau, the topics and issues selected were:

- **Unit 1**

  Topic: Meeting new people
  Issue: Being new at school

- **Unit 2**

  Topic: My family
  Issue: Authority within the family

- **Unit 3**

  Topic: My friends
  Issue: Cheating at school

- **Unit 4**

  Topic: My interests
  Issue: Financial priorities

- **Unit 5**

  Topic: My future profession
  Issue: Long-term value of an education

- **Unit 6**

  Topic: My education
  Issue: Being mentally and physically prepared

M'BANA IS WITH HIS UNCLE MR SAMBA
MR SAMBA: WAKE UP
M'BANA. GO AND BUY FISH FOR LUNCH
M'BANA: I CAN'T. I HAVE TO STUDY FOR MY EXAM TODAY
MR SAMBA: YOU ALWAYS REFUSE. YOU NEVER HELP AT HOME
M'BANA: WHY CAN'T YOU ASK YOUR SON?
MR SAMBA: BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO GO!

As you can see, the bite is in the issue. Meeting new people, My family, My friends are all predictable topics for first year learners of English. The surprise comes in the depth with which they are addressed. In Meeting new people, it is recognized that for many students, secondary school means leaving their homes and villages for the first time. Being new at school is stretching, but also scary and stressful, particularly in societies that place high values on community living, and where school friendships have lifelong implications. In My family, M'Bana battles with his uncle who wants him to go and buy fish just when M'Bana needs to study for an exam. Look at the shortness and simplicity of the problem posing dialogue in the Motivation lesson.

DESCRIBE THE SITUATION

1. **WHO IS MR SAMBA?**
2. **WHAT DOES MR SAMBA WANT M'BANA TO DO?**

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

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1. **WHY CAN'T M'BANA CO AND BUY FISH?**
2. **WHAT IS MR SAMBA'S REACTION?**

RELATE TO THE PROBLEM

1. **WHAT HELP ARE YOU EXPECTED TO GIVE AT HOME?**
3. **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON' STUDY FOR YOUR EXAMS?**

ANALYZE THE REASONS FOP THE E PROBLEM

1. **DOES MR SAMBA HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK M'BANA TO HELP AT HOME?**
2. **WHAT DO STUDENTS THINK ABOUT HELPING AT HOME?**

DO SOMETHING

1. **HOW CAN M'BANA BE SUCCESSFUL IN SCHOOL AND OBEY HIS UNCLE?**
2. **WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE HIM?**

But look how well the issue is chosen to elicit a range of responses from adolescent students dealing with conflicting demands on their time, and the special authority of an older family member. And notice how the text does not present a solution, but how the questions move the students towards discovering answers of their own.

How do you go about uncovering these issues? This is where the help of your colleagues and your students is essential. You need their inside view on what makes the community tick. Your job is to record and organize ways of using these insider viewpoints.

Chapter Three talked about some of the techniques that can be used to get to know your students. Listen carefully during those interviews and presentations for recurring ideas and examples of critical incidents that can be used as themes and developed in problem posing dialogues for your lessons.

How many issues do you need? A good tactic is to take a large theme, such as My community, Belonging, Connecting, My generation, and then break these large themes into related issues or topics. For a large theme like My generation, the cluster of issues/copies might be, Changing traditions, Living in cities, Employment expectations, or Generation gaps. Once you and your students have agreed upon the choice of issues, you can then develop a set of four 4MAT lesson plans (Motivation, Information, Practice, Application) for each issue/topic.

This means that if you are teaching a class four hours a week, and you have ten weeks in a trimester, you can select two major themes which you will stay with for five weeks each. Then each week you can present a set of 4MAT lesson plans which deals with a separate issue/topic, related to the major theme. By working within the context of a large theme for several weeks, you provide coherence and continuity, so that all of your students have time to think about the ideas discussed.

All this takes time, vision, and not a little chutzpah, but the results are worth the effort as students work with you to renew their curriculum. And your English classes become places where students can speak with authority because they have identified what is important to them.

II. What am I teaching?

If our pedagogy is purely cognitive, our chances of motivating a change in values and behavior are nil.

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Michael E Soule, Mind in the Biosphere; Mind of the Biosphere

Having identified with your students the themes and issues/topics of your lessons and curriculum, you now need to consider what information you will present. Your primary sources are the national curriculum, the textbooks set by the Ministry of Education and the teaching records of your predecessors. You are looking for four things: (1) legitimacy; (2) ideas about sequencing; (3) ideas about pacing; and (4) content-appropriate language items such as functions and structures.

Legitimacy: What you want to avoid is creating a maverick program. No matter how entertaining you are, no matter how good you feel about what you are doing, if your students are not covering what the Ministry says should be covered, then they are unlikely to be successful in the national exams which are set by this same Ministry.

Have the curriculum or set textbook in front of you as you prepare lessons. Make reference to them in your teaching objectives which preface your lessons. If you are writing a problem-posing dialogue for your Motivation lesson, it's easy enough to make sure that you include items from the curriculum. Your Information lessons are good places to exploit the recommended grammar and functions. These same items can then be practiced and used by your students in the Practice and Application lessons.

In fact, you may well find yourself teaching and your students learning more than the recommended items. What is important though is that your students see you as a legitimate teacher, and in their terms this means covering the curriculum and helping them pass their exams.

Sequencing: Once upon a time, English language teaching curricula were sequenced according to grammatical complexity. This often meant talking in, or perhaps more accurately learning about, the simple present, past, and future during the first year of English as a foreign language; the present and past perfect during the second year; and so on. But research about language acquisition has not demonstrated the need to present grammatical structures in a fixed order.

Today, Communicative Approach supporters advocate sequencing materials according to learners' needs. In the formal educational settings in which you are most likely working, these needs are usually defined by officials in the Ministry of Education. Increasingly, you will find these needs categorized in functions, such as talking about oneself and others, and asking people for help and/or permission. The grammatical features are found in the wake of these functions.

Many Communicative curricula sequence materials by spiralling functions. For example, in the Gabonese national EFL curriculum the same function can be found at four different levels, but at each encounter the supporting grammatical items become more complex.

Function: Talking about oneself

GRAMMAR

First year:	No grammar point, but set expressions:
	I like/don't like. What do you like?
	What do you like to do? Do you like?
	Do you like to?
Second year:	Present simple, affirmative, negative, interrogative
Third year	Present simple, present perfect, present continuous
Fourth year:	Verb "to be," present simple, "to have got," present unreal conditional

In summary, when you are sequencing your material, you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Include the features recommended by the Ministry of Education, or laid out in a textbook, and follow more or less the same sequences. Most of these features have been organized quite sensibly with the idea that language learners generally like to move from simple to complex structures. Try to keep a Communicative slant. This means spending more time on functions than

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grammatical items, like the differences between definite and indefinite articles. Yes, your students do need information about the structures of the language, but knowing the rules is not enough. Your students are being offered the chance to communicate in English. Your job is to make sure that they understand this and seize the opportunity to do so.

Pacing: How much material do you cover and how fast should your class be moving? Tricky questions, since in your role of organizer and timekeeper, you are the one who has to make the call on this one. And in large, multilevel classes, no call is ever exactly right.

But there are sources of help. Chapter Two, on classroom management, discusses the importance of enlisting your students' support. You are definitely outnumbered, and if you cake full responsibility for your students" learning you will exhaust yourself needlessly. Share your teaching goals. Make a poster of main points in the national curriculum and put it on the wall. Let everyone see how much has to be covered and in how much time. Keep public track of your class' progress. Broadcast timely achievements and take a session to celebrate. Then get everyone back co work.

Check with other teachers and in your predecessor's teaching notes. Find out what can be safely left out of the program and what questions crop up regularly in the national examinations and therefore need to be studied carefully.

Provide ways for students to catch up and keep up. Chapter Ten, on Independent Study, has ideas for developing self-access materials which students can use to review on their own. If you find there is enough interest and you have the time, grammar clinics can be helpful. This is where you run after-school sessions on grammatical features which are causing your students problems. Restrict attendance to the first fifteen to sign up and get one or two of your best students to act as co-tutors. This semblance of exclusivity creates a pleasantly different atmosphere when everyone is used to working in large groups.

Language Content: How do you select the functions and grammatical structures you will present in your English lessons? And how do you organize this material?

The following steps are based on the assumption that you will be using 4MAT lesson plans, that is to say that you will be organizing your work in blocks of four lessons on a single issue/topic.

1. **Select the topics/issues.**

2. **Find out about the required language items (functions and, grammar) in the national curriculum for the level of English you are teaching.** If you can't get hold of a national curriculum, check in a textbook for recommended functions and grammar. You do not necessarily have to follow the exact order of functions and grammatical items laid out in the national curriculum. However, you must keep track of your progression so that you know what you've covered, and your students have a sense of order in what they are learning. You will also want to keep records so that your successor can carry on your good work.

3. **Develop 4MAT lesson plans.** In your MOTIVATION lesson, use the topic/issue to introduce the selected functions, grammatical items and vocabulary. Your main focus in this lesson is to raise an issue which will motivate and interest your students. In your INFORMATION lesson, exploit the selected functions, grammatical items and vocabulary. When you are developing these exercises, remember to stay within the framework raised in the motivation section. And in the PRACTICE and APPLICATION, provide opportunities for your students to use the selected functions, grammatical items and vocabulary. Again, remember to stay within the framework of the issue/topic selected for this set of lessons.

Here is a model of how to organize a long-range plan for four weeks of a twelve week trimester. We have taken as an example a class in its fourth year of EFL which has five lessons of English a week. This is a fairly common situation for students in secondary schools where English is studied as a foreign language. As you can see, in this case, it was decided to work with one issue

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a week, thus giving five hours in which to cover a 4MAT cycle. As you read through it, think of ways in which you would adapt it to suit your situation.

1. Divide the trimester into 3 units of 4 weeks each. Each unit contains 20 hours of teaching, that is, 5 hours per week.

2. Select a theme for each 20 hour unit. This gives you 3 themes per term. Divide each unit into 4 sub-units of I week each. Select a topic and an issue for each sub-unit which is related to the unit's overall theme.

3. Write teaching objectives for each unit or sub-unit, making sure that these objectives include the functions and grammatical items recommended by the national curriculum and/or presented in the official text books.

4. Divide each sub-unit into five lessons: Lesson 1, motivation; Lesson 2, information; Lesson 3, practice; Lesson 4, application; Lesson 5, review and quiz. Write lesson plans for each lesson.

A fuller development of this four week program looks as follows:

UNIT 1 Theme: Belonging

Week 1

Topic 1: Family
- Issue: Conflicting responsibilities
- Text: From **Things Fall Apart** a novel by Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Discuss conflicting responsibilities faced by secondary school students and share with each other ways of balancing family and academic demands.

2. Ask and talk about the past, using simple past tense. Talk about past and present obligations using "had to/have to." Ask for and give opinions. Recognize and use words to describe farming and household chores.

3. Read an extract from Things Pall Apart by Chinua Achebe, and answer comprehension questions on the text.

Lesson 1: **Motivation**: problem-posing dialogue: conflicting demands

Lesson 2: **Information**: functions, vocabulary, grammar

Lesson 3: **Practice**: group work: work sheet on vocabulary; prepare comprehension questions on set text which will be answered by rest of the class; coach fellow group members to answer questions set by rest of class

Lesson 4: **Application**: fishbowl: groups take turn to enter the fishbowl and answer question on set text put to them by other groups

Lesson 5: **Review:** wrap up: group members coach and edit each other as each individual writes out the answers to the questions on the text

Week 2

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Topic:	Friendship
Issue:	Disagreeing with friends
Text:	Letters asking for advice on disagreements with friends

Objectives
Students will be able to;

1. Discuss and identify qualities looked for in a friend.

2. Express agreement and disagreement Describe likes and dislikes Ask for and give opinions Recognize and use words to describe human qualities

3. Read problem page letters and discuss possible plans of action for resolving the dilemmas described in the letters.

Lesson 1: **Motivation**: problem-posing dialogue: disagreeing with friends

Lesson 2: **Information**: functions, vocabulary, grammar

Lesson 3: **Practice group work**: worksheets on functions, discussing problem page letters, preparing role-plays illustrating-problem and group solution to problem

Lesson 4: **Application role plays**: each group presents its problem letter and solution, a spectator poll is taken to ascertain the whole class' degree of agreement with proposed solutions

Lesson 5: **Review**: wrap up: debate on a quote from E.M.Forster: If I had to choose between my county and my friend, I hope I would have the courage to betray my country.

Week 3

Topic: Boyfriends and girlfriends
Issue: Sexually transmitted diseases
Text: A text on AIDS

Objectives
Students will be able to:

1. Define the expectations and responsibilities that boyfriends have of and towards girlfriends, and vice versa

2. Identify ways in which AIDS can and cannot be transmitted.

3. Talk about expectations and wishes
Talk about future plans, using future simple, present progressive and "going to"
Express agreement and disagreement
Recognize and use words to describe feelings

4. Read a text on AIDS prevention, and answer questions on the text.

Lesson 1: **Motivation**: problem-posing dialogue: safe sex

Lesson 2: **Information**: functions, vocabulary, grammar

Lesson 3: **Practice group work**: worksheet on functions and vocabulary, readings from text, AIDS board game

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Lesson 4: **Application guest speaker**: listening to and questioning a guest speaker on AIDS in the national context

Lesson 5: **Review** wrap up: quiz on facts about AIDS, producing posters on safe sex to be displayed throughout the school

Week 4

Topic:	Neighbors
Issue:	Adapting to life in urban settings
Text:	Data on shifts from rural to urban settle meets provided by teacher of social sciences

Objectives
Students will be able to:

1. Share experiences they have had in adapting to urban life.
2. Compare past and present experiences and life styles Compare preferences Ask about duration of adaptation processes, using already, yet, still Recognize and use words to describe and compare rural and urban living conditions

3. Demonstrate understanding of data by answering comprehension-questions on tables of figures, and by presenting information found in tables in other forms, such **as pie charts, bar graphs, and diagrams.**

Lesson 1: **Motivation**: problem-posing dialogue: making ends meet in the city

Lesson 2: **Information**: functions, grammar, vocabulary

Lesson 3: **Practice group work**: worksheets on already, yet, still using statistics given in tables to complete charts or answer comprehension questions

Lesson 4: **Application**: survey. in groups, devise questions and conduct an attitude survey on what class members look for in good living conditions, make graphs and charts showing survey results

Lesson 5: **Review**: presentation: each group presents its graphs and charts, showing results of the surveys

As you can see, these are just the outlines of four blocks of lesson plans. Each block is linked thematically to the other blocks. And each lesson is now ready to be fully developed.

One way to get good mileage out of your efforts is to team up with a partner or two. If three of you get together and divide up the items required by the curriculum, then write 4MAT lesson plans which you exchange among yourselves, you will only be preparing four out of every twelve lessons that you teach. It's also quite challenging having other teachers work from your lesson plans. Explaining why you did what you did and what results you expected can he a clarifying experience which sharpens your professional focus.

IF THERE IS NO NATIONAL CURRICULUM

What do you do if there is no national curriculum or textbook to work from, and no way of knowing what functions, grammar, and vocabulary to teach? The feeling of not having a plan for your teaching programs can be discouraging. But teaching and learning are ongoing, dynamic processes. You have embarked on a two-year venture, and whereas not having a program to follow at the beginning can be an added frustration, the situation doesn't have to stay that way. Basically you need to follow the same steps of long-range planning as everyone else, only you may need to plan a little more and keep excellent notes on your lesson plans. Or put in other

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terms, you are better off since no one is telling you what to do. You are in charge and you can set up your own curriculum development project.

In this situation, organize a team approach to curriculum development. Take advantage of the break at the end of the first trimester to get together with other Volunteers and fellow English teachers, or use your In-Service Training to work on a curriculum. Pool the information you've gathered in the first trimester. Decide on a program for the second trimester. Ask yourself these questions:

What issues shall we discuss?
What vocabulary shall we introduce?
What functions shall we cover?
What grammatical items shall we cover?
What activities shall we use?
What assessment techniques shall we use?

The answers to these questions will provide the basis of your curriculum for the second and third trimester. You don't want your curriculum so loose that it has no shape. And yet it shouldn't be so rigid that there's no room to breathe.

An excellent secondary project is for a group of education Volunteers and fellow English teachers to gather up these curriculum outlines and 4MAT lesson plans that have been taught, try to put them into a computer database, use them during pre-service training for incoming Volunteers, and distribute them to Volunteers and colleagues for the next academic year. Organized improvisation is your goal.

III. How am I teaching?

To recap a little on this long-range planning process: you are developing a series of 4MAT lesson plans. You have chosen issues that will interest your students. You will present these issues/topics in your Motivation lessons. You have selected appropriate functions and grammatical features which you will present in your Information lessons.

In Chapter Four we discussed two methodologies: the teacher-centered Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), and the Communicative Approach which lends itself more to learner-centered activities, such as pair and small group discussions. We advised you to lean more toward the Communicative Approach since it encourages learners to use English, and not just learn about the structures of English.

However, we recognize that the Communicative Approach, with its emphasis on learning English through using it, can leave you with a major dilemma How can you provide opportunities for large classes to use English? The answer is cooperative learning through pair or group work. Throughout this book we emphasize that if you are teaching large classes, your students need to take responsibility for their learning. You cannot do it all. However, it is up to you to create an environment in which your students can exercise their learning responsibly. This will not happen if you are permanently stuck in the traffic cop mode of teaching, with all remarks addressed to or through you. You need to be thinking about decentralizing, and organizing communicative activities so that the maximum number of students use their English.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

In Chapter Two, we introduced the vision of students working cooperatively together to accomplish a given task. We suggested that teachers establish clear expectations and then be willing to allow students to learn together by exchanging ideas and sharing experiences in order to increase their understanding and knowledge.

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Many teachers can't imagine allowing their students to manage themselves, even for ten minutes. Possibly they have tried group work and found that there was a lot of noise and very little obvious accomplishment. Students placed in pairs or groups do not automatically cooperate or behave appropriately.

In Chapters Eight and Nine, we will describe cooperative learning strategies in greater detail and give examples of pair and small group activities. In this chapter, as we think about how we are teaching, we want to anticipate the shift from teacher-centered activities, such as class discussions and lectures, to learner-centered approaches, such as pair work, group work, and independent study.

Cooperative learning calls for a significant role shift for the students. Students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge who listen, observe, and take notes. And the teacher is no longer viewed as the sole source of information. Instead, students in cooperative learning activities must collaborate with peers to discuss, contribute, and solve problems. The students engaged in learner-centered activities are responsible for themselves and their peers.

Students are willing and able to take more responsibility for managing themselves and their learning environment, but they need guidance and an opportunity to assume that responsibility. The following activity demonstrates how a cooperative learning approach would allow students to take more responsibility for their classroom environment.

To form cooperative learning groups, identify four to eight students who will work together. Each group should include a variety of skill levels and learning styles. Place students with stronger English language skills together with the weaker students, and try to intersperse leaders and helpers among as many different groups as possible. Don't put troublemakers together. Place them in groups with good students who are dominant enough to have a positive influence. The needs assessment described in Chapter Three will help you create these heterogeneous groups of students who can meet regularly.

MOTIVATION

To motivate the students, tell everyone to examine the classroom carefully. What is nice about this classroom? Now ask the students to close their eyes and imagine that they have the power to improve the room. Ask them to imagine a useful, attractive English language classroom. What are some of the improvements they would make? What materials would be available? Where would they be kept? Tell them to think of all improvements, including cleanliness and necessary repairs.

INFORMATION

Organize and add to this information. Write down key vocabulary words and ask the students to put them into categories using words such as supplies, reading material, cleaning, and repairs. In this lesson, to highlight grammatical structures, you might want to introduce models ("should" or "ought to") that are used to give advice or suggestions.

PRACTICE

One of the most effective ways to demonstrate the practice of language skills that is provided through cooperative learning is to create a "fishbowl." Ask a group of four to eight students to come to the center of the class, where they will be put into a problem-solving scenario. Each student in the fishbowl will be given the opportunity to participate.

Ask the students in the fishbowl, so named because everyone is staring at them, to come to an agreement about who will take these roles: manager (to make sure everyone is following directions), recorder (the student with the clearest handwriting), timekeeper (to remind the group about the time limit), and facilitator (who makes sure chat everyone has a chance to participate; in English).

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The task of the students in the fishbowl is to list all of the ideas they have for improving the classroom. They are to come to a consensus and prioritize the five improvements that can be made first. They will have a limited time to brainstorm, and a limited time to prioritize their suggestions. The recorder is to copy the list on paper, check vocabulary and spelling with the group, and then transfer the list to the board. These students are given an additional assignment which relates to social skills. While they are talking they are to encourage each other politely to speak English. They can point or draw if they do not know the word in English.

As a result of this exercise, the students in the fishbowl will identify five possible improvements to their classroom. The whole class can respond to this list with comments and suggestions. Follow-up activities might include interviews to get additional suggestions from parents or community leaders. Then small group discussions can be used to consider and follow up on the solutions that have been identified.

APPLICATION

The application stage of this lesson is the implementation. When small groups are given a chance to discuss relevant problems, student are often motivated to follow up with class or group projects. Some students who observe the fishbowl exercise will be anxious to contribute to the solution. They should be given an opportunity to express their interest, either in the whole class discussion, a small group exercise, or a simple writing activity. As the students take ownership of this process, plan projects to actually implement some of the recommendations.

This exercise is just one example of the management issues that students can address. Give your students an opportunity to respond to any problem you face, including those related to resources, behavior, or record keeping. The students' suggestions will help, amaze, and amuse you, and if nothing else, they will provide great cultural insight.

IV Have I reached my Goals?

From the beginning, when you first become acquainted with your students, you are assessing their needs and language skills. Assessment should be an ongoing process, not just to establish a skill level, but to monitor the success of your lessons. Check with your students regularly. Informal assessment should be a part of each lesson. For example, to see if your students understood the discussions about classroom facilities, follow up in the next lesson by walking around the room, asking questions about vocabulary or suggested improvements. Don't hesitate to request feedback from your class. A casual conversation at the beginning of class can include questions like, "Did you enjoy the discussion yesterday? Was there anything you didn't understand? How many of you think we need to review that material?" Students appreciate your interest, and they will respond positively when given the opportunity. Periodically, try writing a letter to the students on the board. In the letter, ask them to write back to you to let you know how they are doing in your class.

There are many informal and formal ways for you and your students to check your progress. In addition to casual conversations and informal feedback, you can give assignments or monitor progress through quizzes and tests. In Chapter Eleven, we provide reminders and recommendations to help you consider the options as you assess your teaching and the progress of your students. Assessment is viewed as a predictable, helpful, positive reinforcement of your lessons. Without threatening or tricking or surprising your students, assessment will allow you to analyze the learning that takes place in your classroom.

In Chapter Eleven, as we discuss formal and non-formal assessment, we also emphasize the importance of working with a partner to monitor and improve your lessons. One of the greatest handicaps facing teachers is the isolation of working alone in the classroom. Teachers rarely have an opportunity to share strategies and provide each other with helpful suggestions. We highly recommend that you establish a supportive, professional relationship with one of your

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colleagues. Schedule time to observe each other and then discuss your concerns and share some of your ideas for strengthening your presentations.

Final notes

If long-range planning seems like a lot of work, you are right. But if you are not happy working without an overall plan and strategy, or if you are not satisfied with the materials and curriculum given to you, there comes a point when you have to fish or cut bait. The 4MAT model provides an ideal tool for you to do something about the situation.

Education is a dynamic field. Change, experimentation, and process are the life blood to educators who are constantly working to make the system better and more effective. As an education Volunteer you are part of this restless group. And what makes you a good educator is joining in the quest to improve the services teachers have to offer. In your case, the situation is even more complex (and interesting), because with your large classes and lack of text books, you are pioneering new ways of planning and implementing the teaching of English.

