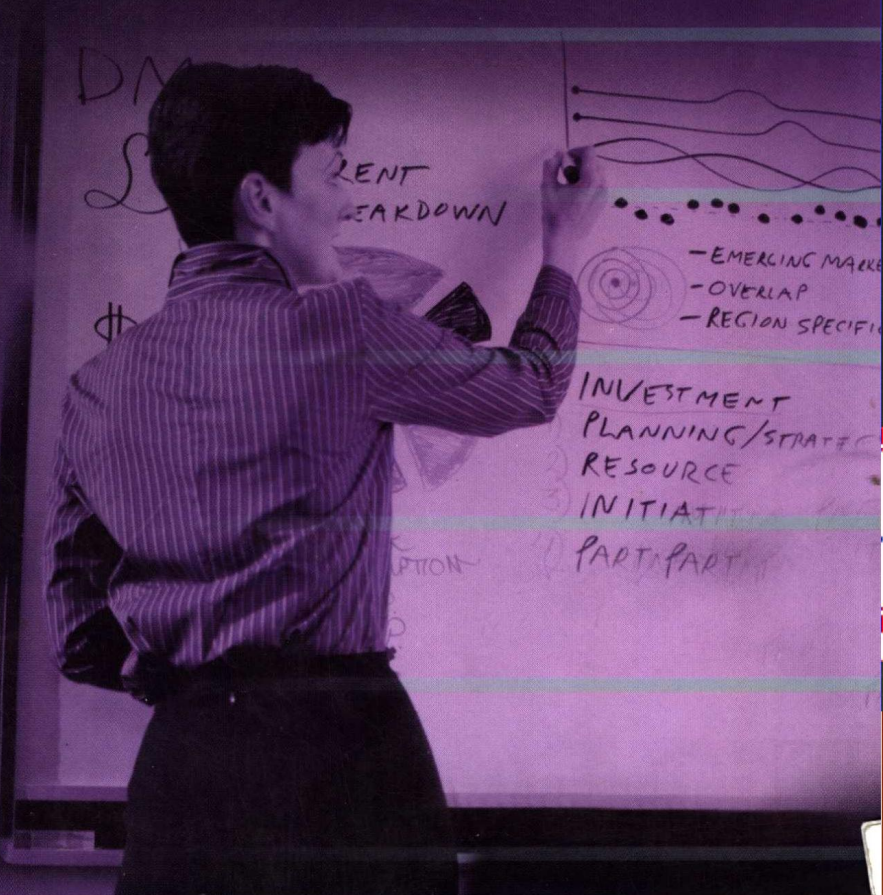


A Course in English Language Teaching

英语教学法教程

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高等教育出版社

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内 容 提 要

《英语教学法教程》适用于师范院校英语专业学生,也可用于中学英语教师的继续教育课程和各类英语教师的在职培训课程。

本书共分14个单元,分别介绍了英语教学的基本概念、交际教学原则和活动、备课和写教案、课堂管理的方法、语言知识的教学方法、听说读写四项技能的教学、综合语言技能的教学、教学评价和教材评价与使用。每单元均配有大量练习,书后附有部分参考答案。

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前 言

《英语教学法教程》是为师范院校英语专业学生编写的英语教学法教材，也可用于中学英语教师的继续教育课程和各类英语教师的在职培训课程。总课时大约需要70~80课时。

一名合格的英语教师，不仅要具备扎实的语言基本功，掌握必要的语言基本知识和基本技能，具有较强的语言交际能力，而且还要掌握一定的教育基本理论和教学基本技能，即能够根据实际需要选择并运用恰当的教学方法和技巧，具备课堂管理的能力与评价的能力，同时具有驾驭教材的能力。而这些能力的形成都基于我们对语言的认识和对语言学习过程的认识。这些正是我们这本教材的目的所在。

本教材力求体现以学生为主体的教育思想，从学生的学习经历和认知基础出发，通过反思、讨论、探究和实践，启发学生的思维，发挥学生的创造能力，帮助他们构建新的认识和理念，培养他们分析问题和解决问题的能力。本教材的主要目的不是提供一种教学模式和几种教学方法，而是提供一个思考和探索研究的园地，一个小小的资源中心，为学生和教师进行教学探索和教学方法与技巧的创新打基础。我们认为，没有一种方法可以适用于一切学生和一切环境，教师的教育教学能力就在于能够依据自己的环境、特定的教学条件和学生的需求以及语言教学的规律，对教学方法和技巧进行选择 and 再创造。

全书共分14单元。第一章重点讨论语言观和语言学习观、优秀英语教师的基本素质以及如何成为一名优秀的英语教师。第二章着重讨论交际教学的思想并介绍一些教学的基本概念和交际教学活动。第三章的重点是备课和写教案，旨在为下面的学习和分阶段备课及写教案打基础。第四章讨论课堂管理的方法。第五、六、七章是语音、语法和词汇的教学，属于语言知识的教学方法与技巧。第八、九、十、十一章是听、说、读、写四项技能的教学。第十二章是综合语言技能的教学。第十三章是关于教学评价的讨论。最后一章，即第十四章是有关教材的评价与使用的指导。

这本教材从设想到计划，从试用到出版，在不断地修改和补充之中走过了整整六年的路程，今天仍然有许多不尽人意之处，总觉得还需要更多的时间和精力去修改和完善她。在这六年中，我们得到了许多同行、外籍专家、教师和朋友的支持和帮助，这里特别提出感谢的有：英国驻中国大使馆文化教育处前一等秘书 John Hilton 先生，英国教材编写专家 Chris Jacques，英国利兹大学 Martin Wedell 博士。他们对这本教材的设计和编写都给予了很多的建议和支持。香港大学课程学系的 Bob Adamson 博士不仅对全书提出了很多有益的修改建议，还撰写了第十二章，并对全书进行了审校。在此，我们对他们表示最衷心的感谢。

诚恳希望使用本教材的教师和学生对我们提出批评指正。

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CONTENTS

Unit 1	Language and Learning	1
1.1	How do we learn languages?	1
1.2	Views on language	2
1.3	Views on language learning	4
1.4	What is a good language teacher?	6
1.5	How can one become a good language teacher?	7
1.6	An overview of the book	11
Unit 2	Communicative Principles and Activities	13
2.1	Language use in real life vs. traditional pedagogy	13
2.2	Fostering communicative competence	15
2.3	The implementation of language skills	16
2.4	Communicative activities	18
2.5	Conclusion	23
Unit 3	Lesson Planning	24
3.1	Why is lesson planning necessary?	24
3.2	Principles for good lesson planning	25
3.3	Macro planning vs. micro planning	26
3.4	Components of a lesson plan	28
3.5	Sample lesson plans	31
3.6	Conclusion	34
Unit 4	Classroom Management	35
4.1	The role of the teacher	35
4.2	Student grouping	40
4.3	Discipline in the language classroom	43
4.4	Conclusion	47
Unit 5	Teaching Pronunciation	48
5.1	The role of pronunciation	48
5.2	The goal of teaching pronunciation	50
5.3	Aspects of pronunciation	52
5.4	Practising sounds	53
5.5	Practising stress and intonation	56
5.6	Conclusion	58

Unit 6 Teaching Grammar	60
6.1 The role of grammar in ELT	60
6.2 Grammar presentation methods	62
6.3 Grammar practice	63
6.4 Conclusion	70
Unit 7 Teaching Vocabulary	71
7.1 Vocabulary and vocabulary building	71
7.2 Presenting new words	72
7.3 Consolidating vocabulary	74
7.4 Developing vocabulary building strategies	77
7.5 Conclusion	79
Unit 8 Teaching Listening	80
8.1 Why does listening seem so difficult?	80
8.2 What do we listen to in everyday life?	81
8.3 Characteristics of the listening process	83
8.4 Principles for teaching listening	84
8.5 Pre-listening activities	86
8.6 While-listening activities	89
8.7 Post-listening activities	92
8.8 Conclusion	95
Unit 9 Teaching Speaking	96
9.1 What are the characteristics of spoken language?	96
9.2 Designing speaking tasks	98
9.3 Using group work in speaking tasks	99
9.4 Types of speaking tasks	100
9.5 Conclusion	110
Unit 10 Teaching Reading	111
10.1 How do we read?	111
10.2 What do we read?	113
10.3 Skills involved in reading comprehension	115
10.4 Principles and models for teaching reading	116
10.5 Pre-reading activities	118
10.6 While-reading activities	124
10.7 Post-reading activities	132
10.8 Conclusion	135

Unit 11 Teaching Writing	136
11.1 The nature of writing in reality	136
11.2 A communicative approach to writing	138
11.3 Problems in writing tasks	140
11.4 A process approach to writing	141
11.5 Writing through e-mail	144
11.6 Conclusion	146
Unit 12 Integrated Skills	147
12.1 Why should we integrate the four skills?	147
12.2 How can we integrate the four skills?	149
12.3 What are the implications for teaching?	153
12.4 What are the limitations of integrating the four skills?	156
12.5 Conclusion	156
Unit 13 Assessment in Language Teaching	157
13.1 Assessment purposes	157
13.2 Assessment methods	159
13.3 Assessment criteria	161
13.4 Assessment principles	162
13.5 Testing in assessment	163
13.6 Conclusion	166
Unit 14 Evaluating and Adapting Textbooks	167
14.1 Why and what?	167
14.2 Evaluating textbooks	168
14.3 Selecting textbooks	170
14.4 Adapting textbooks	174
14.5 Conclusion	175
Appendix 1 Solutions to Tasks	177
Appendix 2 Reading Texts to Unit 10	193
References	198

UNIT 1

Language and Learning



Aims of the unit

In this unit we are going to discuss some general matters about language learning and teaching. We are going to discuss five questions in particular:

1. How do we learn languages?
2. What are the common views on language?
3. What are the common views on language learning?
4. What are the qualities of a good language teacher?
5. How can one become a good language teacher?

1.1 How do we learn languages?

Much of human behaviour is influenced by personal experiences. The way language teachers teach in the classroom is to some extent influenced by the way they learned languages. This is especially true in foreign language teaching. Before we discuss language learning theories, let's first reflect on our own language learning experiences.

TASK 1

Below is a questionnaire on how people learned a foreign language. In the first column write down your own responses. Then interview three other students in your class and fill in the other columns. You may need to write responses on a separate piece of paper.

	You	ST1	ST2	ST3
1. How many foreign languages can you speak?				
2. Did you find learning a foreign language easy?				
3. What difficulties did you experience? Why?				
4. Which skills did you find more difficult to learn?				
5. Did you focus on knowledge or skills? Why?				
6. Why did you learn the foreign language(s)?				
7. Did you find it interesting to learn the foreign language(s)?				
8. What were your most common learning activities?				
9. Did you like the way you learned the foreign language(s)?				


From the results of the above task, you may have found that 1) people learn languages for different reasons; 2) people learn languages in different ways; 3) people have different understandings about language learning; and 4) people have different capabilities in language learning. Thus the challenge the language teacher is confronted with is how teaching methodology can cater for learners who have more differences than commonalities.

1.2 Views on language

One question that all approaches of language teaching should answer is “What is language?” The answer to this question is the basis for syllabus design, teaching methods, teaching procedures in the classroom, and even the techniques used in the class. Different views on language generate different teaching methodologies.

TASK 2

Work in groups of four. Brainstorm possible answers to the question: What is language? When you are ready, join another group and share your ideas.



To give a concise definition of language has always been difficult for linguists and philologists. Although there has been an enormous amount of research in language in the past half century, no authoritative answer has been given to “What is language?” Rather, people talk about views of language, seemingly allowing for or accepting different theories for the moment. However, language teachers clearly need to know generally what sort of entity they are dealing with and how the particular language they are teaching fits into that entity (Brown, 1994a). For sample definitions of “language”, please refer to Appendix 1.

In the past half century, language teaching and learning practices have been influenced by three different views of language, namely, the structural view, the functional view and the interactional view.



**Structural
view**

The structural view sees language as a linguistic system made up of various subsystems: from phonological, morphological, lexical, etc. to sentences. Each language has a finite number of such structural items. To learn a language means to learn these structural items so as to be able to understand and produce language.



**Functional
view**

The functional view sees language as a linguistic system but also as a means for doing things. Most of our day-to-day language use involves functional activities: offering, suggesting, advising, apologizing, etc. Therefore, learners learn a language in order to be able to do things with it. To perform functions, learners need to know how to combine the grammatical rules and the vocabulary to express notions that perform the functions. Examples of notions are concept of present, past & future time; the expressions of certainty and possibility; the roles of agent and instrument within a sentence; and special relationships between people and objects.



**Interactional
view**

The interactional view considers language as a communicative tool, whose main use is to build up and maintain social relations between people. Therefore, learners not only need to know the grammar and vocabulary of the language but as importantly they need to know the rules for using them in a whole range of communicative contexts.

These three views present an ever wider view of language. The structural view limits knowing a language to knowing its structural rules and vocabulary. The communicative or notional-functional view adds the need to know how to use the rules and vocabulary to do whatever it is one wants to do. The interactional view says that to know how to do what one wants to do involves also knowing whether it is appropriate to do so, and where, when and how it is appropriate to do it. In order to know this, the learner has to study the patterns and rules of language above the sentence level to learn how language is used in different speech contexts.

The understanding of the nature of language may provide the basis for a particular teaching method (Richards and Rodgers, 1986), but more importantly, it is closely

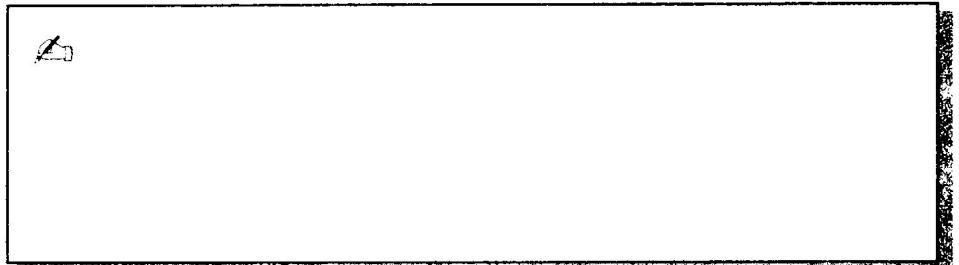
related to the understanding of language learning. If language is considered to have a finite number of structural items, learning the language probably means learning these items. If language is more than just a system of structures, it is more importantly a tool, then to learn the language means to use it, rather than just study what it is and how it is formed. The next section summarizes some current theories about language learning.

1.3 *Views on language learning*

The language learning theory underlying an approach or method usually answers two questions: 1) What are the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes involved in language learning? 2) What are the conditions that need to be met in order for these learning processes to be activated?

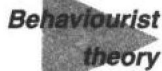
TASK 3

Work in groups of four. Brainstorm the answers to the two questions stated above. When you are ready, join another group and share your ideas.



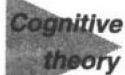
Although these two questions have never been satisfactorily answered, a vast amount of research has been done from all aspects, which can be broadly divided into process-oriented theories and condition-oriented theories. **Process-oriented** theories are concerned with how the mind processes new information, such as habit formation, induction, making inference, hypothesis testing and generalization. **Condition-oriented** theories emphasize the nature of the human and physical context in which language learning takes place, such as the number of students, what kind of input learners receive, and the learning atmosphere.

Some researchers attempt to formulate teaching approaches directly from these theories. For example, the Natural Approach, Total Physical Response and the Silent Way are based on one or more dimensions of processes and conditions. At this level, it is too early to formulate a specific approach, because some aspects are still too vague, for example, what is done in these processes.


 Behaviourist theory

The behaviourist theory of language learning was initiated by behavioural psychologist Skinner, who applied Watson and Raynor's theory of conditioning to the way humans acquire language (Harmer, 1983). Based on their experiments, Watson and Raynor formulated a stimulus-response theory of psychology. In this theory all complex forms of behaviour — motions, habits, and such — are seen as composed of simple muscular and glandular elements that can be observed and measured. They claimed that emotional reactions are learned in much the same way as other skills. The key point of the theory of conditioning is that “you can train an animal to do anything (within reason) if you follow a certain procedure which has three major stages, stimulus, response, and reinforcement” (Harmer, 1983:30).

Based on the theory of conditioning, Skinner suggested language is also a form of behaviour. It can be learned the same way as an animal is trained to respond to stimuli. This theory of learning is referred to as behaviourism, which was adopted for some time by the language teaching profession, particularly in America. One influential result is the audio-lingual method, which involves endless “listen and repeat” drilling activities. The idea of this method is that language is learned by constant repetition and the reinforcement of the teacher. Mistakes were immediately corrected, and correct utterances were immediately praised. This method is still used in many parts of the world today.


 Cognitive theory

The term cognitivism is often used loosely to describe methods in which students are asked to think rather than simply repeat. It seems to be largely the result of Noam Chomsky's reaction to Skinner's behaviourist theory, which led to the revival of structural linguistics. The key point of Chomsky's theory is reflected in his most famous question: if all language is a learned behaviour, how can a child produce a sentence that has never been said by others before?

According to Chomsky, language is not a form of behaviour, it is an intricate rule-based system and a large part of language acquisition is the learning of this system. There are a finite number of grammatical rules in the system and with a knowledge of these rules an infinite number of sentences can be produced. A language learner acquires language competence which enables him to produce language.

Though Chomsky's theory is not directly applied in language teaching, it has had a great impact on the profession. One influential idea is that students should be allowed to create their own sentences based on their understanding of certain rules. This idea is clearly in opposition to the audio-lingual method.

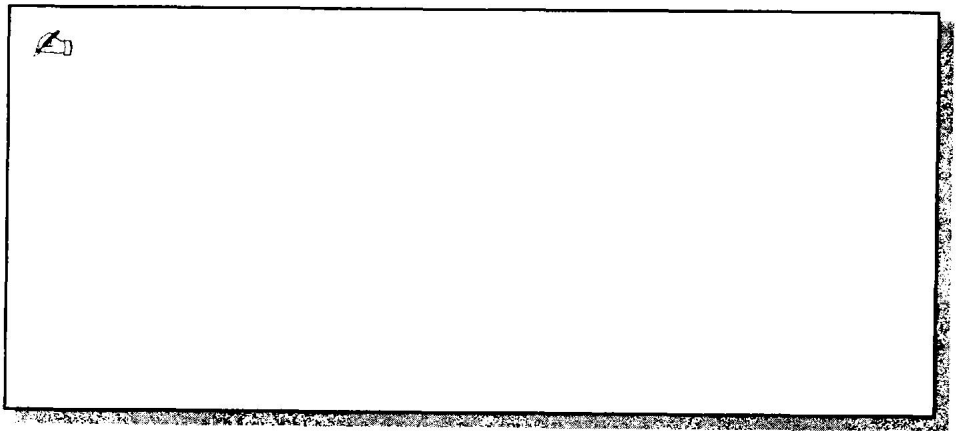
Although people are still pretty much in the dark as to what language is and how language is learned, it is believed that a general knowledge about language and language learning will help language teachers do a better job.

1.4 What is a good language teacher?

Some teachers with an excellent command of a foreign language cannot teach the language well. However, some teachers with a general command of the language can teach it very well. What do you think might account for this phenomenon?

TASK 4

Work in groups. Try to identify as many reasons as possible for the question stated above. Note down the reasons so that you can share with students from other groups.



It is clear that whether someone can become a good foreign language teacher does not solely depend on his/her command of the language. There are a variety of elements that contribute to the qualities of a good language teacher. These elements can be categorized into three groups: ethic devotion, professional qualities and personal styles (Parrot, 1993).

TASK 5

Ethic devotion, professional qualities and personal styles jointly contribute to the making of a good English teacher. All the adjectives in the box below could be used to characterize these three aspects.

1. Work in groups of four and decide which adjectives describe ethic devotion, which describe personal styles and which describe professional qualities. Please write your answers on a separate piece of paper.

2. Add any adjectives to the list which describe further qualities that you feel are missing.
3. These adjectives are intended to describe positive qualities or styles. Do you feel that any of them could have a negative side as well? If yes, in what way? For example, an authoritative teacher may make the students feel assured, but he/she may also make the student less free to disagree with him/her.

kind	dynamic	authoritative	speaking clearly
creative	patient	well-informed	hardworking
resourceful	attentive	warm-hearted	well-prepared
flexible	intuitive	accurate	enthusiastic
humorous	caring	disciplined	professionally-trained

(Adapted from Parrot, 1993)

From the above activities we can see that a good English teacher should have ethic devotion, certain desirable personal styles, and more importantly, he or she should have necessary professional qualities. These three aspects constitute the professional competence of a good English teacher. A person who has a good command of English is not necessarily a good teacher because he/she might have only one of the elements of professional competence.

It is assumed that all responsible English teachers have ethic devotion, and they are supposed to make their personal styles compatible with their work. These two aspects, which are beyond the scope of this book, can be achieved as long as the teacher himself has the willingness to do so.

A question that many teachers often ask is: I like my job, and I love the students, but how can I become a good English teacher? Our answer is that you need professional competence, which we are going to discuss in the next section.

1.5

How can one become a good language teacher?

The most important and most difficult part of the making of a good language teacher is the development of professional competence, which is the state or quality of being

adequately qualified for the profession, and armed with a specific range of skills, strategies, knowledge, and ability.

 **TASK 6**

All the following statements could be used to describe what an English teacher should do in order to develop professional competence. Do you agree with them? What else do you think an English teacher should do in order to develop professional competence? Add them in the table and share your ideas with your partner.

	Agree/ Disagree
1. He should learn from other experienced teachers as an apprentice.	
2. He should accumulate experience from his own teaching practice.	
3. He should receive training in teaching methodology.	
4. He should study applied linguistics.	
5. He should perfect his own command of English.	
6. He should go to foreign countries to learn from native speakers.	
7. He should study subjects like education, psychology, etc.	
8. He should observe other teachers teaching.	
9.	
10.	

A language teacher's professional competence is much more difficult than a driver's skill to handle a car, and is more complicated than a student's competence of speaking a foreign language. It involves more factors and longer learning time, and may never be really finished.

Some people think teaching is a craft; that is, a novice teacher can learn the profession by imitating the experts' techniques, just like an apprentice. Others hold the view that teaching is an applied science, based on scientific knowledge and experimentation. By making a compromise between these two views, Wallace (1991) uses a "reflective model" to demonstrate the development of professional competence. The following model is an adapted version.

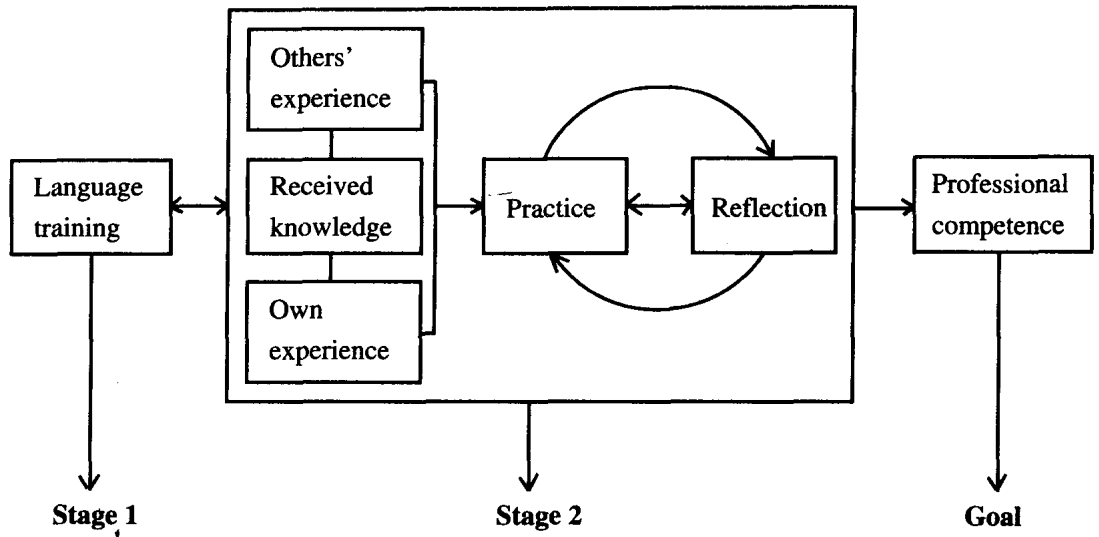


Figure 1.1

(Adapted from Wallace, 1991:15)

From the above model, we can see the development of professional competence for a language teacher involves **Stage 1**, **Stage 2**, and **Goal**. The first stage is language training. All English teachers are supposed to have a sound command of English. Of course, language is always changing so language training can never come to an end.