Questions to ask yourself

- Who am I teaching? Do I keep working at understanding the values important to my school community'

- What am I teaching? Am I sufficiently familiar with student interests and the national curriculum to combine them intelligently?

- How am I teaching? Do I provide my students with opportunities to work together as they learn English?

- Have we met our goals? Are the lessons meeting the needs of the students? Are the students making progress? How can progress be improved?

In this chapter we have shared with you some of the ways in which. Volunteers meet the challenge of long-range planning. We have spoken of the need to put your students' interests at the heart of your lessons. Now we invite you to turn to Chapter Seven as we begin to look at some of the ways in which you can manage class activities and put your intention to implement communicative I lessons to work.

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CHAPTER 7

The whole class

WHEN THE ANTS UN IT E THEIR MOUTHS, THEY CAN CARRY AN ELEPHANT.

MOSSI PROVERB

Adapting to a traditional system

Ed wouldn't say he "enjoyed" his pre-service training, but after the intensive TEFL technical training sessions, he did feel that he was better prepared to teach. He recognized the value of meaningful activities and agreed with the philosophy that promoted student participation in the learning process. By the tenth week of training, Ed was anxious to get to his site and begin implementing this innovative communicative approach.

But here he was, four weeks into the school year, facing rows and rows of faces that did not seem to welcome new tricks. Ed was losing his enthusiasm. He had surveyed their interests (football and tressing hair were big winners), assessed their language proficiency (fairly low), and collected a few homework assignments (most copied from the two best students' papers). The students seemed disjointed, unable to work as a team. There was no class identity, no united spirit. They were happy just to take notes, copy work, or let the better students talk.

Ed puzzled over the lack of cohesion in his class and then recalled some advice that an experienced Volunteer had offered at PST about

Initiating change:

On the day you try something new, take a deep breath. Exhale slowly. Remember you're the band leader, and if you introduce your students to rhythm and pitch and harmony by building on their knowledge and experience, your budding musicians will learn to compose and enjoy the music of English.

Ed had dismissed this advice as whimsy, but now he thought more carefully about his role. "I am in charge, but I do need to build on their expectations. I cannot impose mine right away."

Ed was working in a traditional educational system where students are accustomed to lectures and rote recitals of information. As he thought about PST, he remembered the emphasis on working within the system. The more successful Volunteers do not try to beat the system, rather they accept it as a baseline and subtly adjust their students' expectations of what an English class should be. Ed realized this was approach he needed to take.

In this chapter we will share with you some practical suggestions and creative strategies that have helped Volunteers and other teachers adapt to a traditional educational system.

When you enter your class, one of your first priorities is to try to establish a rapport with your students. Begin by learning your students' names and move on to their personal interests. If you used some of the introductory techniques described in Chapter Two, you have already made good progress.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

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In all likelihood, your students are used to a teacher-directed, lecture-driven lesson, based on the national (grammatical) curriculum and geared toward the national exam. Student participation is minimized. The posing of low-level (cognitively undemanding) information questions is the norm and higher-order thinking questions are rarely asked. Students work individually although they sit on crowded bench-desks and have to share textbooks, if any are available.

This scenario is not what you would like your class to look like. But for the time being, it is what you must work with. starting OUT In order to establish your credibility as a teacher, add new techniques and procedures gradually to your classroom repertoire. Since students are familiar with a whole-class, lecture-style lesson, use it to introduce the communicative approach.

As you read in the previous chapters, we are suggesting you use the 4MAT plan as you develop lessons. However, first you need to train your students to participate in whole-class, pair, group and individual activities. This training needs to be done step-by-step, taking time to let students become familiar with the process.

The whole-class activities will be particularly important at the beginning and the end of a lesson. By starting a lesson together you can set the stage for the topic by:

- establishing the objectives and pace (especially if you plan a lesson that needs several class periods);
- building background information;
- activating students' prior experiences;
- Iinking the lesson to previous topics; and
- presenting new information.

ENDING THE LESSON

At the end of the lesson, addressing the students as a whole class will help maintain continuity and also bring closure to the topic. Remember that the key to using whole class activities successfully is getting the students' attention, holding it, and encouraging the students' participation.

THE LECTURE

Let's start with a traditional lecture, which should not, of course, model a college professor's discourse. In this chapter we will use "lecture" to refer to teacher explanations, on a grammatical point or writing process, for example. However, your lectures should not be lengthy or without some student interaction

Lectures can promote student language development, especially in listening and speaking skills-provided the teacher intersperses the talk with questions to the audience and allows sufficient wait time for responses. They also provide the opportunity to introduce students to content-based activities, linking a subject like biology with English language development. Depending on what task is required of the students, lectures can also be used to develop higher order thinking skills and study skills. Further, while lecturing you are providing students with rich input, native pronunciation, models of English grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and so forth.

ORGANIZATION

- First, as in all lessons, know your objective and relate it to your students in advance. Write a few summary points or even an outline on the board and read the points aloud. Put up some key terms and phrases you will be using. You can even point co them as you talk. This preparation will give the students clues to your talk and will help focus their attention.

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VISUAL AIDS

• Second, ask yourself what you can do to aid the students' understanding of your words. Visuals are one solution. Pictures, photos, drawings, and even stick figures can help your lecture come alive. Use your students to help demonstrate a point. Do pantomime or role play. Sprinkle a lecture with familiar examples, perhaps from the community or from the curriculum of another subject. Better yet, where possible, select a topic from your list of student interests. By using multiple media in the classroom, you can reduce the reliance on language and place the information in a context that is more comprehensible to the students.

NOTETAKING

• Third, teach the students note-taking, a skill which facilitates their comprehension. You might, for example, plan a presentation on "How to Take Notes." As you describe helpful strategies to the students, pause to write notes yourself on a separate sheet of paper. Occasionally stop and check to see what the students write. Have students compare notes with each ocher. For the second half of the lesson on subsequent days, present a few more lectures on topics of student interest and have students cake notes and compare their notes with yours and each others'. If you list the main ideas of THE lecture on the board beforehand, you will provide the students with a framework to which they can add details.

DICTATION

One traditional language learning activity that your students will expect is dictation. This activity primarily occurs in a lecture-like setting. Dictations are useful to practice listening comprehension and writing. A slight modification that you may want to use in large, multilevel classes is a listening cloze dictation. In this instance, you would prepare several versions of the passage. The first version, for beginning students, would have a few blanks. The next version would have those blanks plus a few more; the third, the same blanks as the second plus additional ones, and so forth. You then read the passage aloud to the whole class as you would read a dictation, slowly, with repetitions. But your students would have different amounts of words or phrases to fill in according to their ability levels.

DISCUSSIONS

Whole class discussion is another way to get everyone involved When you have 50 or 60 students, it is extremely difficult to get all of them to participate in a discussion. But, it is possible if students have been prepared for the discussion, if the topic is meaningful and relevant (geared to their concerns when appropriate), and if the discussion is structured to encourage their input (see, for instance, explanation of think-pair-share in Chapter Eight). As we suggested for lectures, you are encouraged to use multiple media to enhance a class discussion.

In earlier chapters, we noted that your students are most likely accustomed to teacher control of lesson activities. You may find that you have to lead several discussions as question/answer sessions until your students feel comfortable initiating questions and making comments without your prompting. You may want to consider selecting one or two students (your dynamic students, perhaps) as discussion leaders to model the participation you would like from all your students.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Consider inviting a guest speaker to your class as one way to make the transition from the lecture format to a discussion format. In advance, scout out potential speakers from your community. Lee the students choose a speaker from your prepared list and help write or dictate an invitation that requests the topic for the talk. They might want to create a list of issues for the speaker to address and include it with their invitation. (You need to monitor this list and make sure it is appropriate for the speaker both in Berms of its content and the speaker's English proficiency.)

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This process gives students a stake in the upcoming talk as well as background knowledge and concepts to listen for during the presentation

Before the speaker arrives, have the class draw up a series of questions to ask the guest after he or she has spoken. Besides factual questions **(What is a____?, When did_____?),** encourage more interactive varieties **(We have been studying ____? What do you think about that? When we read ____, we learned ____. Can you share your ideas? I didn't understand _____. Could you explain again please?).** These questions will provide the basis for a class discussion with the speaker. You should prepare your guest so he or she can ask the students some questions too.

This preparation time is also ideal for slotting in some of the grammatical points you need to cover from the national curriculum. Your students can work on question formation, verb tenses, punctuation, and more. You will be covering chose items in context, and they should therefore be more meaningful and memorable to your class.

When your guest speaker arrives, inform the students that you expect them to take some notes to use later in a class discussion. At that later time ask students to review their notes and summarize aloud what they learned. Or, set up a "hot seat" and ask a student to sit and discuss the topic, using his or her notes. To involve the whole class, encourage classmates to extend the information they hear from the hot seat, question and/or correct utterances, compare the information to their notes, and ask for repetition or clarification. Be careful, though, not to force students to join in, especially if they are particularly shy. You may want to have a lottery to establish an order for the "hot seat.." Clearly, not all students will get to speak, but if this activity is repeated every few weeks, more and more students will have a chance. Moreover, as the students become familiar with the task, they may feel more comfortable speaking up.

SOLVING A PROBLEM

Another useful way to generate a whole-class discussion is to set up a problem-solving activity. As we mentioned in earlier chapters, community problems, such as health or environmental issues, can be incorporated as themes in lesson plans. To facilitate a discussion about a critical issue-Guinea worm eradication or AIDS or digestive disorders, for example-you can play the outsider, perhaps a scientist or doctor, who needs to gee information. Questions you pose should elicit factual knowledge (e.g., What is the problem? Where toes it occur? Who is affected?) and critical chinking (e.g., Why to you think it happens? If it is not stopped, what might occur?).

WHOLE-CLASS ACTIVITIES IN A COMMUNICATIVE LESSON

Lee's look at the seeps in a communicative lesson plan and see where we can apply whole-class activities. As we described the lesson plan format in Chapter Pour, we indicated that teacher-directed, whole class activities tend to cluster in the Motivation and Information phases of a lesson. However, there are times when the whole class will want to come together during the Practice and Application steps too. Frequently this occurs with sharings of discoveries and reviews of findings.

MOTIVATION

As part of the Motivation phase, you may want to offer the students some background information or check on their prior knowledge through several activities.

SEMANTIC WEBBING

This sophisticated version of brainstorming allows students to organize their thoughts and categorize information. One technique is to have students (with or without your assistance) first make a list of ideas, such as foods found in the market, and then organize them in a web, perhaps using branches to represent different food groups. Another option is to web from the

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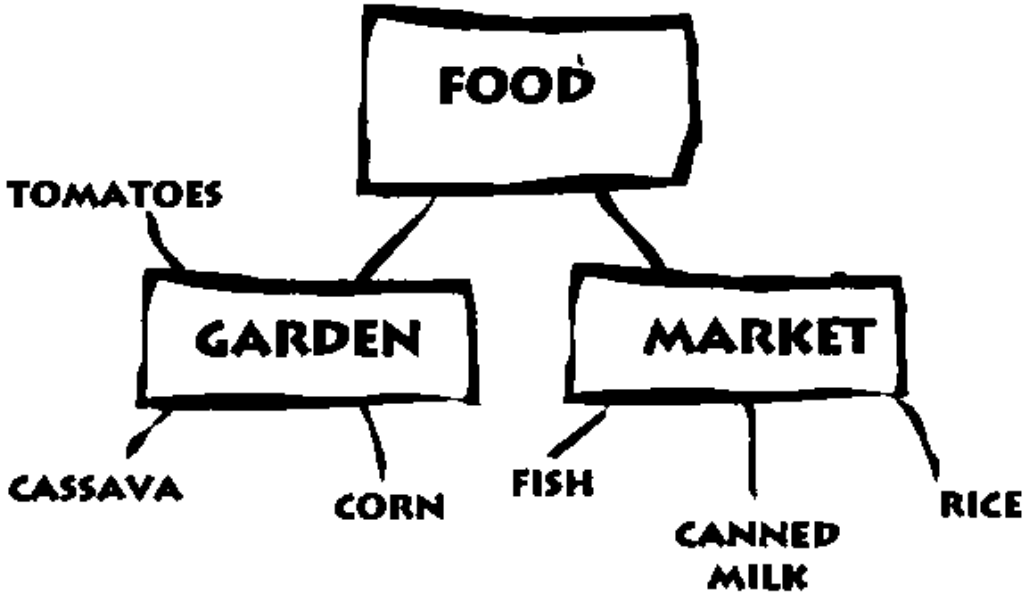
start. As students offer ideas, you or an advanced student can create a web, linking related ideas as they are mentioned.



REALIA

As mentioned earlier, the use of realia and ocher visual materials is important, and particularly effective as a motivator. These items provide a quick, often non-language-dependence means of introducing students to the lesson topic. Such materials can also meet different student learning styles (for example, tactile and visual) and offer critical thinking practice by asking questions like, **What to you think this represents? and Why are we looking at this type of map?**

PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Sometimes it is helpful to gee students "in the mood" for a topic. You can motivate your students by asking them to listen to a song, a poem or even a shore story, and having a brief discussion about it afterwards, or by having them draw a picture while they listen and then share it with the class or a partner.

INFORMATION

The Information phase of a lesson is also teacher-directed. In this phase, you may want to use lectures and whole-class discussions as discussed earlier.

LINKS WITH CONTENT AREAS

This phase is also a good place to incorporate some of the subject matter your students are encountering in other content areas. Using visual aids, showing diagrams and maps, and doing demonstrations and experiments are good techniques for making new information more comprehensible.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

You can present information on themes and content topics with:

- outlines-to show the main idea and supporting detail, to summarize information;

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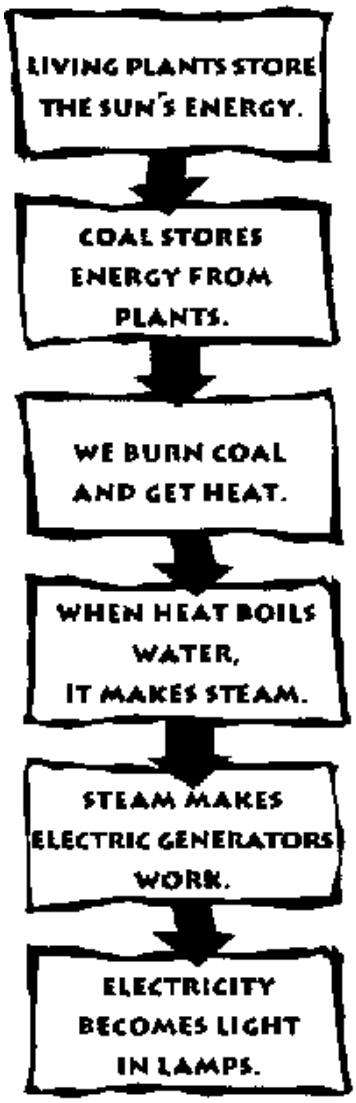
• timelines-to organize and sequence events chronologically, compare events in different settings (e.g., cities, countries);

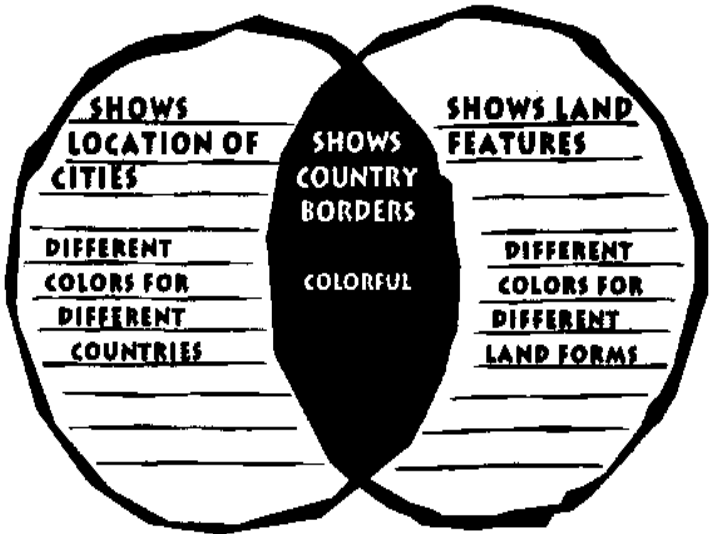
• flow charts-to show progression and influences on an outcome, to show cause and effect;

• graphs, charts-to organize and compare data;

• maps-to examine movement and location; and

• Venn Diagrams-to compare and contrast information.





POLITICAL MAPS RELIEF MAPS

Consider training your students to create graphic organizers. In so doing, you may assist their notetaking and study skill development and also familiarize them with a technique that can be used in small group work.

PRACTICE AND APPLICATION

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The Practice and Application phases of the lesson lend themselves to several whole-class activities.

STRIP STORIES OR SENTENCE STRIPS

First, you write a summary of a lesson or reading passage, or write out the steps for solving a math problem or for doing a science experiment on individual strips of paper-each strip having one sentence or more. You should be sure the writing is large enough to be seen by all students. Next distribute these strips, out of sequence, to several students. These students organize the strips into the proper sequence.

To do the sequencing each student may take a strip and physically stand in the proper place in front of the class or place strips on the board, with classmates concurring or disagreeing with the positions and the students involved justifying their stances.

DISCOVERY AND INQUIRY LEARNING

After studying a certain topic such as flowers, you might design lessons for discovery learning where students seek out specific new information on their own, like comparing petals and leaves from different plants. You would help organize the data and sometimes set out the procedures for your students to follow. Then, as a class, they draw conclusions and discover the results. Other examples of discovery learning include math problem-solving activities and open-ended science experiments.

Similarly, your students might want to investigate a topic of their own choosing while you act as a facilitator. The students would identify a problem, hypothesize causes, design procedures or experiments, and conduct research to try to solve the problem. These inquiry activities work well in conjunction with science, social studies and health objectives.

CLASS NEWSPAPER

Newspaper production is often successful in large, multilevel classes because there are tasks for all students to complete. The key to success, of course, is organization. Based on students' interests and ability levels, students can volunteer for roles, such as reporter, editor, layout, banner designer, artist, advertiser, printer, and so forth. Students with stronger language skills may focus on the reporting, writing and editing stages. Students with weaker language skills may work on the production-layout design, cutting and pasting articles into columns, drawing pictures, and designing advertisements.

CRAB BAG REVIEW

Another whole class activity that may be used to wrap up a lesson is the grab bag. Put written clues or objects into a small bag. Have students reach inside, select one, and talk about it in relation to the unit of study. For example, after a health unit on clean drinking water, you might put a piece of charcoal, small pebbles, and an empty bottle in the bag. As a student takes one out, she or he discusses the object's purpose or importance. Other students are encouraged to join in and add to the explanation.

A Potpourri of ideas

E There are some general communicative techniques that work well as whole-class activities. These include drama, writing tasks, games, jazz chants and music. They can be applied as desired (and as appropriate) in any phase of the lesson.

DRAMA

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Drama is a popular language learning technique that works well with lessons on literature and content subject matter and helps develop social skills. You can ask the class to act out an event from a story or a content area. For example, the sprouting-harvesting cycle of a plant, studied in biology, can become a creative skit; or, students may want to dramatize a scene from a published play, even one of Shakespeare's. You may even want students to demonstrate their negotiating and paraphrasing skills through a mock trial.

You have the option to assign roles impromptu as role plays or have the class research and write dialogues or even a play before performing. And do not forget to use mime. This works well in a large, multilevel class with students of both beginning and advanced levels of English proficiency.

WRITING LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH (LEA)

Writing, as you know, can take many forms. One way to involve the whole class simultaneously is through an LEA exercise. The LEA, originally developed to teach literacy skills to adults, works well in a multilevel class. After your students engage in an activity, such as going on a leaf collection hunt, picking up litter, or making rehydration formula, they dictate a summary of what happened for you or for an advanced classmate to write on the board. Students then work together co organize the written ideas and, if desired, make corrections. You may want to copy the dictation co use another day for review, motivation, or even a lesson on grammar and editing.

CREATIVE WRITING

Another writing idea for large, multilevel classes is the traditional creative writing exercise. It may be possible that your students are not ready to free-write, so you want to provide some structure. One way is to show them a picture and, as a class, list some of the objects or characters depicted and brainstorm some possible story lines around the scene. Some students may copy words or make simple sentences using the class' ideas. Others may branch out and extend the lists or take a different tack entirely. A variation would be to use the picture as a stimulus for writing a dialogue.

A technique that can help students write comparative essays also uses pictures. Try to find two pictures that have similar characteristics but different details. For instance, you may have two pictures of floral bouquets. Begin by asking students to make a list (as a class or individually) of the similarities and a list of the differences. According to their abilities, the students can use those lists to write sentences, paragraphs or an essay about the pictures.

Some other familiar writing techniques will work well too. Tell half a story and ask the students to finish it or have students read or listen to a story and then retell it from the point of view of a different character.

JOURNALS

The use of journals is another writing technique that appears as a whole-class activity, but actually prepares students for individual work. By starting students with journals you offer them opportunities for self-expression, unpressured writing and reflection. You can decide how often you want students to write (maybe daily or twice a week), and if-and how often-you will read the journals. Some students may even volunteer to read aloud. For less proficient students, you can ask them to start with illustrations in their journals and slowly move into writing. In this way, all students in your multilevel class can participate.

You may choose to let writing topics be entirely selected by the students or you may want to provide the writing topics, at least some of the time. To tie the journals into your lessons, you may use them for lesson closure by having students summarize what they learned in the lesson that day or for motivation the next day by having them summarize a previous lesson.

GROUP JOURNALS

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A group journal is one variation that may be used for whole class writing. It is set up in this manner. The teacher designates a single notebook as the group journal. The teacher starts off the journal with an entry on a particular topic. Students then take turns writing in the journal. Turns are not assigned or regulated. Some students may choose to write frequency; others not at all. Students may initiate topics or respond to something already written. Any entries may be read by anyone who writes an entry. The teacher writes entries occasionally, but not in response to each piece of student writing. All writing is to be done in the classroom-the notebook can never be taken home by a student. There are no grades, no error corrections, no "character attacks," only written interaction about the content of the entries.

DIALOGUE JOURNALS

This variation of journal writing may be less realistic for your large classes. In dialogue journals teachers respond to student writing. They do not edit student work; they add positive and supportive comments, ask questions or share ideas, and model, in their responses, correct language forms. The teachers let students know how often they will read and respond to the journals. Some teachers will respond to every piece of writing; others will respond once a week or less. The teacher comments may vary in length and depth too. If you do want to try this technique, pace yourself carefully, especially if your class is large.

GAMES

Games provide a nice break from a traditional lesson format and capture the attention and enthusiasm of a whole class. Many games can reinforce learning vocabulary, grammar rules, stories and reading selections. Students may play games individually, in pairs, and in groups. By using games as an occasional "treat" or "aside" from the lecture or whole class discussion, a teacher can casually prepare the students for the group and pair work that will be expected of them later.

Bingo can be played in many variations. For beginning students, the teacher calls out what is on the cards:

- numbers or letters;
- sight words or vocabulary based on a theme the class has been studying.

More advanced bingo cards could include these:

- numbers that represent a sum or product, for example, and the teacher calls out "eleven plus five" or "ten times twenty;"
- new vocabulary, and the teacher calls out the definitions;
- antonyms or synonyms of the words the teacher calls out;
- irregular past tense forms of the present tense verbs the teacher calls out.

Bingo

B	**I**	**N**	**G**	**O**
POLLEN	FRUIT	LEAF	SEED	MINERALS
ANTHER	BUD	WATER	OVULE	XYLEM
ROOT HAIRS	STYLE	X	FLOWER	FLUID
VEINS	ROOT	SEPAL	PETAL	STAMEN
PISTIL	BULB	OVARY	STEAM	PHLOEM

Pictionary and **charades** are always fun. For pictionary, the student with the cue can draw clues to help his or her team guess the answer; for charades, the student must pantomime the clues.

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To play these games, the class is divided into two teams. One student from each draws or performs while classmates guess the answer. The first team to guess gains a point.

As with bingo, these games can be designed for varying levels of proficiency that can nonetheless include the whole class. The teacher chooses the level of difficulty of the cue based on the students' ability. For instance, two advanced students competing in pictionary may be asked to draw a scientist using a microscope, whereas less advanced students may only have to draw the microscope. Another accommodation for multilevel classes is to give some students written cues and others oral ones.

Mad libs, popular in U.S. elementary schools over 20 years ago, have their place in an EFL classroom. For initial preparation, the teacher writes a story frame with deleted words. Before reading it to the class, the teacher asks individual students to supply needed nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions or conjunctions. These are written into the story and then the story is read aloud. The general idea is to create an amusing, "crazy" story. Hut the teacher's hidden agenda is to check students' knowledge and recognition of those parts of speech.

MAD LIBS

ONE DAY _____(PROPER NOUN) WAS_____(VERB + ING) TO THE _____(NOUN). ON THE WAY, _____ (PRONOUN) SAW A _____ (NOUN). THIS WAS A SURPRISE SO _____(PRONOUN) _____ (VERB) QUICKLY.

Jeopardy and reverse jeopardy suit the multilevel class nicely. By explaining to students that the clues behind the gameboard get more difficult in proportion to the value of the square, less proficient students can choose easier questions; more proficient students, more difficult ones. The gameboard with points can be drawn on the chalkboard or made permanent on a large sheet of paper. The clues behind the points would change each time the game is played. Some teachers read them aloud to the class; others like to have them written down so the students can see them.

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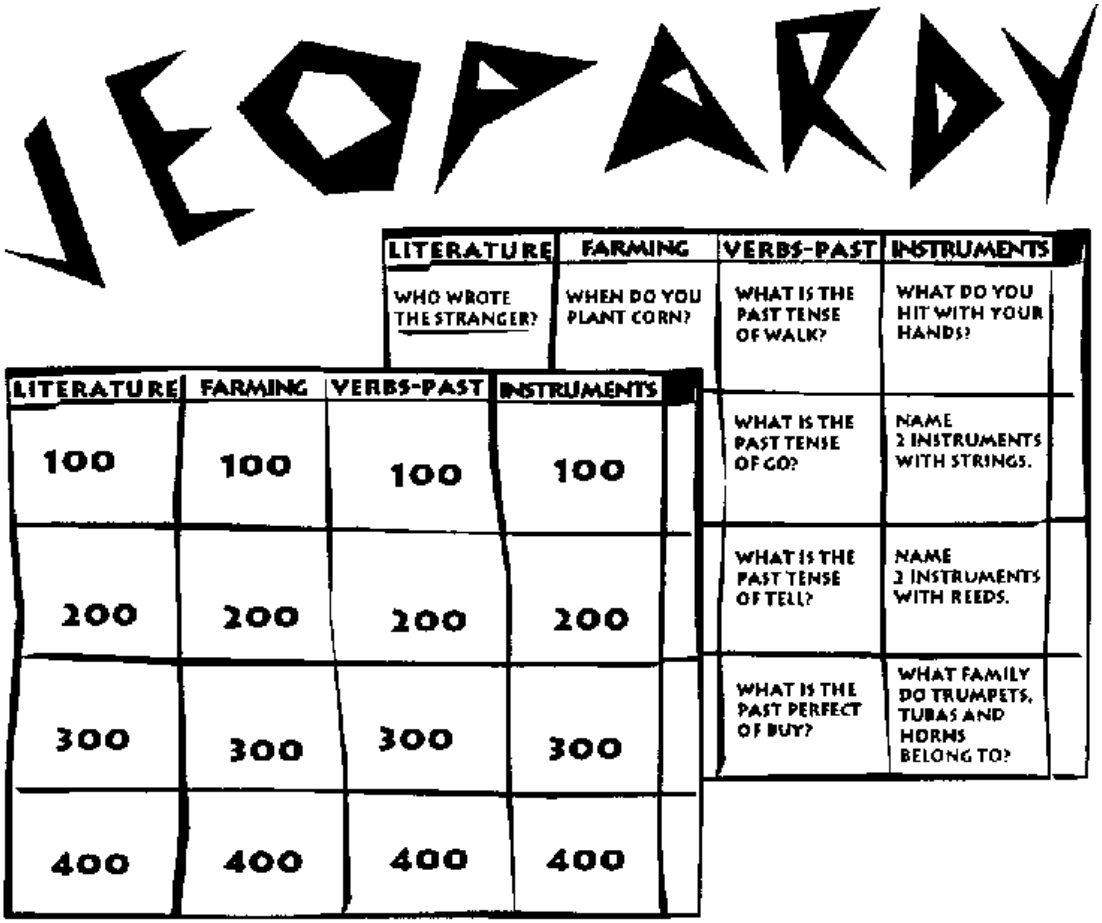

This game is easily played by teams, with scores being kept as individuals take turns making their selections. In reverse jeopardy, questions are posed to the students in a category they select. Students answer the questions. Category options may include:

- vocabulary from **The Stranger** (the name of a book) - clues give definitions or synonyms;
- verb tenses - dues may be "past tense of go" or "future of can," etc.;
- categories that reflect students' interests, such as animals, sports, music;
- local community services;
- comprehension questions about a story students read or an experience they had;
- connections to content classes.

Regular jeopardy is a little more difficult because the students are given the answer and need to make up a correct question. This is a good skill for the students to practice, but it may be better to introduce students to the game via reverse jeopardy and later switch to regular jeopardy.

MUSIC

You may enjoy exploring music and chants in your classes. These activities are motivating for students and also help teach English pronunciation and intonation patterns. Many of your students may be musically inclined, accustomed to singing a capella and in harmony. Look for songs that reinforce a grammar point or some vocabulary you are studying. Also consider American folk songs that have relatively easy lyrics and repetitive stanzas. Songs and jazz

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chants on content area topics would work well too. Students might even like writing their own rhymes, rap songs or jazz chants about topics like the rain forest, geometric figures or politics.

Each individual finds his or her own way to teach a song or chant. One method is to sing a verse or the whole song through once. Next, sing line by line, having the students sing after you. Then sing couplets or some reasonable grouping of lines with students repeating after you. For a jazz chant, you might want to divide the class in half, giving each half responsibility for one part in the chant. Set the rhythm by clapping and encourage the students to follow suit. If you have a tape recorder (and batteries) you may want to record the students singing and chancing and share it with them to reinforce their interest.

FINAL NOTES

This chapter has examined some strategies for you to use in whole-class situations. Knowing that the students expect teacher-directed lessons, you can gradually adapt the traditional system to a more communicative approach. Remember to implement change slowly, establish a rapport, and promote mutual respect with your students. Try to incorporate their interests as much as possible and look for content to ignite your lessons.

Questions to ask yourself

The following questions will serve as reminders as you begin to shift your lessons from the traditional style to a communicative one.

- Have you established your credibility by using the familiar lecture format?
- Do you plan to introduce the communicative approach slowly, one activity at a time?
- Are you enhancing your lectures and discussions with visual and aural stimulation, action and reaction?
- Have you trained your students to participate in a discussion and other whole-class activities? Are they prepared with background information and ideas about what to say or ask?
- Have you linked whole-group activities to topics of student interest? Are you posing problems and requesting student solutions?
- Have you remembered to incorporate the grammatical points required by your syllabus into your creative activities?

In this chapter, we have encouraged you to enhance your lectures with communicative discussions and creative activities. These communicative teaching approaches will interest and challenge your students, but don't limit your lessons to these whole-class options. In Chapter Eight we will show you how to introduce your students to cooperative learning through pair work, so you can help them experience the additional social and academic benefits of a learner-centered classroom.

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CHAPTER 8

Pair work

TWO EYES SEE BETTER THAN ONE.

Learning to value cooperation

When you consider the needs of your students in relation to the social problems we all recognize, you begin to see that individual needs are most often micro-versions of the broader concerns in our world. "Wellness" is a basic need that extends from personal health to the need for environmental protection of the earth. A curriculum theme like "belonging" can begin with a focus on friends and family and expand to an analysis of community organizations. And as you plan your lessons, "cooperation" is a need that extends beyond the classroom to international relations.

In this chapter, we encourage you to explore the personal and social benefits of teaching students to value cooperation. Cooperative learning is a communicative approach that encourages students to work together. In contrast to competitive or individualistic learning, this approach is designed to foster collaboration and interdependence. Through pair and small group activities, students improve their interpersonal skills and learn to accept differing points of view.

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By working together to achieve common goals, they develop skills that help them to function productively in the classroom-and in society.

Benefits of cooperative learning

When students discuss the subject matter in their groups' they reconceptualize the information and put it into words their peers will understand. This cognitive process promotes higher-level thinning and reinforces learning.

ASCD Cooperative Learning Series Facilitator's Manual

COLLABORATING ON TASKS

Adolescents have a natural desire to be part of a social group, but students working in groups are often unable to organize themselves to accomplish a common task. Cooperative learning activities teach young people in groups how to focus on tasks and share responsibility. Pairs or small groups of students are asked to take specific roles and are told to accomplish assignments within a given period of time. Guidelines help them to interact as they work together to accomplish their objectives. While helping each other to achieve shared goals, students learn to negotiate and collaborate. Successful teamwork has the additional benefit of promoting greater trust and self-esteem.

IMPROVING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Cooperative learning also helps learners to reach higher academic achievement levels. Through participatory learning activities, students learn to discuss the assigned topics, justify their positions, and come to a consensus. These interactions give students opportunities to express themselves and understand other opinions. As they question and challenge each other, students develop their critical thinking skills. Because of the higher level of participation inspired by group discussions, cooperative learning increases individual retention of the assigned content.

APPRECIATING DIVERSITY

Cooperative learning groups are typically made up of students with heterogeneous backgrounds and abilities. By working together to succeed in groups, they learn to appreciate differences in skills, aptitudes, learning styles, personalities, goals, and interests. Individuals working in teams develop a greater understanding of the variety of approaches that can be used to accomplish any given task. This understanding of diversity is an advantage that has social significance beyond the classroom.

QUESTIONS AND FEARS

Clearly, cooperative learning offers many individual and social benefits, inducing improvements in attitude, achievement, and esteem. But teachers who are struggling to control and motivate students in large classes still hesitate to try learner-centered activities. These are-typical reactions:

How do you turn over control without inciting mass riots?
Answer: Gradually.

How do you involve students who are completely apathetic?
Answer: Patiently.

What if they actually prefer "chalk talk" lectures?
Answer: Give them periodically.

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These are valid questions, and we will continue to address them with suggestions and encouragement throughout this book. It takes vision, determination, and careful planning to motivate students. But when you can finally step back out of the limelight, and the "lights go on" in your students' eyes, you will find that observing enthusiastic, self-regulated learners is exhilarating.

When you feel comfortable with your students, you are ready to experiment. This confidence may surface the first day, or it may take a few months. Variables include your own style, the school culture, and the attitudes in your classroom.

Beginning with pair work

Experienced educators have found that the easiest transition from teaching "done on" the students to learning "done with" the students is through pair work. As Jill Bell notes in her book Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL, pair work offers many advantages. When the entire class is actively engaged in pair work, everyone is communicating. And pair work is easy to initiate. Without a great deal of organization, you can simply ask two learners to help each other with an exercise or assignment. As they discuss their answers, students working as partners have immediate opportunities to give and receive feedback. For those who are uncomfortable speaking in front of a group or the entire class, pair work offers the lowest stress of all each student is facing an audience of one.

As you begin to prepare pair work activities, you will find chat the lesson planning won't seem easier or harder, just different. In addition to the content objectives of the lesson, you need to create a reason for the two students to cooperate, and anticipate the social skills they might need to accomplish the assigned task. Also, plan the assessment so that each student knows in advance that he or she will be held accountable for learning.

Looking at the options

As you think of pair assignments, you have three options: random, voluntary, or assigned pairs.

RANDOM PAIRS

Random pairs are generally formed by asking two students who are sitting next to each other to work together. This is the most flexible pairing arrangement because it is based on convenient seating. Most teachers who use pair work spontaneously are taking advantage of this option.

Random pairs can work together to review each other's work, complete exercises, practice dialogues, or engage in a conversation. By using a graphic organizer, such as a Venn Diagram, conversations between partners can be carefully structured. For example, if you want two students to introduce, describe, and compare themselves, ask them to write a list of the things that they have in common in the area where the circles overlap. And if they want to identify their unique qualities, each partner can fill in a side of the circle with a list of distinct characteristics. A Venn Diagram is also a helpful visual reminder when you want students to discuss academic content, such as literature. Random pairs can use this graphic organizer to compare or contrast two important quotes or two major characters in a story.

VOLUNTARY PAIRS

When you allow students to form voluntary pairs, they are given the opportunity to choose any partner in the class for a specific project. Classroom projects can include painting, drama, puzzles, or games. Outside of class, voluntary pairs might do some research or conduct interviews together. They can be sent out to a clinic to interview a dentist or to a library to explore a science topic. They might conduct a local survey. Two students living in the same

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neighborhood might want to work on an experiment together, such as starting a small garden. Typically, "buddies" on class field trips are voluntary pairs who watch out for each other.

An interesting (highly revealing) assignment is to ask voluntary pairs to describe the activities of a man and a woman during an entire day, from the time they get up until the time they go to sleep. One partner observes a man, and the other observes a woman. They try to note every activity of the day. What time does he/she get up? What does he/she do every half hour of the day, What about the evening? What time does he/she go to bed? Students then talk about their observations with their partners and try to generalize about the information they have in their detailed notes.

Using a clock as a graphic organizer, each student draws a clock and then adds pictures to symbolize the activities of the observed man or woman. Partners can compare their drawings and share their observations with each other and the class. As a follow-up, have students write sentences or paragraphs to explain their pictures. More advanced students can discuss or write about their reactions to the schedules they observed.

ASSIGNED PARTNERS

Assigned partners are usually based on proficiency levels. Assigned partners with similar abilities can correct each other's exercises, work on writing assignments, or alternate while reading to each other. They can also challenge each other with self-access materials, such as information gaps, puzzles, and games (see Chapter Ten). Students at the upper proficiency levels can create dialogues and role plays. They might work together to form questions or exercises related to magazine or newspaper articles. Students at the lower levels can benefit by practicing or working on the dialogues, role plays, and activities created by upper-level students.

Assigned pairs can also be students at **different levels**. At times, it is beneficial to pair the best students with those who need help. Peer tutoring has been practiced for centuries in the Koranic schools of Muslim countries. The advanced students who are interested in helping as tutors become Teaching Assistants (TAs). Once they finish their exercises, they can be available to give individual attention to some of the students having difficulty. The more advanced students can help the less able. Although you might hesitate to organize TAs, consider the benefits to everyone, including the increased self-esteem of the advanced students.

PAIRS TO SMALL GROUPS

In Chapter Nine, we will continue our discussion of cooperative learning by analyzing small group activities. Many teachers find that the most successful group arrangements are heterogeneous small groups that have been formed by the teacher. Assigned groups usually stay together to complete a unit, and if they are working well together, they may remain together for the entire school term. Before you form cooperative learning groups of four to eight students, observe the dynamics between individuals by experimenting with assigned partners.

Exploring issues through pair work

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

Think-Pair-Share is a simple cooperative learning structure that allows students to share what they already know about a topic. As the teacher provides a topic or stimulus, the students have a chance to think to themselves and put their ideas in writing. Then they pair up with another student to compare and discuss their ideas. And finally they share their ideas with the class.

Think-Pair-Share is a process that will help you design lessons to explore relevant content. A lesson on a science topic, such as insects, might begin with the teacher asking the class to look at and describe a drawing or a poster.

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Beginning level students can generate basic vocabulary about the visual, and intermediate students can dictate statements, which the teacher writes on the board. With advanced students, try to encourage critical thinking. You might ask the students to think about the differences between "observation" (What do they see or hear?), "inference" (What do they assume?), and "fact" (What is the scientific information?). Write these statements in three different columns.

STEP ONE: THINK

Once you have introduced the topic of insects through a whole class discussion, tell the students that you want them to THINK about two questions. Ask them to take a piece of paper and fold it in half (demonstrate). They are to write one question on each side of the paper. Then dictate the two questions:

1. What facts do you know about insects?
2. What else do you want to know?

After you dictate tnese two questions, have a student come to the board to write the questions, which the class may need to correct. Give the students a few minutes to check their sentences and then tell them to think for a few moments and write their ideas in the two columns. On one side, they write everything that they believe is a fact about insects. And on the other side, they write all of their questions about these animals.

STEP TWO: PAIR

Now you are ready to introduce random pair work. Ask each student to compare his or her ideas with those of a student sitting nearby. The partners discuss their facts and questions.

Tell them to try to come to an agreement about the facts that they know. Remind them to encourage each other and speak English quietly. Be specific about the time limit, which will vary depending on your class. For example, "You have ten minutes" should be reinforced by writing "10 minutes" on the board.

Walk around the classroom, complimenting students on their ideas or behavior and commenting on their discussions. After the allotted time, you have two options: (1) go back to a whole class discussion or (2) continue with cooperative learning by combining pairs of students to form small groups.

STEP THREE: SHARK

If the students seem a lithe rowdy, move back to the front of the classroom and gain control of the whole class again by teacher-directing the class discussion. Encourage the students to share their ideas and ask students in pairs to discuss their lists of facts and questions with the class. Two advanced students with legible handwriting can come forward and take notes on the chalkboard. The whole class can then generate a list of facts and a list of questions.

If class management was not a problem during the pair discussions, a second option is to make the transition from pair work to small group work. Tell two or three sets of random partners to come together to form small discussion groups. Within their group they will come to a consensus about the "facts" that they know about insects. Ask each group to select a recorder (who will take notes), a timekeeper (who reminds the group of their deadline), a manager (who makes sure they are following directions), and a facilitator (who involves everyone in the discussion). Give the students a longer period of time (10-15 minutes) to come to a consensus.

REGAINING CONTROL

By introducing cooperative learning through pair work, you can experiment with learner-centered activities and shift back to teacher control very easily. But be patient with yourself and your students. In some cases, the process of going from pair work to small group discussions requires

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two or three (or ten) attempts. In Chapter Nine, we will offer more ideas and suggestions as we discuss management of small group work in greater detail.

The follow-up for this introductory activity on insects might include forming questions, developing vocabulary, learning to make suggestions, creating dialogues with role plays, problem posing, writing letters for guest speakers, interviews, or class displays. Again, by selecting from whole class, pair work, and small group activities, you can broaden the level of class involvement and communication, or step back into the familiar teacher-centered role.

Pair work to introduce social and study skills

While reading this chapter, you may be thinking to yourself, "I'm still not sure about this.... Some of my students can be wild...Why take the risk?" Teachers avoid innovative activities because they are petrified by the fear of losing control. Use your nervous energy, don't let it paralyze you. A healthy reaction is to think and talk and plan creatively. So before you ask 60-150 students to experiment with a new activity, anticipate the problems and do some careful preparation.

When you plan to have students working in pairs together, you need to anticipate the social skills they will need. To come to a consensus, for example, the students must know how to encourage each other, make suggestions, disagree politely, clarify what they said, and verify what they understood. And what if they still can't agree? How will they negotiate? You can help the students by showing them how to respond. Teach them, for example, to criticize the ideas, not the person. Students will soon recognize that discussions result in answers that are an overall improvement over individual solutions.

The social skills that students need for cooperative learning activities can be introduced through pair work activities. Once you have visualized and planned a pair or small group learning experience, show your students how you expect them to act. In other words, you can minimize the "chaos risk" by using a model of behavior to discuss expectations. You and your students can work together to create this model.

THE WRITING PROCESS

Let's imagine a situation in which the students need to know how to work in pairs. If your students are involved in the writing process, they share their ideas and help each other to revise and edit their work. At times they work alone, but sometimes they need to work together. To demonstrate how social skills can be taught through a writing activity, let's look at a specific example:

Nicholas is a teacher who takes pleasure in his own writing skills, and he wants his students to enjoy the art of writing. He reminds his students that artists spend time enhancing and reworking their masterpieces, just as the students must spend time capturing ideas in words, identifying a theme, creating balance, adding images, and perfecting details. Nicholas wants his students to understand that there are many steps involved in the writing process, including free writing, revising, and editing. He has designed a writing activity with two goals in mind:

1) The students use the writing process to write a composition about a significant experience.

2) The students develop social skills through pair work collaboration on the writing assignment.

Nicholas begins by talking to his students about their next writing assignment, "A Significant (Special) Experience." To provide a personal illustration, he describes a major or minor experience that has had a significant impact on his own life. For example, he might talk about an incident that convinced him to enter the Peace Corps. A drawing, word web, or visual aid helps to generate his students' interest. Students ask him personal questions, which he tries to answer, and he reinforces key words by writing on the board. Then the class talks about "significant"

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events or "significant" individuals. They brainstorm to suggest a range of examples-a meeting, a gift, an accident, a teacher, a neighbor, etc.

To shift attention away from his own experience, Nicholas uses random pairs. He tells the students to turn to someone sitting nearby and talk quietly about their own personal experiences and some possible writing topics. Nicholas gives the pairs ten minutes to talk to each other, and while they are doing that he walks around the room to answer questions, respond to ideas, and encourage participation. He then asks a few of the more enthusiastic students to share some of their ideas with the class.

Nicholas reminds his students that the first step in the writing process is to write freely, without fear of making mistakes. Free writing is a search for ideas. Nicholas knows that the students at a basic level are searching for words and writing a few sentences, whereas the more advanced students are able to write passages. His students are reminded that no one is going to correct their ideas. They are encouraged to put down any relevant thoughts.

Before the students begin writing, Nicholas points to the stop light he has drawn on the board. The stop light is a metaphor for the writing process. He emphasizes that as they are writing freely to search for ideas, this is the GREEN LIGHT. Later they will work in pairs to organize and revise those ideas. This stage is represented by the YELLOW LIGHT. And finally, they will be editing each other's papers for mechanical errors, such as spelling, punctuation, or grammar. The RED LIGHT is symbolic of that stage. As they begin, he emphasizes that the first stage in the writing process, finding the ideas, is the most important. **If the students have a real desire to communicate, the rest is much easier.**

The students are given time to start their free writing, and Nicholas asks them to bring their papers to the next class.

When the class meets again, Nicholas emphasizes that the students should feel that they are writing for an audience, not just for a grade. He encourages them to work together to share ideas, and to teach them the social skills they will need to work in pairs, he creates a fishbowl.

Two of the class leaders are encouraged to come to the center of the room to participate in this activity. In the fishbowl, a central location where everyone can see them, the partners are given instructions. One student is told to read his paragraph aloud to the other. The student who is listening is asked to give feedback to answer these questions:

What did you like?

Do you have any suggestions?

As the second student is complimenting or making helpful suggestions, Nicholas is noting the expressions used. Compliments include... "I really like it... It's very nice..." Suggestions begin with... "You should... You ought to..."

When the feedback has been given, Nicholas thanks the students for. their participation and makes some observations about their verbal (choice of words) and nonverbal (eye contact, tone of voice, leaning forward, smiling) behavior. Then he writes some of the expressions he heard on the board under the words **COMPLIMENTS and SUGGESTIONS.**

COMPLIMENTS

To add to this list, Nicholas talks about the need for students to be specific when they give compliments to each other. He refers to the student's work and gives examples by highlighting the aspects that he would compliment, **"You did a nice job of organizing your ideas...That's a great description... This part is very easy to understand... I think that last sentence is excellent..."** He asks the class to think of other expressions they might use to compliment each

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other. And Nicholas enjoys teaching his students some of the "in" words like "Awesome... Super... Far out..." (Are any of these "out" yet?!)

SUGGESTIONS

To address "suggestions," Nicholas takes a moment to talk about the need to avoid a tone of criticism when giving a suggestion. He points out how we sometimes embed suggestions in other phrases.