The second stage seems to be more complicated because it involves three sub-stages: **learning**, **practice**, and **reflection**. The learning stage is actually the specific preparation that a language teacher should make before they go to practice. This preparation can be:

1. learn from others' experience (empirical knowledge)
2. learn received knowledge (such as language theories, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, educational psychology, language teaching methodology, etc.)
3. learn from one's own experience

Both experiential knowledge (others' and one's own) and received knowledge are useful when the teachers go to practice. This is the combination of "craft" and "applied science". The learning stage is followed by practice. The term "practice" can be used in two senses. In one sense, it is a short period of time assigned for student teachers to do teaching practice as part of their education, usually under the supervision of their instructors. This practice is also called pseudo practice. The other sense of "practice" is the real work that the teacher undertakes when he finishes his education.

Teachers benefit from practice if they keep on reflecting on what they have been doing (Stanley, 1999). It should be noted that teachers reflect on their work not only after they finish a certain period of practice, but also while they are doing the practice.

When the student teachers are doing pseudo practice, they are aware that they are trying out what they have learned and they are likely to reflect on their work, because their instructors require them to do so. The pseudo practice is beneficial only if they are serious about the reflection. The most difficult thing to do is to keep on reflecting on their work when teachers are doing practice in the “real work” sense.

After some period of practice and reflection, a teacher matures and approaches the **Goal**. In Figure 1.1, professional competence is at the right end, meaning it is the ultimate goal. But actually it is not. Professional competence is “a moving target or horizon, towards which professionals travel all their professional life but which is never finally attained.” (Wallace, 1991:58).

TASK 7

Work in groups. Discuss possible answers to the following four questions, which are all about the model presented in Figure 1.1.

1. Why are stage 1 and stage 2 interrelated by a double arrow line?
2. Why are practice and reflection connected by a circle?
3. Why is professional competence “a moving target or horizon, towards which professionals travel all their professional life but which is never finally attained”?
4. Where should a TEFL methodology course fit in the model?



1.6**An overview of the book**

It is impossible for one book to cover everything about how to become a good language teacher. It is still too much to explore even one element in depth. This book, *A Course in English Language Teaching*, is aimed at introducing some practical methods to teachers of English as a foreign language. So, apart from a brief introduction about language and language learning and teaching (Units 1 & 2), most units of the book will focus on practical teaching in the classroom.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has been one of the most influential language teaching approaches in recent decades and it has proven to be effective in a variety of language teaching contexts. In Unit 2 we introduce the basic principles of CLT and activities that are often used in CLT. It is intended that most of the methods that we introduce in the remaining units will to some extent follow a communicative approach.

We have arranged lesson planning and classroom management as two early units of the book, i.e. Unit 3 and Unit 4 respectively. Our intention is that users of the book will use what is covered in these two units to design mini teaching activities for the later units.

Units 5, 6 and 7 focus on the teaching of language components, that is, the teaching of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Units 8, 9, 10 and 11 focus on the teaching of four skills of language, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. It should be noted that neither the language components nor the language skills are taught in an isolated fashion. We present the teaching of these language components and skills in separate units so that there is a clearer focus of discussion. In Unit 12, we show how teachers will be able to integrate these areas.

Unit 13 is about language assessment. We have avoided “testing” and “examination” as our unit title because we believe “assessment” is a broader concept. In this unit we have focused on classroom assessment rather than standard tests. Research evidence has shown that classroom-based assessment provides a better evaluation of what the students have achieved during the course of study.

Unit 14 introduces the users of the book to the evaluation, selection and adaptation of textbooks used in language teaching and learning. In the future, classroom teachers will have more autonomy in selecting and adopting ELT textbooks for their students.

Throughout the book, we have provided a number of tasks for each unit. The tasks usually follow a discussion and are aimed at providing the users of the book with opportunities to relate theory to practice. Most of the tasks are open-ended questions,

that is, they do not have fixed answers or solutions. Sometimes, discussions following the task provide the authors' further comments. Occasionally, some tasks seem to need more "concrete" solutions. In that case, we have removed the solutions to Appendix 1 at the back of the book. Our intention is that users of the book should solve the problems by themselves before referring to the authors' suggested solutions.

Most of the tasks involve group work or pair work. If the book is used in class, we consider it very important for students to work in pairs or groups so that they can share knowledge and experience. Individual users of the book may find it inconvenient to perform the tasks. We suggest these users discuss the tasks with their colleagues wherever possible.

UNIT 2

Communicative Principles and Activities



Aims of the unit


In this unit we are going to discuss one of the most important trends in second/ foreign language teaching in the past three decades, that is, the practice of communicative language teaching (CLT). We will focus on the following:

1. Language use in real life vs. traditional pedagogy
2. Communicative competence
3. The implementation of language skills
4. Communicative activities

2.1

Language use in real life vs. traditional pedagogy

The ultimate goal of foreign language teaching is to enable the students to use the foreign language in work or life when necessary. Thus we should teach that part of the language that will be used (rather than all parts of the language); and we should teach language in the way that is used in the real world. However this is not always the case in the present day foreign language teaching practice. Very often there is a big gap between the use of language in real life and the traditional foreign language teaching pedagogy.


TASK 1

Work in groups and brainstorm any differences between language use in real life and traditional language teaching pedagogy. You may reflect on your own experiences of language learning or teaching.

	In real life	In traditional pedagogy
How is language used/taught?		
What parts of language are used/taught?		

The differences between language use in real life and what is done in traditional language teaching pedagogy are numerous and beyond the scope of discussion in this unit. We can only focus on a few major points. Generally speaking language use in real life differs from traditional language teaching pedagogy in the following aspects:

- 1) In real life, language is used to perform certain communicative functions; in traditional pedagogy, the teaching focus is on form rather than functions. So when students have learned a lot of sentences or patterns, they do not know their functions. Thus they are unable to use them appropriately in real social situations.
- 2) For various reasons, traditional pedagogy tends to focus on one or two language skills and ignore the others. For example, due to the needs of language learning in the 19th century, the grammar-translation method emphasized reading and writing skills and virtually ignored listening and speaking skills. In real language use we use all skills, including the receptive skills of listening and reading, and the productive skills of speaking and writing.
- 3) In reality, language is always used in a certain context, but traditional pedagogy tends to isolate language from its context. For example, in traditional pedagogy, when the English passive voice is introduced, the teacher tries to present how the object in an active sentence is moved to the front of a passive sentence and how the verb is changed to an auxiliary plus an -ed form of the original verb. Then the students will ask when the passive is used and why they should learn it. In many cases the teacher may explain the reasons, one of which is, when it is not necessary to tell who has done the action, the passive is used. Then the students will ask another question "Why is it not necessary to tell who has done the action?" Students keep asking questions because the grammar pattern is taken away from the


language context. If the teaching of the passive starts with examples from real language use in context, students will have fewer questions to ask.

2.2 *Fostering communicative competence*

One possible solution to bridge the gap between classroom language teaching and real life language use is the adoption of communicative language teaching, which has in recent years become a fashionable term to cover a variety of developments in syllabus design and in the methodology of foreign language teaching. The goal of CLT is to develop students' communicative competence, which includes both the knowledge about the language and the knowledge about how to use the language appropriately in communicative situations.

TASK 2

Work in pairs and brainstorm the elements of communicative competence. When you are ready, join another pair and compare your ideas.



The term *communicative competence* is used in contrast to Noam Chomsky's term *linguistic competence*, which is understood as the tacit knowledge of language structure and the ability to use this knowledge to understand and produce language. For Chomsky, competence simply means knowledge of the language system: grammatical knowledge in other words. However, if we look at how language is used in real communication, we have to accept that real language use involves far more than knowledge and ability for grammaticality. In Hymes's (1979:15) words, there are "rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless", which simply means, besides grammatical rules, language use is governed by rules of use, which ensure that the desired or intended functions are performed and the language used is appropriate to the context.

According to Hymes (1979), communicative competence includes four aspects:

1) knowing whether or not something is formally possible (grammatically accept-

- able), which is roughly equivalent to Chomsky's linguistic competence;
- 2) knowing whether something is understandable to human beings;
 - 3) knowing whether something is in line with social norms;
 - 4) knowing whether or not something is in fact done: Do people actually use language this way?

In other words, communicative competence entails knowing not only the language code or the form of language, but also what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in any given situation. Communicative competence includes knowledge of what to say, when, how, where, and to whom.

Based on the concept of communicative competence and aiming at developing such competence, communicative language teaching has the following features:

- 1) It stresses the need to allow students opportunities for authentic and creative use of the language.
- 2) It focuses on meaning rather than form.
- 3) It suggests that learning should be relevant to the needs of the students.
- 4) It advocates task-based language teaching. Students should be given tasks to perform or problems to solve in the classroom.
- 5) It emphasizes a functional approach to language learning (i.e. what people do with language, such as inviting, apologizing, greeting and introducing, etc.). Also, to be competent in the target language, learners should acquire not only linguistic knowledge, but also the culture of that language.

Although people's understanding of communicative language teaching varies, the following three principles, which have been suggested by Richards and Rodgers (1986:72), have been generally agreed upon:

- 1) **Communication principle:** Activities that involve real communication promote learning.
- 2) **Task principle:** Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning.
- 3) **Meaningfulness principle:** Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

2.3

The implementation of language skills

The translation of communicative competence in language teaching practice is to develop learners' language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

In traditional pedagogy, listening and speaking activities include: *listening to texts*

(conversations or stories) either read by the teacher or pre-recorded on the tape; repeating what is heard; answering questions according to what is heard; producing responses based on given cues; retelling what is heard. It is clear these activities involve use of language in a completely different way from how language is used in reality. So, listening and speaking skills need to be redefined in terms of the real communicative use, that is, students should have the chance to listen to and produce what is meaningful, authentic, unpredictable, and creative if ever possible.

The listening skill has received special attention in CLT, possibly because it previously had been neglected as a skill in its own right. Listening shares a number of features with reading since both are interpretative or receptive skills. Listening, therefore, is viewed not only as the counterpart of speaking, but also as an independent skill with its own objectives. In real life, there are many situations in which we act as listeners only, for example as audience for radio, television, lectures, films, etc.

Since communicative courses focus on meaning rather than on form, the reading skill is redefined to focus on the purpose of reading. Traditionally the purpose of reading is to learn language, namely vocabulary, grammar, etc. The reading skills involved might be decoding, structural analysis, etc. In CLT, reading is to extract the meaning or the message, and for different reading purposes, the students use different skills, such as skimming and scanning (See Unit 10 for detailed discussion of skimming and scanning).

Finally, in CLT, the writing skill has been expanded to focus on its communicative goals as well. Students should practise writing what people write in reality and writing in the way people write in reality. Students should have the chance to write to express their own feelings or describe their own experiences, thus making the practice of writing meaningful and authentic.

In a word, CLT has not replaced the previous approaches or methodologies. It has only expanded the areas: language content (to incorporate functions), learning process (cognitive style and information processing), and product (language skills).

TASK 3

Use the table below and reflect on your English learning experiences. What skills did you practise? What skills were neglected? What are your strong and weak skills? When you are ready, go into groups and share your experiences.

	You	Other students	Reasons
Skills practised			
Skills neglected			
Strong skills			
Weak skills			

2.4 **Communicative activities**

The key assumption in communicative language teaching is that the students learn the language through engaging in a variety of communicative activities. But what are communicative activities? In his classic book *Communicative Language Teaching*, Littlewood (1981) introduced a classification of communicative activities as follows:

Functional communicative activities:

- Identifying pictures
- Discovering identical pairs
- Discovering sequences or locations
- Discovering missing information
- Discovering missing features
- Discovering “secrets”
- Communicating patterns and pictures
- Communicative models
- Discovering differences
- Following directions
- Reconstructing story-sequences
- Pooling information to solve a problem

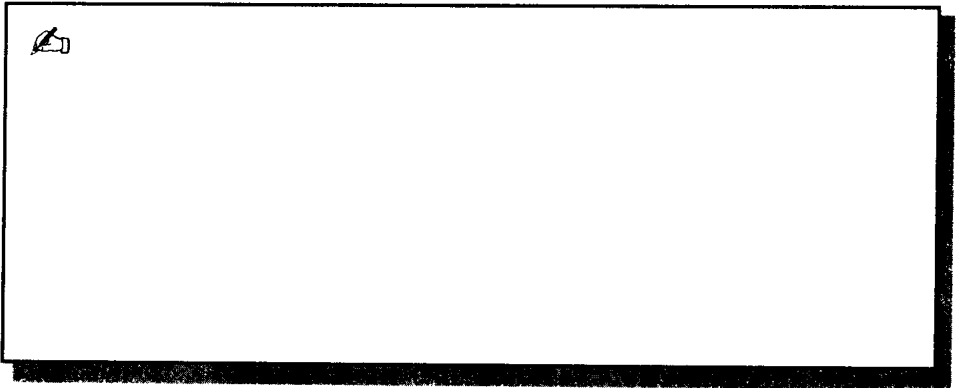
Social interaction activities:

- Role-playing through cued dialogues
- Role-playing through cues and information
- Role-playing through situation and goals

- Role-playing through debate or discussion
- Large-scale simulation activities
- Improvisation

TASK 4

In your experiences of learning English, which of the activities listed above did you often do? How were the activities conducted? How did you feel about the activities? When you are ready, work in groups and share your experiences.



From the names of these activities, it is clear that most of them are aimed at developing listening and speaking skills. Moreover, Littlewood's book has another chapter exclusively introducing listening activities, but not reading and writing activities.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) claim that the range of exercise types and activities compatible with communicative language teaching is unlimited, but they have not introduced any specific activities, rather they have taken some of Littlewood's activities as examples. They have also reported a typical lesson outline formulated by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983). From the procedures in the lesson outline, we can see much of the practice is oral work, plus some integrated grammar work.

Although neither Littlewood nor Richards and Rodgers claim that communicative activities are only speaking and listening tasks, the narrow scope of the activities they have introduced may leave such an impression. Reading and writing are also communicative skills which are worth no less attention than listening and speaking.

Nowadays, when teachers evaluate language teaching activities, they often say "This activity is not communicative enough". But what does it mean by *being communicative*? Ellis (1990) has listed six criteria for evaluating communicative classroom activities:

1. **Communicative purpose:** The activity must involve the students in performing a

real communicative purpose rather than just practising language for its own sake. In order for this to occur there must be some kinds of “information gap” that students seek to bridge when they are communicating.

2. **Communicative desire:** The activity must create a desire to communicate in the students. That is, even if communication is forced on the students, they must feel a real need to communicate.
3. **Content, not form:** When the students are doing the activity, they must be concentrating on what they are saying, not how they say it. They must have some “message” that they want to communicate.
4. **Variety of language:** The activity must involve the students in using a variety of language, not just one specific language form. The students should feel free to improvise, using whatever resources they choose.
5. **No teacher intervention:** The activity must be designed to be done by the students working by themselves rather than with the teacher. The activity should not involve the teacher correcting or evaluating how the students do the activity, although it could involve some evaluation of the final “product” of the activity when the activity is over. This assessment should be based on whether the students have achieved their communicative purpose, not whether the language they used was correct.
6. **No materials control:** The activity should not be designed to control what language the students should use. The choice about what language to use should rest with the students.

TASK 5

Study the following sample activities. Put a tick (✓) in the box if you think the activities meet the criterion. Put a cross (X) if you do not think so. In some cases you may not be sure, so put a question mark (?). When you have finished, go into groups and compare your results.

	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5
1. Communicative purpose					
2. Communicative desire					
3. Content, not form					
4. Variety of language					
5. No teacher intervention					
6. No materials control					

Activity 1**Read and act: Practise similar dialogues.**

A: Excuse me. What's your full name, please?

B: James Allan Green.

A: Shall I call you James or Jim?

B: It doesn't matter. It's not important. But my friends call me Jim for short.

A: OK, Jim.



A: Excuse me. Are you a new student?

B: Yes, I am.

A: Glad to meet you. What's your name, please?

B: Sun Huifang.

A: May I call you Huifang?

B: Of course, if you wish.

(Taken from *Junior English for China*, Book 3:3)

Activity 2**Work in pairs.**

Student A: Use the questionnaire below to interview your partner. Take notes on the lines.

Student B: Close your book. Listen to your partner's questions and try to answer them according to your own situation.

Questionnaire

1. How long have you been learning English? _____
2. When did you begin? _____
3. Where did you begin learning English? _____
4. Have you taken any English examinations? _____
5. Do you speak English outside the class? _____
6. Are you satisfied with your English? _____
7. What are the biggest problems in your English learning?

8. Do you use a dictionary? If yes, what kind? _____
9. Do you enjoy learning English? _____
10. If so, why? If not, why not? _____

(Adapted from *English for Vocational School*, Book 1:76-7)

Activity 3

Pair-work: Ask your partner about yesterday.

Example: A: Where were you at 7 o'clock yesterday morning?

B: I was on the way to school.

Use these expressions:

in bed	at the playground	at the shop
at school	at my uncle's home	at the cinema
at home	in the garden	in the bath

Activity 4

Listen to two students talking about their experiences of learning English.

As you listen, fill in the two tables below with correct information.

Student 1
Name _____
Age _____
Place of birth _____
When started _____
Problems _____

Student 2
Name _____
Age _____
Place of birth _____
When started _____
Problems _____

Now, work in pairs. Tell your partner your own past experiences of learning English. You can use questions like: When did you start? How did the teacher teach? Did you find it interesting? Difficult? Or easy and enjoyable? Did you have any problems? Take notes while you're listening to your partner.

Activity 5

Writing Practice

A head-teacher is speaking to a teacher in her school, "Next week we're going to clean the school as follows: Classroom Building 1 on Monday. Building 2 on Tuesday. The computer room and sound lab on Wednesday. The science labs on Thursday. The library and the Teachers' Rooms on Friday. Please write a notice for the students and put it up. Thank you."

Work with your partner and write a large notice. Start like this:

Classroom Building 1 will be ...

It should be noted that it is extremely difficult (if not impossible) for an activity to meet all the criteria discussed above, and these criteria are not without controversial understanding. So, if an activity does not meet a certain criterion, it does not mean the activity is necessarily a bad one. The value of an activity should be judged according to what the activity is aimed at and in what context the activity is used. Please refer to the back of the book for our suggested solutions to the task above.



2.5

Conclusion

In this unit, we started with the comparison between language use in real life and language taught in traditional pedagogy. In many cases, the way language learners learn the language is too far away from how language is used in real life and there are great discrepancies between the parts of a language that are taught and the parts of a language that are used. We believe language should be learned and taught according to language use in real life so that language learners will develop communicative competence, which is the ability to use language appropriately in social situations.

In practice, to develop students' communicative competence means to develop their language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Of course these skills cannot be developed without the learning of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and other language components. However, generally speaking, traditional pedagogy has emphasized too much on the teaching of language components and neglected the training of language skills. Besides, many activities in traditional pedagogy are aimed at developing language skills, but in fact they fail to do so. This is because the activities are not designed from a communicative point of view. We do not intend that the communicative approach is the magic tool in language teaching, but we do think language learning and teaching should be as close as possible to language use in real life.

UNIT 3

Lesson Planning



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to look at one of the most important components of language teachers' work, lesson planning. We have arranged to introduce this topic prior to other units so that users of the book can use what is covered in this unit as a guide when they write mini-lesson plans for other units. We will focus on the following:

1. Why is lesson planning necessary?
2. What are the principles for good lesson planning?
3. What are macro planning and micro planning?
4. What are the components of a lesson plan?

3.1

Why is lesson planning necessary?

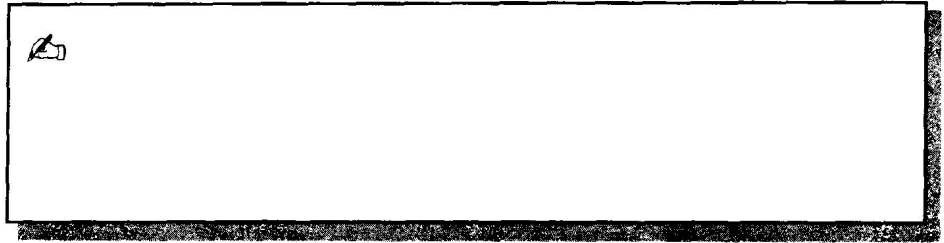
Proper lesson planning is essential for both novice and experienced teachers. Although preparation does not guarantee successful lessons, walking into a classroom unprepared is more often than not the beginning of a disastrous lesson. Besides, students immediately notice if their teacher is prepared or not. Unprepared teachers receive much less trust and cooperation from the students.

Lesson planning means making decisions in advance about what techniques, activities and materials will be used in the class. It is obvious that lesson planning is necessary, but why?

TASK 1

Work in groups of four. Brainstorm how language teachers benefit from proper

lesson planning. When you have finished, join another group and compare your ideas.



There is a common misconception that experienced teachers do not need to do lesson planning. It is said they are so familiar with what they are going to teach and how they are going to teach that they can just walk into the classroom when the bell rings. However, as we have said, this is a misconception. Ironically, people who have this misconception are not the experienced teachers themselves. Experienced teachers also need to plan their lessons. Although the main teaching contents may be the same, the students are different, the time is different, and the mood is different.

Language teachers benefit from lesson planning in a number of ways. Firstly, a clear lesson plan makes the teacher aware of the aims and language contents of the lesson. It also helps the teacher to distinguish the various stages of a lesson and to see the relationship between them so that the lesson can move smoothly from one stage to another. The teacher can also think about how the students can be fully engaged in the lesson. When planning the lesson, the teacher also becomes aware of the teaching aids that are needed.

Teachers benefit from proper lesson plans in a number of other ways. For example, lesson planning helps teachers to think about the relative value of different activities and how much time should be spent on them. By comparing the estimated time with the actual time taken for different types of activity, the teacher soon learn to judge lesson stages and phases with greater accuracy. Plans are also an aid to continuing improvement. After the lesson the teacher can add an evaluation to the plan, identifying those parts which went well and those which were less successful. This plan, with the teacher's comments and corrections, provides a useful, time-saving reference when the teacher next plans the same lesson.

3.2

Principles for good lesson planning

There are four major principles behind good lesson planning. They are variety, flexibility, learnability, and linkage.

Variety means planning a number of different types of activities and where possible

introducing students to a wide selection of materials so that learning is always interesting, motivating and never monotonous for the students.

Flexibility means planning to use a number of different methods and techniques rather than being a slave to one methodology. This will make teaching and learning more effective and more efficient.

Learnability means the contents and tasks planned for the lesson should be within the learning capability of the students. Of course, things should not be too easy either. Doing things that are beyond or below the students' coping ability will diminish their motivation (Schumann, 1999)

Linkage means the stages and the steps within each stage are planned in such a way that they are somehow linked with one another. Language learning needs recycling and reinforcement.



3.3

Macro planning vs. micro planning

Ideally, lesson planning should be done at two levels: macro planning and micro planning. The former is planning over time, for instance, the planning for a month, a term, or the whole course. The latter is planning for a specific lesson, which usually lasts 40 or 50 minutes. Of course, there is no clear cut difference between these two types of planning. Micro planning should be based on macro planning, and macro planning is apt to be modified as lessons go on.


TASK 2

Read through the following items and decide which belong to macro planning and which belong to micro planning. Some could belong to both. When you have finished, compare your decisions with your partner.

	Macro/ Micro
1. Write down lesson notes to guide teaching.	
2. Decide on the overall aims of a course or programme.	
3. Design activities and procedures for a lesson.	
4. Decide which language points to cover in a lesson.	
5. Study the textbooks and syllabus chosen by the institute.	
6. Decide which skills are to be practised.	
7. Prepare teaching aids.	
8. Allocate time for activities.	
9. Prepare games or songs for a lesson.	
10. Prepare supplementary materials.	

In a sense, macro planning is not writing lesson plans for specific lessons but rather familiarizing with the context in which language teaching is taking place. Macro planning involves the following:

- 1) **Knowing about the course:** The teacher should get to know which language areas and language skills should be taught or practised in the course, what materials and teaching aids are available, and what methods and techniques can be used.
- 2) **Knowing about the institution:** The teacher should get to know the institution's arrangements regarding time, length, frequency of lessons, physical conditions of classrooms, and exam requirements.
- 3) **Knowing about the learners:** The teacher should acquire information about the students' age range, sex ratio, social background, motivation, attitudes, interests, learning needs and other individual factors.
- 4) **Knowing about the syllabus:** The teacher should be clear about the purposes, requirements and targets specified in the syllabus.