Instead of saying, "Change that word..." we would say, **"Why don't you change that word." Other expressions used to give suggestions include.. "I think you should... Do you think you could... What if you... Did you think about..."** Then Nicholas gives the students in his class a chance to add to the list. During the discussion, they compare polite forms in English with the polite ways students give suggestions in their first language. Nicholas encourages the students to ask him questions so that they fully appreciate the significance of being tactful.

To continue this exercise in the next class, Nicholas asks the student in the fishbowl who listened the first time to take a turn reading his paragraph aloud. This time, his partner has a chance to give feedback. Again, Nicholas notes the way they behave and highlights their positive social skills. When these students have finished with the exercise, he thanks them and because he knows it is culturally acceptable, encourages the whole class to give these brave students a round of applause!

By asking two students to demonstrate social skills to the whole class, you have clarified your expectations of appropriate behavior. The class can then go through the same exercise that was demonstrated by the partners in the fishbowl. After the students freewrite their ideas, they form random pairs, read aloud to each other, and then compliment each other and make helpful suggestions. As you are walking around the class, the two students who have completed this process in the fishbowl can help you by walking around to encourage and provide feedback.

The next steps in the writing process, which are revision and editing, provide additional opportunities for developing social skills through pair work. After the students have read their papers to each other and given feedback, they reorganize their ideas, if necessary, and revise their drafts. To edit, they check their own papers for grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors. At that point, they may think that they are done with the writing process, but in most cases, they are not. Rather than have all the students give their papers to you for correction, eliminate some of the time you will spend correcting papers by having the students work in pairs to share and correct their own papers. Again, the students will need a model of behavior.

Draw a picture of a piece of paper on the board. Write a few sample sentences, with errors, on the paper you have drawn. "My friend called me... I drawed my first picture..."

Tell the students that they are going to work in pairs to help each l other improve their writing, but that editing must be done with great care. Explain that they are going to have a chance to exchange papers, read silently, and note any errors. Before they make any marks on each other's papers, which can be very annoying, they must follow specific guidelines.

Emphasize to the partners that when they are reading someone else's paper and they find an error, or think they have found an error, they are not to mark the body of the text. Instead, in pencil, they are to write a check (V) in the margin on the line where they think there is a mistake. As they are reading, if they have any questions or feel confused about meaning, they can write a question mark (?) nearby in the margin. Then, when they return each other's papers, they can easily find and discuss their reactions and the writer can erase the pencil marks in the margins.

One of the social skills students will need during this process is the ability to **"disagree without being disagreeable."**

DISAGREEING

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Again, you can create a model by asking two students to demonstrate in front of the class. Provide a situation in which one student thinks he has found an error, but the writer doesn't agree. In this case, the student who thinks there is a mistake should identify the error using a phrase generally used for suggestions, such as "I think you should..." But when one student disagrees with another, what is the appropriate response? Conflicts can be avoided or softened by controlling tone (take the edge out) and using phrases such as **"I'm not sure I agree with you... You could be right, but I think... I understand that, but... You have a point, but don't you think...."** Emphasize the importance of responding to the idea without attacking the person who said it... Instead of saying, "YOU're wrong" try al don't agree with (specific idea), I think..."

The writing process gives students a chance to think and get their ideas down on paper. Once they have identified the ideas they want to communicate, they can share with their peers. By working together with classmates, students practice social skills and learn to organize, revise, and edit their writing for themselves. Throughout the process, they are talking and listening, reading and writing-all in English. Students take pride in their work when feel they have a real opportunity to express themselves. An additional benefit of the writing process is that the teacher is spared the time-consuming task of correcting every error on the paper. For grading of the writing process, please see Chapter Eleven.

Other options

DIALOGUES AND PAIR WORK

Many approaches to language learning use pair work to practice dialogues. The ALM Method requires students to listen to a dialogue and repeat words, phrases, and sentences. Repetition in groups is followed by practice in pairs. Finally, the students have memorized the exact words presented in the dialogue. In contrast, the Communicative Approach uses dialogues to stimulate conversation and generate ideas. In communicative learning, pairs of students can use dialogues and role plays as a springboard for meaningful conversation.

In the following lesson, using the Communicative Approach, a drawing and a dialogue are used to demonstrate how the whole class and then pairs of students can be encouraged to discuss a critical topic such as hygiene.

To allow your students to share what they already know, tell them to look at the drawing and describe what they see. Encourage them to guess what is happening. What are the students in the picture saying? Write down some of the key words and expressions. As students share their personal experiences, language use becomes relevant and meaningful. Students who are given an opportunity to express themselves also learn that their ideas are valued.

Next, tell the students that you want them to look at the picture and listen to a dialogue, but don't allow them to read the dialogue yet. Ask them to listen carefully so that they can recall what was said. Point to each of the figures in your picture to emphasize which student is speaking as you read. Read the dialogue once, and ask the students to discuss the situation. Then read it again.

Student A: Let's stop and get a drink of water.

Student B: No, wait. That water might make you sick

Student A: It seems fine to me.

Student B: We had so many heath problems in my family. Then we started using the water from the pump and our problems went away.

Student A: But I'm thirsty

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Once the students have described and analyzed the situation, write the dialogue on the board. Ask them to listen again, only this time while reading the dialogue from the board. Students can then ask questions about vocabulary that they didn't understand. They can also ask the teacher to clarify the important points.

Ask the students to pair up with someone sitting nearby so that they can each take a different role as they read through the dialogue. Encourage them to help each other if they need to clarify pronunciation or the meanings. Students should know they can always ask you to repeat the correct pronunciation of a word.

PROBLEM POSING

Ask two students to volunteer to come to the front of the room to act out this dialogue. Encourage the students to take on personalities (whining, impatient, helpful, patronizing etc.) as they act out these roles. Using this miniskirt as the basis for conversation, challenge the class to discuss the dialogue in more depth by using Freire's Problem Posing approach, which was introduced earlier in this book. As you may recall, the five steps for processing a problem are:

1) What to you see?
2) What is the problem?
3) Do you recognize the situation?
4) Why is there a problem?
5) What can you do?

As you talk about sanitation and hygiene, be sensitive to the local community and culture and allow the students to generate their own ideas. Encourage the students co respond to each other's questions and statements. "Ana, do you agree with that idea.." or "Would anyone like to answer that question..." are the types of expressions used by facilitators to encourage participation. Keep in mind that when you are dealing with critical issues, it is important not to overwhelm the students. During problem posing, **it's better if you allow the students to explore possible solutions for themselves.**

DICTATION

As a follow-up activity, you can use a dictation and matching exercise to focus on additional causes and solutions related to sanitation or health problems. Write the word "Diarrhea" on the board and under it "CAUSES" and "SOLUTIONS." After you clarify the meanings of these words, tell the students you are going to give them a dictation. You want them to work in pairs as you dictate ten sentences.

Before you begin, the students must agree to their roles. One student is only responsible for writing the sentences that reflect CAUSES of diarrhea. The other will only write the sentences that reflect SOLUTIONS. Encourage the pairs to collaborate quietly throughout this process. To give an example, ask the students to listen to two sentences and identify the one that could be the cause of diarrhea and the one that could be the solution.

A. Bacteria is on dirty fingers.
B. Wash your hands.

Write each of these sentences on the board under the appropriate category to indicate whether it is a cause or a solution.

Tell the students to leave two spaces between each sentence that they copy on their page. (After the dictation they will create sentence strips.) As you dictate the following sentences, there's no reason to dictate in any particular order. In fact, if your students like to be challenged, mix them up.

CAUSES	SOLUTIONS

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People spit on the ground.	Don't eat food that falls on the ground.
Germs are under fingernails.	Cut children's fingernails often.
Feces are near the house.	Build and use latrines.
The water is contaminated.	Don't throw garbage near drinking water.
Bacteria is on food.	Cover food to keep flies and insects away.

When you finish giving the dictation, allow the pairs to work together to discuss their sentences and correct spelling and grammar mistakes. When you notice that some students have finished quickly, ask one pair to come to the front of the room and each partner will write one sentence under either CAUSES or SOLUTIONS. Ask the class to give feedback regarding meaning or accuracy of spelling. The students at the board can make their own corrections. Continue to check the dictations by having pairs come forward to write sentences under the appropriate category on the board. At this stage, the CAUSES and SOLUTIONS do not have to match up. Have the students compare their dictations to the sentences on the board and correct their own work. Tell the students to save their papers for the following class.

MATCHING SENTENCE STRIPS

During the next class, give oral directions as you show the students how to fold and tear their papers into strips so that each quip has one sentence. When they finish, each student in a pair will have five strips of paper. Tell them to mix up the strips and then analyze the sentences to match CAUSES of diarrhea with SOLUTIONS. After the students have a chance to match their sentence strips, have pairs of students come to the board to write their answers. Discuss the new vocabulary and encourage students to ask questions. Note and discuss the grammatical form of the SOLUTIONS (imperative form).

With this information on the board, ask the students to comment on the problem of diarrhea and dehydration, not just locally but worldwide. A common local problem can be the basis for additional communicative activities, including cooperative work whereby students in pairs create their own dialogues and take turns acting them out in front of the class. Student-generated dialogues can be interesting and fun, and they provide great cultural insights, especially for a non-native teacher.

In the example above, pair work is integrated throughout the lesson as learners are encouraged to explore a particular theme. Hygiene and sanitation can be further developed through small group activities. We will continue to explore this critical health theme when we discuss dealing with dehydration in Chapter Nine, which will focus on group work.

OTHER OPTIONS

Pair activities provide many other options for student-centered learning. information gaps are situations in which students in pairs depend on each other to complete a task. For example, partners with one budget can be given the assignment to agree to one weekly shopping list based on the prices they each find at two different grocery stores. Or partners may have a list of questions to answer about a current event, but each has a different source of information. One may have been told to listen to the radio while the other was asked to read a newspaper article.

Other pair options include guessing a described picture or item, drawing pictures that are described but hidden from sight, and working together to create exercises and games. Students in pairs can quiz each other before tests and help each other to remember information. And they can solve problems and puzzles together.

Pair work: cautions and limits

Although pair work is fun and easy to initiate, special considerations should be kept in mind. As we emphasized in Chapter Three, it's important to get to know the personalities and preferences of your students so that you can anticipate and avoid problematic pairs. You can expect some

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interpersonal conflicts because of the variety of learning styles, achievement levels, interests, and personalities that are represented in your class.

Students will resent pair work if they are forced to work with the same partner all the time, especially if a personally clash exists. Be conscious of the good friends who are entertaining themselves with a little mischief. Partners who aren't participating need to see that you are holding them accountable through your grading system. And dominant overachievers can be helpful at times, but they can also intimidate lower achievers.

The best way to avoid interpersonal problems, whether in pairs or small groups, is to structure the cooperative learning activities so that the content is challenging and the pace is appropriate. Avoid monotony by planning a balance of whole-class, pair, small group, and individual activities. Try to be aware of mismatched or mischievous partners so that you don't repeat the combination over and over again. But if two students are having a problem, don't be too quick to indulge their demands for an immediate change. You may not want them to work together again, but have them finish the assigned task. Students need to learn to work with a variety of individuals, not just with their friends.

Final notes

You will discover that pair activities can be helpful, quick, fun, and easy to implement. With their partners, students engage in meaningful discussions and learn to provide helpful suggestions to each other. They can explore critical issues, analyze their reading assignments, improve each other's writing, and compare notes on what was understood. The social skills that students learn through cooperative learning are often more important than the grammatical structures that language classes tend to emphasize. In fact, we rarely remember a grammar mistake, but if a person seems impolite, that negative impression is often difficult to overcome. As you incorporate pair work in your lessons, structure tasks carefully, take the time to highlight social skills, and build in some type of assessment (see Chapter Eleven). Your students will enjoy working with each other as they improve their academic performance.

Questions to ask yourself

- Are pair work activities designed so that partners need to work together?
- Do you take the time to teach social skills?
- Do you provide models of expected behavior?
- Are you using a variety of pair activities?
- Do you try to form pairs with diverse backgrounds?
- Do you encourage students to help each other?
- Do you allow your advanced students to assist you?
- Are pairs given opportunities to create their own dialogues, materials, and exercises?
- Do you incorporate health, environmental, or academic content in your discussions?

Cooperative strategies allow the teacher to step back and facilitate a variety of learner-centered activities. By introducing relevant topics and structuring discussions and tasks, the teacher encourages learners to explore critical issues and share their knowledge. Although pair work can be enjoyable and easy to manage, this is not the only option. In Chapter Nine, we will continue our discussion of cooperative learning by describing the benefits of teaching cooperation by organizing your students into small groups.

CHAPTER 9

Group work

CROSS THE RIVER IN A CROWD AND THE CROCODILE WONT EAT YOU

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MADAGASCAR PROVERB

Promoting a community spirit

"A tsetse fly flew in the window yesterday," PCV stationed in another town. "And I realized were ready for cooperative group work.

"The window, of course, had no panes, and closing the shutter wouldn't help because the outside light was our only source of illumination. The students, knowing this, chose the only available recourse. Several brave souls organized the class. Two students were dispatched to man the door; two more, the window. All students were told to hold their notebooks high and get ready to swing.

The leaders positioned themselves on three sides of the room. On command they started chasing the fly-not indiscriminately, I discerned after several seconds, but with the purpose of channeling the fly towards the fourth side, my blackboard wall! Pandemonium ensued, but not enough to distract the teacher next door. Swinging notebooks created air currents and a few close hits. The fly headed my way. I sidestepped, not the laborer, me; no, just the observer. Several students closed in, quietly. The fly rested, near the date. Smack! Jules carried the insect outside. Everyone returned to their seats. Class resumed."

Cecelia recognized the cooperative spirit among her students. They had a task to do-they organized themselves, they played different roles, they communicated. They did not look to her to solve their problem. She could observe, listen, and step in and out of focus in their actions and thoughts.

COOPERATIVE GROUPS

In Chapter Eight we introduced cooperative learning and discussed the benefits of pair work. In this chapter we will see how cooperative strategies can be extended from pair work to small group activities.

Cooperative learning is an approach that accommodates diversity and aids students in the socialization process. As students work on tasks, they not only practice their language skills, such as speaking and listening, but also their communication skills, such as encouraging and clarifying meaning. Cooperative learning can bee introduced more easily through pair work, but when students are organized into small groups, this approach offers greater opportunities for student-centered development.

MANAGEMENT

By taking advantage of student leaders and encouraging students to generate their own strategies, teachers find that cooperative groups provide a management tool for large classes. Just as students in Cecilia's class organized themselves to respond to the tsetse fly threat, students in small groups are capable of organizing themselves to complete assigned tasks.

INTERACTION

Within small groups, students have greater opportunities to practice oral skills. While promoting student-to-student interaction, group work also decreases student reliance on the teacher as the sole source of knowledge. Students are able to correct each other and interact with less anxiety in a small group environment.

RESISTANCE

Cooperative group work differs from the more traditional teaching techniques Volunteers are apt to encounter at their posts; and initially, students may offer some resistance. Unlike ALM, where

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the teacher is in strict control, cooperative grouping allows the teacher to step back and offer guidance when requested. Once the students are given the guidelines, they are expected to conduct the bulk of the work. They will need teacher assistance at first, of course, to help organize the steps they will take to complete their tasks.

Critics of cooperative group work may argue that the students do not receive appropriate language input when they are speaking to one another. While it is true that in most settings the Volunteers are the main source of "native speech," the students also benefit when they speak with one another.

- **First,** the teacher is always present to model appropriate language when that is the objective of the lesson or activity.

- **Second,** the students learn to communicate in English through clarification, paraphrasing, repetition, and other accommodations that help them negotiate their meaning.

- **Third,** many of the students, when they speak English outside of the classroom, will interact with non-native English speakers and need to learn strategies for such communication.

- **Fourth**, as part of the communicative approach, we are asking students to take more responsibility for their learning and also for monitoring their errors. It is well known that students, especially adolescents, prefer to learn from their peers. If the teacher establishes a positive, supportive atmosphere in the classroom, students will feel comfortable correcting errors and helping one another with the language.

- **Fifth**, students can be more motivated when they work in cooperative groups. As we know, sometimes it is hard to excite students about studying English. While working with their peers, students experience a synergistic effect subtly encouraging them to learn English.

- **Sixth**, by letting the students work in cooperative groups, a teacher trains students for life beyond school where they will work with others to complete assigned tasks.

Getting started with cooperative learning groups

You need to address several management issues when you undertake cooperative grouping. One consideration involves the type of group you will set up. As mentioned in Chapter Eight, students may be grouped in several ways.

RANDOM GROUPS

These groups are generally heterogeneous and formed without taking into account student abilities and personalities. You may form groups by drawing names from a hat, distributing playing cards and asking all like suits or numbers to join up, or having students number off. Sometimes random groups are formed according to seating patterns. For example, you may ask the first row of students to turn around and join with the row behind, and so on. Also pairs may be randomly joined to form groups.

Random groups are frequently formed for brainstorming and process writing activities and think-pair-share work. They are ideal for games too.

VOLUNTARY GROUPS

Students may self-select these groups based on common interests or friendships. You may want to use this grouping as a motivator. Voluntary groups may be formed for a variety of activities described later in this chapter, such as Three-Step Interview, Literature Study Groups, or Four Corners. This method of channeling students is also ideal for special projects.

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These groups are not usually formed for activities that require certain proficiency levels. For example, in a task where groups must use manipulatives and design a house, the English proficiency level of the students in the group is not a criterion for completing the assignment, and so you might allow students to self-select their taskmates.

TEACHER ASSIGNED GROUPS

These may be homogeneous groups in the sense that the students of each group are on comparable ability levels, or they may he heterogeneous with students of mixed ability levels. Different homogeneous groups may be assigned different tasks based on the students' abilities. In this way a teacher can accommodate the needs of more advanced and less advanced students in the same lesson. For instance, a homogeneous group of advanced students may do some independent work while the teacher works directly with the lower level students.

Heterogeneous groups are often organized to assist student learning, especially tasks that have academic implications and a need for proper English usage, such as reading comprehension, writing, and oral presentations. You would select students to ensure the right "mix," usually by including a stronger and weaker student in each group, and considering learning styles and personalities. When a more advanced student is placed in each group, that student can act as a leader and a peer tutor to the others. The less advanced students will then have a good role model.

CHANGING GROUPS

Another issue, the frequency with which groups are formed, is usually determined by the teacher. Some teachers form a new group with each new task. Others form a group chat will work together on all small group activities over a period of time.

For management purposes, we recommend that you form heterogeneous, assigned groups that work together for a month or two, but that you incorporate opportunities for regrouping for special tasks. By working with a variety of groups-homogeneous, random and voluntary-as well as with the assigned group, your students will learn to complete tasks with different students and experience diverse cooperative activities that will help them develop their social earl academic skills

GROUP ROLES

A key to group management is assigning each student in the group a role which he or she may accomplish, so everyone will contribute positively to the activity. As explained in Chapter Eight, it is important to prepare students for these roles through modeling and to make sure they are aware of your expectations for their social behavior.

To keep the students engaged in each new cooperative task, teachers often vary the role assignments. They can create a variety of tasks depending on the group activity. Keeping in mind your students' abilities you can choose among the following possible roles:

- group recorder - writing down the group's ideas or responses;

- materials collector - gathering needed materials from the teacher or a central location and collecting them at the end of the activity;

- reporter - acting as spokesperson for the group in reporting its progress or giving oral responses;

- final copy scribe - writing the final version that will be handed in;

- illustrator - drawing accompanying diagrams, pictures, and so forth;

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- timekeeper - watching the time and pacing the group through the task;
- cheerleader/facilitator - encouraging the group, keeping the group on task;
- monitor - checking for errors, proof-reading;
- messenger - seeking or sharing information with the teacher or another group.

Clearly, some of these roles may be combined to reflect the number of

GROUP SIZE

Although research recommends an ideal group size of three to five students, the large classes you face require some modification. For example, you may have to plan on groups of eight to ten students especially if you do not have enough materials (e.g., reading books, maps, even colored pencils) for more.

MATERIALS

Having enough materials is always an issue when doing group work. One popular strategy is to adapt materials and then ask students to make duplicate copies as part of their group assignment. Look at Chapter Ten for some excellent ideas on creating materials and having your students help with the production.

Planning group activities

As we discussed in Chapter Seven, alterations to the traditional instructional pattern must be introduced slowly. It is difficult to run successful cooperative learning groups the first few times that group tasks are presented. This caveat is true for situations where the language of instruction is the first language of the students as well as situations where the language is the second or third.

Don't be discouraged, however. Just realize it will take time to train your students how to behave, how to manage their work, and how to look to one another as resources, instead of always to you. It is worth the effort because you will be able to involve all students, increase the amount of time students spend using the language, and focus on communicative, student-centered activities.

If you have organized exciting, cooperative activities, have prepared clear instructions, and have modeled appropriate interactions and social behavior, and still your students have difficulty working in groups, you may want to set up a system of group rewards for cooperative behavior. Besides assessment measures, which are discussed later in this chapter, group rewards can range from teacher praise and class recognition of successful group behavior to bonus points and special treats. Some teachers like to use a "Homework Pass" or a "Test Question Pass," if the group meets the criteria. For example, when all members complete their work each day for a week or all members participate in three oral presentations to the class, each member receives a pass which may be used in place of a homework assignment or test/quiz question. The students would receive full credit for whatever work the pass was used for.

IMPLEMENTATION

One recommendation for implementing group work is to start with paired activities (see Chapter Eight). Another way of easing into group work is to connect tasks to whole-class activities in a scaled-down version. By modifying and extending class assignments where students are already familiar with the procedures and the expected outcomes, you will help both yourself and your students maximize success in this new approach. For example, if you have been regularly using graphic organizers with your whole class, such as a decision diagram (see page 68) for a

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problem-solving frame (Should women go to the university?), you can now ask the groups to complete one, perhaps on a topic previously discussed as a whole class or on a new topic that will be discussed after the groups have organized their ideas.

In addition, a little rule like "Ask Three Before Me" can guide the students and remind them to talk among themselves before they run to you with questions or complaints.

Cooperative learning activities

In the 4MAT lesson plan, group activities are most commonly part of the practice and application stages. In this part of the lesson the students take on more responsibility for their learning.

The following activities are ideas that can be implemented as cooperative group work. You may want to model each activity when it is introduced by using the "fishbowl" strategy Since training students to participate successfully in cooperative learning tasks is often an arduous process, providing a model can facilitate the students' comprehension of what will be expected of them.

INFORMATION CAP ACTIVITIES

These activities, which include jigsaws, problem solving, and simulations, are set up so each student (in a class, or more generally, in a group) has one or two pieces of information needed to solve the puzzle, but not all the necessary information. Students must work together, sharing information while practicing their language, negotiating and critical thinking skills.

One example to practice directional vocabulary and prepositions (e.g., north of, to the south, above, next to) uses a map. Using a real map of a continent, or an imaginary one of a town, make several copies that all are incomplete in different ways. In other words, one copy may locate six countries clearly and leave other countries unlabeled. A second copy has six different ones labeled; the third and fourth, six others. Be sure to have some baseline features located on all the maps (oceans, rivers, etc.). Without showing the map to anyone, each student must ask questions, such as "What country is west of the Indian Ocean?" and when a group member responds, they fill in their missing information. At the end, students compare their maps. By looking at the completed versions, you can make a quick assessment of their oral/aural comprehension skills. JIGSAW Suppose you have planned a theme about medicinal plants. After introducing the topic to the students and providing some general information, you want them to learn more specifics. For this jigsaw idea you start with heterogeneous groups of equal numbers of students. If there are six students in each group, each student is given a number from one to six. Then all number "Is" from all the groups, leave their original groups and form a secondary, expert group to learn about one medicinal plant, such as aloe. All number "2s" form another expert group to learn about cinchona (quinine), and so forth.

Each expert group must study the information about their plants that you have provided and assess one another to check on their comprehension. Then the students return to their original groups to share their expertise. At this juncture you may provide the groups with a worksheet with questions about all the plants. The students now must pool their information to complete the task.

NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER

This technique is similar to a jigsaw in that the students number off, but they do not need to form expert groups. Instead the regular groups work together, but the individuals are responsible for any questions assigned to their number.

At the end of a unit on diarrhea and oral rehydration mix, for example, you may want to assess the students' retention of the mix recipe. Share the following drawing with the groups. Each student, according to his or her number, will be responsible for describing one of the steps for preparing rehydration mix. Let the groups review the illustration as a whole and then remove it from sight. Now call out a step, such as "Step Three." The groups put their numbered heads

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together to prepare an answer, but only the corresponding numbered student may respond. That student may say or write, "Give the child several-drinks of the rehydration mix after each bowel movement." For incomplete answers or paraphrases, ask another group to add to the response, correct it, or rephrase it.

FOUR CORNERS

You can use this activity to introduce a topic to your class or let students share their knowledge about a topic. This technique can also give students opportunities to practice their paraphrasing skills. Choose a topic that has four possible dimensions and assign one dimension to each corner of the room. For example, the topic might be food resources. The corners could be labeled. cleared land, forest, river, and ocean. Students then move to the corner of interest or of knowledge.

At their comers, students pair up and explain why they chose that corner and what they know about food resources in that area After they have had some time to talk, ask a student from one corner to share her or his ideas with the whole class. Then you may want to ask a student from another corner to paraphrase. This process continues with students from all corners sharing while others paraphrase.

This activity is also a method for creating voluntary groups. After the Four Corners technique is over, you may want the students to keep their corner groups for another group task.

ROUNDROBIN/ROUNDTABLE

This activity works with open-ended questions, providing your students know several possible responses. It is a fun way to focus on grammar. You may, for example, ask the groups to generate a list of irregular verb forms or the rules for capitalization. In Roundrable each group has one sheet of paper and one pencil. The students pass the sheet around to all members to record the responses. To encourage total student participation, explain that you will be checking the sheets for each student's handwriting. In Roundrobin, the students provide answers orally one at a time in an orderly fashion. You would circulate among the groups to check on student participation.

THREE-STEP INTERVIEW

This structured interview allows student pairs to form groups. Assign an interview topic that relates to the unit theme (What is your favorite character in and why? How can farmers grow more crops?) and have students select partners. Or you can pair up the students. This interview process works best if the partners do not know each other well.

First, one partner interviews the other. Second, they reverse roles. As a next step, several pairs (depending on class size, the number of pairs can range from three to six) form a group and do a Round robin to share their opinions, with each student speaking for her or his partner.

QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

Designing questionnaires and interviewing respondents are excellent activities for heterogeneous student groups. As you choose your unit themes, you may realize several apply to academic content areas or the local community (the environment, women at work, crop rotation, etc.). These lessons can include interviewing local residents about their opinions or practices regarding the specific issue.

In the design phase of the questionnaire, all students in the group can contribute and evaluate questions for inclusion. In the interview phase, the number of people each student may be expected to interview can be adjusted to the students' ability. Also interviews may be conducted in students' first language, though responses must be reported in English. A report and analysis of the interview responses may he conducted orally or in writing

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STORY SUMMARIES

As the graphic below shows, this activity has both a written and pictorial component. Students summarize a lesson, reading or experience (individually or in groups), by drawing illustrations and describing them A format may look like this

LITERATURE STUDY GROUPS

"Book study" is an activity that can be applied in the secondary language learning classroom. Offer several books (or short stories or poems) as possible selections and have students divide into groups according to their reading preference. Remember to choose some books that reflect your students' interests. The students are expected to read their books (individually if sufficient copies are available, or in pairs, or aloud if several beginning readers are in the group), discuss the contents, and prepare an oral report to the rest of the class. This procedure can be varied according to the desired skill practice. For example, you may want to focus on characterization or conflict in the books, and so you may design a series of questions for the groups to respond to. Their responses may be oral or in writing. You may want to extend the reports and ask students to compare the characterization styles among all books studied. WRITING HEADLINES

Suppose you have asked your student groups to read a story or an article, or you want them to describe the results of a science experiment. After having the groups discuss it among themselves, you can check on their observations and comprehension by having them write a headline or a title for a book review. Students will practice their summarizing skills and, as they get more proficient, their descriptive language skills, when writing news headlines. More advanced students may provide most of the language, but beginning students can copy the final product, perhaps in a fancy "script."

SCIENCE AND MATH INVESTIGATIONS

Performance-based activities in math and science promote student comprehension, encourage practical language use, and stimulate critical thinking skills. They can be particularly effective if you can collaborate with a content teacher and reinforce a concept being studied in the content class.

If your school has some microscopes, for example, ask groups to collect samples of water from different sources and examine droplets under the microscope. To ensure thinking skill development, ask groups to pose "research" questions they would hope to find the answers to by examining the water. They can present their results and conclusions through pictorial, written, and oral formats. This experiment could be a follow-up to a discussion about healthy drinking water.

Even if scientific equipment is not available, performance activities can be planned. To learn about monocotyledonous and dicotyledonous plants, students may want to gather seeds, leaves, and sample plants and conduct comparative analyses. They can plant different "mystery" seeds and watch their growth, observing signs of plant type as they develop.

Investigations can be adapted to mathematical concepts too. Probability, for example, can be examined in a gamelike setting. Student groups can make predictions about the percentage of time two dice (or replicas carved from wood or soap) will show a certain number, like four or seven or twelve. One group rolls the dice, records the results, draws some conclusions, and makes generalizations which are then compared to the other groups'.

SEND A PROBLEM/TRADE A PROBLEM

This cooperative learning activity can be used with many content areas. Have your student groups write a problem, such as a math word problem, a scientific hypothesis, a historical

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question, or a literature prediction (what will happen next in the story?) and send it to another group that must respond. The receiving group answers the problem and returns it to the original group for approval. You then cheek both the problem and the response to give points or a grade, if desired.

PROJECTS

The key to organizing successful projects is preparation. Teachers need to make sure necessary materials or information is available. Do not, for instance, assign a research project on one animal or one country for all groups if there are only two sources of information in the school or community. Teachers also need to delineate specific objectives and guidelines for achieving the projects. Students need to be aware of exactly what is required from each group member, and the requirements might vary by individual.

Projects certainly offer opportunities for problem posing and problem solving. By making the topic pertain to a local issue, students are more motivated to become actively involved. Cooperative projects have broad possibilities:

- writing and illustrating a story about a problem, perhaps for elementary school students; scripting a scene and performing It;

- making a product (e.g., oral dehydration formula or heat stroke survival kit) and developing a marketing plan for it; producing a class newspaper or bimonthly newsletter for parents (see Chapter Seven);

- recording oral histories from local residents about changes in the community (e.g., how technology has affected their lives);

- conducting research to obtain background information on a chosen topic;

- creating a poster or mural to reflect a topic in history or literature.

PROCESS WRITING

Another activity is process writing, which can be applied to language arts topics, literature and other content areas, too. This activity also combines aspects of whole-class, group and individual work. In process writing exercises, students begin with pre-writing activities. They may, for example, listen to you read an article that sets the stage for the topic. You may review with the class key concepts and vocabulary to incorporate in the writing.

Students involved in this approach will learn to develop and elaborate on possible writing topics, create successive drafts, confer with peer editors, work groups, and the teacher, and eventually produce the final version (see Chapter Eight). They also learn to take responsibility for their work. During the process the students learn about language specific to the content topic selected-in a meaningful and motivating manner.

Group assessment and evaluation

In Chapter Eleven we will discuss assessment in more detail, but several considerations can be addressed here.

- For each task, you can decide if the students will receive the group grade or individual grades, and it is recommended that you inform the students in advance. For example, you conduct a whole class discussion on a certain topic, but ask students to work in groups to complete a worksheet or write a summary of what they have learned In this case, you may assign one grade to the group, and all students will have that grade recorded next to their names. At another time you can organize a Numbered Heads Together competition and then

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question the students individually about what they have learned This time each student will get an individual grade based on his or her performance. In a third variation, you might present a lesson and tell the students to study and quiz one another. They take an individual test but their scores are combined to determine a team score.

• Some groups may have lazy or frequently absent students who, despite your efforts and those of the group members, refuse to participate fully in the assignment. In this instance it may be unfair to punish the whole group. You should establish guidelines if you will adjust your grading scale.

• You may want to consider group self-evaluations. Prepare a form with statements like these: Everyone in the group participated. Everyone encouraged other group members. Everyone praised the ideas of other members. Everyone contributed to the final product. Everyone listened while other members spoke. Everyone followed his or her assigned role.

Then ask students to choose a response on an evaluation scale, such as **Always, Usually, Sometimes and Never** (By giving four choices you avoid the default practice of always choosing the middle option.)

Final notes

In this chapter, we have expanded on the information presented in Chapter Eight, which provided a rationale for pairing, and we described strategies for setting up cooperative groups and assisting them as they accept responsibility for completing a signed tasks. We have suggested various ways to group students-through random, voluntary and teacher selection-and recommended regrouping students regularly. We have provided sample group activities that are meaningful and communicative, that will motivate students to practice and apply information, and that will accommodate different learning styles. We have also considered the issue of assessment to help you make decisions about group grades and individual grades

Questions to ask yourself

As you start adding cooperative learning tasks to your lesson repertoire, think about the following questions:

• Did you prepare the students for small group work by planning two-step activities where they talk or work in pairs first and then share ideas with a larger group or with the whole class?

• Have you discussed the purpose of cooperative groups with your students?

• Do you have a clear lesson objective in mind for each cooperative task you plan?

• Have you tried some teambuilding activities with the groups'

• Did you review social behavior and group roles with your students?

• Have you informed your students how they will be assessed for the group tasks?

In previous chapters, we have described different ways in which you can balance teacher-centered and learner-centered activities through whole class, pair, and small groups. In the next chapter, we encourage you to give your students opportunities to be creative and enjoy themselves as they learn independently through self-access materials.

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CHAPTER 10

Independent study

GIVE A ME A FISH AND YOU FEED ME FOR A DAY. TEACH ME HOW TO FISH AND YOU FEED ME FOR A LIFETIME.

Preparing for a lifetime of learning

In a classroom in Yemen, Maria is working with a group of her student. The rest of the class is busily engaged with individual work-cards that Maria has made by cutting pictures from magazines and sticking them on construction paper with True/False questions on the back.. As each student finishes, she or he checks the back of the card for the correct answers. The student then makes a note of the card number, returns the card to a box at the front of the class, and takes another.

In a classroom in Tonga, David's class is busy working on a writing exercise. Two students finish early, but instead of distracting the other students, they walk to the front of the class and select activities from a box kept there. One begins to reconstruct a cut-up reading passage while the other writes a dialogue for speech balloons in a cartoon story. All the activities in the box are color coded so that the students are able to select an activity at their own level. Student record cards and answer keys are enclosed in the box.

In her classroom in Thailand, Amy sets up activity centers every Wednesday. She does this by placing a box of reading activities one desk, a writing activities box on another, a grammar activities box on a third, and a listening/pronunciation activities box on a fourth. In each box the activities are arranged by level. As each student completes an exercise from one of the activity centers, he or she checks the answers using the answer key in the box, puts an entry on his student record sheet, and then selects another activity. Amy circulates, helping students with individual difficulties.

In all three classrooms students are engaged in independent tasks of their own choosing and are taking some measure of responsibility for their own learning. This is what independent study is all about.

IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter, we suggest some ways in which you could use independent study in your classroom. The first half of the chapter deals with background information, such as the rationale for using independent study and issues of classroom management and materials production. The second half of the chapter provides a bank of materials and activity types that you can choose from to suit your particular group of learners.

REASONS FOR USING INDEPENDENT STUDY

If we were to ask Maria, David, and Amy why they use independent study, they might give a number of different answers. Maria might say that it's a way to usefully occupy most of the students while she has a chance to give some extra help to a small group. David might say that he started independent study as a way of dealing with the interruptions produced by early finishers, while Amy might say that her learners are all at different levels and in need of different skills and that independent study seems to be the only way to address their individual needs.

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In fact, independent study can do all these things and more. It can also help to solve the problem of a limited number of textbooks. And it provides students with the study skills necessary to continue learning beyond the classroom. This last point is very important if the students are receiving only minimal English instruction in school.

Teacher concerns

If independent study is so valuable, why doesn't everyone use it? Here are some of the fears chat teachers express:

1. Chaos
"I'll lose control if my students are all doing different things without being closely monitored..."

2. Errors
"They'll just be practicing their mistakes..."

3. Too much work
"I don't have time to produce the materials..."

These are legitimate concerns but not insurmountable problems. Let us look at each of them in turn.

CONTROLLING CHAOS

Introduce independent study gradually. Learners need to be taught how to handle working independently, and you can help them to develop the necessary skills by introducing it gradually. Without prior preparation, walking into the classroom with a box of materials and asking the students to each select an activity IS a recipe for disaster

START SIMPLY

Some activities are inherently easier to control than others and so they make a good starting point for independent study. For this reason it's a good idea to practice independent study with reading and writing activities before introducing speaking and listening activities.

LIMIT CHOICES

One of the advantages of independent study is that it offers both teachers and students an element of choice. However, it is important chat students get used to making choices, without being overwhelmed by options. For this reason we suggest offering only two or three possible activities at first, and limiting the activities to one skill area. This means, for example, chat all the students in the class would be working on reading activities at the same time.

We also suggest in the preliminary stages of independent study that choices should be offered EITHER in (1) task type OR in (2) materials, but not in both. By varying only one parameter at a time, introduction to independent study is simplified for both the teacher and students.

CHOICE IN MATERIALS

Maria's students are practicing reading and they are all answering T/F questions based on a picture (task), but the pictures and T/F questions they are working with vary from student to student (materials). In this case the task is kept constant while materials change.

CHOICE IN TASK TYPE

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On the other hand, it would be possible to control material while varying the task. Each student could be working on the same reading passage (material), but some students could be taking out words to produce a cloze passage, which is described in Chapter Eleven; others might be answering comprehension questions) and others could be filling in a chart from information in the text (casks). As your students become more used to independent study, you can increase the number and types of activities offered.

USE FAMILIAR ACTIVITIES

No activity type should be used for independent study without first being introduced in whole-class, group or pair work. This means that the best hunting ground for activities is in the work already introduced in class.

Another way to familiarize your students with independent study materials is to have them generate their own. For example, in Maria's class, the T/F questions to accompany the pictures could have been written by her students in an earlier lesson. We shall return to the idea of student generation of materials later in this chapter.

GIVE CLEAR WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITIES

Attach simple, explicit instructions for using an activity to the activity itself. When possible, the instructions should include a model of the desired task or responses, such as a circled word or T/F. If students are unsure of the cask requirements they will want to ask you questions. Clear instructions will allow the students to take control of their own learning. Again, you are moving from teacher-directed activities to learner-directed activities.

ALLOW THE STUDENTS TO MONITOR THEIR OWN PROGRESS

You need to provide answer keys so that your students can check their own answers, encouraging them to be responsible for their own learning while freeing you up for more productive work. Both you and your students, however, need a way to keep track of the activities they complete. The simplest way to do this is to have the students fill in independent study record sheets, which you can review to ensure that they are not focusing on one skill area to the detriment of others.

If possible, students should keep their answer sheets and record sheets in an envelope in the classroom or with the box of materials. An example of a student record sheet is given below. It can be modified to suit your own situation, or you may prefer to have the students design their own, which would be would be a useful lead-in to a class discussion of what information is necessary to have for the record and why.

DATE	ACTIVITY NAME/NUMBER	SKILL AREA	RESULTS	STUDENT COMMENTS	TEACHER COMMENTS

SELL THE IDEA OF INDEPENDENT STUDY TO THE STUDENTS

As with any new activity in the classroom, students will not work well if they don't recognize the value of what they are doing. Therefore it's up to you to share with them your reasons for using independent study

CORRECTING ERRORS

In the past, language was seen as the learning of a set of habits, and so a great deal of emphasis was placed on the idea that students shouldn't be allowed to make errors, as this might introduce

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and reinforce bad habits. More recently, studies in second language acquisition suggest that the mistakes learners make are part of their own internal syllabus and will eventually correct themselves so long as the learners continue to be exposed to meaningful chunks of language. So relax! This is good news for us, as it means that we don't have to be so afraid of learners practicing errors. Our primary emphasis should be on providing meaningful practice while giving our students every chance to monitor their own performance. Many teachers will testify that students learn far more from finding their own mistakes than from the most diligent teacher correction!!!

DEVELOPING MATERIALS

One of the reasons that teachers find the thought of providing materials for independent study so daunting is that they think they will have to generate all of the materials themselves. Happily this is not the case. There are several valuable alternative sources:

EXISTING SCHOOL MATERIALS - USE WHAT YOU HAVE

Look around your school for any outdated or damaged textbooks. These can be cut up to provide activities in several skill areas and can be a particularly valuable source of grammar exercises. Single copies of textbooks and readers can also be used for independent study, as can dictionaries and tapes. Don't limit yourself to the EFL closets though. The content area subjects are a good hunting ground for maps, charts, pictures, and process descriptions that can be utilized for information transfer activities. Using existing materials can be a good way to provide a quick core of activities in each skill area, leaving you free to produce more customized materials.

STUDENT-GENERATED MATERIALS

As pointed out earlier, students can be actively engaged in language learning tasks while generating materials that other learners can use for independent study. This is a WIN-WIN situation, as it gives you a readily available source of assistants and gives your students valuable practice, plus a vested interest in the materials produced. Students learn grammar points much more painlessly if they are tasked with producing materials for other students to practice with.

These are some examples of materials students can produce:

- written directions based on a map for other students to follow;
- general knowledge quizzes with answer keys;
- cloze exercises made by deleting chosen items from a text. C)ther materials that students can create are marked in the activities section of this chapter.

O.K., we admit it. At some point you are going to need or want to make your own materials.

TEACHER-GENERATED MATERIALS

But you don't have to make them from scratch. Usually, you will provide instructions and exercises to accompany existing materials, which gives your students a good opportunity to vary their' English diet by exposing them to all types of authentic materials. "Authentic" here means materials that were originally intended for native speakers. You will find yourself becoming an ardent collector of magazines, newspapers, travel brochures, catalogues, maps, cookbooks, games, letters, postcards, and forms. Cash in on your students' interest in your personal life. Letters with portions deleted are a marvelous source of practice for their inferring skills. You can also record conversations with other PCVs and use them for listening comprehension activities.

A good way to cut down on preparation time is for groups of teachers to pool their resources and work together on materials that they can all share.

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So far we have dealt with the issues of control, error correction, and materials development. Let us now look at how to preserve and organize the materials we develop.

PRESERVING MATERIALS

Once you've put together some materials, you are going to want them to last for a long time. So at the same time you are producing materials, you need to be looking for a secure place to keep them. This is easy, of course, if you have your own classroom, but if, like most of us, you carry everything with you, cardboard boxes or shopping bags are more likely to be the order of the day. Space and weight criteria may, therefore, limit the amount or type of materials you are willing to produce.

The next job will be to find a way to protect materials so that they can be used again and ague. Here are some possibilities, but you will probably want to experiment with what is locally available:

lamination
wide, transparent tape
plastic bags and staples or tape
file folders
envelopes.

If, despite your efforts, your precious materials do get to look a little dilapidated, console yourself with the thought that it is a sign of success. It means they are being used

ORGANIZING MATERIALS

It is very important to organize the materials so that student can select them easily. Otherwise all your students will need your help at the same time. Your system of organization will depend on the amount and variety of materials available and the way you intend to use them. However, the easiest starting point is probably to divide the materials into skill areas first. With a small amount of materials, you could use a file folder for each skill area, but be ready to move into boxes as you expand!

Within each skill area, activities can be color coded to show their level. The teacher can then recommend a particular level to a student, and if a student finds an activity too easy or too difficult he is able to select another one at a higher or lower level. You may also find it useful to further subdivide activities within some skill areas. For example, within the grammar activities section, it is useful to group together activities that practice the same grammar point.

As suggested earlier, it is also important to provide the students with a way to check their own answers. This will often take the form of an answer key, but a less familiar, fun alternative is to use self-correction jigsaw pictures.

Start out with a list of cues and responses.

For example, the cues could be:

1 questions needing answers, or
2 words needing definitions, or
3 words needing opposites.

These would then be the responses:

1 answers,
2 definitions, and
3 opposites.

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Having selected the cues and responses, find a large magazine picture and mount it on construction paper (card A) and provide another piece of construction paper the same size and shape (card B). Using a pencil and ruler, divide both cards into the same number of sections (see examples below). Then write a cue on each section of card B and write the corresponding responses on the back of the picture card in a mirror image of the cues. Two examples are provided below:

CUE CARD opposites A

FAT	WIDE	RIGHT
THICK	BIG	CLEAN
NICE	GOOD	SHARP

PICTURE CARD B

WRONG	NARROW	THIN
DIRTY	SMALL	THIN
BLUNT	BAD	NASTY

CUE CARD prepositions

THE BOOK WAS____ THE TABLE	HE PUT THE DISHES____ THE CABINET.	THE WOMAN LIFTED THE MAT AND PUT THE KEY ____ IT
THE GIRL RAN____ THE HOUSE	LOOK ___ THE WINDOW AND YOU WILL SEE HIM.	THE CHILDREN WALKED _____ THE PATH.
HE HEARD A NOISE ____ HIM SO HE TURNED AROUND.	ALWAYS LOOK ____ YOU AND YOU WONT FALL	A PLANE USUALLY FILES ____ THE CLOUDS.

PICTURE CARD

UNDER	IN	ON
ALONG	SMALL	INTO
ABOVE	IN FRONT OF	BEHIND

Cut the picture card into sections and store it with the uncut cue card. The student's task is to take out the uncut cue card and place the correct response on top of each cue. When the task is completed the student turns the response cards over and magically the picture appears. If there is a problem with the picture, the students need to go back and reconsider their answers.

In some activities, particularly in speaking and listening, the completion of the task itself indicates success in the activity. For example, Draw the Picture, described in Chapter Four of the **TEFEL/TESL Manual**, could be used as an independent study activity by two students. One student is given a picture and told to describe it to his or her partner in such a way that this partner can draw it without seeing the picture. In this activity the accomplishment of the task indicates that successful communication has taken place and the students require no further feedback.

Materials and activities

Note: Items marked with a * are suitable for students to produce.

READING

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***A SET OF GRADED READING EXTRACTS TAKEN FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES WITH ACCOMPANYING EXERCISES**

These are suitable sources: magazines, newspapers, want ads, catalogues, indexes, advice columns, maps with directions, cookbooks, filled-in forms, postcards with messages, letters, etc. If you want your students to generate this kind of material, provide a variety of magazines, newspapers, etc. and task them with finding an article that interests them and writing 5-10 comprehension questions on it.

*** SETS OF PICTURES, MAPS OR CHARTS WITH ACCOMPANYING QUESTIONS**

Beginning level

45	5	15
3	13	10
20	30	75

Questions
Which number is in the middle?
Which number is in the top left corner?
Which number is in the bottom right corner?
Which number is in the middle of the bottom line?

Intermediate level

COUNTRY	CAPITAL	POPULATION	AREA	INDUSTRIES
NEPAL	KATHMANDU	17,422,000	56,136	SUGAR JUTE MILLS TOURISM
HONDURAS	TEGUCIGALPA	4,648,000	43,277	CLOTHING TEXTILES CEMENT WOOD PRODUCTS
THAILAND	BANGKOK	52,438,000	198,456	TEXTILES MINING WOOD PRODUCTS

True/False Questions
a. The capital of Thailand is Kathmandu.
b. There are more people in Thailand than in Nepal.
c. Nepal is a smaller country than Honduras is.
d. Thailand and Honduras both produce textiles.

***MATCHING EXERCISES**

In these exercises students match cues and responses as in the self-correction jigsaw activities described earlier. The materials can be easily varied to accommodate different levels. For example, at an elementary level, students may be matching the parts of cut-up proverbs, while at a more advanced level they may be trying to match headlines cut from newspapers to their accompanying articles or advice column letters to their responses. In many cases these activities can be used as preparation for national exams. For example, literary figures or references can be incorporated into the materials.

***CUT-UP STORIES OR INSTRUCTIONS**

In these exercises, a reading passage, set of instructions, or dialogue is cut up into parts, and the student's task is to reconstruct it by putting the parts in the right order. This is a very intensive

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reading exercise and can be used with simple new texts or as a way of recycling texts the students familiar with. If the idea of keeping track of all the bits of paper is too much for you, another way to do the exercise is simply to write out the sentences in a different order and ask the students to number them in the correct order. A set of instructions that can be used in this way is given below. As you can see, any simple task could be used to produce such a set of instructions, but it is very important to use a task with which your students are familiar. For this reason it may be best to use student-generated material.

Washing Your Hands
a. Take your hands out of the water.
b. Rub your hands together.
c. Turn off the faucet.
d. Put your hands in the water.
e. Pick up the soap.
f. Rub your hands together with the soap.
g. Turn on the faucet.
h. Put the soap down.
i. Put your hands back in the water.
j. Put in the plug.
k. Turn off the faucet.
i. Dry your hands.

*** CLOZE PASSAGES**

The words that are omitted from these reading passages may be done on a simple count basis, for example, taking out every seventh word. However, if the students themselves are producing them, it will be more thought provoking if they are tasked with taking out words of a certain type, such as prepositions, verbs, etc.

***READING MAZES**

These are stories in which the student has some choice in what happens. As an exercise, students can be asked to write out their version of the story, or to add their own choices to an existing story, or to make another story.

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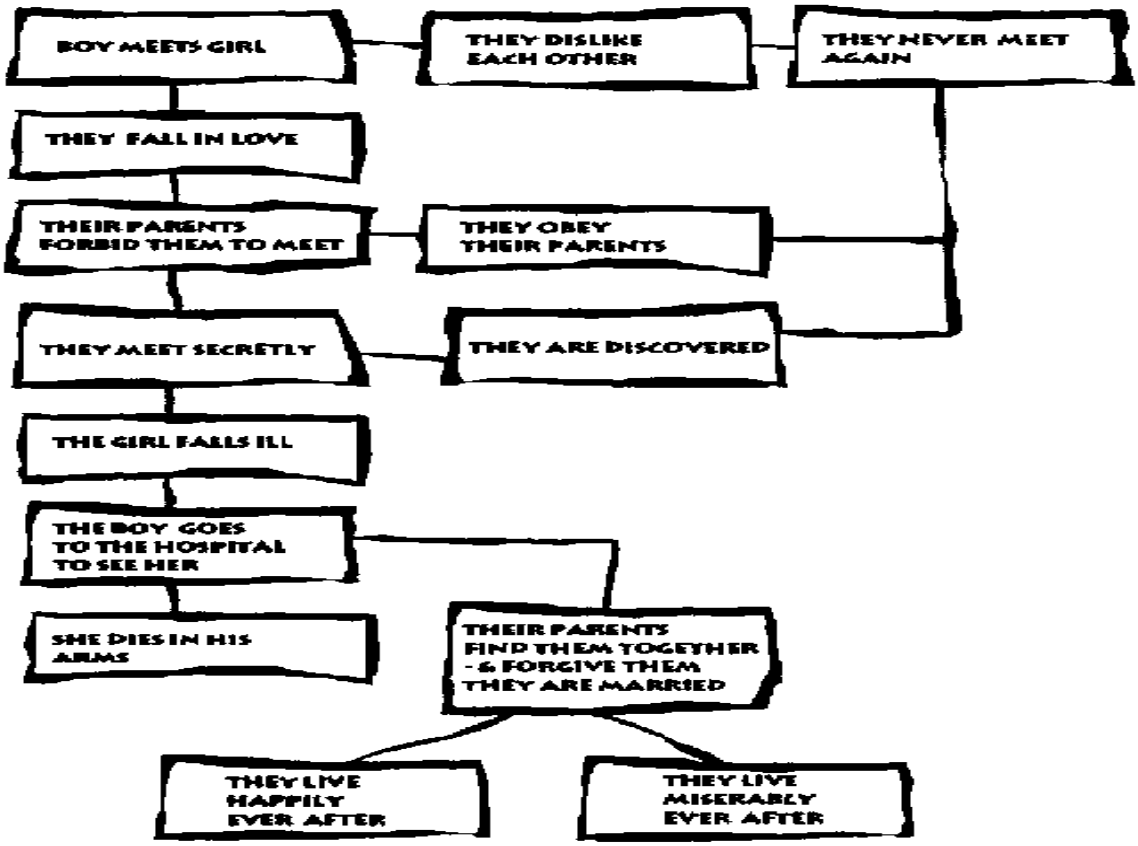

***QUESTIONNAIRES**

These can take the form of general knowledge quizzes and can include: At what temperature does water freeze? Where does the sun set? You can also ask questions connected to content area studies, which could be another opportunity to prepare for national exams in literature, etc. Or the questionnaire can take the form of the personality quizzes often found in women's magazines in the United States. An example of this type of Questionnaire is given below:

How Passive Are You?

1. Do you often start arguments?
2. Do you find it difficult to forgive?
3. If someone is rude to you are you immediately rude back?
4. Do you get angry with someone who pushes in front of you in a line?
5. Will you do just about anything to win an argument?
6. Do you like to give orders?
7. If you thought your boyfriend/girlfriend was cheating on you, would you immediately ask him/her about it?
8. If you thought someone was lying to you would you accuse them?

If you answered YES to four questions or more, you are able to stand up for yourself.

If you answered YES to all eight questions, you will never have trouble sticking up for yourself but some people might find you very bossy.

If you answered YES to fewer than four questions you are a passive person. You probably have difficulty dealing with unpleasant situations. You need to practice sticking up for yourself.

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Since the value we place on personal characteristics varies culturally, such questionnaires can provide a useful entry into a discussion of differences among cultures.

***PROBLEM SOLVING**

In these exercises students are asked to read and solve puzzles Several examples of this type of puzzle were given in the chapter on group work. Another example is given below;

Heather, Mary Jo, and Brendan have different jobs: teacher, computer programmer, and musician.
The teacher is a woman.
Heather can't play a musical instrument.
Mary Jo is no good with machines.
Heather likes to work by herself.
Who has which job?

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Writing is a quiet activity that particularly lends itself to independent study. However, any kind of free writing will inevitably involve the teacher in marking. For this reason we have arranged the activities in this section from controlled to free.

***TRUE/FALSE STATEMENTS**

In this activity the students are given a list of statements and copy only the true ones.

*** CHANGING PARAGRAPHS**

In this controlled writing activity the students are given a paragraph and asked to make certain changes to it. For example, the paragraph may be given in the present tense and the students may be asked to change it into the past tense. Or a paragraph may be given in the first person and the students are asked to change it into the third person.

*** SCRAMBLED TEXTS**

Students write out a scrambled text in the correct order.

*** FORM FILLING**

Provide the students with a large variety of forms and let them try their hand at filling them out.

***WRITE DOWN THE DIFFERENCES**

Provide two pictures with a number of differences between them and ask the students to write down the differences. Such pictures are often available in magazines, newspapers, and ESL texts.

TELEGRAMS

Students are given a message and told that they must send this message by telegram. They are also told the cost of each word and the amount of money that they can spend on the message. The object is to send the message in the fewest words possible.

CARTOON SPEECH BALLOONS

Students are given cartoons with the speech balloons blanked out and asked to fill in appropriate dialogue. These can then be displayed for other students to read.

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*** WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS**

Students are asked to build a model using a building system like Lego and then to write down instructions for how to build the same model. This exercise could also be done by using colored paper cut into shapes, or simply by drawing a picture.

***STORY STARTERS**

In this exercise the students read a story which stops part way through. They are then asked to finish the story. Here is an example suitable for an intermediate level.

Harjinder was walking down to the river as she did every morning. But when she came to the place where the path divided, she thought she saw something brightly colored in the tall grass. She wanted to find out what it was, but in her haste she slipped and twisted her ankle. It hurt so much she couldn't even stand up. Just then she realized that the brightly covered object was a snake, and

***CLASS BOOKS**

Students can be asked to contribute items to joke books, riddle books, ghost story books, etc.

GIVING FEEDBACK

You can use independent study as an opportunity to get feedback from individual students. For example, you can provide them with questionnaires about learning preferences or ask them to fill in learner logs in which they write about their language-learning experiences. A simple format that you might use to get input from your students is given below:

THINGS THAT I LEARNED THIS MONTH.
THINGS THAT I CAN'T DO IN ENGLISH NOW BUT I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO DO
THINGS TAT I FIND DIFFICULT
THINGS THAT I FIND EASY

Grammar Practice Activities

EXERCISES FROM EXISTING BOOKS

As mentioned earlier, discarded textbooks are often the best source of structure practice activities.

*** MAGAZINE PICTURES WITH ACCOMPANYING EXERCISES**

Magazine pictures offer a good way to spice up grammar exercises. For example, given a picture of a yard you could practice prepositions by using a Fill in the Blanks Activity such as:

There is a bird _____ the table.
There is a cat _____ the bird.

SNAKES AND LADDERS

This is a game format that provides a way for students to re-examine their own errors. The idea comes from Recipes for Tired Teachers (ED 132), which is available through Peace Corps ICE. You take sentences containing mistakes from your students' papers and write the sentences on small cards. Half the sentences should be left as the students wrote them, but the other half should be corrected. These cards are then arranged on a board which may take the form of a simple numbered grid or a snake, as shown below. It is important that the cards be the same size or smaller than the squares on the board. The students play the game in groups of three or four. They take turns throwing a die. When a player lands on a square, he has to tell the others

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whether the sentence is correct or not. If the player thinks it is not correct, he must correct it. If the others in the group agree with the player, then he can stay on the square, but if they do not agree, he has to go back to the square he came from. At the end of the game they can check any controversial decisions against the answer key.

PROBLEM-SOLVING DRILLS

Here the students are presented with problem situations and are asked to generate as many solutions as possible in a given period of time. However, the language forms they can use are restricted. They then leave their responses for other students to read and improve on.

Example:

It's eleven o'clock at night, and I haven't finished my homework yet. I have to learn twenty words for an English test tomorrow. What's the best way to learn them?

Try _____ ing

Sample Answers:

Try repeating them.
Try drawing pictures of them.
Try imagining wrapping them up and giving them as gifts to special friends.

***MATCHING SPLIT SENTENCES**

In these exercises students match sentence halves together to practice logical connectors.

Although he worked hard he passed the exam.

Because he worked hard he didn't pass.

This can be a fun variation of a sentence completion exercise. The teacher makes a list of the forms she wants the students to practice and fits them into a crossword puzzle.

***CROSSWORDS**

Given the irregular past tense forms:
caught,
drank,
understood,
did,
shot,
swam,
made,
drew,
ate,
had,
was, said, we can produce the following puzzle.

Across

2. Her son _____ all the milk.

4. Peter _____the question but he didn't know the answer.

6. The children _____ a lot of toys to play with.

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7. Yesterday ____ a sunny day.

9. They _____ a mess in the kitchen.

10. My stomach hurts. I think I _____ too much.

11. My sister _____ a beautiful picture this morning.

Down

1. Yesterday we went fishing. My friend _____ a fish but I didn't.

2. I didn't finish all my homework last night so I _____it this morning.

3. The tiger was attacking him so he _____ it.

5. The two boys _____ across the river.

8. "Pick up your books" she _____

VOCABULARY PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

EXISTING TEXTS

As with grammar exercises, existing texts are an excellent source of vocabulary activities.

***MATCHING EXERCISES**

These take the form of matching words to synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, definitions, etc. An example can be seen in the jigsaw picture correction exercises described earlier in this chapter.

***CROSSWORDS**

These can be prepared in the same way as the grammar practice cross words but providing definitions instead of gapped sentences as clues.

HOW MANY WORDS CAN YOU MAKE?

In this exercise a word is written on the outside of an envelope and the students are invited to make as many words as possible from the letters in the word. When they have made as many as they can, they put their list of words into the envelope and look at any lists already in there.

LABELING EXERCISES

Provide the students with pictures and ask them to label the parts of a body, for example, or a car.

ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Students are invited to put a list of words in alphabetical order in the shortest possible time.

ORAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

There are three main categories of oral communication activities that lend themselves to independent work. These are information gap, problem solving, and opinion-sharing activities.

INFORMATION CAP ACTIVITIES

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In this type of activity students are required to transfer information from one person to another in order to complete a task. Two examples already described in this chapter are Draw the Picture and Find the Difference pictures. Other examples of information gap activities are given in the chapters on group and pair work. It is very easy to make these exercises by giving each of the students in a pair partial and different information on a chart and asking them to complete their own chart by asking and answering questions without looking at their partner's. Any chart can be utilized in this way. As an example the chart used earlier for reading is adapted below for an information gap activity.

Student A

COUNTRY	CAPITAL	POPULATION	AREA	INDUSTRIES
NEPAL		17,422,000		
	TEGUCIGALPA		43,277	CLOTHING TEXTILES CEMENT WOOD PRODUCTS
	THAILAND	52,438,000		

Student B

COUNTRY	CAPITAL	POPULATION	AREA	INDUSTRIES
	KATHMANDU		56,136	SUGAR JUTE MILLS TOURISM
HONDURAS		4,648,000	43,277	
THAILAND		52,438,000		TEXTILES MINING WOOD PRODUCTS

PROBLEM-SOLVING ACTIVITIES

These activities have already been described in the chapter on group work. Prioritizing lists and solving written puzzles are particularly suitable for independent pair work.

OPTION-SHARING ACTIVITIES

These are activities that involve students working together in small groups or pairs and exchanging opinions. The examples below both utilize a game format.

PICTURE LINKS

For this activity the teacher prepares a pack of object pictures. These can be cut from magazines and stuck on index cards. This task is well worth the effort as the same pack can be used for a wide variety of activities. The pictures should be as varied as possible. The students work together in groups of three or four. One student deals seven cards to each player and puts an extra card face up on the desk. The student on his right then selects one of his pictures and tries to link it to the first picture. He must explain the link to the other group members. For example, if the first picture is a fishing rod and the second picture is a tent the student could link them by saying that they are both items that you take on a fishing trip. If the other members of the group accept the link, then the player can put his picture down and the next player has to make a link between this new picture and one of the ones in his hand. But, if a majority of the other players do not accept the link, the player keeps the card and misses his turn. The first player to put down

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all his or her cards is the winner of the game. This game usually leads to extremely creative links and a lively exchange of options

THE GIFT GAME

This game can utilize the same picture cards as Picture Links. The students work in groups of three or four and start by arranging the picture cards in a 9 x 9 square. A die is required and each player needs some kind of marker. Each player is given a list of eight people to find gifts for. The players then take turns throwing the die and moving around the square formed by the picture cards. When a player lands on a card, he or she tries to persuade the other players that the picture he or she has landed on will make a perfect present for someone on the list. If the other players agree with this choice, the player can stay on the card and cross the person off the list. If the other players don't agree with the choice, the person loses a turn and has to return to the card he or she came from. The first person to cross of all the names on the list is the winner.

Both these games are adaptations of activities appearing in Communication Games by Byrne and Rixon.

LISTENING ACTIVITIES

If available, a cassette recorder with earphones is an invaluable aid for listening activities, but don't despair if you don't have one. You can put the students in pairs of differing ability and have the more advanced students read the exercises to the less advanced students.

*** INFORMATION TRANSFER EXERCISES**

Several examples of this type of exercise, where information is changed from one form of presentation to another, are given in Chapter Four of the Peace Corps manual, **TEFL/TESL: Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language (M 0041).** In one example given in the manual, students listen to a lecture on vitamins and fill in a chart showing the vitamins, their sources, and the diseases caused by vitamin deficiencies. Other possible activities are described below: listening to a description of a family and filling in the names on a family tree; listening to a flawed description of a picture and marking the differences on the picture; listening to a description and choosing from a set of pictures the one that is being described; following a route on a map.

***ORAL CLOZE ACTIVITIES**

In these activities students listen to a text and fill in the blanks in a written version of the same text. The gaps can be selected on the basis of every 5th / 6th / 7th, etc. word, or you can decide to gap any element of the text that you have been recently working on: prepositions, verb forms, etc. This activity can also be used with songs.

***MYSTERY LISTENING**

Pairs of students can be asked to listen to a number of dialogues and to decide on the basis of limited information who is talking to whom, where, when, and about what. Snippets from classroom discussions and one side of a telephone conversation work well for this exercise.

MATCHING ACTIVITIES

Students can be asked to match snippets of radio programs to descriptions taken from the program guide.

***FREE LISTENING**

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Students can listen to recorded stories and record their own.

Final notes

This chapter has looked at independent study and suggested a number of reasons for including this approach to language learning. First, independent study is learner centered. It allows us to accommodate different learning styles, paces, and goals. Second, it helps us to deal with the problems of overcrowded classrooms and shortages of materials. Third, and most important, it makes the learner increasingly responsible for his or her own learning while providing the necessary tools. Thus, through independent study activities we are preparing the learner for a lifetime of learning.

We have also dealt with some of the concerns teachers have about using independent study and made concrete suggestions for avoiding problems. At the heart of many of our suggestions is the idea of making the reamer a partner in the learning process. We underscore this when we explain our rationale for using independent study, involve the learner in the selection and production of materials, and select and design materials so that learners will be free to use them without our intervention.

Chapter Ten has provided descriptions of some of the independent study activities that can be used in your classroom. Think of these suggestions as a starting point and feel free to modify them in any way you like to suit your particular groups of reamers.

Questions to ask yourself

- What activities have you already introduced in the class that could be used for independent study?
- What materials could your students make in pairs or small groups?
- Are there any existing materials you can utilize?
- Can you pool resources with other teachers or Volunteers?
- Can you arrange for a group of teachers or Volunteers to get together and make materials?
- Do you set aside a regular rime for independent study?
- Is there a place where you can set up a resource center for independent study?
- Do you integrate critical health or environmental issues in the content of independent study materials?
- Do independent study materials include information to prepare students for major examinations?

Students like to make all kinds of materials but are particularly interested in making and working with materials that will prepare them for major tests. This interest leads us naturally to the next chapter, which will help you to prepare students for different types of assessment.

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CHAPTER 11

Assessing language skills

ONE WHO PLANTS THORNS SHOULD NEVER EXPECT TO GATHER ROSES. ARABIAN PROVERB

Using tests to reinforce learning

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Judy stared at her notes and tried to envision an outline for the test she was creating. As she had promised her students, their English tests would contain no surprises. All of the activities and exercises had been introduced and practiced in class. In fact, her preference was to include some of the exact assignments that her students had worked on previously. As Judy thought about the success of some of her communicative activities, she had a brilliant idea. Why not ask her students to create their own test questions for a section of the test?

Judy decided to give each cooperative learning group the responsibility of writing four or five test questions. Everyone would have a chance to review the lesson as they analyzed and developed their test items in a prescribed format. The more Judy thought about this idea, the more she liked it. Her students had responded positively to learner-centered activities, and she was sure they would enjoy challenging and helping each other as they became involved in the assessment process.

Throughout this book we have encouraged you to integrate learner-centered activities, even if you're working in a traditional classroom environment. We have emphasized the importance of getting student feedback on a regular basis and tailoring your lessons to meet student interests and needs. By observing carefully and asking questions of the whole class or random individuals within the class, you have been able to monitor your students' progress to find out whether or not students understand what is going on in the lesson.

In this chapter on assessment, we discuss the exercises and tests that you can use to document the progress your students are making in your classroom. We introduce the purposes and basic types of assessment, provide some guidelines for testing large, multilevel classes, and provide suggestions for evaluating listening, speaking, reading, and writing in large multilevel classes. This chapter includes recommendations for keeping records and suggestions for preparing students for major examinations. And finally, as we think about monitoring and assessment, we consider how we as teachers can assess and improve our own efforts in the classroom.

DEFINING ASSESSMENT

As we define assessment in this chapter, we are referring to activities which show whether or not each of your students has met specified learning objectives. In the beginning of this book, we highlighted the importance of identifying student needs and monitoring progress through student feedback. Feedback and student assessment are two distinct ways of trying to determine learners' understanding and progress. Feedback usually means that you are making mental notes and adjusting your lesson plan to better meet the needs of your students at any given moment. In contrast, student assessment takes place when you are keeping a written record to document the progress that your individual students have made.

As you think of the stages in a four-step lesson plan, feedback is the process that helps you to monitor the level of student comprehension and progress during motivation activities presentation or new information, and practice exercises. Throughout each of these stages, you observe class behavior and ask questions to determine whether or not most of the learners have mastered key concepts, vocabulary, and skills to respond. As a rule of thumb, if your feedback indicates that approximately 80% of your students are making satisfactory progress, you proceed to the next stage. On the other hand, the purpose of student assessment is to document, in written form, what takes place following the application stage. Assessment can take the form of paper and pencil tests, teacher checklists and rating scales, or student self-assessment questionnaires. Through assessment, you are able to determine whether or not your students are able to apply what they have learned.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

In trying to assess and document student progress, you will be dealing with two basic kinds of tests: informal tests and formal or standardized tests. Informal, teacher-made assessments are tests that you create to measure how your students are doing. They are instruments that will

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allow you to document your students' progress. We recommend that you use informal student assessments in an ongoing, continuous manner. In this way, you establish student records that more accurately reflect student learning over a period of time. Informal assessments can have many purposes: to monitor individual progress, to provide a grade, or to determine which students will be promoted. We will discuss types of informal assessment in more detail in the first half of this chapter.

Formal or standardized tests, such as National Examinations, are used for comparing students to each other and to set minimal scores for entry into schools and universities. These tests are considered to be valid (measuring what they are supposed to measure) and reliable (giving consistent results every time). Standardized tests are assessment tools that have been developed at great cost by testing specialists. Standardized tests like the National Examination cause the greatest "test anxiety" in the classroom. In many parts of the world, the academic and career options of students rest solely on the results of a single standardized examination. Most teachers do not have the expertise to develop standardized tests, but after discussing informal, teacher-made tests, we will describe the ways you can help your students prepare for formal, standardized exams.

Informational assessment

In selecting the informal tests your will use for on-going assessment in large multilevel classes, the main thing to remember is that selecting the kind of test to use will depend on the reason for giving the test.

If you are trying to find out how well students communicate orally in English, then students will have to talk and you will have to listen to them individually. With large classes of 60-150 students, we recommend that you either conduct oral assessments with groups of six to ten students at one time (while the rest of the class is occupied with other tasks), or walk around and assess students while the whole class is involved in pair or group discussions. When you are trying to determine how well students can read, you can have students take quick reading comprehension tests, including cloze tests and sentence completion exercises. To find out how well students can write, you may conduct an activity to get writing samples from the whole class at one sitting, but these samples must be scored individually. To speed up the scoring process, you might want to score only five to ten each night using a holistic rating scale where you assign a number from one to five on each paper.

In the following sections we describe these suggestions in more detail. We also provide specific guidelines for designing, administering, and scoring informal classroom tests to help you determine students' oral communication skills and ability to read and write.

ASSESSING ORAL SKILLS: LISTENING/SPEAKING

Oral language assessment should be linked to the themes addressed in your lessons and activities. For example, if your students have been discussing family or peer relationships, they will feel more comfortable if they are tested on similar topics. Oral performance assessments can take various forms. These include: oral interviews, story retelling, simulations/situations, and directed dialogues. Other possibilities are incomplete story or topic prompts which students are asked to complete, picture cues, teacher observation checklists, and student self-evaluations.