Much of macro planning is done prior to the commencement of a course. However, macro planning is a job that never really ends until the end of the course.

Macro planning provides general guidance for language teachers. However, most teachers have more confidence if they have a kind of written plan for each lesson they teach.

All teachers have different personalities and different teaching strategies, so it is very likely their lesson plans would differ from each other. However, there are certain guidelines that we can follow and certain elements that we can incorporate in our plans to help us create purposeful, interesting and motivating lessons for our learners.

3.4 Components of a lesson plan

The advantage of a concrete teaching plan is that teachers can follow it in the class and check what they have done. This plan will be the basis of a record of what has been covered in class, and will make it easier to make achievement tests later. The teaching plans will be good records for the entire course. So what does a lesson plan include? A language teaching lesson plan usually has the following components: teaching aims, language contents and skills, and teaching stages and procedures.



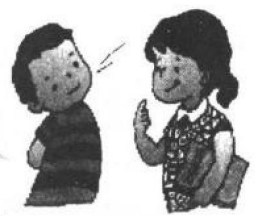
The first thing to do in lesson planning is to decide the aims of a lesson, which include what language components to present, what communicative skills to practise, what activities to conduct and what materials and teaching aids to be used.

TASK 3

Here is part of a first year lesson. Study the part briefly and answer the two questions that follow.

Lesson 15

Ask and answer questions from table.

When do you	get up eat breakfast wash your face go to school finish school go to bed	in the morning? in the afternoon? in the evening? at night?
When do you	clean your teeth? meet your friends? learn English? play games? practise the piano?	

- 1) What do you think are the aims of this part of the lesson?
- 2) Three different teachers are about to teach the lesson. Below are their introductions to the lesson. Which teacher has the clearest idea of the aims of the lesson?

Teacher A: Today we're going to learn Lesson 15. It's question and answer practice using a substitution table.

Teacher B: Today we're going to practise present simple questions with "when ..." and other time expressions.

Teacher C: Today we're going to practise asking and answering questions using the present simple tense, so that we will learn how to talk about everyday activities.

Usually the teacher's manual accompanying a textbook will state clearly what the aims are for each unit or lesson. However, classroom teachers are under no obligation to adopt the same aims. The writer(s) did not write the textbook specially for their teaching context. So teachers may wish to modify the aims and the approach recommended by the teacher's manual.

**Language
contents and
skills**

Among the three teachers described in Task 3, Teacher A is not thinking of the aims of the lesson at all. Teacher B has thought about what language is going to be taught in the lesson, but he/she is not aware of the language skills to be practised. Teacher C has the clearest idea of the aims of the lesson. He/she is not only aware of the language which is going to be taught, but also aware of what the students will learn to do with the language.

In language teaching, it is important for the teacher to know exactly what language contents will be taught and what language skills will be practised in the lesson. By language contents, we mean structures (grammar), vocabulary, functions, topics and so on. By language skills, we mean communicative skills involved in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Among the language contents, new vocabulary and structures often (unjustifiably) receive more attention from both the teachers and the students. However, teachers should be careful when deciding what vocabulary items and structures to focus on in the class. Not all new words in a lesson are equally important. The teacher should decide which words need to be practised and which only need to be briefly touched. Similarly, not all structures have the same status in the lesson. New structures need to be presented carefully and practised. The teacher should also be aware of any structures which are practised in the lesson, but which have been introduced in the previous lessons.

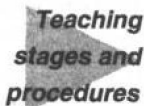

TASK 4

Work in groups of four. Study this sample lesson and discuss what language contents and skills are intended.

Read and act

- JIM: Ling Feng, could you do something for me, please?
 LING FENG: Certainly! What would you like me to do?
 JIM: Well, you know I'm going to England next week for a holiday?
 LING FENG: Yes.
 JIM: Well, we can't take Polly with us. Could you look after her for me while we're away?
 LING FENG: With pleasure!
 JIM: Are you sure you don't mind looking after her?
 LING FENG: Yes, of course I'm sure. I'd love to look after her. Glad to help! What do I have to do?
 JIM: I've written it all down on this list.
 LING FENG: Good. Don't worry. I'll take good care of her.
 JIM: I'm sure you will.

(Taken from *JEFC*, Book 3:45.)


Teaching stages and procedures

Teaching stages are the major steps that language teachers go through in the classroom. Procedures are the detailed steps in each teaching stage. The most popular language teaching stages are the three P's model, which include *presentation*, *practice* and *production*.

At the *presentation* stage, the teacher introduces new vocabulary and grammatical structures with reference to their contextualized use. At the *practice* stage, the lesson moves from controlled practice to guided practice and further to the exploitation of the texts when necessary. At the *production* stage, the students are encouraged to use what they have learned and practised to perform communicative tasks. At this last stage, the focus is on meaning rather than formal accuracy.

Although popular, the three P's model is not always applicable in various language classes, especially the skill-oriented lessons. For example, it is not desirable to adopt the three P's model in a reading lesson in which, the focus is not on the presentation and practice of language points embedded in the reading text. Rather, the focus is on developing reading skills. In practice, however, another 3-stage model is frequently advised and adopted in reading lessons, that is, *pre-reading*, *while-reading* and *post-reading* stages. This model is also often applied in listening lessons, which have pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening stages.

In this model, the *pre-* stage involves preparation work, such as setting the scene, warming up, or providing key information (such as key words). The *while-* stage involves activities or tasks that the students must perform while they are reading or listening. The *post-* stage provides a chance for students to obtain feedback on their performance at the while- stage. This last stage may also involve some follow-up activities, in which students relate what they have read or heard to their own life and use the language spontaneously.

TASK 5

What do you think of the two three-stage models discussed above? Are there any other stages that you think a lesson should include? Give your reasons.

After deciding on the teaching stages, the next thing is to design procedures or steps for each stage. Some teachers do not bother to write out the detailed procedures. It is not always necessary to do so, but all teachers should be clear about the steps they are going to go through in the class. Some teachers, especially some novice teachers, take it for granted that the steps will take care of themselves as long as they have set up the main stages. This assumption often leads to chaos in class. When a teacher has planned to present a new structure (presentation stage), he or she needs to consider the following:

- 1) when to focus on the structure and when to study it in context;
- 2) whether to present the structure orally or in written form;
- 3) when to give out information and when to elicit from students;
- 4) when and how to use visual aids to help with the presentation;
- 5) what to do if students fail to understand.

3.5 Sample lesson plans

Now let's look at two sample lesson plans. The first plan is for a listening lesson, but we believe the format is also applicable to task-based reading lessons as well. The second plan is for a traditional dialogue-based lesson. Both plans are taken from *A Practical Handbook of Language Teaching* (Cross, 1995). It should be noted that, unlike other verbatim lesson plans, these outline-type lesson plans function only as a guide for the teacher. A lot of preparation is not written in the plans. Very often, these

simplistic lesson plans are accompanied by supplementary notes or handouts.

Sample lesson plan 1

- AIMS:** a) To give practice in listening to a story.
b) To give opportunities for expression of opinions about military service.

NEW LEXIS: a) from text: mess (officer's), barracks room, compulsory, civilian.

b) additional vocab.: recruit, conscript.

STRUCTURE/GRAMMAR: No formal focus

PROCEDURE

WARM-UP (3 minutes):

Song, *Happy Birthday Dear Yao* (14 years)

STAGE 1, PRESENTATION (approx. 7 mins)

- a) New vocabulary:
b) Introduction: Story of a young conscript, etc.
c) Task setting: Why was John Smith in the army? What did the sergeant make him do?

STAGE 2, EXPLOITATION (approx. 10 mins)

- a) Reading aloud, once
b) Check on pre-questions (random).
c) Read text second time, dramatically.
d) Familiar, short answer Q's.
e) Limited production, longer-answer Q's.

STAGE 3, PERFORMANCE (approx. 15 mins)

- a) Hypothetical Q's and discussion.
b) Written arguments, papers exchanged, discussed.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Check yesterday's homework (approx. 5 mins).

Set homework, page 73, ex. 4.

RESERVE ACTIVITY: Substitution, game-like:

John Smith dreamed only of the day he would ...
/ often dream of the day I shall (win the lottery, etc).
What about you?

TEACHING AIDS: Cassette recording of text. Tape player.

(Reminder: check batteries, zero rev. counter).

COMMENTS: (Filled in immediately after the lesson).

Sample lesson plan 2

- AIMS:** a) To have the class learn key structures by heart.
 b) To have them practise the dialogue with substitutions.
 c) To introduce some role play.

NEW VOCABULARY: How're things? (informal) = How are you?
 a bike ride = an excursion on bicycles.
 a picnic = a meal in the open air.

NEW STRUCTURE: How about -ing ...? Function: making suggestion.

ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE: Declining: I don't feel like -ing.
 Countering: I'd rather + basic verb.

PROCEDURE

WARM-UP: Game (3 minutes), Going on a Picnic:

You bring a/the/some ...!

I'll bring ... (nominated students).

STAGE 1, PRESENTATION (approx. 10 mins)

- a) New vocabulary: (three new lexical items above)
- b) New structure (flash cards)
- c) First model, spoken (BB drawings of speakers)

STAGE 2, PRACTICE (approx. 15 mins)

- a) Repetition drill (backward build-ups)
- b) Cued substitution, chorus work
- c) Public pairs: cued acceptance/refusal and counter suggestions (flash-cards)
- d) Ditto. Books closed
- e) Public check

STAGE 3, PRODUCTION (to end of lesson, 17 mins)

- a) Public pairs, new suggestions.
- b) Private pair role play; New suggestion, counter suggestions, agreeing weekend activities.
- c) Acting out. Volunteer pairs.
- d) Write out created dialogues.

HOMEWORK: Complete writing of dialogues.

RESERVE ACTIVITY: none

VISUAL AIDS: Set of flashcards with suggestions

COMMENTS: (Filled in immediately after the lesson).

 **TASK 6**

Choose a unit from a textbook you are familiar with. Imagine you are going to teach the unit. Write a lesson plan based on the ideas suggested in this unit. If possible, choose a section in your lesson plan and give a mini demonstration.

3.6 Conclusion

We started this unit with the discussion on the significance of lesson planning. We believe lesson planning is necessary and beneficial to both experienced teachers and new teachers. Then we discussed some major principles for good lesson planning, namely, variety, flexibility, learnability and linkage. There are principles but no standard way to plan lessons. Lesson planning can be done at macro and micro levels. Macro planning involves obtaining knowledge about the students, the institution and other features of the teaching context. Micro planning involves deciding what and how to teach in the classroom. We discussed the major components of a lesson plan, i.e. aims, language contents and skills, and stages and procedures.

Due to the limitation of space, we were unable to discuss other stages in lesson planning, e.g. revision, introduction, checking homework etc. We provided some sample lesson plans, but none of them are like those verbatim teaching notes, which many teachers wish to read. We do not think verbatim lesson plans are really beneficial to classroom teachers because very little real life language interaction can be predicted ahead of time. We hope teachers can apply the ideas and principles suggested in this unit to the creation of imaginative lesson plans of their own.

UNIT 4

Classroom Management



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to discuss how language teachers can manage the classroom more effectively and efficiently. We will focus on the following:

1. What roles do teachers play in the classroom?
2. What are the different ways for student grouping?
3. How can we maintain discipline in the classroom?

Classroom management is one of the most important factors that contribute to the efficiency of the teacher and the learning activities. The most effective activities can be made almost useless if the teacher does not organise them efficiently (Harmer, 1983:200). Classroom management is the way teachers organise what goes on in the classroom. The goal of classroom management is to create an atmosphere conducive to interacting in English in meaningful ways (Gebhard, 1996:69). Efficient classroom management can be achieved when the following three conditions are met:

- 1) The teacher plays appropriate roles.
- 2) The students are grouped in a way suitable for the learning activities.
- 3) There is discipline and harmony in the class.

4.1

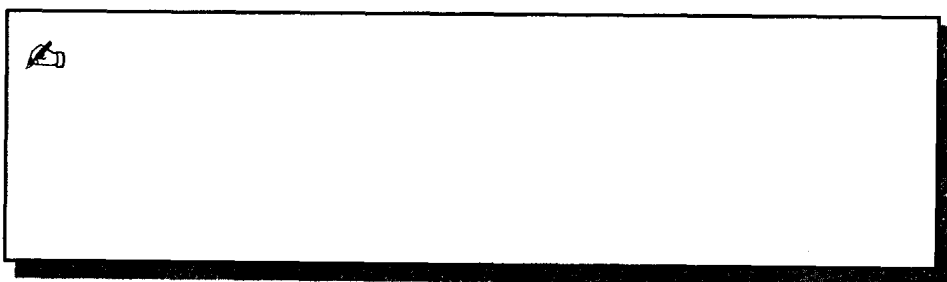
The role of the teacher

Although many people consider the role of the teacher an important component of efficient classroom management, some researchers regard it as part of the design of a

methodology or approach. As Richards and Rodgers (1986) point out, teacher roles are related ultimately to assumptions about language and language learning at the level of approach. That is, different approaches stipulate different roles for the teacher. So without confining our discussion to one particular approach, it is no good talking about teacher roles in language teaching. However, due to the scope of this unit or even this book, it is impossible to examine the various teacher roles in different approaches. Instead, we are going to discuss the most common roles that teachers play in present-day second/foreign language teaching.

TASK 1

Brainstorm the issues that teacher roles are related to. Think about what a teacher does before the class, during the class and after the class. If possible, define some teacher roles. Then work in groups of four and share your ideas.



Although different approaches stipulate different teacher roles, there are some common roles that teachers play in most of the major approaches. For instance, in most approaches, the teacher is somewhat a controller, though the degree of control over what to learn and how to learn varies a lot.

The things that a teacher does before, during and after the class and the degree to which he does these things reflect his assumptions about the roles teachers should play in language teaching. Before the class, the teacher is a planner, who plans what to teach, how to teach, and what result to achieve. After the class the teacher is an evaluator, who evaluates not only how successfully he has conducted the class but also how efficient the learning activities have been. Since this unit is about classroom management, in the following sections, we will confine our discussion to the roles that the teacher plays during the class.

Based on the functions that the teacher performs in different activities, Harmer defines the teacher's roles as controller, assessor, organiser, prompter, participant and resource-provider (Harmer, 1983:201).

 **TASK 2**

What do you think the teacher does when he/she is a controller, an assessor, an organiser, a prompter, a participant and a resource-provider respectively? When you are ready, work in groups of four and share your ideas.

 **TASK 3**

The following are things that teachers often do in the language classroom. Decide what role the teacher is playing in each activity. Put number 1 – 6 in the brackets. When you have finished, work in groups and compare your answers.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Controller | 2. Assessor | 3. Organiser |
| 4. Prompter | 5. Participant | 6. Resource-provider |

- () a. The teacher gives students two minutes to skim a text, and when time is up, he/she asks students to stop and answer some questions.
- () b. T: Do you have any hobbies?
S: Yes, I like singing and dancing.
T: Uhm, and...?
S: I also collect coins.
- () c. The teacher writes one of five numbers (1 – 5) on a number of cards (the same number as the students). Each student draws one card. Those who have drawn number 1 will form group 1, and those who have drawn number 2 will form group 2. Thus the students are put into five groups in a random way.
- () d. When a student has made a sentence with “borrow”, “I borrowed a paper to write a letter”, the teacher says, “Well, we don’t say *a paper*, we say *a piece of paper*”.
- () e. The teacher asks the students to take turns to make sentences with a newly learned structure. If someone makes an error, the teacher asks him or her to revise.
- () f. While doing a writing task either individually or in groups, the students need to use a particular word they don’t know. So they ask the teacher.

- () g. The teacher asks a student a question “Have you ever bought clothes with problems?” If the student doesn’t seem to be ready, the teacher says “for example, a shirt without ...” and points to the buttons on his own shirt or jacket.
- () h. When the students have in groups decided where to go for a spring outing, the teacher asks each group to tell the others why they have made such a choice.
- () i. When students are doing a group-work task, the teacher joins one or two groups for a short period of time.
- () j. The teacher asks the students to produce conversations (either orally or in writing) by using particular patterns or expressions they have just learned.
- () k. The teacher has a word in his mind and asks students to guess by asking only Yes/No questions until they make the correct guess.

Below are further comments on the different roles that teachers play in the language classroom. Read the comments and see how similar they are to your understanding of the roles in Task 2.



Controller

An appropriate degree of control by the teacher over the class is vital in formal language teaching. The teacher controls the pace so that activities run smoothly and efficiently. For instance, when students do skimming and scanning tasks, it is very important for the teacher to control the time. When doing lockstep activities (see next section) the teacher controls the whole class so that everyone has an equal chance. When students do production activities, the teacher’s control can make sure the students use certain target language items and their production has a degree of accuracy.

When we talk about the advantages of teacher control, we mean appropriate degree of control. Over-control will do no less harm to students than no control at all. Besides, different activities need a different degree of control. Some teachers use terms like *controlled practice*, *half-controlled practice*, and *free practice* to indicate where control is needed and where control should be relaxed. We believe the more communicative an activity is, the less the control that is needed.



Assessor

It is generally believed that it is a major part of a teacher’s job to assess the students’ work. According to Harmer (1983), as an assessor, the teacher does two things, that is, correcting mistakes and organising feedback. Harmer insists that correcting should be gentle. Gentle correcting involves showing that incorrectness has occurred, but not making a big fuss about it (Harmer, 1983:201). Organising feedback is an effective way to assess students’ performance so that they see how they are doing. When organising feedback, it is very discouraging for the teacher to be *critical*. Rather, we encourage teachers to focus on students’ success or progress so that a success-oriented

learning atmosphere can be created.

Organiser

The most important and difficult role that the teacher has to play is to be an organiser. Nowadays many approaches and methods advocate task-based activities. So one of the teacher's major responsibilities is to design and organise tasks that students can carry out in the class. It is in doing this that teachers have the most freedom and most challenge, and it is where the teacher can exert creativeness in an unlimited way.

Before organising an activity in the class, the teacher should envisage what the activity is going to be like. He/she should also anticipate problems that may arise when the activity is being carried out. Before students start the activity, the teacher should give instructions clearly and concisely so that students know what to do and how to do it. Sometimes a teacher demonstration can help. And if necessary, use the students' native language to clarify.

Prompter

While students are doing the activity, the teacher should walk around the classroom and monitor what the students are saying. If some students are not doing the right task, the teacher should rectify it. Taking mental notes will help the teacher to provide accurate feedback later.

When students are not sure how to start an activity, or what to do next, or what to say next, the teacher should give appropriate prompts. For instance, if students find it difficult to start talking in a task where they have to choose one from five places to go for an outing, the teacher may tell them to consider distance, means of transport, time available, safety, etc. When a student doesn't seem to be ready for an answer, the teacher can give hints; when a student finishes with a very short answer, the teacher should elicit more by saying "and...?" "Anything else?" "Yes, but why...?"

Participant

Task-based teaching methods encourage the teacher to participate in students' activities. Once the teacher has finished giving instructions and the activity has started, there is no point in the teacher standing in front of the classroom doing nothing (as some teachers do). Besides monitoring the class, the teacher can also join one or two groups as an ordinary participant. However, the teacher should change his/her role once he/she joins the students. He/she should not dominate or appear to be authoritative, though students regard it a good chance to practise English with someone who speaks it better than themselves.

Resource-provider

Although the jug-and-mug method (the teacher, a full jug, pours knowledge into the students, empty mugs) has been widely criticised, the teacher is still considered a good and convenient resource for the students. In this sense, the teacher's role is the same as the role of instruction materials. However, when students are supposed to work on their own, the teacher should withhold his readiness to provide resources.

4.2

Student grouping

An important feature of today's language classroom is that students do not always study as one big group. Rather, for much of the class time, students are broken down to groups of different sizes. The most common student groupings are lockstep, pair work, group work, and individual study.

Lockstep is where all the students are under the control of the teacher. They are all doing the same activity at the same rhythm and pace. Lockstep is often adopted when the teacher is making a presentation, checking exercise answers, or doing accuracy reproduction. When the teacher asks questions, the students speak either together or one by one, in turns or indicated by the teacher.

Pair work is where the students work in pairs. It could be a competition over a game or co-operation in a task or project between the two students. They could also do certain exercises together or oral practice. When the students are doing pair work, the teacher usually circulates around the classroom, answering questions or providing help when necessary.

Group work is where the students work in small groups. Each group has 3, 4, or 5 students, depending on the activity. What students do in group work is similar to pair work, only there are more members in the group. Group work is most beneficial when the activity requires contributions from more than two students. The teacher can join each group for a while, but only as a participant not as a leader or inspector.

Individual study is the stage during the class where the students are left to work on their own and at their own speed. Usually they are doing the same task, but the teacher may give them a choice of tasks. Some activities cannot be done in pairs or groups, for instance, reading and writing. People read at different speed, so they cannot read together, though two people might share one book. It seems writing can be done in pairs or groups, but what they are actually doing when they are working together is brainstorming ideas, discussing, or revising. When it comes to the real writing stage, students should work individually.

TASK 4

Brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of these four types of student grouping. Note down your ideas in the form below. When you are ready, work in groups of four and share your ideas.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Lockstep		
Pair work		
Group work		
Individual study		

Different grouping methods have different values in the language teaching classroom. Below are further suggestions about student grouping methods.

- 1) When working in lockstep, the teacher should not speak too much, though his/her speech could be a good model and authentic input. The teacher should try to elicit replies or answers from the students. If the teacher speaks too much, he/she is running the risk of “jug-and-mug” method. Even worse is that some teachers “think aloud” in the classroom, and what they are saying could be illogical, unprepared, and irrelevant to the activity.
- 2) When organising pair work, the teacher should give the clearest instructions, otherwise the student will not know for sure what they are supposed to do. If necessary, the teacher should demonstrate with one student first. Many teachers assume students will know what to do. The teacher should keep an eye on “who works with who” and make sure every student finds a partner, if necessary rearranging the seating. If noise or indiscipline rises to an excessive level, the teacher can simply stop the activity, explain the problem and ask the students to continue more quietly (Harmer, 1983). If some pairs finish the task too early, the teacher may need to encourage them to continue the task one way or another so that they will not get bored and lose interest.
- 3) All the above suggestions for pair work apply to group work as well, but the biggest problem for group work is the selection of group members. Below are some possible ways to group the students:
 - Group the students according to seating arrangement;
 - Students select their own group members (risky);
 - Strong students and weak students are mixed together;
 - Strong students and weak students are grouped separately to do different tasks;
 - Group the students by drawing lots.

All these grouping methods have advantages and disadvantages. The teacher should use the most appropriate method and should vary the form from time to time. Besides, the teacher should also pay attention to the group size, which we believe should be from 4 to 6 ideally. In order to make each group self-organised, a group leader could either be “democratically” selected or assigned by the teacher, who can act as organiser or a mini-teacher.

- 4) ESL/EFL teachers are encouraged to use pair work and group work to provide more chances for practice, but individual study should not be totally neglected. Students need some time on their own. It should also be noted that individual study is different from individualised learning. We believe individualised learning is not a mere management issue but a matter of approach.

In individualised learning, the learners are given a measure of freedom to choose how and what they learn at any particular time, thus there is less direct teacher supervision and more learner autonomy and responsibility for learning (Ur, 1996:233). Individualised learning needs some conditions, for instance, self-access centres, materials aimed at self-instruction, and flexible time arrangement. Modern technology, especially computer networks, provides a great aid to individualised learning. On a computer network, each learner can choose any level of materials, any topic, and any language skill to study or practise. Besides, the interactive software can even provide a teacher for each learner.

TASK 5

The following activity has only general instructions. Think about how you will do the activity in your class. Write out the steps and try to use lockstep, pair work, group work or individual study when necessary. When you have finished, compare your steps in pairs.

Speaking activity

Your teacher has asked you to decorate your classroom with things that are either beautiful or useful. What things would you use? How can you get them?

Many activities in ELT textbooks have only general instructions so that they are adaptable for different types of learners. It is the teacher's task to design the specific steps for these activities based on possibilities in his or her classroom. And it is for the teacher to decide when to use what forms of student grouping for the actual procedures in the classroom.