As you prepare for an assessment activity, be sure to check for possible cultural bias in any materials you plan to use. This means that if the materials contain unfamiliar cultural items, then your students will be at a disadvantage. For example, unexplained references to Western fairy tale figures will puzzle your students. Cultural bias invalidates your assessment. Also, plan activities for those students who are not being assessed. These might include having students work on individual or group projects, silent reading, or writing activities.

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When you are ready to assess your students' listening and speaking skills, you may want to consider an oral interview or story retelling. An interview consists of asking each student several questions and rating their responses. Interviews let you get a sense of a student's functional ability to communicate. Story retelling activities consist of telling students a story and asking them to retell the same story in their own words. Story retelling activities provide a useful vehicle for determining a student's understanding of a story or situation as well as his or ha ability to synthesize or paraphrase it. Let's look at the different ways to design, conduct, and score oral language assessments.

ORAL INTERVIEW

To design an oral interview, prepare a list of four or five questions appropriate for the age and grade level of your students. The list should be arranged from questions requiring simple or easy responses to more difficult questions that call for lengthier responses. Short answer questions might be those which require a yes/no response or that ask basic information about a student's family or school history. Longer response questions might be those which ask the student's opinion or idea on something. Decide whether you will ask questions with only one answer (such as questions on a story the student has read) or whether your questions will be open-ended (such as asking a student to talk about family members, about personal experiences, or about his or her ideas on a topic).

STORY RETELLING

To design a story retelling activity, be sure to select stories that are appropriate to the age and grade level of your students and which will spark their interest. They may be stories with which students may be familiar, but students should not have memorized them. You can sit with small groups of students and read aloud a short passage from the story or the whole story, depending on how long it is. It shouldn't take you more than five to ten minutes to read the story. Prepare your materials for story retelling ahead of time. For example, you may need to gather pictures, drawings, or objects which lead students to talk about certain topics. Story retelling can be expanded to include academic content areas by asking students to describe a recent science experiment or the geographic features of an area using map, provided these activities have been discussed in class.

In a story retelling, guide your students' oral language production around a story that you have selected and have read aloud to them. In selecting a story, check for cultural bias and make sure it is appropriate for your students' age and interest level. Try to integrate stories with both males and females in a variety of roles to avoid gender stereotyping. The story does not necessarily have to be one which they have read before. You can read a story consisting of a few paragraphs to students, not to exceed 250 words (shorter for younger students, longer for older students, depending on their English language proficiency), and have students retell the story as best as they can.

CONDUCTING AN ORAL ASSESSMENT

When giving an oral assessment, teachers often tend to do more talking than the students. This cakes time which could be better spent listening to each student talk. One way to make sure you don't do all the talking is to have students interview each other in groups of six to ten. Using a checklist such as the one shown here, you can mark the appropriate level to indicate how each student rates on the skill or language competencies You are considering at that moment.

ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS CHECKLIST

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DATE_____
STUDENT NAME_____

□ INDICATE THE LEVEL OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE USING THE FOLLOWING RATINGS:
□ NO FUNCTIONAL ABILITY
□ MINIMAL ABILITY
□ MODERATE ABILITY
□ STRONG ABILITY
□ EXCEPTIONAL ABILITY

LEVEL SKILLS/COMPETENCIES

THE STUDENT CAN ASK ABOUT THE STORY
THE STUDENT CAN ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STORY
THE STUDENT CAN DESCRIBE A PERSON IN THE STORY
THE STUDENT CAN SUMMARIZE THE MAIN POINTS OF THE STORY
THE STUDENT CAN GIVE AN OPINION ABOUT THE STORY

Another approach is to give directions to students by using cue cards which direct them to ask particular questions in an interview or to interact in some other way. Cue cards should be written at your students' reading level. For example, after a lesson containing a &dialogue about being absent from class, one student's cue card might say, "Greet your classmate and find out where he or she has been for the past few days." The other cue card could say, "Respond to your classmate's question by telling him or her that you have been at home sick. Find out from your classmate what you have missed in class."

If students are at a beginning level, you can use picture cues and ask them to discuss the topic indicated by the picture. Students can also talk at length on topics which interest them, such as their favorite food, animal, or person. For example, "Tell me about your favorite animal. Describe it and tell me why it is your favorite." For more advanced students, the topic might be: "Give three reasons why people should protect the natural environment."

To rate the oral skill of your students, use a checklist or rating scale which identifies the language skills you will be scoring. Put the students' names on a grid or matrix containing these skills (see the Oral Language Skills Matrix). In order to have enough oral language production co assign a rating, you should listen for at lease three or four sentences from each student. You can use this matrix to rate students who have been put in a special group for assessment, or by attaching this checklist to a clipboard, you can walk around the room while the students are interviewing each other in groups or pairs and mark the language ability by each student's name

ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS MATRIX

STUDENT NAME	INTRODUCTIONS	SIMPLE QUESTIONS	DESCRIBE OBJECT & PERSON	RETELL STORY	CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Indicate. the level of student performance using the following ratings:

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(1) No functional ability
(2) Minimal ability
(3) Moderate ability
(4) Strong ability
(5) Exceptional ability

ASSESSING THE WHOLE CLASS

One way of assessing the oral skills of the whole class is to tell your students that you want them to listen to a story as you read it or play an audiotape of it, and that they should be prepared to retell it to each other when you are done. Then, read the story at a natural pace or play the tape (once you have ensured that everyone in the room can hear it) and ask students to retell it.

As with the oral interviews, while students are retelling the story in pairs, walk around the class with your checklist or rating scale and rate as many students as you can at one time. Each student can take a turn at telling the parts of the story that he/she remembers and other students can take turns filling in or elaborating on what the others have said. You will not be able to rate all students on one day, so pace yourself and score a certain number each time you do an oral interview or a story retelling.

Oral language assessment is authentic when it reflects familiar tasks that have been performed in the classroom and involves language used for real purposes. For intermediate to advanced level students, this might mean asking students to use language for study-related purposes, such as describing the steps in a math problem or retelling a historical event. These students might be asked to use English to report or explain, to compare or clarify, and to synthesize ideas or evaluate them.

HOW TO SCORE AN ORAL ASSESSMENT

Oral language skills to be scored will vary depending on the grade and proficiency level of your students. In addition to the checklist we discussed earlier, you can use one of the rating scales shown in the following figure or modify the checklist or rating scales for your students. The following figure shows three different approaches to rating oral language proficiency; each approach was designed to be used with adults. For example, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of the U.S. Department of State uses the scale listed in the far left column with diplomats going to work out of country. The American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and Educational Testing Service (ETS) Scale indicated in the center column is used with teachers preparing to teach foreign languages in secondary schools in the U.S. The definition provided in the far right column shows the commonalties shared by both the FSI and the A(-TFL scales and can be used as a holistic rating scale on its own by assigning a number to each block (such as one through four).

SCORING AN ORAL ASSESSMENT

GOVERNMENT (FSI) SCALE	ACADEMIC ACTFL/ETS SCALE	DEFINITION
5+ 4 4 3+ 3	NATIVE SUPERIOR	Able to speak like an educated native speaker Participates effectively In most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and abstract topics Supports opinions and hypothesizes using native-like discourse strategies

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2+	ADVANCED PLUS	Converses in clearly participatory fashion Initiates, sustains and brings to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks Satisfies all requirements of school and work Narrates and describes with paragraph-length connected discourse
2	ADVANCED	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements
1 +	INTERMEDIATE-HIGH	Creates by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode Initiates, minimally sustains, and closes basic communicative tasks
	INTERMEDIATE-MID	Asks and answers questions Able to satisfy some survival needs and some limited social demands
1	INTERMEDIATE-LOW	Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements
O_+	NOVICE-HIGH	Can repeat or recall words or phrases Asks or answers simple questions Relies heavily on learned material Uses vocabulary for basic objects, places, events
	NOVICE-MID	Uses isolated words and learned phrases Has vocabulary to handle simple needs and to express basic courtesies Uses long pauses, understands with difficulty
O	NOVICE-LOW	Uses isolated words and perhaps a few high-frequency phrases No functional communicative ability

First, determine what student scores will mean by breaking the possible range of scores into high, intermediate, and low ranges. For example, on a scoring scale from one to five, scores ranging from one to two might be considered low, from three to four called intermediate, and a five classified as high. This way you can see which students have the most need in relation to the rest of the class. When scoring an oral assessment, focus on your students' ability to understand and communicate orally. Grammatical accuracy and pronunciation are usually not as important as a student's overall ability to communicate, depending on the task.

Assessing written language skills: reading/writing

Research indicates that the best way to assess students' ability to read and write is through reading and writing activities rather than multiple-choice tests. To determine at what level of proficiency your students are reading, you can design a fill-in-the-blank reading passage, called a cloze. Cloze tests are reading passages which measure a student's reading comprehension by his or her facility in filling in missing words. The assumption is that if the student understands the meaning of the passage, he or she will be able to supply appropriate words to fill in the blanks.

DESIGNING A CLOZE TEST

To construct a cloze test, select a reading passage appropriate for the age and grade level of your students. This passage can be taken from books that students will be asked to read in your class. Check the passage for cultural bias. Write the reading passage on paper or on the board. Leave the first two sentences intact. Beginning with the third sentence, delete every fifth, seventh, or ninth word, making all blanks the same size, with a minimum of about 20 blank spaces. Number the blanks. The more frequent the deletions, the more difficult the cloze test becomes.

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GIVING A CLOZE TEST

Practice using the cloze technique many times with your students before giving the cloze as a test. Students not familiar with cloze format need practice at using the technique. Start by using a reading passage which you estimate your students can complete with confidence. Then work your way up to more difficult passages.

Give clear directions. Tell students that they should read the passage completely through before filling in any blanks. They should fill in each blank with the most appropriate word. They should also skip over any blanks which they find too difficult and come back to these later. If the reading passage is on the board, students can simply write the number of each missing word on their paper and turn in a list with their answers. Cloze tests are not strictly timed, so you can be flexible with time limits.

SCORING A CLOZE TEST

A correct answer for a blank on a cloze test is any word which makes sense and is used in its correct grammatical form. Do not count off for spelling.

Calculate the score by determining the percentage of correct responses.

For example:

TOTAL BLANK SPACES	25
NUMBER INCORRECT	10
STEP 1	25-10=15
STEP 2	15/25=60%
SCORE	60%

To interpret scores obtained on a close test, use the following guide:

57%-100% correct -The reading level of the passage is appropriate for the student, and he or she is able to read the passage with limited instruction.

44 - 56% correct - Student should be able to understand the passage after some Instruction.

0 - 44% correct- The reading passage is too difficult for the student, even with instruction. Test the student on easier material to determine the level of English proficiency in reading and verify with other measures of reading comprehension.

WRITING SAMPLES

To design activities to assess writing, select writing assignments that match the age and grade level of your students. Use topics that are familiar and interesting to students and that will generate writing styles commonly practiced at their grade level. You can use what you learned in your needs assessment about students' interests to select these topics (see Chapter Three). Writing topics should not draw upon a student's knowledge of a content area, such as science or history, unless the topics are familiar from class discussions.

Writing topics should be on relatively meaningful, common themes, such as describing a favorite relative or explaining a particular study skill. More advanced students, who may be experienced in persuasive writing, can respond to more controversial topics, such as a student's opinion of male and female roles in the workplace or in society.

Provide a choice of several topics. By giving options, you increase the possibility that a student will be interested enough in at least one of the topics to write about it. Make sure the topics will result in comparable types of writing. That is, you would not give one topic which elicits an

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explanation, another that calls for a description, and yet another that depends upon persuasive writing, all as choices for any single assessment.

GETTING A WRITING SAMPLE

Give clear directions. Let your students know the amount of writing required (a minimum of one paragraph for students of lower proficiency and a minimum of three paragraphs for students with higher levels of proficiency), how much time they have to write, and how their writing sample will be scored.

Provide a minimum of thirty minutes to allow students to plan, organize, and revise their work. Decide whether students can use dictionaries or other resources (including you and other students) during the writing process and apply your rule consistently.

SCORING A WRITING SAMPLE

To score a writing sample, use a rating scale which focuses on your students' overall ability to communicate through writing. Categories to look for should include organization, cohesion, and for more advanced students, transitions from one idea to the next. Depending on the learning objective (and number of drafts), count off for grammar and punctuation if they seriously interfere with the message the student is trying to get across.

You may want to assign two separate scores, one to reflect overall content and organization and the other to reflect mechanics such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Many teachers use a system where an "S" represents "satisfactory." In assigning two scores to a writing sample, a student might receive an S+ for content and organization and an S- for mechanics. If the paper is unacceptable, the student receives an "R" and must rewrite the sample.

Decide on what scoring ranges mean for students at different levels. At a minimum, at least three categories should be established with regard to writing ability: low, intermediate, and high. (See the visual on next page.)

Self-assessment

One way of getting your students actively involved in and responsible for their learning is to use student self-assessment procedures. This helps get students accustomed to the idea of monitoring their own progress. The fact that the self-assessment is subjective does not

SCORING AN WRITING SAMPLE

RATING	CRITERIA
5	• Vocabulary is precise, varied, and vivid • Organization is appropriate to writing assignment and contains dear introduction, development of idea, and conclusion • Transition from one idea to another is smooth and provides reader with clear understanding that topic is changing • Meaning is conveyed effectively • A few mechanical errors may be present but do not disrupt communication • Shows a clear understanding of writing and topic development
4	• Vocabulary is adequate for grade level
	• Events are organized logically, but some part of the sample may not be fully developed • Some transition of ideas is evident • Meaning is conveyed but breaks down at times • Mechanical errors are present but do not disrupt communication • Shows a good understanding of writing and topic development

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3	• Vocabulary is simple • Organization may be extremely simple or there may be evidence of disorganization • There are few transitional markers or repetitive transitional markers • Meaning is frequency not clear • Mechanical errors affect communication • Shows some understanding of writing and topic development
2	• Vocabulary is limited and repetitious • Sample is comprised of only a few disjointed sentences • No transitional markers • Meaning is unclear • Mechanical errors cause serious disruption in communication • Shows little evidence of organization
1	• Responds with a few isolated words • No complete sentences are written • No evidence of concepts of writing
O	• No response

necessarily invalidate its use in language testing. Self-assessments can produce reliable estimates of student ability if teachers and students are given training arid practice in how to conduct them and if the reporting forms are closely related to students' needs for using the language.

Self-assessment measures can take the form of questionnaires, rating scales, and checklists. The closer these are related to the purposes for which your students are learning a language, the more reliable the information becomes. Scoring scales will depend upon the types of questions used, although most scales consist of three, five, or ten points. The points on a five-point scale might be described as follows:

5 points	I can do this all the time;
4 points	I can do this most of the time;
3 points	I can do this about half the time;
2 points	I can seldom do this;
1 points	I can never do this.

An example of a self-assessment of language proficiency is given below.

Use the following ratings to indicate how well you can perform the following tasks:

1	never
2	seldom
3	sometimes
4	most of the time
5	all of the time

I can understand what the teacher says in class.

_____I can ask for information if something is not clear.
_____I can complete my homework assignments.
_____I can understand what I read.
_____I can contribute when I work with a small group of students.

You might want to model a self-assessment by conducting one of your own ability to perform a certain task, such as a self-evaluation of your ability to understand, speak, read, and write in the national language of your students. (Students will enjoy this activity!)

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PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

If you are teaching 60-150 students, you may wonder how you'll ever be able to keep track of test results and student ratings. One alternative is portfolio assessment. By identifying a particular area you want to keep records on, you can keep student folders or boxes which hold samples of student work-in-progress along with student assessment results. In this way, you can determine what your students' strengths and needs are. For example, if you have decided to focus on reading and writing skills, have students choose their best writing sample each week and put it in their portfolio. You can also put the results of oral interviews and cloze tests obtained from observations in the portfolio, along with the results of student rating sheets and checklists.

Portfolio assessment provides an innovative approach to putting together all of your students' assessment results in one place. Adapted from the idea of the artist's portfolio, where an individual carries samples of his or her best work, portfolio assessment refers to a system for putting together all of the information you will need in order to closely monitor a student's progress. A portfolio can be more than just a student folder containing samples of the student's best work. Portfolios can focus on specific language skills or learning goals. By focusing on specific skill areas or learning goals and outlining the minimal standards for each, portfolios can serve as useful ways to interpret the results of student performance on assessments of various types. Portfolios can contain both formal (standardized) and informal (alternative) assessment results and should be updated on a frequent basis, perhaps every few weeks.

ASSESSING GROUP WORK

The portfolio checklists and rating sheets provide documentation that can be used to assess individual participation in cooperative learning groups. For example, to make learners accountable for social skills or behavior in their small groups, assign a weighted value to their participation. You might decide that group participation will count for 10% of the overall grade. Your observations of individuals in groups, noted on checklists and rating sheets, then provide documentation incorporated in the assessment of oral skills. Portfolios can also be used to record grades for group projects or presentations. The grade that is given to the entire group is then documented and integrated in the individual assessments.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES

One of the implications for your large classes is that you may not be able to design a portfolio for every student in your class, so you may have to be discriminating and select the students who appear to be most in need of monitoring due to their low level skills. On the other hand, should you decide to keep a portfolio for every student in your class, you can make the collection of your students' work more manageable by collecting the information in staggered cycles. That is, instead of collecting the results of the writing assessment for all student portfolios on the day of the assessment, you can collect these at various other times throughout the week or month. To interpret students' work, use a sheet at the beginning of the portfolio which lists learning goals in the specified language skill areas and gives examples of the portfolio contents that show the student has met the goals.

PORTFOLIO SUMMARY SHEET

DATE 10/15/92
STUDENT HUSSEIN
EDUCATIONAL GOAL: IMPROVED WRITING SKILLS

SKILL/COMPETENCE	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS	DATE
DEMONSTRATES INTEREST AND ABILITY IN A VARIETY OF WRITING TASKS	LITERARCY DEVELPMENT CHECKLIST	10/26/92
WRITES A SHORT STORY	WRITING SAMPLE: FISH STORY	11/7/92

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WRITES TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS	LETER	11/13/92
EXPRESSES WRITING PREFERENCES	SELF-ASSESMENT OF WRITING	12/2/92
SUMMARY COMMENTS		

As you prepare informal tests and organize your documentation in portfolios and other written records, try to view assessment as a shared responsibility between the teacher and the student. Whenever possible, allow students to use self-assessments to evaluate their own progress, and create a schedule so that you meet with learners individually to compare each others' impressions and experiences and clarify needs and expectations.

As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, informal teacher-made tests are designed to measure your students progress toward your course objectives. These tests should have no surprises and no secrets. In fact, if your tests match the activities your students have practiced and completed during your lessons, the assessment is in harmony with the course. Before administering an assessment, be sure that everyone knows when the test will be given, what is going to be on the test (the material that the class has been studying), and how the test will be designed (the same formats used in practice and application). No surprises and no secrets means that your tests reflect your lessons. This predictability has a positive influence on your students' behavior during the course. (This reinforcement is sometimes called "positive backwash.") Learners are relieved to know that the activities in your class are a direct preparation for the tests they must take. This correlation may seem obvious, but how often do we hear of students completing a lesson with communicative dialogues, role plays, and simulations before they are given their graded test on grammatical structures. (And that's not fair!)

Assessment can cause a great deal of anxiety for students. But when your teacher-made tests are fair and predictable, you eliminate most of the distracting stress that accompanies test taking. Unfortunately, when your students must take formal, standardized exams, they have to cope with a great fear of the unknown. Major examinations are designed to be full of surprises and secrets. Although pre-exam nervousness is difficult for any of us to avoid, especially before a major exam, there are ways that you can help prepare your students for these formal tests.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR FORMAL TESTS

As we interviewed Barbara, a former Peace Corps Volunteer from Liberia, she explained that the National Examination had become an obsession for her students. They felt that the only material worth learning was related to the European classics represented on the examination, never mind that there were native authors and poets who had written fine works of literature. Barbara was determined to include relevant cultural works in her discussions, but she knew that preparation for the National Examination also had to be incorporated into her class-work To find out about the National Examination, she talked to other teachers, reviewed old copies, and even became an exam proctor. In that way, she became familiar with the exam format and the major topics that were covered. Barbara then went to her classes and gave her students practice for the exam. She used the examination format to test her students on other reading selections. She also created self-access materials to help the students expand on some of the European classics she covered in class. Her students were appreciative of her knowledge and support. They came to trust her judgment, and they soon responded more positively to discussions about local folktales and poems, basic life skills, and current events.

TEST-TAKING SKILLS

In your classes, you can help prepare your students for the National Examinations by providing practice in test-taking skills. There are many types of examinations your students may have to take. The most common are multiple choice, oral interviews, and writing samples. By familiarizing yourself with some basic test-taking skills and providing opportunities for your students to practice these, you can help your students demonstrate what they know. This does not mean coaching students on the answers to tests or limiting what you teach to only that which is covered

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by the tests. It does mean incorporating test-taking skills into routine classroom activities. Basic test-taking skills fall under several categories: following directions; understanding test vocabulary; and taking timed tests. The following is a checklist on basic test-taking skills.

SKILLS

A. FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

1. Carry out oral test directions.
2. Carry out written test directions.
3. Ask for clarification of test directions when necessary and appropriate.

B. UNDERSTANDING TEST VOCABULARY

1. Recognize key test words and phrases (e.g., compare, rank, choose the best order).
2. Apply vocabulary learned in the classroom to testing situations.
3. Ask questions if test vocabulary is unclear.

C. TIME MANAGEMENT

1. Have developed a sense of time awareness when taking a test.

2. Understand the importance of using time to the best advantage in a testing situation.

3. Can adapt general skimming strategies (e.g. locate easy items first, become familiar with overall test format).

4. Can adapt general skipping strategies (e.g., mark omitted questions for easy location later, skip questions rather than puzzling over answers).

Adapted from Evaluation Assistance Center (EAC) - East, Georgetown University/RMC Research, Washington, D.C. 1987.

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Students frequently miss answers unnecessarily due to their inability to follow directions. Your students can practice following directions as a routine part of classroom activities. A few ways to develop this strategy are: classroom games, giving oral directions, and using written directions

Classroom games such as "Simon Says" and bingo can help students learn to follow directions. With "Simon Says," the penalty is elimination from the game whenever directions are not followed. For example, the teacher instructs the students: "Simon says stand up." Students who do not follow the directions sit down and remove themselves from the game. The winners of the game are the last students left standing; this could be five, ten, or thirry students, depending on the size of your class.

Playing bingo has its own reward for following directions. Students feel a sense of accomplishment when they can correctly identify words in response to clues the teacher has called out. Winners are students who identify words on a bingo card which fall in a row either vertically, horizontally, or on the diagonal. The vocabulary you use on bingo cards should be familiar to your students. Directions may include: "Cover the space that has the word that matches each of the following definitions. When you have covered all the spaces in a line going across your card, up and down, or on the diagonal, say 'Bingo' in a loud voice."

Giving oral directions for performing routine classroom tasks also helps prepare your students to take tests. Directions can range from easy to more difficult. Begin with simple instructions such as, "Put your name in the upper right hand comer of each first sheet you hand in." With more advanced students you might say, "Be sure to include your name and grade on the upper right

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hand corner of every sheet you hand in, the date on the upper left hand corner, and the name of today's lesson in the center of the first line." Vary the directions so that they learn to respond to different assignments.

Another way to help your students take standardized tests is to find out how written instructions are worded on National Examinations. Written directions on teacher-made tests and exercises should be similar to ones found on standardized tests. Some examples are: "Circle the correct answer..." "Write the letter of the correct response..." and "Fill in the blank with the best word."

UNDERSTANDING TEST VOCABULARY

Various kinds of tests use specific vocabulary to provide directions for completing each section of the test. If your students know what the different words and phrases mean, they will be better prepared to answer test questions appropriately. Here are some of the most frequently used words and phrases.