4.3

Discipline in the language classroom**Discipline vs.
Indiscipline**

Discipline does not mean a series of punishment meted out to badly-behaved students. Discipline here refers to a code of conduct which binds a teacher and a group of students together so that learning can be more effective. It is important to realise that the code of conduct that determines the behaviour of a class is as necessary for the teacher as it is for the students (Harmer, 1983). It sounds obvious, but it is really difficult to give a satisfactory definition for an ideally disciplined classroom. More observations have been made on acts in an indisciplined classroom than on acts in a disciplined classroom.

TASK 6

Listed below are some possible characteristics of a disciplined ELT classroom. Do you agree with them? Can you add any more? When you finish, go into groups of four and decide on the three most important characteristics which are typical of a disciplined ELT classroom.

	Agree/ Disagree
1. The class is under the teacher's control.	
2. The classroom is quiet.	
3. The teacher and students are cooperating smoothly.	
4. The teacher and students show respect to each other.	
5. Indisciplined students are punished.	
6. The lesson is proceeding according to plan.	
7. The teacher appears to be the authority.	
8. Learning is taking place.	
9.	
10.	

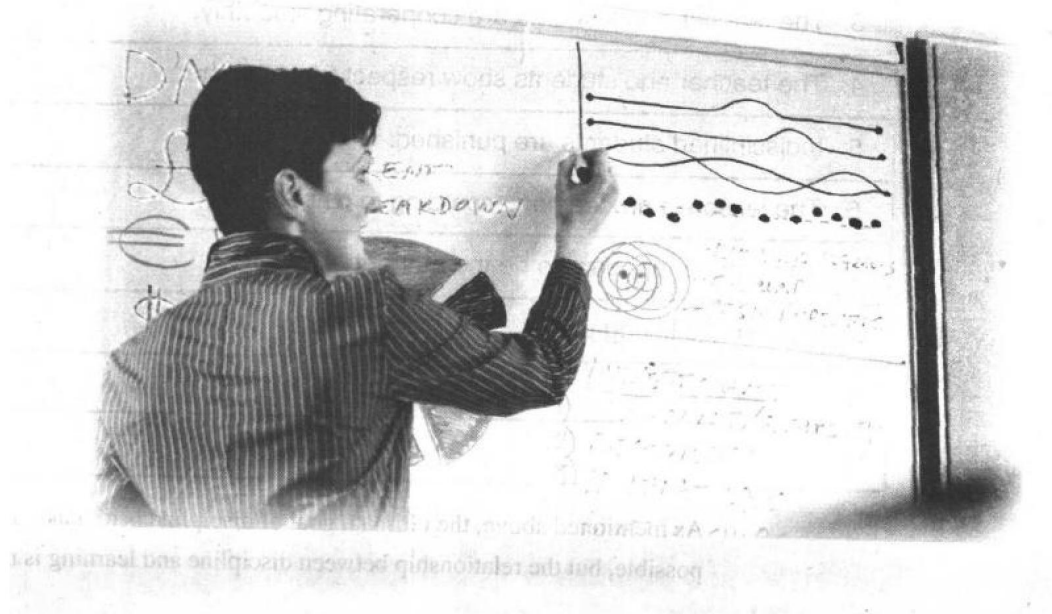
As mentioned above, the ultimate goal of discipline is to make more effective learning possible, but the relationship between discipline and learning is not as straight forward

as it appears. It seems fairly clear that in a disciplined classroom it is easier to activate students in the way the teacher wants, and that time will be probably spent on learning tasks, rather than wasted on organisational problems or disruptive behaviour (Ur, 1996:260). However, discipline does not guarantee learning; that is to say, there might be little learning even if the class is very disciplined.

Although discipline is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective learning, a thoroughly indisciplined atmosphere will surely yield no learning at all. Students' indisciplined acts could be numerous, such as arriving late for class, coming to class without a textbook and necessary materials, failing to do homework, making noises in class, not paying attention, refusing to cooperate with peers, or causing disturbances. However, indisciplined acts are not confined to students. Certain acts on the teacher's part are also considered as indisciplined, such as being late for class, going to class unprepared, being inconsistent, threatening students, or being absent-minded. Besides, other acts or factors of the teacher may cause further indiscipline, such as giving boring lessons, being unfair, or being rude to students.

Although discipline is often discussed together with classroom management, classroom management skills are not sufficient if discipline is to be achieved. Rather, a variety of teacher's behaviour contributes to discipline, such as the teachers' choice of methodology, their interpersonal relationships with students, and their preparation for the lesson. Besides, students' motivation, which can be enhanced by teacher action, is extremely important for discipline (Ur, 1996).

Due to lack of space in this unit, we will just focus on some practical classroom management skills that can be directly used to achieve discipline in an ELT classroom.




TASK 7

Read through the following practical hints for maintaining discipline in the classroom and choose the ten most important hints. When you are ready, go into groups of four and share your choices.

Practical hints for teachers on classroom discipline

1. Start by being firm with students: you can relax later.
2. Get silence before you start speaking to the class.
3. Know and use the students' names.
4. Prepare lessons thoroughly and structure them firmly.
5. Be mobile: walk around the class.
6. Start the lesson with a "bang" and sustain interest and curiosity.
7. Speak clearly.
8. Make sure your instructions are clear.
9. Have extra materials prepared (e.g. to cope with slower/faster-working students).
10. Look at the class when speaking, and learn how to "scan".
11. Make work appropriate (to pupils' age, ability, cultural background).
12. Develop an effective questioning technique.
13. Develop the art of timing your lesson to fit the available period.
14. Vary your teaching techniques.
15. Anticipate discipline problems and act quickly.
16. Avoid confrontations.
17. Clarify fixed rules and standards, and be consistent in applying them.
18. Show yourself as supporter and helper to the students.
19. Don't patronise students; treat them with respect.
20. Use humour constructively.
21. Choose topics and tasks that will activate students.
22. Be warm and friendly to the students.

(Taken from Ur, 1996:263)

Factors in an ELT classroom, such as culture, age, sex, motivation, vary so greatly that there cannot be sure "wise counsel" for classroom discipline. An undisciplined act frequently occurring in one culture may rarely occur in another. A management skill effective in one class may be fruitless in another. In most cases, teachers have to search for and develop their own strategies to maintain discipline in their classroom. And when indiscipline does occur, they should take the most appropriate measures to put

things right. Harmer (1983) suggests the following measures for indisciplined acts and badly behaving students:

- 1) **Act immediately.** If possible, indisciplined acts should be immediately stopped so that less damage is caused. The longer a discipline problem is left unchecked, the more difficult it is to take action. Of course, the teacher's action on a particular student's indiscipline (which should be done carefully) should not be done at the expense of other students' time and attention.
- 2) **Stop the class.** If the indiscipline is so disruptive as to hinder the progress of the whole class, the teacher should stop the class and make it clear what is wrong.
- 3) **Rearrange the seats.** If troublesome students are sitting together, the teacher should separate them. Besides, if students are moved to the front of the class they may behave better.
- 4) **Change the activity.** If the class seem to be getting out of control, or if indiscipline occurs due to inappropriacy of the activity, a change of activity will often restore the class.
- 5) **Talk to students after class.** If a student is continually making trouble, the teacher should talk to that student after class. The student should be given a chance to explain why he/she behaves in this way.
- 6) **Use the institution.** When problems become extreme it will be necessary to use the institution—the school or institute—to solve the problem.

Problem-making students are not necessarily "bad" boys, and sometimes students are not aware of their indisciplined acts. So when the teacher is trying to act against indiscipline, he/she should be careful not to hurt the students. Ur (1996) gives the following advice about problems in class:

- 1) **Deal with it quietly.** If the problem involves only one student, the teacher's action should be a quiet response so that it will avoid other students' attention. For example, if a student has not opened (or closed) the textbook in response to an instruction, it is better for the teacher to go up to him and open the book than draw the attention of the whole class by a reprimand or loud, repeated instructions.
- 2) **Don't take things personally.** When something happens, the teacher should try to address the problem rather than the student as the object. Besides, the teacher should relate to the problem impersonally even if the criticism is meant personally.
- 3) **Don't use threats.** Threats are never constructive measures against indiscipline. In most cases, threats cause a negative affective state and resistance to cooperation.

4.4 *Conclusion*

In this unit we started with the discussion of the teacher's roles in the language classroom. Different assumptions about the teacher's roles will stipulate different classroom management policies; and different methodologies entail the adoption of different teacher roles. Borrowing Harmer's concepts of the teacher's roles as a controller, an assessor, an organiser, a prompter, a participant and a resource-provider, we believe teachers are multi-functional in the language classroom. This is especially true if the class is conducted in a variety of formats such as whole class activity, individual study, pair work and group work. Varying student grouping can help to create a dynamic language classroom and thus improve learning effectiveness.

Another important issue in classroom management is maintaining discipline. However, teachers should be careful when judging what behaviour is disciplined. It should be noted that different cultures have different assumptions about discipline. If ever possible, problems around indiscipline should be dealt with in friendly rather than hostile ways.

UNIT 5

Teaching Pronunciation



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to discuss how to teach pronunciation. We will focus on the following:

1. What role does pronunciation play in language learning?
2. What is the goal of teaching pronunciation?
3. What aspects of pronunciation do we need to teach?
4. How can teachers help the students to practise pronunciation?

5.1 *The role of pronunciation*

In the teaching of English as a foreign language, discussions on pronunciation are not so much around how to teach pronunciation as around the value of teaching pronunciation. There are people who claim that students do not need to learn pronunciation because pronunciation will take care of itself as the students develop overall language ability. However, there are people who assert that failure in pronunciation is a great hindrance in language learning. What do you think?

TASK 1

Below are some statements about the role of pronunciation in English teaching. Read the statements carefully and decide if you agree or disagree with

them. Try to give reasons for your decisions. When you are ready, go into groups of four and share your ideas.

	Agree/ Disagree
1. Students need to be able to read phonetic transcripts of words.	
2. Students need to be able to write phonetic transcripts for words.	
3. Students need to know phonetics in order to learn English.	
4. Poor pronunciation may cause problems for the learning of other skills.	
5. Adult learners need to focus on pronunciation, but young learners don't.	
6. Both consistency and accuracy in pronunciation are very important.	
7. Stress and intonation are not important for beginning learners.	
8. Students should learn Received Pronunciation.	
9. Stress in pronunciation is sometimes as important as grammar.	
10. Bad intonation can lead to important misunderstandings.	

Results from the task above will certainly vary greatly. This is because whether pronunciation needs special attention or focus in language teaching depends on many factors, especially learner factors. For example, learners whose native language has similar sounds to English are less likely to have problems with pronunciation than those whose native language has very different sounds from English. Learners who have more exposure to English need less focus on pronunciation than those who only learn English in the class. Adult learners need more focus on pronunciation because they are more likely to substitute English sounds with sounds from their native language.

Considering our English learning context, generally speaking, beginning Chinese learners of English need a certain degree of focus on pronunciation. However, great care should be taken over the distinction between pronunciation and phonetics. The teaching of pronunciation should focus on the students' ability to identify and produce English sounds themselves. Students should not be led to focus on reading and writing phonetic transcripts of words, especially young students, because phonetic transcripts are more abstract and less meaningful.

Phonetic rules regarding what sounds a letter or a cluster of letters should be pronounced are helpful for students to develop the ability to cope with English pronuncia-

tion and they should be introduced at a suitable stage. However, they should be avoided at the beginning stage, especially for young learners.

Stress and intonation are as important as the sounds themselves and should be taught from the very beginning. In the example below, different intonations for “Sorry” indicate different meanings. A neutral tone would indicate a normal apology. However, a sharp falling tone or a rising tone would mean the opposite.

A: Would you please turn down the radio a little bit?

B: Sorry. ↘ (No, I don't want to.)

or


B: Sorry? ↗ (What did you say?)

5.2 *The goal of teaching pronunciation*

It is true that language students' pronunciation should be as good as possible. But should we require the students to acquire native-like pronunciation? The question is probably not whether we should or should not require the students to acquire native-like pronunciation. The question is whether the students themselves can achieve that goal at all. Generally speaking, learners of English as a foreign language cannot acquire native-like pronunciation, except those who start learning English at a very young age.

TASK 2

Work in groups and brainstorm any reasons why most learners of English as a foreign language cannot acquire native-like English pronunciation. When you are ready, join another group and compare your ideas.



Much research has been done to test a hypothesis proposed by linguists called the Critical Period Hypothesis. This hypothesis states that if humans do not learn a foreign language before a certain age (perhaps around puberty), then due to changes such as maturation of the brain, it becomes impossible to learn the foreign language like a

native speaker. No definite answer to this hypothesis has been found and it is still debated by researchers, but there is some evidence that this hypothesis is true for acquiring native-like pronunciation even though there is less evidence that it is true for acquiring the grammar or the vocabulary of a foreign language. Even though nobody knows for certain what exactly happens to our brains as we mature, almost everyone agrees that almost all people who learn a foreign language after puberty will always have an accent. That is, native speakers will be able to identify that the person is not a native speaker of that language.

The amount of exposure to English is another factor that determines if the students can acquire native-like English pronunciation. At the present time, most Chinese learners of English do not have enough exposure to English to acquire native-like pronunciation.

Due to biological and physiological differences, individual students have different phonetic ability. Some students are more sensitive to and better at imitating sounds than other students. Although a few students can acquire native-like pronunciation, it is unrealistic for the majority of students to do so.

However, admitting the difficulty in acquiring native-like pronunciation does not mean that teachers should not encourage students to improve their pronunciation as much as possible.

If we should not require native-like pronunciation, then what should be our realistic goals? Our realistic goals of teaching pronunciation should be

- **Consistency:** The pronunciation should be smooth and natural.
- **Intelligibility:** The pronunciation should be understandable to the listeners.
- **Communicative efficiency:** The pronunciation should help to convey the meaning that is intended by the speaker.

Some students take great pains to be accurate in pronunciation. This is often done at the expense of consistency. And the speech produced in this way is not only unnatural but also uncomfortable to hear. Many of us would remember how accurately and awkwardly Elizabeth says “How do you do?” for the first time in the film *My Fair Lady*.

When trying to achieve consistency in pronunciation, students do not have to and should not sacrifice intelligibility. Unintelligible speech is useless and may cause unpleasant feelings for both the speaker and the audience.

However, consistency and intelligibility are not necessarily enough in real communication. For example, it is easy to say “Sorry” smoothly and clearly. But if the intonation is not appropriate, it may convey the opposite meaning.

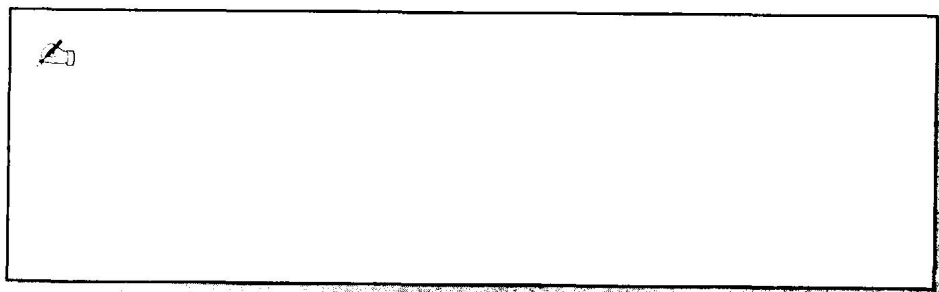
5.3 Aspects of pronunciation

When talking about pronunciation, many people automatically think of sounds and phonetic symbols and rules. Actually pronunciation is an umbrella term covering many aspects besides sounds and phonetic symbols, such as stress, intonation, and rhythm. Of course, these aspects are not isolated from each other. Rather, they are interrelated. For example, the word stress influences how the letters are pronounced. And the sentence stress again will make it necessary to pronounce words differently from when they are read individually. Similarly, intonation and rhythm also cause variation in the sounds of words.

One common problem in English learning is that many students take great pains to improve the English sounds they produce while neglecting stress and intonation. This type of learning is not effective because sometimes stress and intonation matter more than the individual sounds do. Experiments have demonstrated that often when a native speaker mishears something, it is because the foreigner has put the stress on the wrong place, not because he or she has mispronounced the sounds of the word, e.g. “written” is pronounced as [ri'tein] and “comfortable” is pronounced as [kʌm'fə:təbl].

TASK 3

Work in groups and brainstorm the most common problems that Chinese students experience with English pronunciation. Then discuss the possible causes for these problems and possible solutions.



Language learning needs a lot of practice and this is especially true with pronunciation. As far as pronunciation is concerned, students benefit from both mechanical practice and meaningful practice. Mechanical practice is necessary for the development of many skills. For example, we learn typing not from knowing the keyboard, but by mechanically hitting the individual keys until it becomes automatic without thinking. In sports, movements which you have done often are relatively simple to repeat, while using muscles which you have never used can be difficult. Meaningful practice is more desirable. Everything can be learned more effectively if it is meaningful.

5.4 Practising sounds

Pronunciation is difficult to teach without some drills on sounds. The trick to working with drills is not to work on individual sounds for more than a few minutes a time because they become boring and demotivating. It is important to combine drilling pronunciation exercises with more meaningful exercises whatever aspect of pronunciation is the focus for the lesson.

Focusing on a sound

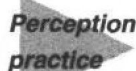
When teaching pronunciation, very often we need to focus on individual sounds, especially those sounds that are difficult to learn. For example, most Chinese students find it difficult to learn the English sounds {θ} and {ð}.

TASK 4

Imagine that you want to focus on a sound which your students are having difficulty with. Which of the following steps are necessary? In what order would you teach and practise the sound? On the line tick (✓) the steps that you think are necessary. In the brackets, write the order numbers.

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| () | ___ | Get students to repeat the sound in chorus. |
| () | ___ | Explain how to make the sound. |
| () | ___ | Contrast it with other sounds. |
| () | ___ | Write words on the blackboard. |
| () | ___ | Get individual students to repeat the sound. |
| () | ___ | Say the sound in a word. |
| () | ___ | Say the sound alone. |
| () | ___ | Say the sound in meaningful contexts. |

Obviously there is no fixed answer to the questions above. Many people would put "Explain how to make the sound" as the first step, but we suggest it be done at a later stage because if the students can produce the sound correctly after the teacher's modelling, it is not necessary to explain "how". When students have difficulty producing the sound, explanation will do. Some people might put "Contrast it with other sounds" as an early step, but this may cause unnecessary confusion. We suggest the step be done at a later stage when the students have obtained a certain degree of mastery of the sound. We consider "Write words on the board" unnecessary because words written on the board will distract students' attention from the teacher's modelling. In addition, some students automatically try to produce sounds from the words they see and ne-


 Perception practice

glect whatever the teacher says. Our suggested order to do these steps is in Appendix 1 at the back of the book.

Perception practice is aimed at developing the students' ability to identify and distinguish between different sounds. Correct perception of sounds is vital for listening comprehension. Below are some examples of perception practice of English sounds.

Using minimal pairs. Minimal pairs are two words which have only one different sound. The teacher reads either word of each pair and asks the students to tell which word is read. Here are some examples of minimal pairs:

will	well	till	tell	fill	fell
lid	led	ship	sheep	bid	bed

Which order? The teacher reads each group of words in a different order and the students mark the words with 1, 2, 3 to indicate the order in which the words are read. The teacher can read the words several times in different orders. Here is an example:

pit	pet	bet	bear	tear	ear	beard	beer	bear
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>

Same or different? The teacher reads pairs of words and asks the students to tell if the pairs of words are the same or different. Of course the words should not be written out. Here is an example. (D for "different" and S for "same")

met	meet	well	well	well	will
(D)		(S)		(D)	

Odd man out. The teacher reads a group of words a time and the students identify the different word or sound. Again the words are not written out. Below are some examples:

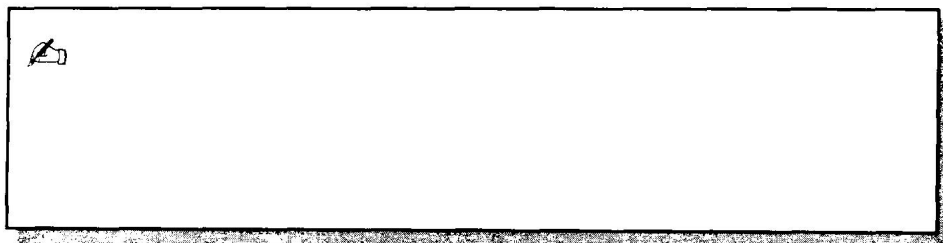
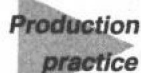
bit	bit	bit	pit	(No. 4 is different.)
lid	led	lid	lid	(No. 2 is different.)
bag	bag	back	bag	(No. 3 is different.)
load	loud	load	load	(No. 2 is different.)

Completion. The teacher reads a series of words which have only one different sound. The students complete the words they hear. Here is an example. The teacher reads *gate*, *late*, *mate*, *fate*, *date*, *hate*, *rate*, and *Kate* and the students complete the following:

__ate __ate __ate __ate __ate __ate __ate __ate

 **TASK 5**

Choose a problematic English sound and design a perception practice activity. When you are ready, go into groups of five and try out your activity in turns. Note how effective your activity proves to be.

Production practice is aimed at developing students' ability to produce sounds. Producing distinct and understandable sounds is very important for effective communication. Production practice of pronunciation varies from mechanical imitation to production in meaningful context. Let's look at a few types of production practice activities.

Listen and repeat. The students repeat what the teacher says. This activity can practise individual sounds, individual words, groups of words, and sentences.

Fill in the blanks. The students fill in blanks in sentences with words which contain certain sounds. Here is an example (the underlined parts should be blanks):

- Children love to play games.
- Black and white make grey.
- After April comes May.
- Hurry up. Don't be late for school.
- We study in the same class. We are classmates.

Make up sentences. The students are given a groups of words containing the same sound or similar sounds. They should make up sentences using as many of the given words as possible. The sentences do not have to be realistically meaningful and logical. Humorous sentences are preferred. Try to make a sentence with the words given in the box below.

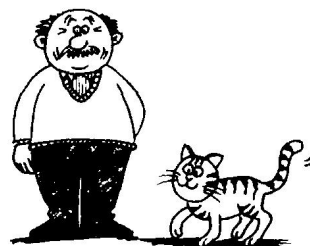
last	fast	calm	dark	black	glad	bad	sad
------	------	------	------	-------	------	-----	-----

Use meaningful context. The sounds to focus on are embedded in a meaningful context and students perform meaning tasks while "keeping an eye on" the sounds. For example, students can role play the dialogue below:

A: What's wrong with you, Mr. Bloggs?
B: I hate this horrible job.
A: What job?
B: Washing socks.
A: What do you want to do?
B: I want a holiday.

Use pictures. The students produce meaningful language based on pictures. Again the students perform meaning tasks while “keeping an eye on” particular sounds. Here is an example:

This is old jack.
He has a black cat.
Its name is Pat.
It is very fat.
...



Use tongue twisters. Tongue twisters are often used in pronunciation practice because they are fun and motivating. Also the relaxing atmosphere helps students to overcome inhibition. Students should be given time to practise on their own for a few minutes before they are asked to perform in front of the whole class. Below are some examples:

She sells seashells on the seashore.
Five wives drank five bottles of fine wine.
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where is the peck of pickled peppers that Peter Piper picked?

5.5

Practising stress and intonation

Practising stress

There are two kinds of stress that are important in achieving good pronunciation. The first is word-level stress. It is very important to stress the proper syllable in multi-syllabic words. If the wrong syllable is stressed, listeners often will not understand what word is being pronounced. Unfortunately, the rules for predicting which syllable in a word should be stressed are extremely complicated in English, so the best strategy is to emphasize the importance of learning the stress as part of learning a word.

The second kind of stress is **phrase-level stress**. Each phrase has one syllable which receives greater or more prominent stress than the others. Some phrases may have only one stressed syllable, while other phrases may have 5–6 (or possibly more) stressed syllables. The rules for predicting the stress of a phrase are less complex than predicting word-level stress.

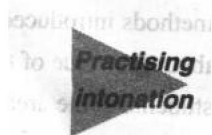
The most important thing in practising stress is making the students be aware of where to stress the word or phrase. Below are three ways to show the stress pattern of words, phrases and sentences.