TEST VOCABULARY: FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

Name	List	Cite
Mention	State	Trace
Chronological order	Compare	Contrast
Means about the same as	Label	Approximate
Mark the space for the answer	Choose the best answer	Summarize
Listen and read along	Complete the sentence	Rank
Match Column A with Column B	Complete the meaning	Fill in the blank

Source: Evaluation Assistance Center (EAC)-East, Georgetown University/RMC Research, Washington, D.C. 1987.

It may be helpful to become familiar with the language used on standardized tests such as the National Examination by reviewing a copy of a sample exam. Sample examinations are designed to parallel the format and vocabulary of the actual test, so they should contain words and phrases that your students will see on the exam. You can also review the contents of old exams for special vocabulary and directions. After an examination has been given, talk with your students about the experience in order to determine what words they had problems with, and take the time to clarify these before the next exam session. Once you are familiar with the vocabulary your students will encounter, you can make up your own test vocabulary lists. By using words from these lists in daily classroom activities and exercises, you can help your students become better prepared to show what they can really do on standardized tests.

TAKING TIMED TESTS

The greatest challenge for many of your students may be demonstrating what they know on a test which has strict time limits. Most standardized tests are timed tests, and students are penalized for not being able to complete these tests within the specified time.

One way to develop a sense of time awareness in your students is to incorporate into routine class activities exercises which will focus your students on the critical role of time in accomplishing classroom tasks. For example, you can tell the class: "When I tell you to begin, take your pencil and print the alphabet on your paper. After one minute, I will tell you to put your pencil down. I want you to try and guess how long a minute is." You can also use a timed activity approach where you tell students that they will have only ten minutes to work independently to complete an exercise. This will help your students experience the passage of time.

By giving students varied times for simple tasks, starting with one to two minutes and building to longer time blocks, you help students adjust to working independency for extended periods of time. Administering occasional teacher-made quizzes and tests under timed conditions will also help students get used to what "time is up" means. The purpose of these activities is to help your

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students develop an ability to make good use of time. As with other test-taking skills, time management can be considered a life skill that your students can incorporate into their daily lives.

TAKING MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

Multiple-choice tests are challenging and technically difficult to prepare, which makes them impractical for most classroom needs. Furthermore, studies by language researchers indicate chat multiple-choice tests are not the best way to get feedback on how much your students can do with the English language. However, there are some test-taking skills that your students can develop to help them with these tests. These include:

- Read the question or statement completely a few times before attempting to choose the correct answer.

- Choose only one answer for each question. To indicate two answers to any single question, no matter how much they may both appear to be correct, will be counted as being wrong.

- Avoid absolute answers. Words such as all, none, only, always, and never are often found in incorrect responses. Words such as usually, generally, often, and may are more likely to be found in correct responses.

- Narrow down your choices by eliminating responses which are incorrect. If two responses are opposites or one implies the incorrectness of the other, one of the two is probably incorrect.

Your students will appreciate any help that you give them in preparing for a major examination, but be sure that these test-taking activities play a secondary role in the assessment process. You may want to include a few test-taking exercises in each unit, and then include these exercises as a minor section of the test. Again, keep in mind that the primary purpose of your assessment is to find out if you and your students are meeting your course goals.

Finally, as you think of meeting your goals, don't overlook the importance of monitoring your own progress as a teacher. Through student feedback, you have been trying to diagnose the problems in your lessons and adjust your teaching. But who can provide you with an honest opinion so that you can assess and improve your progress toward meeting your teaching goals?

ASSESSING AND IMPROVING YOUR TEACHING

How do you know when you have presented an effective lesson? Of course, one major source of feedback is your students. But it's not easy, or advisable, to discuss your professional questions and concerns with your students. Instead, we recommend that you develop a partnership with another teacher. We are not talking about peer observations in which teachers put on a show to achieve a positive assessment from a colleague or outside evaluator. We are talking about developing a dialogue with a partner, with the aim of developing your "voice," that is, your carefully thought out assessment of what you do, why, and how well you do it.

Education Volunteers shouldn't work alone. You are members of a learning community and part of a teaching team. Developing good working relationships with your colleagues isn't always easy. Some may be unsure of their command of English and may be shy about speaking to you. Others may insist on practicing their English with you and may eat up your time and privacy in the process. Some may resent your presence. Others may not understand that Peace Corps supplies only technical assistance-that means you, your time, expertise and enthusiasm. They may be disappointed that you are not going to provide funding for scholarships and materials for dormitories or laboratories. In this context, it's hard to find ways to develop an atmosphere of trust and professional respect. The only satisfactory option for you is to keep working at integrating yourself into the teaching team. As we keep hearing from Volunteers, developing materials and

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teaching large classes is demanding work. With the support of your fellow teachers, you might be looking at a very long two-year assignment.

How do you go about establishing the supportive and professional relationships we are talking about? Your technical trainers and your Associate Peace Corps Director for Education have probably already suggested that you should invite other teachers to watch you teach in the hope that they will invite you back to watch them. Maybe this doesn't thrill you. No matter how discreet, visitors to your class always have an air of inspection about them, and it's hard to let an outsider in on what really takes place when you're on your own in front of your students. It's quite likely that your counterpart will feel the same way. However, there is a process called "horizontal exchanges" in which pairs of teachers search for the gap between what they want to do and what they end up doing. It works this way.

HORIZONTAL EXCHANGES

First, choose a colleague to team with. Be creative about this step. If your counterparts don't seem interested, team up with another Volunteer in the area Be very open about what you are doing, explain your ideas to your head of department, and make sure that everyone knows who your visitor is and why he or she is there. Work in the staff room with your partner, and if possible, invite a counterpart to be an observer member of your team.

Second, organize your schedule with your partner so that on three separate occasions he or she will sit in on three of your classes, and on three separate occasions you will sit in on his or hers. (If possible, try to organize it so that you are observed teaching different lessons in the 4MAT system-for instance, a Motivation, an Information and a Practice lesson.) Hold post-observation conferences, and record each conference on an audiotape.

This analysis will center on how your intentions work in practice. But the exchange is not one way. You are not inviting an outside expert to critique your efforts. You are collaborating with a partner, and both of you are exploring together the effectiveness and results of your teaching strategies. Take the opportunity to tell your story of how you selected issues, functions and grammatical forms. Talk about how you developed communicative activities and organized your groups. Share your students' reactions, show their written work. Then, when you have had your say, be prepared to support your partner in analyzing his or her teaching using a similar process.

What are some of the questions you and your partner need to ask in horizontal exchanges? Have the outline of your 4MAT lesson plans and objectives in front of you as you work, so that you can see the big picture of the learning cycle. Have on hand also the detailed lesson plan of the session you were observed teaching. This plan represents your intentions. Then discuss, step by step, what actually took place. You may want to decide on your own guiding questions for the analysis. Or you may find the following questions helpful:

1. Learning Cycle: Were my students clear about their roles, and the expectations I had of them? Did I provide activities suitable for this step in the learning cycle? Was my role appropriate?

2. Issues: Is the theme and the topic/issue of this lesson interesting to my students? Have I brought up concerns they can relate to? Have I linked language learning to the academic content? Is the classroom atmosphere open enough that students will say what is on their minds without fear of being ridiculed? Did you hear students react or say things about the issues that I might have missed?

3. Teacher Talk: Am I using appropriate levels of English? (:an most of my students get the main idea of what I'm saying? Was I talking too slowly? Too fast? Is my input comprehensible? How do you assess whether your students understand? Did you notice a particular point when you thought my students didn't understand?

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4. Function and form: Am I emphasizing functions and teaching enough grammar to support practice of those functions? Were my explanations dear enough? Did my visuals work? Were my examples effective? What kind of problems do we expect students to have with these grammar points? Where do these problems come from? Are they related to interference from ocher languages? Do you have any favorite ways of explaining these grammatical structures?

5. Group work: Are my instructions clear? Did my groups know what they had to do? Are they sufficiently organized so that they can get to work quickly? Did everyone in the groups near you seem to be participating in the task? How do you organize your groups? What do your students think about group work? How do you deal with problems associated with group work?

6. Communicative exercises/worksheets: Are my students interested in their work? Was I providing relevant practice, or busy work? Was there too much or not enough to do? In your large classes, how do you organize corrections of exercises and worksheets?

As you work with your partner, finding that there are reoccurring frustrations and annoyances that are common to both of you can be a tremendous relief. You are not imagining things. This is a tough job. Sharing experiences and respecting each other's efforts will provide you with a valuable way out of the professional isolation that can make teaching large classes so difficult.

Final notes

In the beginning of this book, we emphasized the importance of getting to know your students and designing your lessons to reflect their needs and interests. Throughout each stage of your lessons, you have been monitoring student feedback to make sure that the activities and materials are appropriate for your learners. Assessment is the written documentation that determines whether students are meeting the course goals. It is used to monitor progress, assign grades, and determine who will pass or fail your course. As you improve your teaching skills, particularly your ability to prepare and administer teacher-made tests, keep the following principles in mind:

1. As you develop tests to assess the language skills of your students, be sure that you are motivating your students to improve in areas that are relevant to their actual needs in life.

2. Be clear about the purpose of your test. Are you monitoring progress? Assigning a grade? Deciding whether students will be promoted? Make sure that you and your students understand why you are administering the test.

3. There should be no surprises and no secrets. Make sure your students know, in advance, why you are conducting the test, which content will be assessed, how the test will be designed and administered, and the relative weight of the test in relation to the overall grade.

4. Assessment is a shared responsibility between the teacher and the learner. Provide opportunities for students to assess their own progress, and schedule meetings to discuss your evaluations. students analyze their own behavior, strengths, and preferences when they participate in the assessment process.

Questions to ask yourself

- How are you monitoring student feedback?
- What is the purpose of your test?
- Does your test reflect the objectives of the lesson?

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• Are your students aware of the scheduled date, purpose, content, design, and relative importance of each test?

• How do you organize the test results?

• Have you prepared students for important formal tests, such as the National Examination?

• Do you share assessment responsibility with the learners?

• Have you worked with a colleague to assess you own teaching goals?

Resources

WHAT DO WE LIVE FOR IF NOT TO MAKE THE WORLD LESS DIFFICULT FOR EACH OTHER?

GEORGE ELI()T

Peace corps language learning resources

WHOLE ICE CATALOG NO.

M0031	**ESP: Teaching English for Specific Purposes** by Mary Schleppegrell and Brenda Bowman. (Peace Corps ICE) 1986. Provides step by-step procedures for designing a program in English for Specific Purposes and for creating materials and activities in the classroom. Covers the necessary language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), includes teaching grammar and study skills, and presents general guidelines for program and classroom management.
ED129	**Keep Talking Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Teaching** by Friederike Klippel. (Cambridge University Press) 1984. Practical guide to communication activities for a language classroom. Offers variety of exercises to complement traditional foreign language lessons. Suitable for elementary to advanced levels.
ED104	**Problem Solving and Comprehension** by Arthur Whimbey & Jack Lochhead. (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.) 1986. Handbook to sharpen thinking skills, specifically analysis and comprehension.
ED132	**Recipes for Tired Teachers: Well Seasoned Activities for the ESOL Classroom.** Edited by Christopher Sion. (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.) 1985. Practical, easy-to-follow activities designed to reinforce language skills. Activities are grouped together under such headings as group dynamics, creative writing and thinking, reading and writing, listening, vocabulary, and fun and games.

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ED118	**Teach English: A Training Course for Teachers, Trainer's Handbook.** Trainer's handbook to help less experienced teachers develop practical skills in teaching TEFL. Concentrates on methods and techniques which do not require lengthy preparation of materials, extensive use of equipment, or complex classroom organization.
ED106	**Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary** by Virginia French Allen. (Oxford University Press) 1983. Comprehensive guide that includes methods for teaching vocabulary and practical tests for determining which words students understand.
ED107	**Techniques in Teaching Writing by** Ann Raimes. (Oxford University Press) 1983. Practical suggestions and examples of writing strategies used successfully in ESL classrooms.
ED108	**Techniques in Testing** by Harold S. Madsen. (Oxford University Press) 1983. Designed to improve skills in constructing and administering classroom tests for ESL students.
M0041	**TEFL/TESL: Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language** prepared by the Center for Applied Linguistics. (Peace Corps ICE) 1989. Designed for use by PCVs with no previous teaching experience. Discusses major teaching approaches and provides specific techniques for teaching the four basic language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), grammar, lesson planning, and testing.
ED150	**Understanding and Using English Grammar** by Betty Azar. (Prentice-Hall Inc.) 1981. Practical text with the forms, meanings, and usage of basic structures in English grammar. Charts and presentations are accompanied by oral and written exercises that range from controlled responses to open communicative interactions.

Peace corps academic and community- based resources

WHOLE ICE CATALOG NO.

T0065	**Community-Based initiative to Eradicate Guinea Worm: A Manual for Peace Corps Volunteers** by Eva Silverfine, William Brieger, Angela Churchhill. A manual for Volunteers working in communities where Guinea worm disease is endemic. Provides dear explanations, with visual aids, of the life cycle, symptoms, treatment, and prevention of the disease.

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EN	**Environmental Education: Creating a Program that Works** by Judy Braus and David Wood. Publication Date: Summer 1993. Provides an overview of environmental education, including how to assess environmental education problems and "size up" a school, how to create environmental education lessons, dozens of activity samples, suggestions for evaluation, and more.
AG237	**The Growing Classroom: Garden-based Science** by Roberta Jaffe and Gary Appel. (Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.) 1990. Provides a curriculum for teachers to develop a garden-based science program. Offers information for starting a school garden, incorporating it into a classroom, and adapting the program to meet specific needs and resources. Presents techniques for managing a class and methods for cultivating community support.
ED 089	**Mathematical Activities** by Brian Bolt. (Cambridge University Press) 1988. Contains more than 150 games, puzzles, and investigations designed to encourage creative thinking and practical work. A resource of mathematical education ideas.
WD 006	**Navamaga Training Activities for Group Building, Health and Income Generation** edited by Suzanne Kindervatter. (Overseas Education Fund International, Washington, D.C.) 1988. A handbook developed in Sri Lanka to help strengthen the economic roles of rural women through income generation, group building, and health training.
HE234	**Tallying AIDS: A Guide for Community Work** by International Planned Parenthood Federation. (Macmillan Education Ltd.) 1988. Guide to promote understanding of the disease, awareness of the means of preventing its spread, and support for people infected with HIV. Information is accessible and thought-provoking.
ED91-95	**Nucleus English for Science and Technology Series. Titles in the series: Biology, Physics Chemistry, Mathematics, Engineering, Agriculture, Medicine, Nursing Science, Architecture, and Building Construction** edited by Martin Bates and Tony Dudley-Evans. (Longman) 1985. An integrated series for students who need English language skills for specific purposes. Provides a sound basis for the study of scientific and technological subjects in English. Student books accompanied by teacher's notes on methodology and scientific background, cassettes and texts for listening comprehension.

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WD003	**Women Working Together for Personal Economic, and Community Development** by Suzanne Kindervatter. (Overseas Education Fund International, Washington, D.C.) 1983. A handbook of learning activities that address the needs of low-income communities. Activities to help participants clarify personal goals, identify community resources, and organize for community problem-solving.

Additional recommendations

Adapting Materials for Content-Based Language Instruction by Deborah J. Short. (ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics). 1989. Article describes methods for adapting mainstream materials for ESL classes where the students learn language through the context of specific subject area topics rather than through isolated language features.

The American Way: An Introduction to American Culture by Edward N. Kearny, Mary Ann Kearny, and JoAnn Crandall. (Prentice-Hall, Inc.) 1984. Readings to help students enhance their understanding of American cultural values and behaviors. Contains information about religion, business, government, race relations, education, recreation, and the family. Each chapter contains exercises to improve vocabulary and comprehension, encourage analyses, promote discussion, and strengthen writing and study skills.

Building Bridges by Anna U. Chamot, J. Michael O'Malley, and Lisa Kupper. (Heinle & Heinle Publishers). 1992. This ESL series address high beginning to intermediate language levels. Designed to promote language development, the lessons draw on subject area concepts, academic language and learning strategies.

The Card Book by Abigail Tom and Heather McKay. (Alemany Press) 1991. Provides interactive games and activities to stimulate communication among independent learners as they exchange information, share opinions, and solve problems.

Circle of Learning Cooperation in the Classroom by David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, Edythe Johnson Holubec, and Patricia Roy. (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) 1984. Manual discusses the importance of cooperative learning and provides guidelines for implementing cooperative learning and teaching students cooperative skills. Addresses basic questions and myths about cooperative learning.

A Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach: An ESL Content-based Curriculum by Anna Chamot and J. Michael O'Malley. (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education). 1986. Guide to the CALLA Approach which uses learning strategies to help teach content topics in ESL classrooms.

Cooperative Language Learning: A Teacher's Resource Book edited by Carolyn Kessler. (Prentice Hall Regents) 1992. Collection of readings on cooperative learning written by well-known names in the field. Explores curriculum concerns, small group work, integration of language and content (mathematics, science, social studies), the role of the teacher, and teacher training.

Content-based Second Language Instruction by Donna Brinton, Marguerite Snow and Mari Wesche. New York: (Newbury House Publishers). 1989. Excellent resource for teachers interested in the theory and application of content-based instruction. Although the focus is primarily on post-secondary classes, many interesting activities and classroom models that are easily adapted to elementary and secondary programs are provided

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English Skills for Algebra by JoAnn Crandall, Theresa Dale, Nancy Rhodes and George Spanos. (Prentice Hall Regents). 1989. Offers a paired model set of books so student-student or tutor-student work may be done. Provides activities designed to help students understand the language of pre-algebra problems and develop problem-solving skills in a careful step-by-step sequence.

ESL through Content-area Instruction: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies. JoAnn Crandall (Ed.) (Prentice Hall Regents). 1987. Introduces content and ESL teachers to integrated language and content instruction. Chapters identify the need for teacher collaboration across disciplines. Sample transcripts of students engaging in language/content learning activities and sample lesson plans with math, science and social studies content are included.

Experiential Learning Experience as the source of learning and development. David A. Kolb (Prentice Hall). 1984. Gives the theoretical framework of the Experiential Learning Cycle.

The 4MAT System.: Teaching to learning styles with left/right mode techniques Bernice McCarthy. (Excel) 1980. Gives an excellent overview of how 4MAT ties in with theories of educational psychology. Presents 4MAT lesson plans for all levels. Contains wonderful graphics and lay-outs which will appeal to visual learners

4MAT in Action II: Sample lesson plans for use with the 4MAT system. Susan Morris & Bernice' McCarthy (Excel) 1990. Great ideas for lesson plans which can be adapted to suit your needs.

4MAT and Science: Towards wholeness in science education. B. Samples, B. McCarthy, B. Hammond (Excel) 1985. For when you feel adventurous and want to include science in your TEFL/TESL lessons.

How to Integrate Language and Content: A Training Manual by Deborah J. Short. (Center for Applied Linguistics). 19')1. Manual for teachers and teacher trainers who want to integrate language and content in their lessons. Topics include strategies and techniques, assessment issues, lesson planning, materials adaptations, program design and training. Examples are drawn from several content areas: science, mathematics, social studies, and health.

Integrating Language and Content Instruction: Strategies and Techniques by Deborah J. Short. (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education). 1991. Discusses the approach to integrating language and content instruction at the school and classroom level. Specific activities are described including developing student background knowledge, meeting their cognitive needs and adapting ESL techniques to the content classroom. Sample lesson plans are also provided.

Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know by Rebecca L. Oxford. (Newbury House Publishers) 1990. Provides language teachers with practical recommendations for developing their students' second language learning strategies. Detailed suggestions for strategy use in each of the four language skills are included, as well as case studies and models.

The Learner-Centered Curriculum by David Nunan. (Cambridge University Press) 1988. Useful guide that reports on what teachers actually do as they plan, implement, and evaluate language courses. Promotes the concept of a negotiated model. Stresses the value of collaboration between teachers and learners.

Learning English Through Science by Francis Sutman, Virginia Allen and Francis Shoemaker. (National Science Teachers Association). 1986. Discusses teaching in multilingual settings, reading science materials, techniques for teaching English and science, and provides sample lessons and lesson models.

Life Sciences for ESL (botany, zoology, human anatomy, human physiology, human ecology) and Physical Science for EST` (meterology, topography, oceanography, chemistry and physics, astronomy) by Mary Ann Christison and Sharron Bassano. (Longman) 1991. introduces students

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to key science topics. Features readings with focus and detail questions, pre-reading and post-reading activities designed to develop oral language skills, an extensive array of hands-on experiments, cooperative group work and peer-tutoring activities, vocabulary reinforcement activities, and a comprehensive glossary, answer key, and teachers notes.

Maths Matters Plus Books A and B by Gerry Price, Joyce Chester, and Eon Harper (Longman) 1991. Aims to enhance the mathematical knowledge of 14-16 year olds by relating mathematics to real world application. The learning material is based on practical situations, with scenarios that offer opportunities for discussion, problem-solving, and explorations to develop process skills. (Teacher's books and copy masters available.)

Organizing Thinking by Howard and Sandra Black. (Critical Thinking Press) 1990. Book I (grades 24), Book II (grades 4-8). Excellent resource on graphic organizers. Provides organizing frames and demonstrates their use in a wide variety of lesson plans drawn from literature, writing, music, social studies, mathematics, science and personal problem solving.

Performance and Portfolio Assessment for Language Minority Students by Lorraine Valdez Pierce and J. Michael O'Malley. (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education) 1992. Publication describes performance assessment procedures and a portfolio assessment framework for monitoring language development. Provides examples of performance and assessment tools and procedures.

A Practical Handbook of Language Teaching by David Cross. (Cassell) 1991. Combines basic instructional skills and procedures with communicative teaching, with the focus largely on authentic use of language. Comprehensive training manual that combines the essentials of successful classroom management and teaching.

Say It Naturally Verbal Strategies for Authentic Communication by Allie Patricia Wall. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.) 1987. Based on a functional/notional approach to language learning. Text provides communicative strategies to help language learners adapt to social situations in which a certain amount of verbal know-how, tact, and polite phrasing is required. Designed to strengthen social skills in a conversation class.

Science for Language Learners by Ann K. Fathman and Mary Ellen Quinn. (Prentice Hall Regents). 1989. Presents integrated science and language lessons that combine authentic science activities with language exercises. Activities are drawn from physical and life science curricula and include guided demonstrations, group study and independent investigations.

Teaching Language in Context by Alice C. Omaggio. (Heinle and Heinle) 1986. investigates issues related to proficiency in second language learning. Includes current theories of language learning. methodological trends, and guidelines for contextualizing practice. Presents ideas for integrative activities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Explores the accuracy issue, formats for proficiency-oriented classroom testing, and the teaching of culture in a procifiency-oriented curriculum.

Teaching Makes a Difference by Carol Cummings. (Teaching Inc., Edmonds, Washington) 1990. Practical, straight-forward book for classroom teachers. Includes chapters on task analysis, long-range planning, monitoring and adjusting, teaching for retention, active participation, planning better lessons, and concept development strategies. Explanations of concepts are clear with plenty of examples and self-check exercises.

Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL by Jill Bell. (Dormac, Inc.) 1988. Practical guide for teachers of multilevel classes of adult learners. Students are considered active participants in the planning, learning, and evaluation process. includes methodology and detailed suggestions for activities and exercises.

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The Teaching of Problem Solving by Ian Inston (Longman) 1991. Emphasis on the development of independent thinking skills. An invaluable guide to teachers who wish to give pupils the challenge of working on their own to develop their own ideas and independence.

Teaching Science to English Learners, Grades 4-8 by Ann K. Fathman, Mary Ellen Quinn and Carolyn Kessler. (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education). 1992. Guide describes learning and teaching principles for integrating science and language activities with emphasis on making science meaningful. Sample lessons are provided.

Testing for Language Teachers by Arthur Hughes. (Cambridge University Press) 1989. Helps teachers understand the principles of testing and how they can be applied in practice. To help language teachers write better tests, this book takes the view that test construction is essentially a matter of problem solving, with every teaching situation setting a different testing problem.

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