1. **Use gestures.** The teacher can indicate the stress by clapping hands or using arm movements as if conducting music.
2. **Use the voice.** The teacher can raise the voice to indicate stress. This can be done with some exaggeration sometimes.
3. **Use the blackboard.** The teacher can highlight the stresses by underlining them or writing them with coloured chalks or in different size.

mini TASK 6

Work in groups and demonstrate how you can apply the methods introduced above to show the stress pattern of the following words, phrases and sentences.

disappointed	A Kilo of sugar.
attractive	Give me an orange.
trousers	I'd like some coffee.
suppose	He was late again.
perfect	We can leave as soon as you are ready.



Intonation can greatly affect the intention of the speaker's message. Intonation is used by native speakers to express meanings in many subtle ways such as surprise, complaint, sarcasm, friendliness, threats, etc. This is perhaps one of the last areas of language that foreign language learners can master and is very difficult to teach.

Most teachers use hand or arm movement to indicate change of intonation as if conducting music. When it is necessary to mark intonation, we often use rising or falling arrows, such as ↗ and ↘. Another way to mark change of intonation is to draw lines as shown below.

Did you get some tic|kets for the con|cert?

In most English sentences, the pitch movement at the end is important for meaning. Students frequently find it difficult to repeat long sentences. In this case, the teacher should break the sentence down to bits and build up towards the complete sentence. Because of the importance of intonation at the end of the sentence, it is naturally better to break down from the end rather than the beginning.

TASK 7

Work in groups. Demonstrate how you can 1) help the students practise saying the following sentence; 2) indicate the normal intonation in the following sentences; then change the intonation and see how the meaning can be changed.

I haven't seen her for years.
 Have you ever been to London?
 Do you mind if I open the window?
 You can sit down if you like.
 She is wearing a green dress.

5.6 Conclusion

Due to limitation of space, in this unit we have focused on the teaching of sounds, stress and intonation. We have not discussed other areas such as linking, reduction, contraction etc. We hope teachers can creatively apply the methods introduced in this unit to the teaching of these areas. Due to on-going debate about the value of teaching pronunciation, teachers should be sensitive to the needs of students in the area of pronunciation.

Below are some further suggestions on teaching pronunciation:

1. Use individual, pair, group and whole class practice formats to create a pleasant, relaxed, and dynamic classroom.
2. Use hands and arms to conduct choral pronunciation practice.
3. Move around the room when doing choral practice,
4. Vary the criteria of "good" in pronunciation practice to give students confidence.

5. It is helpful to do articulation practice more than once.
6. Bring variety to the classroom.
7. The main criteria for good pronunciation are consistency, intelligibility, and communicative efficiency.
8. Do not rely on explanations. Make full use of demonstration.
9. Try to use visual aids

UNIT 6

Teaching Grammar



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to discuss how to teach grammar. Although grammar is usually integrated with the teaching of other language components, we still consider it necessary to introduce ways to "focus on form". We will mainly talk about the following:

1. The role of grammar in ELT
2. Methods for grammar presentation
3. Methods for grammar practice

6.1 *The role of grammar in ELT*

Before trying to find out how something can be done, it is necessary to decide whether it should be done. The value of grammar in foreign language teaching has been a focus of debate for decades and no conclusion is in sight. Nevertheless, it is useful for us to look at some possible controversial ideas about teaching grammar before we discuss methods for teaching grammar.

TASK 1

Read the following assumptions about grammar in English learning and decide if you agree with them or not. When you have finished, compare your results with your partner. Try to give reasons for your decisions.

	Agree/ Disagree
1. Students need to be given detailed grammar rules if they want to learn a foreign language successfully.	
2. Children do not learn grammar rules when they acquire their first language, so they do not need them either when learning a foreign language.	
3. If students get enough chance to practise using a foreign language, they do not need to learn grammar.	
4. Making students aware of grammatical information is one of the teaching objectives, allowing students opportunities for using the language is just as important.	
5. Grammar should be taught to help students to analyze difficult structures in texts.	
6. Teaching and learning grammar should focus on practice rather than the study of grammar itself.	
7. Grammar should be taught and practised in context.	
8. Knowing grammar is not enough for real communication.	
9. An inadequate knowledge of grammar would severely constrain the capacity for communication.	
10. Grammar will always be "the boring bit" of language learning.	

The debate about the value of grammar in foreign language teaching is still going on. Perhaps the answers to whether grammar should be taught and to what extent grammar should be taught depend on certain variables in the language teaching/learning context, such as learner variables and instructional variables. For example, it is believed that teaching grammar is less important for children than for adults, and it is less important in listening and reading than in writing (Celce-Murcia, 1991). In most cases, grammar is still being taught, especially in formal classroom language teaching. Besides, varieties of grammar-focused approaches are still widely used in certain educational contexts and success stories are not difficult to find.

The purpose of the task above is not to seek definite conclusions about the value of grammar teaching, but rather to raise awareness of issues in grammar teaching. People may have different opinions just because they are looking at an issue from a different

point of view or they are considering a different language context. Or they may disagree with an statement just because of the wording. For example, some people may disagree with the first statement only because they think the word “detailed” has made the statement too strong.

6.2 Grammar presentation methods

Among the methods for teaching grammar, the **deductive method** and the **inductive method** have been discussed and used most frequently.


Deductive method

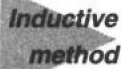
The deductive method relies on reasoning, analyzing and comparing. First, the teacher writes an example on the board or draws attention to an example in the textbook. Then teacher explains the underlying rules regarding the forms and positions of certain structural words. The explanations are often done in the student’s native language and using grammatical terms. Sometimes, comparisons are made between the native language and the target language or between the newly presented structure and previously learned structures. Finally the students practise applying the rule to produce sentences with given prompts.

The deductive method is often criticized because: 1) it teaches grammar in an isolated way; 2) little attention is paid to meaning; 3) the practice is often mechanical. However, this method is not without merits. First, it could be very successful with selected and motivated students. Second, it could save time when students are confronted with a grammar rule which is complex but which has to be learned. Third, it may help to increase students’ confidence in those examinations which are written with accuracy as the main criterion of success.

TASK 2


Suppose you are going to teach the structure “used to do” in a deductive method. How would you do it? Design a mini lesson plan and demonstrate it in small groups.




**Inductive
method**

In the **inductive method**, the teacher induces the learners to realize grammar rules without any form of explicit explanation. It is believed that the rules will become evident if the students are given enough appropriate examples. For example, in order to present the two forms “this is” and “these are”, the teacher will first hold up a book, saying “This is a book.” He will do the same showing other objects. Then the teacher holds up several books and says “These are books.” After several similar examples, it is hoped students will understand “These are” is used with plural forms of nouns. Then students are invited to apply the newly learned structure to produce sentences with given visual aids or verbal prompts. The teacher tries to say nothing except to correct when necessary. Finally, but optionally, the teacher may elicit the grammar rule from the students.

It is believed the inductive method is more effective in that students discover the grammar rules themselves while engaged in language use. This is especially true with grammatical regularities which are easily perceived, understood and applied.


TASK 3

Reflect on your experiences of learning English in middle school. Which method did your teacher use most often to teach grammar? How effective was it? When you are ready, share your experiences in groups of four.

✍

In practice, the distinction between the deductive method and the inductive method is not always apparent. Perhaps a blend between the two is indeed more appropriate. Again, learner variables and instructional variables need to be considered when teachers decide whether to use a deductive method or an inductive method or a combination of both.

6.3 *Grammar practice*

It is widely believed that practice is of vital importance in the teaching and learning of grammar. But what is practice? What kind of practice is most effective? How can

practice be conducted in a language classroom?

According to Ur, "practice may be defined as any kind of engaging with the language on the part of the learner, usually under the teacher supervision, whose primary objective is to consolidate learning" (Ur, 1988:11). Ur further predicts that the following factors contribute to successful practice:

- 1) **Pre-learning.** Practice is more effective when new language is clearly perceived and taken into short-term memory by the learners.
- 2) **Volume and repetition.** The more language the learners are exposed to or produce, the more they are likely to learn. The learners should have plenty of time and opportunities to listen, speak, read and write.
- 3) **Success-orientation.** Practice is most effective if it is based on successful practice.
- 4) **Heterogeneity.** Practice should be able to elicit different sentences and generate different levels of answers from different learners.
- 5) **Teacher assistance.** Practice is most effective when teacher assistance is available, such as suggestions, hints and prompts.
- 6) **Interest.** Interest is an essential feature of successful practice. Learners who are bored find it difficult to concentrate and their attention wanders.

Grammar practice is usually divided into two categories, **mechanical practice** and **meaningful practice**.

Mechanical practice

Mechanical practice involves activities that are aimed at form accuracy. By doing mechanical practice, the students pay repeated attention to a key element in a structure. Substitution and transformation drills are most frequently used in mechanical practice.

In **substitution drills**, the students substitute a part in a structure so that they get to know how that part functions in a sentence. Sometimes certain prompts are given. Below is an example.

Substitute the underlined part with the proper forms of the given words.

green lawn clean house pretty garden nice flowers

Mrs. Green has the largest house in town.

In this exercise, the students are expected to produce sentences like:

Mrs. Green has the greenest lawn in town.

Mrs. Green has the cleanest house in town.

Mrs. Green has the prettiest garden in town.

Mrs. Green has the nicest flowers in town.

When doing substitution drills, the students also need to change the forms of the given prompts, for example, from “green” to “greenest” and from “pretty” to “prettiest”. It is believed that substitution drills that involve changes in forms are more effective than those in which students simply replace the target part with another word.

In **transformation drills**, the students change a given structure in a way so that they are exposed to another similar structure. The type of exercise also helps the students to have a deeper understanding of how the structures are formed and how they are used. Below is an example of transformation drills.

Change the following sentences into the past tense. Use the adverbs given in the brackets.

Now he lives in London. (last year, Paris)

We have English and maths today. (yesterday, music and P. E.)

He usually gets up at seven. (this morning, eight)

In this exercise, students are supposed to produce sentences like:

Last year he lived in Paris.

Yesterday we had music and P.E.

This morning he got up at eight.

TASK 4

Work in groups of four and discuss the following questions: What is the purpose of mechanical practice? What are the advantages and disadvantages of mechanical practice?





In meaningful practice the focus is on the production, comprehension or exchange of meaning though the students “keep an eye on” the way newly learned structures are used in the process. Meaningful practice usually comes after mechanical practice. For example, after the presentation and mechanical practice of adjective comparatives and superlatives, the following activity can be done as meaningful practice.

Look at the table below. Rank the items on the left column according to the criteria listed on the top.

	Cheap	Healthy	Tasty	Fattening	Important
Beer					
Water					
Fruit					
Cigarettes					
Alcohol					
Milk					

In this activity, students may come up with sentences like:

- I think beer is cheaper than fruit.*
- No, no, I think fruit is cheaper than beer.*

Obviously there is no correct or wrong answer in this task. All depends on the students’ experience and the actual local commodity prices. Engaged in such an activity, students practise the targeted structure while negotiating meaning.

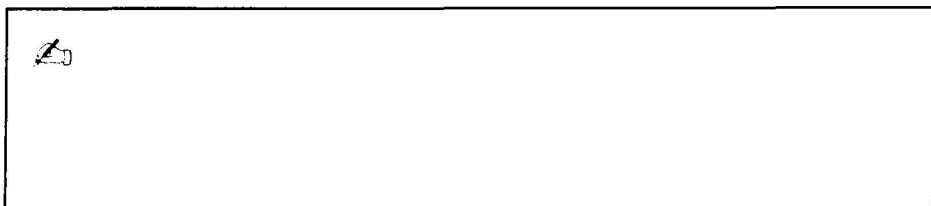
TASK 5

What are the advantages of meaningful practice? Does it have any possible disadvantages? Write down your opinion.

<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>

 **TASK 6**

Suppose you have just presented the simple past tense to a group of Junior 2 students. Design a meaningful practice activity. Write out the steps and share them with your partner. If possible, give a mini demonstration.



Of course there is no clear cut distinction between mechanical and meaningful practice. Very often an activity can have elements of both. The activity below is aimed at practising the second conditionals in English. In what way do you think the activity is both mechanical and meaningful?

Chain of events

Teacher: Now let's play a game. The first student starts a sentence with a second conditional clause. The next student takes the result of the sentence, reforms it into another condition and suggest a further result. For example, the first student says "If I had a million dollars, I would buy a yacht". The second student says "If bought a yacht, I would go for a sail". Are you clear?

After the instructions are made clear, the activity starts which could involve all the students in the class. The students may come up with sentences like:

If I went for a sail, there might be a storm.

If there were a storm, my yacht would sink.

If my yacht sank, I would die.

If I died, my parents would cry.

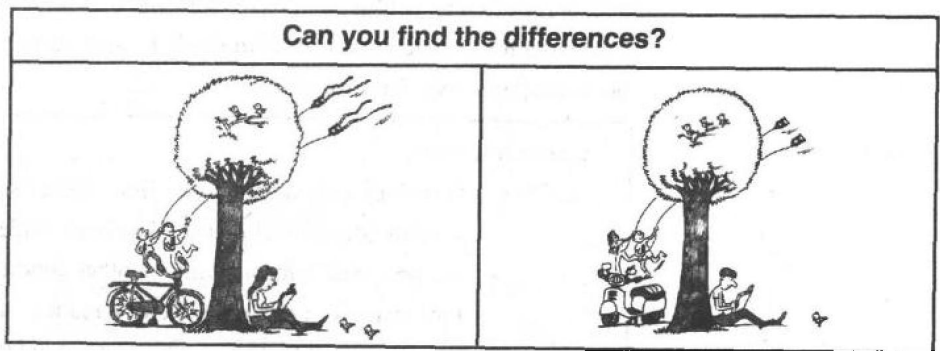
This activity is a good example of how mechanical practice and meaningful practice are combined together. Although students may not be telling the truth, the activity does give them the freedom to imagine. Besides, sticking to the form of second conditional may help with the automation of the structure.

 **Using prompts for practice**

Using prompts has also proved to be an effective way of grammar practice. The prompts can be pictures, mimes, tables or key words. Practice based on prompts is usually meaningful practice.

Using picture prompts. The students are asked to produce sentences based on the

pictures provided. Below are two example practice activities. In the first activity, the students describe what the people in the pictures are doing by using the present continuous tense. In the second activity, the students spot the differences between the two pictures. Hopefully, the students will use the forms "There is" and "There are".



Using mime or gestures as prompts. The teacher can invite the students to ask questions like "What were you doing at 7 o'clock yesterday evening?" or "What do you like to do in your spare time?" Instead of answering the questions directly, the teacher acts out the answers by miming and then invites the students to guess the answers.

Using information sheet as prompts. The students produce language according to information provided in tables like the one below.

Names	Favourite subjects	Favourite sports	Favourite food	Hobbies
Li Li	Maths	basketball	pork	music
Susan	Chinese	Ping-Pong	eggs	reading
David	English	football	Ice-cream	Collecting stamps

Students can be asked to describe each person using the information provided and then add and tell each other their own likes and hobbies. An alternative would be that the teacher can ask the students to find out information from each other first and then talk about it.

Using key phrases or key words as prompts. The students are asked to produce language based on pictures and key phrases (words) provided by the teacher. Below is an example.



How many? playground
 boys dancing
 girls playing football
 children

Using chained phrases for story telling. The students try to tell a story based on given prompts. Here is an example.

7 o'clock — got up — had breakfast — hurried to school — school closed
 — surprised — ?

Using created situations. In classroom situations, it is very difficult to find a real need and a real purpose for genuine communication in English among the students. However, teachers can create a situation for the students to practice the language in a communicative way. Below are two examples.

1. You are a stranger in this town. You want to buy some fruit, you want to post a letter, and you also want to see a movie at night. Ask about the places.
2. There was a robbery yesterday in the neighborhood. A policeman was asking some questions to three of the neighbors (A, B, C) to find out what they were doing between 4:00–6:00 yesterday afternoon. A was at work and came back at 6:30 p.m., did not see anybody. B was a student who came back at 4:30 p.m., saw a tall young man going up stairs... C was an old man, stayed at home, heard some strange noise at 5:00 p.m. and came out to find a tall young man ...



6.4 *Conclusion*

In this unit we started with the discussions about the role of grammar in ELT. The value of teaching grammar has been a focus of debate for quite some time. Perhaps there will never be a solution to the debate because language teaching and learning contexts vary so greatly. Generally speaking, Chinese learners of English as a foreign language need a certain degree of mastery of English grammar. However, it should be noted that learning grammar itself is not the ultimate goal of learning English.

The understanding of how to teach grammar is no less controversial than the value of grammar in language learning. We focused on two ways of teaching grammar, the deductive method and the inductive methods. We believe both methods have merits and drawbacks. The best way is to vary methods in different situations.

Grammar presentation is concerned with how to make the students understand or discover grammar rules. It is grammar practice that helps the students to develop grammatical ability. Great care needs to be taken if teachers want to avoid ineffective and boring grammar practice. We think both mechanical practice and meaningful practice are necessary. Below are further suggestions about teaching grammar.

- 1) Teach only those rules which are simple and which do not have too many exceptions.
- 2) Do not spend too much time on grammar points which do not appear to be very useful or important. Just make the students aware of the special features.
- 3) Wherever possible, teach grammar in context.
- 4) When presenting grammar, try to use charts, tables, diagrams, maps, drawings and realia to aid understanding.
- 5) Avoid difficult grammatical terminology as much as possible.
- 6) Allow enough opportunities for practice.
- 7) Do not be frustrated by the students' mistakes and errors, which are inevitable in language learning.

UNIT 7

Teaching Vocabulary



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to discuss how to teach vocabulary. Although vocabulary is usually integrated with the teaching of reading, we still consider it necessary to introduce ways to learn and consolidate vocabulary. We will mainly talk about the following:

1. Assumptions about vocabulary and vocabulary building.
2. Methods for presenting new vocabulary items.
3. Ways to consolidate vocabulary.
4. Ways to help students develop vocabulary building strategies.

7.1 Vocabulary and vocabulary building

Unlike the controversial role of grammar in foreign language learning, the role of vocabulary seems to have received more consistent understanding. However, uncertainty still remains regarding what constitutes a vocabulary item, which vocabulary items should be taught and learned, and how vocabulary can be taught and learned most effectively.

TASK 1

Read the following assumptions about vocabulary in English learning and decide if you agree with them or not. When you have finished, compare your results with your partner. Try to give reasons for your decisions.

	Agree/ Disagree
1. A vocabulary item can be more than one word.	
2. Languages consist of "words" with equivalents from one language to another.	
3. Vocabulary cannot be taught. It must be learned by the individuals.	
4. Both teachers and students need to know that there is a difference between active and passive vocabulary.	
5. The best way to explain vocabulary is to translate.	
6. English-English explanations are the best for vocabulary teaching.	
7. An English-English dictionary is an important aid for students.	
8. Words can be taught and learned most effectively in groups of words which are related to each other in meaning.	
9. Words must be learned in language contexts.	
10. If we do not use words, we will forget them.	

The responses to the statements above will certainly vary greatly. People have different understanding of what a vocabulary item is, how an item can be learned and consolidated, which items should be learned, and to what extent the items should be learned and practised. For example, a passive vocabulary item for student A may be an active one for student B. An item which is very difficult for student C to learn may be very easy for student D. It is very important for the students themselves to develop vocabulary awareness and vocabulary building strategies. For our opinions regarding the task above, please refer to the back of the book.

7.2 Presenting new words

Different teachers have different ways to present new words. Whatever methods are used, the following suggestions may help teachers:

- 1) Prepare examples to show meaning. Examples are best if they are created by the teachers themselves rather than taken from dictionaries. Students also look up words in dictionaries. If the students find that most of the teacher's examples are from the dictionaries, they tune out when the teacher talks.
- 2) Ask students to tell the meaning first. Teachers should always elicit *meaning from*

- students before they offer the meaning.
- 3) Think about how to show the meaning of a word with related words such as synonyms, antonyms etc.
 - 4) Think about how to check students' understanding.
 - 5) Think about the context in real life where the word might be used. Relating newly learned language to real life promotes high motivation.
 - 6) Think about possible misunderstanding or confusion that student may have.

TASK 2

Two teachers presented the word "grumble". Below are the descriptions of how they did it. Work in groups of four and discuss which way is more effective. Try to give reasons for your decision.

- Teacher A:**
- a) wrote "grumble" on the blackboard
 - b) said "complain about someone or something in an annoyed way"
 - c) translated the word into the students' native language.
 - d) gave more example sentences for the students to translate into their native language.

Teacher B: said "some people grumble about everything. For example, they grumble about the weather. If it is sunny, they say it is too hot. If it is cool, they say it is too cold. They are never happy with the weather. They always grumble about the weather". Then the teacher set out to check the student's understanding by asking "So what does 'grumble' mean?"

Here are more ways to present and explain vocabulary:

- 1) Draw pictures, diagrams and maps to show meanings or connection of meanings;
- 2) Use real objects (realia) to show meanings;
- 3) Mime or act to show meanings, e.g. brushing teeth, playing Ping-Pong;
- 4) Use synonyms or antonyms to explain meanings;
- 5) Use lexical sets, e.g. cook: fry, boil, bake, grill;
- 6) Translate and exemplify, especially with technical words or words with abstract meaning;
- 7) Use word formation rules and common affixes.

 **TASK 3**

Work in groups and discuss what techniques or combination of techniques you would use to present the following vocabulary items. If possible, choose four items and give a mini demonstration.

a sponge	a hammer	a lion	lazy
sad	to shave	to increase	a coat hanger
two million	a reward	love	fight
a typist	a boxer	erase	sleepy

7.3 Consolidating vocabulary

For the students, perhaps it is less difficult to learn vocabulary items for the first time than to consolidate and remember them. It is too often that we hear students complain that they keep learning and forgetting. Some people say vocabulary cannot be taught, it can only be learned by the students. This is perhaps partially true. When students study vocabulary individually, very often it is rote learning whose effectiveness is seldom guaranteed, particularly when they do not fully understand the meaning of the vocabulary. When students study vocabulary together, say in groups, through various activities and under the teacher's supervision, vocabulary learning becomes more fun and effective. Learning is also more effective when students understand the meaning of the new vocabulary.

Below are some vocabulary consolidation activities that can be done in class.

Labelling

Students are given a picture. They are to write the names of objects indicated in the picture. A competitive element can be introduced by making the first student to finish the winner.

Spotting the differences

Students are put into pairs. Each member of the pair receives a picture which is slightly different from his partner's. Students hide the pictures from one another and then, by a process of describing, questioning and answering, discover what the differences are.

Describing and drawing

Students are put into pairs. One student has a picture, the other a blank piece of paper and a pencil. The student having the picture must tell his partner what to draw so that the drawing ends up the same as the original picture. The student must not show the picture until the drawing is completed.

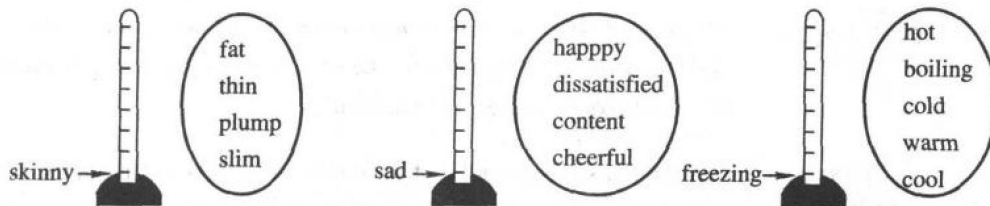
Playing a game

Students are shown a picture or a tray with many objects on it, or a series of different flash cards or magazine pictures. They have one or two minutes to memorise as many

of the objects as they can. The cards, pictures or tray are then taken away and the students have to say what they saw, or write down everything they can remember seeing, then compare their answers with the rest of the class.

Using word thermometers

These are useful for indicating different degrees in size, speed, age, distance, emotion and etc. Students are given a list of words in jumbled order. They have to place these words in the correct place on the thermometer.



(Adapted from Spratt, 1985:183-198)

Using word series

Students construct the series following an example.

Example: *Cutlery: knife, fork, spoon*

- Transport: _____
- Vehicles: _____
- Furniture: _____
- Buildings: _____

Word bingo

The teacher thinks of an area of language (e.g. shopping) that the students have recently been studying. Students draw nine squares (3 × 3) on a piece of paper and put 9 words connected with shopping in the squares. The teacher then calls out, one at a time, words connected with shopping. If the students have the word in the squares, they cross it out. The first student to cross out all the words in the squares is the winner. The game can be played for more than one round.

- shopper
- bargain
- shop
- store
- market
- supermarket
- customer
- seller
- buy
- sell
- price
- goods
- client
- pay
- money
- sale
- discount
- receipt

A different version of word bingo is that the first student to cross out a line of three words either horizontally, vertically or diagonally should shout out “Bingo”, and he or she will be the winner.

Word association

The teacher says a key word, e.g. travelling. The students then have to write down all the words they can think of connected with travelling. They have a time limit, e.g. two minutes. When time is up, the person with the highest number of acceptable words is the winner.

Odd man out

The teacher writes a set of words on the blackboard and asks the students to find the “odd man out”. For example, in the set “cheese, eggs, oranges, bread, soap, and meat”, the word “soap” is the “odd man out”.

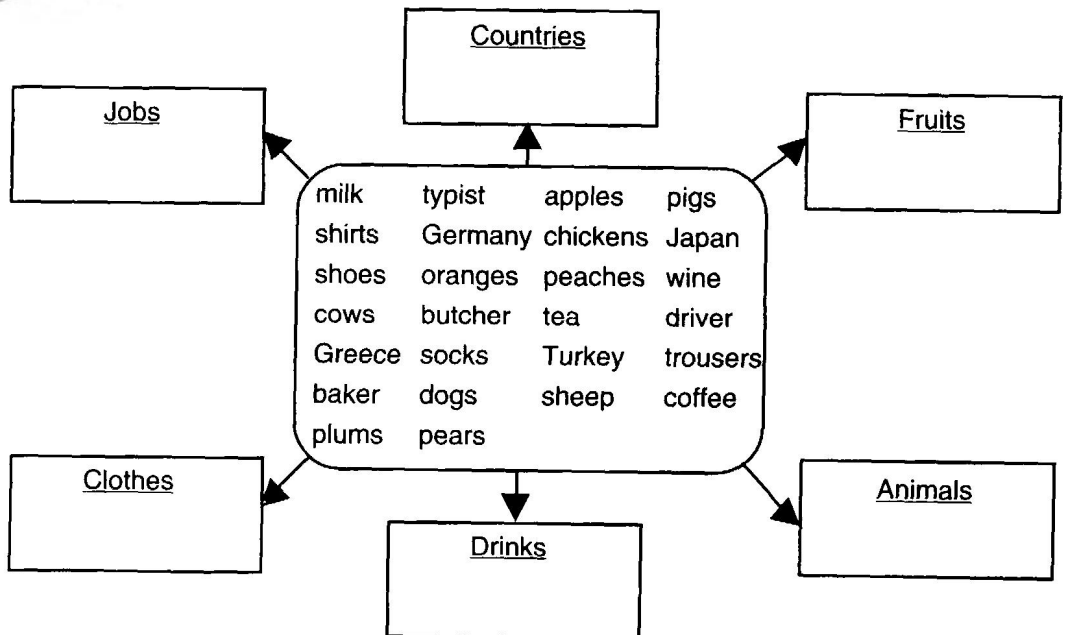
Synonyms and antonyms

The students are given a list of words and asked to find pairs of words, either synonyms or antonyms. The words in the box below are six pairs of synonyms and six pairs of antonyms. Can you find them?

full	jumper	optimistic	go on	choose	dirty
awake	select	wait a minute	pullover	pessimistic	rude
clean	continue	hang on	empty	asleep	lazy
awful	hard-working	impolite	terrible	thin	thick

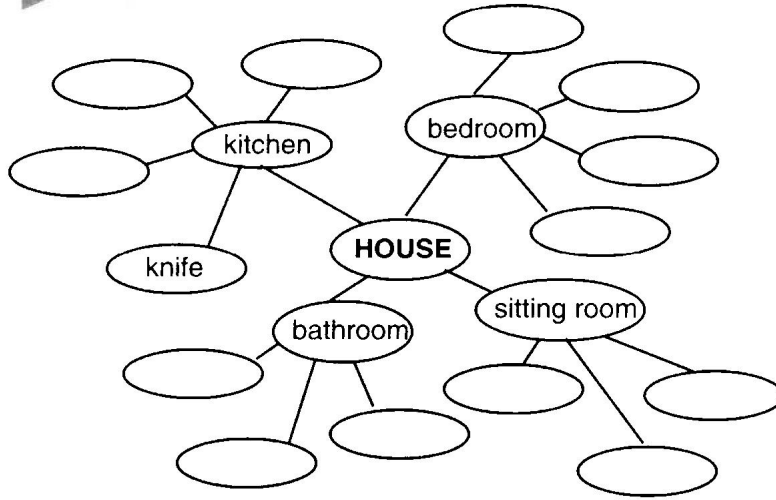
Using word categories

Students put the jumbled words in the middle into the boxes marked with different categories. Below is an example:



Using word network

Students fill in the ovals in a network with words that are under the same category or sub-category. Below is an example.



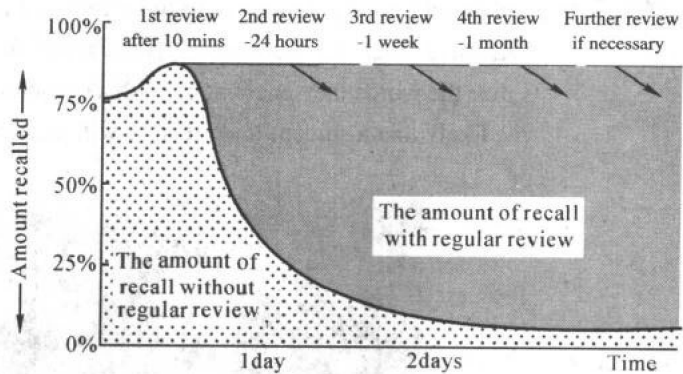
- toothpaste
- TV
- alarm clock
- stove
- video
- towel
- cupboard
- sofa
- dressing table
- wash-basin
- slippers
- mirror
- shower

7.4 Developing vocabulary building strategies

Due to limitations of time, students cannot learn all necessary vocabulary in the class. Thus we need to help students to develop their own vocabulary building strategies so that they can effectively acquire more vocabulary on their own, especially outside the class.

Review regularly

There is evidence that regular review helps to maintain largest amount of recall. The figure below may help students to understand what is regular review.



Guess meaning from context

Guessing meaning of unfamiliar words or expressions from context is not a new idea. The problem is how students can develop the ability to do so. Initially students need the teacher's help regarding what contextual clues to look for and how these clues can contribute to the discovery (revealing) of meaning. Generally speaking, the topic, the grammatical structure, the possible meaning connection between the given word and other words and the linguistic pattern where the word appears, all these may give hints

to the meaning in one way or another. Look at an example:

The captain asked the seamen to throw the anchor.

If students does not know the word *anchor*, there are enough clues for them to guess the meaning. What do seamen usually throw anyway?

 **TASK 4**

What contextual clues in the following extracts can provide hints to the meaning of the underlined words? Work in groups and share your ideas.

A study of more than 12 000 American teenagers found that young people who spend more time with their parents are happier than ... It was also found kids who spend more time with their parents do better in their school subjects ...

Let's synchronize our watches so that we can start the game at exactly the same time.

Susan went to the shop and bought some bananas, mangoes, and chirimoyas.

**Organize
vocabulary
effectively**

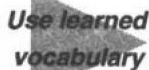
There is evidence that if information is organized and stored in special ways, e.g. related information is stored together or new information is related to previously stored information, it is more likely to be retained and easier to retrieve. Considering the massive English vocabulary, it is necessary for the teacher to guide students to organize the words they encounter. With a conscious attempt at vocabulary organization it is likely that a student's word store will increase significantly.




TASK 5

Work in groups and organize the following words in different groupings. You can set up groupings based on topic, similarity in meaning, word root, etc.

drunk	ring	depend
breeze	independent	article
journalist	bracelet	caption
wealthy	release the handbrake	picture
dependable	wind	jewellery
put into gear	necklace	push in the clutch
earrings	headline	editor
sober	well-off	gale
newspaper	look in the mirror	independence


Use learned vocabulary

Students should be encouraged to use active vocabulary items in real language use. By trying to use words or expressions correctly and appropriately, students get a better and deeper understanding of the meaning and use of the vocabulary. Besides, successful attempts at word use definitely help vocabulary consolidation.

7.5 Conclusion

In this unit we started with discussions about vocabulary and vocabulary learning. Many students devote large amounts of time and energy to the learning of vocabulary, but they still complain that their vocabulary size is not large enough or they cannot avoid forgetting. Generally speaking, there are two problems. One problem is that students treat vocabulary items indiscriminately. Considering the large size of English vocabulary, there is no wonder that students complain about their small vocabulary size. Another problem is that many students learn vocabulary in ineffective ways such as rote learning. So it is very important to make students aware that not all words are equally important and that effective ways of vocabulary learning help to reduce forgetting.

Although much of the work of vocabulary learning is the responsibility of the students, teachers' guidance and help are invaluable. If teachers present new vocabulary items effectively, it saves a lot of time and energy for consolidation. Besides, teachers' work should also include helping students to develop vocabulary building strategies.

UNIT 8

Teaching Listening



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to discuss how to teach listening. We will focus on the following:

1. Why is listening so difficult for students?
2. What do we listen to in everyday life?
3. What are the characteristics of the listening process?
4. What are the principles of teaching listening?
5. What are the common activities in teaching listening?

8.1 *Why does listening seem so difficult?*

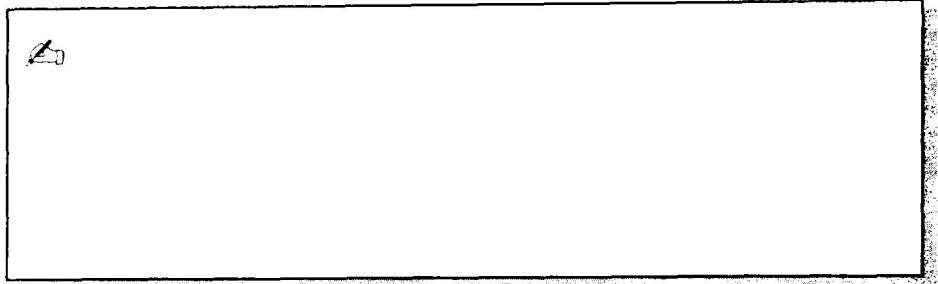
As technology advances, and trade and exchanges between countries increase, it is becoming more and more necessary to understand spoken English in many situations such as face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, business meetings, lectures, speeches, television, and so on.

Among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), foreign language learners often complain that listening is the most difficult to acquire.

TASK 1

In your English learning experiences, did you find listening more difficult than the other three skills? Can you think of any reasons why listening is often

considered to be more difficult? Work in groups and share your ideas.



One major reason for students' poor listening skill is that listening is often neglected in language teaching for various reasons, such as:

- 1) Lack of teaching materials (audio and video tapes);
- 2) Lack of equipment (tape players, VCRs, VCDs, computers);
- 3) Lack of training in how to use the equipment;
- 4) Listening is not included on many important tests;
- 5) Lack of real-life situations where language learners need to understand spoken English;
- 6) Lessons tend to test rather than to train students' listening skills.

However, even if listening were not neglected, it could not be guaranteed that students would have no problem in listening. In foreign language learning, both listening and reading are receptive skills, but listening can be more difficult than reading because:

- Different speakers produce the same sounds in different ways, e.g. different dialects and accents, stresses, rhythms, intonations, mispronunciations, etc.;
- The listener has little or no control over the speed of the input of spoken material;
- Spoken material is often heard only once. In most cases, we cannot go back and listen again as we can when we read;
- The listener cannot pause to work out the meaning of the heard material as can be done when reading;
- Speech is more likely to be distorted by background noise or the media that transmit sounds.
- The listener sometimes has to deal simultaneously with another task while listening, such as formal note-taking, writing down directions or messages from telephone calls, or operating equipment while listening to instructions.

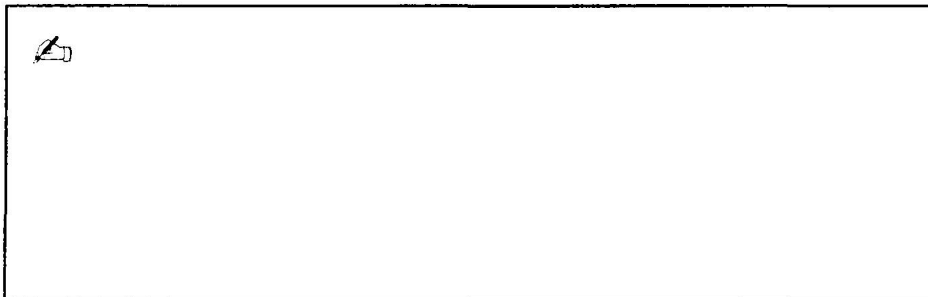
8.2 *What do we listen to in everyday life?*

Since we are teaching our students English not only to help them pass exams, but also

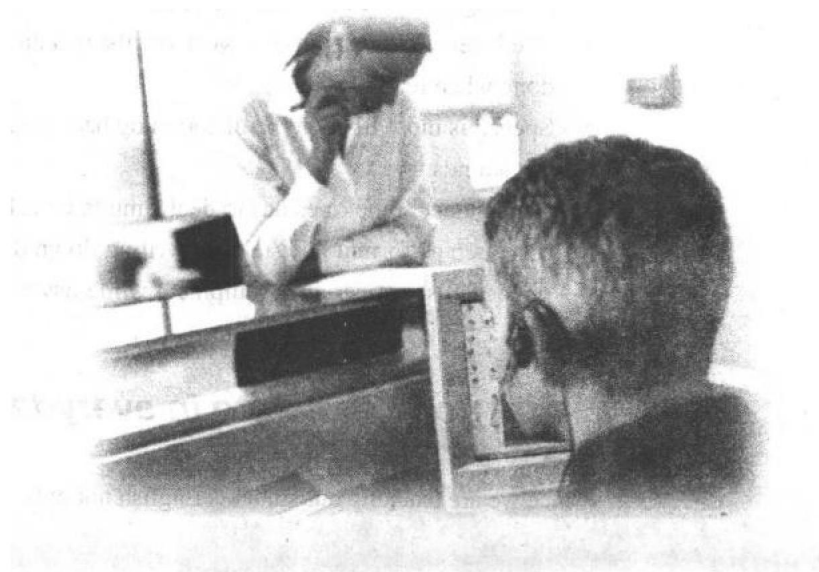
to prepare them to use English in real life, it is important to think about the situations they will listen to English in real life and then to think about the listening exercises we do in class. Do these exercises help prepare them for real life use of language? Are they too artificial and too far removed from real life to be of any use? Of course, classroom practice cannot always be the same as real life, especially with beginners. We must control the input they receive to some extent, for example, control the vocabulary and the speed, but even at beginning stages, we need to give our students a variety of listening exercises to prepare them for real life use of language.

TASK 2

How many situations can you think of where you listen to other people in our native language? Work with a partner and think about all the different situations where you need to listen in a routine day.



One reason for students' unsatisfactory listening abilities is that there is not enough variety in the materials that they listen to. In most cases, the listening materials are daily conversations or stories. But in reality we listen to far more things, regardless of which language is used.




TASK 3

Below is a list of situations where Chinese people may need to listen to English. Choose eight situations that you think are the most frequent. When you are ready, go into groups of four and compare what you have chosen.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> telephone conversations about business | <input type="checkbox"/> radio news in English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lessons or lectures given in English | <input type="checkbox"/> conversations with foreigners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> instructions in English | <input type="checkbox"/> watching television in English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> watching movies in English | <input type="checkbox"/> shop assistants who sell goods to foreigners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> deal with tourists | <input type="checkbox"/> international trade fairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> interviews with foreign-enterprises | <input type="checkbox"/> negotiations with foreign businesses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> socialize with foreigners | <input type="checkbox"/> hotel and restaurant services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> listening to English songs | |

8.3 Characteristics of the listening process

From the previous section we have seen that there is a great variety of situations where we need to listen to English. It is important to understand the characteristics or processes behind these listening situations so that we as teachers can design appropriate activities to help our students to develop effective listening habits and strategies.


TASK 4

Look back at the list of listening situations in Tasks 3. Judge the situations according to the following criteria:

- Formal or informal?
- Rehearsed or non-rehearsed?
- Can the listener interact with the speaker or not?

Generally speaking, listening in real life has the following characteristics (adapted from Ur, 1996:106–7)


Spontaneity

While some of the things that we listen to are rehearsed, e.g. radio news, television news and shows, movies, theatre, and some formal lectures, most of the time during an average day we listen to people speaking spontaneously and informally without rehearsing what they are going to say ahead of time.


Context

The context of listening is usually known in real life. In other words, we know the relationship between the listener and the speaker. Therefore, the situation helps us to

Visual clues

predict what we are going to hear.

Most of the time we can see the person we are listening to. This means we can see their facial expressions, gestures and other body language as well as the surrounding environment, which is relevant when, for example, people point at objects or in certain directions. These visual clues help us understand and predict what we hear. Of course there are situations where we cannot see the speaker, such as when we listen to the radio or use the telephone.

Listener's response

Most of the listening in daily life allows the listener to respond to the speaker, such as in a conversation. This means we can interrupt the speakers and ask for repetition or clarification.

Speaker's adjustment

In most cases, the speaker is talking directly to the listener, so he or she can adjust the way of speaking according to the listener's reactions. For example, if the listener indicates that he or she does not understand what is being said, the speaker may rephrase or elaborate.

8.4 Principles for teaching listening

There are two major purposes in listening. The first is for social reasons, like when we have a casual conversation with friends or acquaintances to maintain or build social relationships. The second is to exchange information. The second kind is more difficult, according to Anderson and Lynch (1988), and needs more emphasis in the language classroom, especially at intermediate and advanced levels.

Focus on process

The skills of listening and reading are often thought of as passive skills. However, in reality, they are not at all passive. People must do many things to process information that they are receiving. First they have to hear what is being said, then they have to pay attention, and construct a meaningful message in their mind by relating what they hear to what they already know. We all know that it is possible to hear people talking without paying attention. We also know that if we do not have enough previous knowledge of what is being said, it is more difficult to make sense of what is said. So, listening is as active a skill as speaking. It is simply more difficult for teachers to judge how well the students are comprehending the messages. So it is very important to design tasks the performance of which show how well the students have comprehended the listening material.

Combine listening and speaking

It is also important to develop speaking and listening skills together, because most of the time in real life these two skills are needed at the same time. In the traditional

listening classroom, students listen to tapes with headphones and then answer listening comprehension questions. There are two problems with this approach. One is that it does not give students chance to practise listening and speaking skills together. The second problem is that the listening comprehension questions only test the students, but do not train the students how to listen or how to develop effective listening strategies.

**Focus on
comprehending
meaning**

Another problem with many listening exercises in traditional textbooks is that they test students' memory, not their listening comprehension. It is important to design tasks that do not ask learners to remember details that they wouldn't even remember in their native language. In fact, psycholinguistic studies have shown that people do not remember the exact form of the message they hear; that is, they don't remember what they hear word for word, rather, they remember the meaning. The original message is transferred in the brain to a form where the meaning is preserved, but the original surface detail is forgotten.

**Grade
difficulty level
appropriately**

When designing listening tasks, it is very important to grade the difficulty level of the tasks. There are a large number of factors that affect the difficulty level of listening tasks, but they fall into three main categories according to Anderson and Lynch (1988:46): 1) type of language used; 2) task or purpose in listening; 3) context in which the listening occurs.

 **TASK 5**

Suppose you are teaching a lower intermediate class of middle school students. You want to give them some listening practice. The following listening materials are available. Which texts would you choose? In what order would you use them? Give your reasons.

- A videotape of a talk by a native speaker about the school life of middle school students in the United States
- A live talk by a competent English-speaking Chinese psychologist about effective study habits
- An audiotape of an interview with a native English speaker talking about her experiences living in China
- An audiotape of the news from CRI (China Radio International)

Most textbooks do not provide enough variety of types of listening tasks, so *the teacher* will need to evaluate the tasks provided, adapt and design tasks to provide more vari-

ety. Variety is very important. Not only does it help students remain interested and motivated to learn, but it also provides practice in the many types of listening situations learners will encounter in real life.

There are three stages in listening activities for language learners: **pre-listening**, **while-listening**, and **post-listening**, which we will discuss in detail in the next sections.

8.5

Pre-listening activities

Predicting

Research in listening has shown that good listeners are good predictors. By helping our students become better predictors, we are helping them become better listeners. There are many different activities that can be used to encourage students to predict the content of what they are about to hear.

If there is a picture with the listening passage, the students can be asked to predict what the passage will contain before they listen. If there is no picture, perhaps the teacher can find or draw a picture that fits the text. Visual aids are immensely helpful in aiding students' comprehension. "They attract students' attention and help and encourage them to focus on the subject in hand" (Ur, 1984:30).

 **TASK 6**

From the pictures below, what can you predict about the contents of the listening texts? How would you guide the students to make predictions based on the pictures? When you are ready, go into groups of four and share your ideas.



(Taken from *Junior English for China*, Book 1:77)



(Taken from *Junior English for China*, Book 1:81)

In the beginning the students may have difficulty predicting. If so the teacher can help them by asking leading questions. For example, for each of the pictures above, the teacher can ask these questions:

Picture 1: Where are they? What are they doing? What is the relationship between them?

Picture 2: What do you see in the picture? What is behind the trees? What is in the trees? What is in the river?

Another type of predicting task is to let students read the listening comprehension questions before they listen. In this way, they can guess the topic of the listening text. Sometimes, the teacher can even ask the students to guess the answers to the questions before they listen. Notice that even though it may be impossible to predict the correct answers, the students will be more motivated to listen to the passage to see if their predictions are correct or not.

Setting the scene

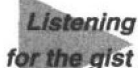
Another type of pre-reading activity is to set the scene for the students. As we have said before, listening to passages in the classroom can be more difficult than listening in real life, because of the lack of context. So the teacher can help provide the background information to activate learners' schema, so they will be better prepared to understand what they hear.

TASK 7

Suppose your students are going to listen to a passage about Michael Jackson. How would you set the scene? Note down your ideas and then share them with other people in your group.



Whether the teacher can effectively set the scene depends on what he or she knows about the topic in question, what he or she has in hand, and also how well he or she knows about the language level of the students he or she is teaching. In the task above, if the teacher him(her)self does not know much about Michael Jackson, he or she will have to rely on what is provided in the textbook. Or if the teacher has collected some photos or albums of the singer, they will be a great aid to set the scene. In addition, the teacher can always ask the students to help set the scene.




**Listening
for the gist**

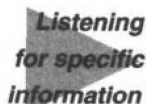
The third type of pre-listening activity is listening for the gist. It is very important to give students practice in this area, because in real-life, they will not be able to listen to something several times. Therefore, it will be impossible for them to catch all the details, so they need to be comfortable with some ambiguity in listening and realize that they can still learn even when they do not understand every single word. Listening for the gist is similar to the concept of skimming a passage in reading. The key is to ask students one or two questions that focus on the main idea or the tone or mood of the whole passage. Notice that students can answer the gist questions even though they do not understand every word or phrase in the passage. If the passage is recorded well, students will be able to guess the answer simply from the tone of voices of the speakers.



TASK 8

Look through a textbook such as one of the SEFC textbooks. Find a listening passage where students will have some difficulty understanding every word. Write one or two gist questions that they should be able to answer even if they can only catch the main idea or tone of the passage.





**Listening
for specific
information**

There are situations in real life where we listen only for some specific details and ignore the rest of the entire message. For example, when we listen to the weather report on TV, we are only interested in the temperature in the city where we live or where we plan to go on the weekend, or when we are sitting in a train station or an airport, we do not listen to the details of all the announcements. It is important to expose our students to a variety of types of listening texts for a variety of purposes so that they will develop a variety of listening strategies to use for different situations.



TASK 9

Jane has left a telephone message on Kate's answering machine. She's coming to visit Kate. What specific information is important to Kate? How would you set

up a pre-listening task focused on specific information? Below is the message.

Hello, Kate. It's Jane here. I'm catching a train to Guangzhou on Saturday evening. It gets to Guangzhou at 10:30 on Monday morning. I don't know where you live. Can you come and meet me at the station? Oh, yes. My telephone number is (010) 6687-2495. Bye.

**Summary on
pre-listening
activities**

These are just a few examples of pre-listening tasks. Using their creativity, teachers can think of many more. Most of the time, we would only use one kind of pre-listening activity before each listening session. Pre-listening tasks should not take much time. Remember the purpose of them is to activate the students' schema, in other words, to add context, so that the actual listening itself becomes easier.

8.6 While-listening activities

The while-listening stage is the most difficult for the teacher to control, because this is where the student needs to pay attention and process the information actively. However, if the teacher provides a reason, goal, or task for the learner, this can encourage and help the listener to focus. There are many different kinds of tasks for students to do while they are listening to a passage. Below are just a few examples.

**No specific
responses**

Recent research has shown that by not giving students any task the first time they listen to a passage, it can take the anxiety out of listening. This can work well with stories or with any kind of material that is interesting, humorous, or dramatic, because learners are likely to pay attention and try to understand in order to enjoy it.

**Listen
and tick**

A large part of what makes a listening task easy or difficult is what the teacher asks the students to do with the material. If all the students need to do is tick items as they hear them, the task will be much easier. Below is an example.

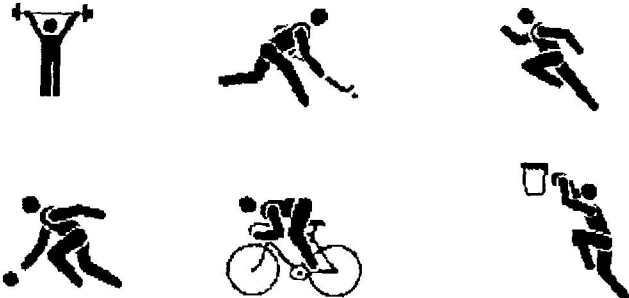
Directions: You are going to listen to three students talking about their school subjects. Listen carefully and decide if they like or dislike the subjects. Put a "✓" for "like" and "✗" for "dislike".

Subjects	Justin	Lynn	Ben
History			
Maths			
English			
Chinese			
Science			
Music			
Art			
Physical education			

Listen and sequence

There are many different tasks of this type. The students find out the order of things based on what they hear. Students can successfully complete this type of task even when they do not understand every word they hear. This builds up their confidence and helps prepare them for the real world where they certainly will not be able to understand everything they hear. Below is an example.

Directions: Listen to an announcement of the order of the games at a sports meeting. Mark the following games with numbers 1–6 according to the order they are played.



Listen and act

There is a whole method of teaching called Total Physical Response, which concentrates on learning language by listening and responding physically to commands or directions. There are many variations of how this can be carried out in a classroom. With beginners, it is easy to start with simple commands such as “Stand up.” “Sit down.” “Walk to the door.” “Open the door.” “Close the door.” “Point to the window.” “Hold up your pencil box.” “Put your left hand on your head.” “Put your right hand on your left ear.” etc. At intermediate levels, the commands can become more complex. For example, “Pretend you’re walking through mud.” “Pretend you’re walking through sand.” “Pretend you’re washing your face.” “Pretend you’re tying your shoes.” “Pretend you’re eating watermelon.”

Listen and draw

A whole range of activities can be designed around this type. This is similar to acting out physically, but in this type, the students are drawing pictures, diagrams, etc. on paper. This type of activity works very well as an information gap activity between pairs of students. One student draws a simple picture and then tells his/her partner how to draw it. Neither partner can look at each other’s drawing during the task. After they have completed the task, they can compare their pictures to see how similar they are. Usually, this produces amusing variations. One way to simplify the task is to work only with geometric shapes. Of course, the vocabulary would need to be pre-taught if the students do not know it.


TASK 10

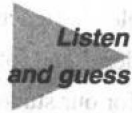
Work in groups of four. One person reads the text below and the other three people draw a picture according what is read. They should close the book and should not look at each other's picture. When everyone has finished, compare the pictures.

First, draw a circle in the middle of the page. It should be about 4 cm in diameter. Then draw a long rectangle above the circle. It should not touch the circle. Then draw a triangle below the circle. The top of the triangle just touches the bottom of the circle. Now, on the right side of the circle, draw a square. It should be slightly larger than the circle. Inside the centre of the square, draw a small oval. Next, on the left side of the circle, draw two parallel vertical lines. They should be slightly longer than the circle. Now, under the triangle write the sentence "What is this?" OK. Now we're done. Do your drawings look alike?

For this type of task, it is best to give it live rather than recorded, so that the teacher can judge how well the students are following and how often the teacher needs to repeat or rephrase the instructions.


Listen and fill

This is a task that you are probably very familiar with. The students can read along while they listen to something and fill in the blanks with the words that they hear. It is easy to design this type of tasks. All you need to do is to decide which words to take out and replace with blanks. You can decide to focus on different types of words, for example, only nouns, or only function words (prepositions and articles like "an, the, of, for, on, in") depending on how difficult the passage is and what you want your students to practise listening to. Note that it is important not to overdo this type of tasks, since it gives students the impression that they need to understand every word, but there are times when you want your students to focus on the details. For example, function words are almost always unstressed and therefore sometime difficult for non-native speakers to hear.


Listen and guess

The teacher (or a student) can provide oral descriptions of a person, place, thing, action, etc. Learners write down what they think it is. One game that can be played is to ask the students to write down descriptions of themselves after they have learned vocabulary for height, appearance, and personalities. The teacher can collect the descriptions and then choose 10 or so to read out loud to the whole class, so that the students can write down silently who they think is being described. Then, the answers can be confirmed and anyone who guessed all of them correctly is the "winner".

Another game is to have the students write down 4 or 5 clues that describe an animal

after they have learned the names of several animals and some vocabulary such as colours, and some parts of the body such as eyes, feet, feathers, fins, fur, stripes, spots, etc. Then the students can take turns coming to the front of the class and reading out their clues, while the rest of the students write down what animal they think it is. A variation of the animal game is to divide the class into 2–3 teams and have the team members take turns to call out what animal they think it might be after each clue is read. The sooner the animal is guessed, the more points the team can earn. For example, if the animal is guessed on the first clue, a team can earn 10 points, second clue — 6 points, third clue — 2 points, fourth clue — 1 point.

The advantage of doing these types of listening activities is that it personalizes the lesson so the students are more interested in listening, especially if a game element is involved where the class can be divided into teams. Competition inevitably increases the students' motivation. This type of activity also integrates listening with the other skills, especially speaking, but also some limited writing; therefore it helps prepare students for listening situations in real life where often several skills need to be used simultaneously.

Summary on while-listening activities

So far, we have discussed many options for while-listening activities. The above list is by no means complete, either. As we have pointed out, sometimes it is good to just let the students listen and enjoy what they are listening to without a specific task. However, most of the time, it is helpful to provide a task for the students to do while they are listening. This gives the students a purpose to listen for and helps them focus on the listening itself. By providing a variety of types of tasks, students learn to listen for a variety of purposes which better prepares them for listening in the real world outside the classroom.

8.7 Post-listening activities

The post-listening stage is where the teacher can determine how well the students have understood what they listened to, but it is important to design the tasks well. One important point to keep in mind is whether we are testing the students' listening comprehension or their memory as we mentioned in the "Principles for teaching listening" section. If the listening text is too long or complicated, students can forget what they have heard even in their native language. It is also possible for our students to remember and repeat things they heard, even if they did not understand them. But, it is more common for people to understand more than they can remember. Even in our own language, we remember the gist of the conversation, but we cannot remember exactly what words were said. In fact, in real life, it is more natural to select and interpret what we hear rather than repeat everything we have heard. Now let's look at some types of post-listening activities.

Multiple choice questions

The most typical type of post-listening task is the multiple-choice comprehension question. While this type of task may prepare students to take traditional multiple choice tests, it does little to help them develop good listening habits and strategies. The teacher needs to decide what balance is best for the students, preparing them for traditional multiple-choice tests or preparing them to function in English in the real world. The following example from Anderson and Lynch (1988:69) illustrates two types of tasks: one provides test-taking practice and the other helps the students listen with understanding.

Exercise A

Now that you have listened to the whole conversation, look at the questions below. Listen carefully again and answer the questions by choosing the right answer from A, B, C, or D.

1. With general tickets, borrowers can take ____ from the library.
 - A. fiction only
 - B. non-fiction only
 - C. both fiction and non-fiction
 - D. none of these

(Taken from Underwood, 1971:4)

Exercise B

Liz is a librarian in an academic library. She does a number of different tasks every day. List five things she might be expected to do. Then, while you are listening to Extract H, tick any jobs she mentions which are on your list.

(Taken from Underwood and Barr, 1980:12)

Do you see how Exercise A focuses the students only on the information in the questions, whereas Exercise B helps students activate their schema of vocabulary about libraries before they listen to the passage? Therefore, the job of listening becomes easier and more like real life.

Answering questions

Instead of multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions can be asked. Some types might lend themselves nicely to discussion in small groups. The answers to some questions can be found in the passage, but other types of questions might be asking about the attitude of the speaker. Was the person angry, upset, happy, excited? Another type of question is an inference question, where the answer is not stated explicitly, but can only be inferred from the text.

Note-taking and gap-filling

This is a good example of how while-listening and post-listening is combined. First the students listen to a fairly long text (depending on the level). The students takes

notes while they are listening. When the listening is finished, the students are given two or three minutes to tidy up the notes. Then the teacher gives the students an incomplete summary of the text that the students have listened to. The students complete the summary based on their notes. They do not have to use the original words from the text. This is a good activity where students reconstruct meaning from what they hear.


Dictogloss

Dictogloss is a recently discovered listening activity which requires the use of comprehensive listening skills. It has four stages:

- 1) **Preparation.** The teacher prepares the students by briefly talking about the topic and key words or asking general questions about the text they are going to hear. The teacher should also make sure students know what to do exactly.
- 2) **Dictation.** The teacher dictates the text twice. For the first time, students just listen and focus on the meaning. For the second time, the students take extensive notes. The teacher should make sure that the dictation speed is almost at the speed of normal speech.
- 3) **Reconstruction.** Based on their notes, the students work in pairs or groups and reconstruct the text they have heard.
- 4) **Analysis and correction.** The students compare their version of the text with the original, sentence by sentence.

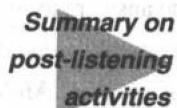

TASK 11

Work in groups of five. One person dictates the text below and the other four people take notes. They should close the book. When everyone has finished, the four students work in pairs and reconstruct the text.

Text for dictogloss

In 1985 there was an earthquake in Mexico City. Many thousands of people died in the disaster. People searched the city for missing relatives and friends. Rescuers worked without rest for many days. There was a great deal of suffering and enormous destruction.

(Taken from Nunan, 1995:29)


**Summary on
post-listening
activities**

There are many opportunities to integrate listening with the practice of other language skills, especially at the post-listening stage. It is important to remember when designing tasks not to demand that our students remember more details than a native-speaker would in a real-life situation, because we do not want our students to get into the habit of thinking that they need to understand and remember everything they hear. It is also important not to spend too much time giving students practice with traditional test-

taking questions because they do not help prepare students for listening outside the classroom as well as many other types of tasks. By integrating listening tasks with speaking and writing, it is easier to keep students' motivation high and motivation is essential in order for real language learning to occur.

8.8 *Conclusion*

In this unit, we started with discussions about the nature of listening, both in real language use and in language classroom. We believe a better understanding of the listening process and the spoken language will help us to understand the difficulties that students experience in developing listening skills. It will also help us to design better listening activities for our students. We then focused on a variety of activities in teaching listening. We have emphasized that teaching listening should focus on the process of listening rather than the result of listening. Listening activities should not merely test the students' memory as many traditional test-oriented listening exercises do.

UNIT 9

Teaching Speaking



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to discuss how to teach speaking. We will focus on the following:

1. What are the characteristics of spoken language?
2. What are principles for designing speaking activities?
3. How can we use group work in speaking activities?
4. What are the common types of speaking activities?

9.1 *What are the characteristics of spoken language?*

Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real-life situations. It is an important part of everyday interaction and most often the first impression of a person is based on his/her ability to speak fluently and comprehensibly. So, as teachers, we have a responsibility to prepare the students as much as possible to be able to speak in English in the real world outside the classroom and the testing room.

Speaking is a skill, just like swimming, driving a car, or playing ping-pong. Too often, in the traditional classroom, the learning of English has been relegated to linguistic knowledge only, e.g. knowledge of vocabulary and grammar rules, with little or no attention paid to practising language skills. How can we tell the difference between knowledge and skill? Bygate (1987:4) points out one “fundamental difference is that both can be understood and memorized, but only a skill can be imitated and practised”.

One of the characteristics of speech in everyday life is that speech is spontaneous. That is, in most situations, people do not plan ahead of time what they are going to say. Only in more formal situations, such as when a person has been asked to give a speech, do people plan and organize their speech. The fact that speech is spontaneous means that it is full of false starts, repetitions, incomplete sentences, and short phrases. So, should we expect the students to produce complete sentences in the language classroom? Bygate (1987:8) points out that teachers may be requiring their students to do more forward-thinking and planning than native speakers do in real life!

Another aspect of producing spoken language is the time-constraint. The students must be able to produce unplanned utterances in real time, otherwise people will not have the patience to listen to them.

TASK 1

Considering the aspects of the nature of spoken language discussed above, which of the following activities do you think would help to prepare students for real life speech in English? (adapted from Bygate, 1987:8)

1. reading aloud
2. giving a prepared talk
3. learning a piece of text or dialogue by heart
4. interviewing someone, or being interviewed
5. doing a drill

Most of the above activities are very common in traditional language teaching. The only activity that would help students prepare for spontaneous speech would be the fourth one: interviewing someone or being interviewed. This is not to say that the other activities have no value; but they do not help prepare the learner for the type of speaking that is most common in everyday life. The only other activity that is realistic is the second one: giving a prepared talk, but this would usually not be required of any of the students until they were at an advanced level of English. Perhaps by the intermediate level, this kind of activity could be used, but it should not be emphasized. The other three activities, reading aloud, memorizing a dialogue by heart, and doing a drill are merely language practice activities that have very little basis in real life (although reading aloud helps the development of literacy in first language learning) and therefore need to be supplemented with more realistic activities especially as the level of the learner increases.

Time pressure is not the only issue that is difficult for language students; they must also consider whom they are talking to and be able to check if they are being under-

stood. If they are not, they need to be able to change strategies. One advantage in learning to speak compared to learning to write is that the speaker gets immediate feedback from the listener, so the speaker can adjust the message immediately. Look at the following example:

Kelly: Hey Jack, how's the project coming along?
 Jack: What project?
 Kelly: The one you and Craig are working on.
 Jack: Craig and I?
 Kelly: Yeah, for the science fair.
 Jack: Oh, that project. It's finished; I'm so busy working on another project for my economics class that I almost forgot about it. I hope it'll work like we want it to.
 Kelly: Oh, I'm sure it will.


9.2 Designing speaking tasks


When we design speaking tasks, one important consideration is the language proficiency level of the students. If we ask them to do tasks that are above their level, they will simply become frustrated and demotivated. On the other hand, it is good to give the students tasks at times that challenge them, because if speaking tasks are always too easy, they can also become demotivated.

There are several other factors to consider when designing speaking activities. Look at the task below and see if you can think of other factors.

TASK 2

Think about a successful speaking activity that you have participated in as a student or led as a teacher. What made it successful? When you are ready, share it with your partner (adapted from Ur, 1996:120).



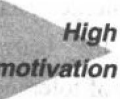

**Maximum
foreign talk**

Although the success of a speaking task depends on many factors, the following characteristics are common in successful speaking tasks (adapted from Ur, 1996).

In successful speaking tasks, the students talk a lot in the foreign language. One common problem in speaking activities is that students often produce one or two simple utterances in the foreign language and spend the rest of the time chatting in their native language. Another common problem is that the teacher talks too much of the time, thus taking away valuable practice time from the students.


**Even
participation**

Whether the task takes place among the whole class or in small groups, a successful task should encourage speaking from as many different students as possible. The task should be designed in a way so that the outspoken students do not dominate discussions. When necessary, the teacher may interfere to guarantee equal opportunities for students of different levels.


**High
motivation**

Research has shown that motivation is one of the most important variables in successful language learning. Teachers can do a lot to increase and maintain the motivation of students by the types of tasks that they organize in class. Students are eager to speak, when the topic is interesting or there is a clear objective that must be reached. Again great care should be taken to make sure the task is in line with the students' ability to deal with the task. If the task is too easy, the students may think it is childish and thus lose interest.


**Right language
level**

In a successful speaking task, the language is at the right level. The task must be designed so that students can complete the task successfully with the language that they have. If the students lack too much vocabulary the task will become frustrating and the students are likely to give up or revert back to the native language.

9.3 *Using group work in speaking tasks*

The first characteristic of a successful speaking task is that students talk a lot in the foreign language. This is the strongest argument for using small group work because it increases the time for each student to practise speaking in one lesson. The only way to become good at a skill is to practise it. Nobody expects to be good at playing ping-pong the first time they try even if they already know all the rules very well and have watched others play many times. The same is true of speaking a foreign language. Since the students will probably not have enough opportunity to practise speaking in English outside the classroom, it is our responsibility as teachers to give them as many opportunities in the classroom as possible.

A second reason for designing speaking tasks to be completed in small groups is that often students are afraid of criticism or losing face or they simply feel shy about speak-

ing in a foreign language in front of a whole class. Besides, speaking in small groups is more natural, because in real life, we spend most of our time talking to one other person or to a few other people. If we speak to a large group of people, it is usually a more formal situation where we have spent time preparing what we are going to say.

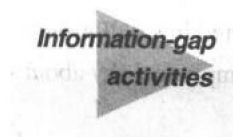
Different small groups can work at different levels if the teacher groups them according to language proficiency level (Cooke & Nicholson, 1992:32). It is inevitable that some students in a class will be more advanced than other students. If teachers modify a given task to make it easier for slower students and more challenging for more advanced students, then all students will continue learning and remain more motivated. Even when teachers do not modify the task, students will naturally perform to their abilities more readily in small groups than in a whole class (Brumfit, 1984:77).

On a broader level, Cooke and Nicholson point out that small group work helps students learn to work cooperatively and it helps them develop interpersonal skills. When students work with other students who are not their friends, they learn how to work with a wider variety of people and this fosters development of tolerance, mutual respect and harmony (1992:34). Unit 4 of this book has further discussion about group work.

9.4 Types of speaking tasks

It is important to give the students a variety of speaking activities so that they will be able to cope with different situations in reality. Variety also helps keep motivation high. Any kind of activity, if overused, may become less interesting. A third reason for designing a variety of activities is that the students have different learning styles, so some kinds of activities may suit some students, while other activities may suit other students.

In the unit on teaching listening we stated that there are two major purposes for listening: one is to get information and the other is for social reasons. Since speaking is the reciprocal of listening, the same is true of speaking. So, it makes sense to design tasks to help the students practise both listening and speaking. Littlewood (1981:20) divides communicative speaking activities into two types: **functional communication activities** and **social interaction activities**. For beginning language students, Littlewood points out that it is necessary to also include what he calls pre-communicative activities, which are more structured and allow the learner to practise the forms of the language. As much as possible, however, we should make speaking tasks communicative. Now let's look at a few types of speaking activities.



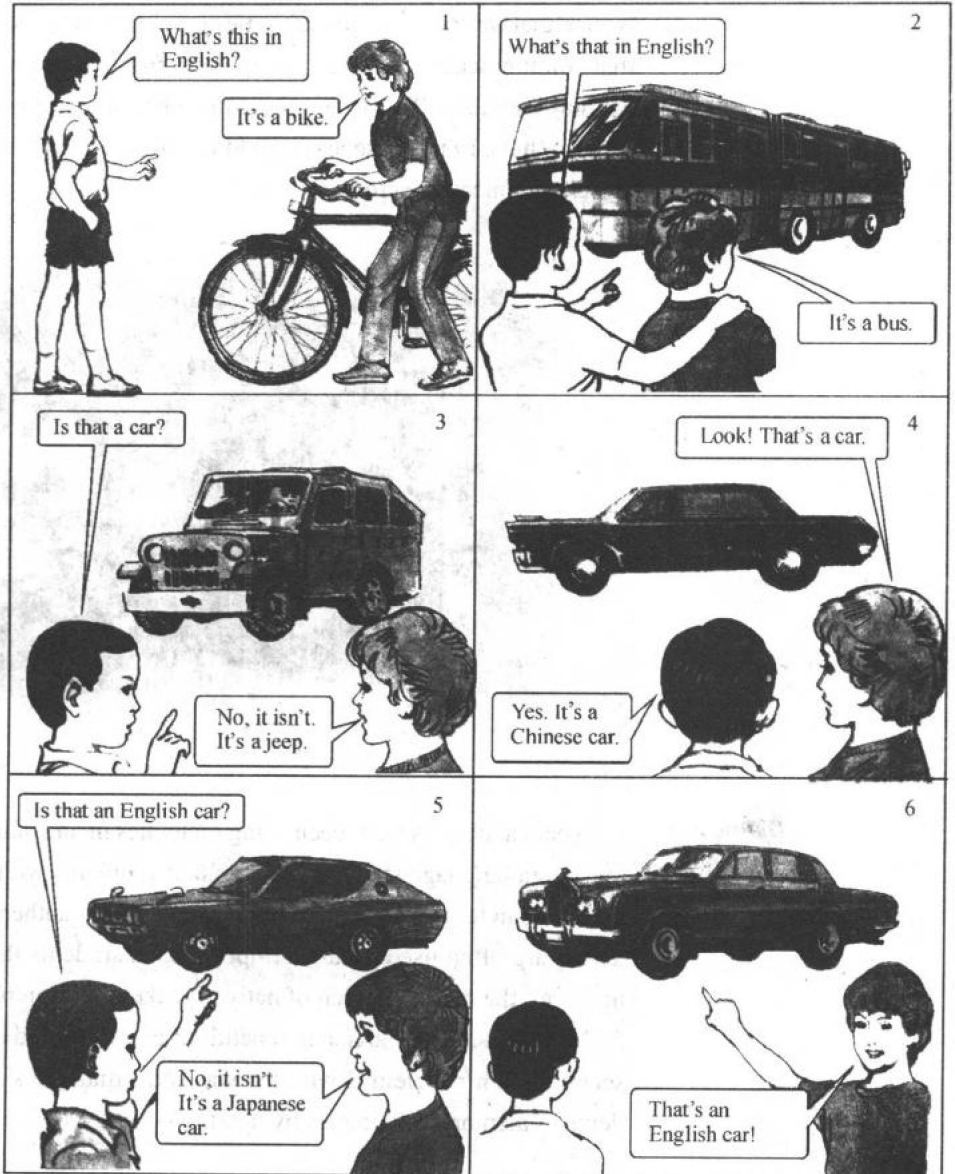
One excellent way to make speaking tasks communicative is to use information-gap activities, in which the students have different information and they need to obtain

information from each other in order to finish a task.

TASK 3

Work in groups and decide which of the following speaking activities includes an information gap. How can you further adapt the activities to make them more communicative?

Activity 1



(Taken from *Junior English for China*, Book 1:19)

Activity 2

Use the same pictures, but cut them up, paste them on cards, and give each student a different picture.

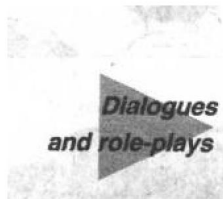
Directions: Ask your partner what is in their picture.

For Example: Student A: What's in your picture?

Student B: There is _____. What's in your picture?

Student A: There is _____.

Obviously the second activity includes an information gap that the first one does not. Notice that information-gap activities can be designed at a very elementary level, so that communicative practice can be done from almost the very beginning of foreign language learning. This is not to say that drills have no use in the language classroom, but they have limited use and should be followed by more communicative or at least pre-communicative activities.



For years textbooks have been using dialogues in an attempt to teach spoken language to foreign language students. A couple of problems with the way most dialogues are presented in textbooks are that the language is not authentic or natural. Complete sentences are often used in an attempt to teach students the grammar of the language; however, the natural speech of native speakers is often phrases or sentence fragments full of pauses, false starts, and repetitions as we pointed out in a previous section. The second major problem is with the way most dialogues are taught. Teachers ask students to memorize dialogues by heart.

As Cunningsworth (1984:66) points out, reading or memorizing a printed dialogue does not allow students to develop "the ability to produce the quick real-time responses

which are an essential feature of fluency in a conversational context". Of course, it is useful for students to memorize some common stock phrases that they can then use, but a dialogue is always between at least two people, so we can never predict what the other person will say next.

So, what can teachers do to make dialogues more communicative? First of all, turn the dialogues into role plays, so the students can pretend they are acting as someone else. Some students become less inhibited about speaking in front of a class when they are acting. Look at the dialogue below.

A: What time is it?
 B: It's 3:00. Why?
 A: Oh, I need to go to the store! Do you want to come?
 B: OK. Just a minute. I need to finish this first.

After students have practised it in pairs and a couple of pairs have performed it in front of the whole class, the teacher can ask them to perform it in different moods such as happy, irritated, bored or in different role relationships such as a parent and a child, husband and wife, two friends, etc. Then the actual words can be varied such as "go to the post office" or "go to the bank" instead of "the store" or "I need to find my jacket or my shoes" instead of "finish this first". Finally, the teacher can get the students to make the dialogue longer by adding two or more lines (Ur, 1996:132). Again, notice how even at a very elementary level, students can be creative with the language that they have.

Another way to make dialogues more similar to real-life, yet still controlled enough so that the task is not too difficult for beginning and lower intermediate students, is to use cue cards. This way an information gap is formed because each student only sees one cue card and therefore doesn't know what the other person is going to say.

TASK 4

Perform a dialogue with a partner based on cue cards. Speaker A looks at Card A and Speaker B looks at Card B. Then, with your partner make up your own prompts to be used on cue cards. Think about what sort of topics the students would be likely to talk about in their native language.

Card A

You are talking to a new classmate. Begin the conversation with a greeting.

1. Greet your partner.
2. Ask your partner which school he/she went to before.
3. Ask your partner if he/she lives nearby the school.
4. Suggest you go shopping together after school.

Card B

You are a new student at this school. One of your classmates greets you.

1. Greet your partner back.
2. Answer the question.
3. Answer the question.
4. Respond to the offer.

By performing a dialogue based on cue cards, it should be obvious that students need to make up their own language and respond to a real person. Creating prompts on cue cards is not as simple as it may seem due to the element of control. It is hard to direct the dialogue without controlling it too much. In the example cue cards for the task above, it might be more natural for Speaker B to respond to the second question with a reciprocal question like "What about you? Do you live nearby?"

Cue cards obviously have their limitations due to the amount of control still needed. Students should be ready to move quickly into less controlled type of role plays, where only the situation and the relationship between the two speakers is specified. For example:

Card A

You and your friend are going out to eat lunch. You need to decide where to go. You would like to try something different because you're tired of the same food. You make a suggestion.

Card B

You and your friend are going out to eat lunch. You need to decide where to go. You would like to go to the place where you always go, because you like the food. You don't agree with your friend's suggestion.

Notice that the outcome of this role play is not specified in the cue cards. It only sets up a point of disagreement. How the actors work out the disagreement is up to them. Notice that the level of control for this kind of role play is much less and thus gives students more practice of thinking and talking in real-time.

Traditionally, teachers allow students to practise a role-play in pairs before asking a few pairs to perform in front of the entire class. So, when they are performing, they are still not talking completely spontaneously. One way to force students to speak spontaneously is to ask the actors to come to the front of the class before the teacher tells them the situation. The teacher then explains the situation so that the whole class can

hear and gives the actors a few seconds to think about what they will say before they start. The first few times that a teacher organizes this type of role play, it is probably a good idea to choose some of the more outgoing students who will not feel so inhibited performing impromptu.

Ur (1996:133) points out that the factors that affect the success of role-plays are: the teacher's enthusiasm; careful instructions; clear situations and roles; and making sure that the students have the language they will need to carry out the role-play.

**Activities
using
pictures**

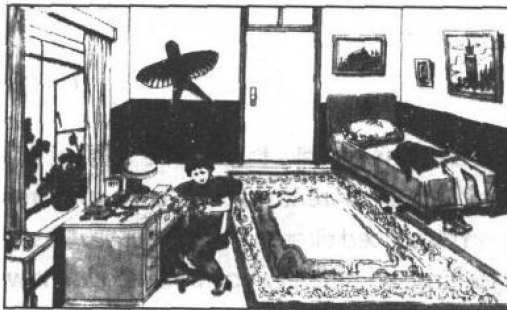
Pictures are invaluable in speaking activities. Appropriate pictures provide cues, prompts, situations and non-verbal aid for communication. Students from elementary level to advanced level can all benefit from using pictures in speaking activities.

TASK 5

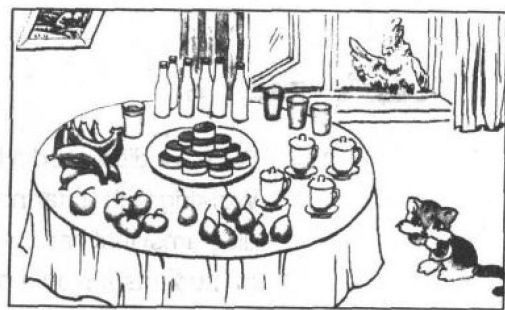
Look at the activity below. Try it out with your classmates. Discuss what level of students you could use this task with. Do you think it would be a successful task? Will all the students participate? Will they enjoy it? Can you think of any potential problems with it? (adapted from Ur, 1996:124-5)

Directions:

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 people. Each group has one of the two pictures shown below which everyone in the group can see. Give them two minutes to say as many sentences as they can that describe the picture. Appoint a "secretary" to mark a tick on a piece of paper for each sentence said. Emphasize that the secretary only needs to mark a tick; there is no need to write down the sentence. At the end of two minutes, groups report how many ticks they have. Then they repeat the procedure with the second picture, trying to get more ticks than the first time.



(Taken from *JEFC*, Book 1:69)



(Taken from *JEFC*, Book 1:75)

Ur (1996:128) states that the type of activity described in the task above works well with beginning level classes. Because this task has a clear objective and a short time limit, students produce a good number of sentences rapidly. Ur claims that when the groups do the task for the second time with the second picture, they almost always come up with more sentences than they did the first time.

There are many different information-gap activities that can be designed around pictures. One common type is to use two pictures which look identical to each other at first glance, but actually have several differences. One student gets one picture and a second student gets the other picture. Their task is to discover all the differences between the two pictures without looking at each other's pictures. In this way, they must describe the pictures in detail. The language used for such a task can be somewhat controlled by the vocabulary for the items in the picture. The level of difficulty of this task can be changed depending on how obvious the distinguishing characteristics of each picture are.

There are many variations on this theme. One variation described by Littlewood (1981:23-4) is to give Student A a set of 4-6 pictures that are similar to each other, while Student B has only one of those pictures. Student A must find out which picture Student B has by asking questions.

Another variation proposed by Littlewood (1981:24) is instead of giving one learner the complete set of pictures, the teacher can give four members of a group each a different picture and give the fifth member a duplicate picture of one of the first four members. The task is that the fifth member must question the first four to find out who has the identical picture.

A third slightly more challenging variation is to give Student A a set of pictures that tell a story in correct order and Student B the same set of pictures in jumbled order. Student A must describe the story in sequence so that Student B can put the pictures in the correct order without letting Student B look at Student A's set of pictures.

TASK 6

We have discussed a few variations of tasks that can be designed using pictures. Working with a partner, think of a different variation using pictures (or maps or diagrams) that has not been discussed already in this section. Describe what level of students it would be for and what level of communication it would involve.



Here are a few other possibilities with pictures. One activity is to cut up a story told by 4–6 pictures and give each member of a group one picture. The task is for the group to reconstruct the story. Another common task can be designed with maps where one speaker tells the other speaker how to get from Point A to a certain destination (without giving away the name of the destinations). One way to integrate speaking and listening with reading and writing is to use pictures with labels. Each student receives a picture with only certain parts labeled such as a room in a library, so they must communicate with each other in order to fill in all the blanks in the pictures such as which kind of books are located on which shelves.

**Problem-
solving
activities**

Another type of speaking activity that we will present in this section is the problem-solving activity. This type of activity tends to be productive because there is a clear objective to be reached. There are many topics that would be interesting and relevant to the students' life. Try the problem-solving task below.

TASK 7

Work in groups, complete the activity below and then discuss how well it worked. Do you think it would be a successful activity with the students? Do you foresee any problems? Can you think of any ways to improve it so it would be more successful?

Directions:

You are on a committee that is in charge of deciding what to do with a small amount of money that has been donated to improve your school. You have a list of things to do, but you only have enough money for 5 of the items. You must reach a consensus in your group on which 5 items you will spend the money. Here is the list:

- repaint 3 classrooms
- paints lines for games on the playground
- install lights that automatically turn off to save electricity
- buy curtains for 8 classrooms. This will make it easier to see the OHP (Overhead Projector) when the room is darker
- buy sound absorption panels for 2 classrooms. This will make the classroom quieter so it will be easier to hear each other.
- buy an air conditioner for one classroom
- buy 4 new basketball hoops for the playground
- buy 15 young trees to be planted for shade around the edges of the playground
- buy fans for 6 classrooms
- remodel bathroom faucets so students can wash their hands using hot and cold water
- add soap dispensers and hand dryers to bathrooms

Problem-solving activities require a higher level of language proficiency, however the difficulty level can be controlled somewhat by the topic. In general, problem solving activities can work very well with more advanced students especially if the topic is something that they can relate to. As Ur (1996:128) explains, “participants tend to become personally involved; they begin to relate to the problem as an emotional issue as well as an intellectual and moral one”.

Other speaking activities

Many kinds of activities can be designed around the theme of exchange personal information. Even when you have a class of students that know each other quite well, you can still design activities where the task is for them to find out some details about each other that they do not already know. One good activity that can have a game element to it is called “Find someone who ...” It is best if the teacher designs the activity with the knowledge of something about the students. It can be designed around a theme after students have learned vocabulary for it such as sports. Below are some examples.

Find someone who ...

Directions: Stand up and walk around the room. Ask your classmates what they like to do. Once you find someone who likes something, write down his/her name in the blank next to the activity. Continue asking until you have a different name written down for each activity. The first person to fill in all the blanks is the winner. Remember, you must speak only in English!

- Find someone who likes to swim. _____
- Find someone who likes to play ping-pong. _____
- Find someone who likes to play basketball. _____
- Find someone who likes to play badminton. _____
- Find someone who likes to play tennis. _____
- Find someone who likes to play football. _____
- Find someone who likes to roller skate. _____
- Find someone who likes to ice skate. _____
- Find someone who likes to jump rope. _____
- Find someone who likes to play volleyball. _____
- Find someone who likes to go hiking. _____
- Find someone who likes to practise gymnastics. _____
- Find someone who likes to ride bikes. _____
- Find someone who likes to go jogging. _____

One potential problem with this activity is that students will simply read each other’s sheets and write down their names with very little oral exchange in English in their effort to be the first person done. The teacher needs to stress the importance of speaking in English and warn the students that they cannot win the game if the teacher overhears them speaking in their native language. Then the teacher needs to monitor the students while they are engaged in the activity.

The “Find someone who ...” activity can be expanded. The teacher can require that the students have a proper conversation before they can write down another students’ name. A model conversation can be provided. For example:

Student A (Sherry): Hello, I don’t believe we’ve met. I’m Sherry.

Student B: Hi, I’m Tom. Nice to meet you.

Student A: I’m conducting a survey for our school newspaper. Could you tell me, do you like to swim?

Student B: Yes, I do. In fact, I usually go swimming once or twice a week.

Student A: Great, would you mind signing your name here for me please?

Student B: Sure, there you are.

Student A: Thanks a lot. See you around.

Student B: See you.

Students would not have to follow the model exactly, but the less confident students could and still simulate a realistic conversation.

Bingo Activities

Bingo is an easy game to set up and can be used to practise many language areas. Give the students a game card with 16 boxes on it (or have them make their own). Decide what category of words you want to work on — a common one is numbers. For example, tell the students to write down one number in each box in random order from 1 to 30. This way each student will have different numbers and in different boxes, so they cannot simply look at their neighbour for the answers. The teacher calls out the numbers in random order and writes down the numbers as she/he says them. The students draw an X through the numbers as they hear them. Once a student gets four Xs in a row either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, he/she can call out BINGO! The student reads out the numbers in that line so that the teacher can check if she/he actually called out those four numbers.

This game can also be played with vocabulary. Students write down 16 vocabulary words from a list of 25 or so words in random order. Then the teacher can read definitions of the words instead of the words themselves, so the students need to know the meaning of the words in order to mark an X through the correct words.

Change the story

A story game described in Wright, Betteridge and Buckby’s book *Games for Language Learning* (1984:110) is called “Change the Story”. Students work in small groups of 3–5. Each student writes a short story or description and then underlines all the verbs in the story. The group together then makes a list of about 20 random verbs. Each group member reads his/her story but pauses at every verb. The group then supplies one of the random verbs into that slot. The results can be very funny.

No specific responses

A very lively game that helps students practise spelling described in *101+ Terrific Tips for Language Teachers* (Iocofano, 1997) is called “Human Scrabble”. Make two

sets of alphabet cards. Use thick paper (index cards work well). Write one letter in thick ink on each card. Make two cards of each vowel and leave one card blank. Have two teams of 5 or 6 people each come to the front of the room and face the class. Give each person 4 or 5 letters. The teacher then calls out a word in English while both teams must rush to hold up their cards in the proper order to spell the word. Whichever team spells the word correctly gets a point. The rest of the class can help judge which team is quicker. The teacher then calls out another word and the play continues. In the end, the team with the most points wins the game.

9.5 **Conclusion**

The trick in teaching speaking is to provide a chance for students to speak and make them speak. Although the teacher's talk can be good modelling and useful input, it is best to keep the teacher's talk at a minimum level. There is a belief that students should not be forced to speak when they are not ready yet. This belief is based on the assumption that if the students have not learned enough language components (e.g. grammar, vocabulary), they are unable to produce meaningful language. In China, generally speaking, both teachers and students have paid great attention to learning grammar and vocabulary. So our problem is not having nothing to say but not knowing how to say things. And this results from the lack of opportunities to speak. Therefore, designing speaking activities that maximize students' opportunity to speak is one of the central tasks for language teachers.

Due to limited space, we could only present a few types of speaking activities in this unit. We hope that these ideas have stimulated you to think of more creative ways to give the students as much time to practise speaking as possible. At least now you should be able to better analyze the speaking tasks provided by the textbooks and adapt them when necessary to make them more communicative. The most important aspect of preparing students to speak in real life is to give them as many opportunities as possible to practise producing unplanned, spontaneous and meaningful speech under time pressure.

UNIT 10

Teaching Reading



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to discuss how to teach reading. We will focus on the following:

1. How do people read?
2. What do people read?
3. What are the skills involved in reading?
4. What are the principles for teaching reading?
5. What are the common types of activities in teaching reading?

10.1 How do we read?

This section attempts to clarify and illustrate some aspects of the nature of reading. If the students fail to understand the nature of reading, they will adopt inappropriate and ineffective reading strategies; if teachers fail to do so, they will be unable to help the students to develop effective reading skills.

TASK 1

Read the following assumptions about reading and decide if you agree with them or not. Try to give reasons for your decisions. When you are ready, discuss your ideas in groups.

	Agree/ Disagree
1. Reading has only one purpose, i.e. to get information.	
2. Reading is a silent activity. Reading aloud does not help understanding.	
3. Reading with a purpose will be most effective.	
4. When we read, our eyes are constantly moving from letter to letter, word to word.	
5. Reading is an individual activity.	
6. We need to read and understand all the words in order to understand a text.	
7. We read everything at the same speed.	
8. When reading in a foreign language, we mentally translate everything in order to understand.	
9. It is helpful to use a dictionary to find the meaning of all new words.	
10. The lack of cultural knowledge may affect the rate of reading comprehension.	

Responses to the assumptions above will certainly vary from person to person. Some assumptions are obviously untrue such as the first one “Reading has only one purpose, i.e. to get information”. The purpose of having such assumptions in the list is to increase our awareness of different purposes that reading fulfils in real life.

Some assumptions may be true in one context, but untrue in another. For example, some people may say “Reading aloud does not help understanding” is untrue because much of our first language literacy is acquired through reading aloud. Either we read aloud by ourselves or our parents read to us. So, the authors would like the reader to locate the situation in the context of learning English as foreign language in China when deciding if the above assumptions are true or untrue. For the authors’ responses, please refer to the back of the book.

Reading aloud and silent reading are two types of reading practice commonly found in classrooms. Are they the same or different? Many teachers use the activity of reading aloud in teaching reading in the classroom without understanding what it is for. The following table will give you an idea of their differences.

	Reading aloud	Silent reading
Manner	Utterance of every word	Silent
Speed	Usually slow	Usually fast
Purpose	Usually to share information	Usually to get information
Skills involved	Pronunciation and intonation	Skimming, scanning, predicting Guessing unknown words Understanding details Understanding relations between sentences and between paragraphs Understanding references Understanding inferences
Activity type	Collective activity	Individual activity
Management in the classroom	Easy to manage as it can be observed and heard	Difficult to manage as teachers cannot see what is going on in the students' minds

We can see from the above table that reading aloud and silent reading are different in many aspects. Obviously, reading aloud cannot replace silent reading as it involves only the skills of pronunciation and intonation, while one's real reading ability requires the reading skills of skimming, scanning, predicting, etc. With these differences in mind, teachers should know when to practise reading aloud and when to practise silent reading.

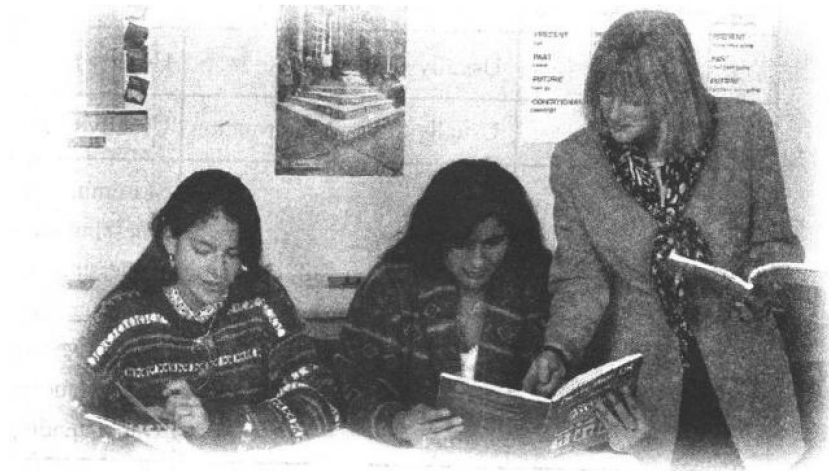
Based on our understanding of the nature of reading, we believe effective readers do the following:

- They have a clear purpose in reading;
- They read silently;
- They read phrase by phrase, rather than word by word;
- They concentrate on the important bits, skim the rest, and skip the insignificant parts;
- They use different speeds and strategies for different reading tasks;
- They perceive the information in the target language rather than mentally translate;
- They guess the meaning of new words from the context, or ignore them;
- They have and use background information to help understand the text.

10.2 *What do we read?*


Think about your experience of learning English. What kind of texts did you read?

Short stories? Tales? Essays? Diaries? Plays and poems? Biographies? It seems there is a great variety. But what do we read in reality. There are more.



 **TASK 2**

Work in pairs and make a list of the things that you and your partner read in the past two days in any language. Note them down in the box below.



It is easy to see that ESL/EFL textbooks have a heavy load of literary texts (e.g. stories, tales) and non-literary passages (e.g. essays, diaries, anecdotes, biographies). ESL/EFL textbook writers believe these materials have a richer content. They are more suitable for certain language items or to illustrate particular language points. Here the focus is on language content. But how about reading skills? As we mentioned in the previous section, different types of texts require different reading skills and strategies. If students have never practised reading a certain type of text, how can they read it in reality? That is why many ESL/EFL students can achieve a high score in reading tests in the classroom but cannot read practical things, such as advertisements, contracts, or instructions.

We believe ESL/EFL reading textbooks should have a great variety of authentic materials, as much as the coverage allows. Of course, textbooks should always be supplemented by extra materials. Below is a list of things we read in daily life:

Calendars	Clothes size labels	Magazines
Addresses	Graffiti on walls	Radio/TV guides
Phone books	Children's scribbling	Advertisements
Name cards	Informal letters	Posters
Bank statements	Business letters	Travel guides
Credit cards	Rules and regulations	Cookbooks
Maps	Electronic mail	Repair manuals
Anecdotes	Telegrams	Memos
Weather forecast	Fax messages	Time schedules
Pamphlets	Junk mail	Street signs
Product labels	Postcards	Syllabi
Washing instructions	Greeting cards	Journal articles
Short stories	Comic books	Song lyrics
Novels	Newspapers	Film subtitles
Plays	Diplomas	Diagrams
Poems	Application forms	Flowcharts
Handbooks	Store catalogues	Name tags

(adapted from Gebhard 1996:198)

It is very important for ESL/EFL teachers to bear in mind what we read in real life so that when we select reading materials for our ESL/EFL classroom, we not only have a greater variety but also meet the needs of different students.

Besides authentic texts, ESL/EFL textbooks also employ a lot of non-authentic texts, i.e. simulated texts. Though appearing authentic, these materials are written especially for language students with some language control. Simulated texts are aimed for beginner students who are probably not able to handle genuine authentic texts. It is believed the reading of such texts will help students to acquire the necessary receptive skills they will need when they eventually come to tackle authentic materials (Harmer, 1983).

10.3

Skills involved in reading comprehension

Reading comprehension means extracting the required information from the text as efficiently as possible. Reading is a silent and individual activity since the writer's *intention* was that the text should be read not heard. There are two broad levels in reading: i) visual signals from the eyes; ii) a cognitive task of interpreting the visual information, relating the received information with the reader's own general knowledge, and reconstructing the meaning that the writer had meant to convey.

In order to achieve these two levels of reading, the reader needs the following skills:

- Recognising the script of a language
- Understanding the explicitly stated information
- Understanding conceptual meaning
- Understanding the communicative value (functions) of sentences
- Deducing the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items
- Understanding relations within sentences
- Understanding relations between sentences
- Understanding references
- Recognising indicators in discourse
- Recognising the organization of the text
- Making inferences

In order to make reading more efficient, the students also need the following strategic skills:

- Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
- Skimming: reading for the gist or main idea.
- Scanning: reading to look for specific information.
- Predicting: guessing what is coming next.

We will discuss some of these reading skills in detail in the following sections.

TASK 3

In your past experiences of learning English, which of the reading skills listed above did you practise? How effective was the practice? Were any skills ignored? When you are ready, share your experiences with your partner.



10.4

Principles and models for teaching reading

When teaching reading, great care should be taken regarding materials selection, the purpose of reading, the design of reading tasks and the skills involved. Below are some principles for teaching reading.

- The selected texts and attached tasks should be accessible to the students. Inaccess-

sible texts and tasks do not help improve students' reading skills but cause frustration.

- Tasks should be clearly given in advance. Preferably, tasks should motivate students.
- Tasks should be designed to encourage selective and intelligent reading for the main meaning rather than test the students' understanding of trivial details.
- Tasks should help develop students' reading skills rather than test their reading comprehension. If teachers always ask students to read passages then answer multiple choice questions, they are actually testing them not developing their reading skills.
- Teachers should help the students not merely to cope with one particular text in front of them but with their reading strategies and reading ability in general. We should encourage them to use reading strategies which will enable them to tackle any further texts.
- Teachers should help the students to read on their own. We should aim at gradually withdrawing our guidance as our students progress so that they eventually become independent readers.

Bottom-up model

The way one teaches reading always reflects the way one understands reading and the reading process. Some teachers teach reading by introducing new vocabulary and new structures first and then going over the text sentence by sentence. This is followed by some questions and answers and reading aloud practice. This way of teaching reading reflects the belief that reading comprehension is based on the understanding and mastery of all the new words, new phrases, and new structures as well as a lot of reading aloud practice. Also, this reading follows a linear process from the recognition of letters, to words, to phrases, to sentences, to paragraphs, and then to the meaning of the whole text. This way of teaching reading is said to follow a bottom-up model.

Top-down model

However, a different view believes that one's background knowledge plays a more important role than new words and new structures in reading comprehension. For example, we all have experiences of reading something which does not contain any new words or new structures, but we still find it difficult to understand its meaning. In other cases, we may read an article with some new words or new structures in it, but we can guess the meaning of the article based on our knowledge about the topic without too much difficulty. Therefore, it is believed that in teaching reading, the teacher should teach the background knowledge first so that students equipped with such knowledge will be able to guess meaning from the printed page. This process of reading is said to follow the top-down model of teaching reading just as Goodman (1970) once said that reading was "a psycholinguistic guessing game".

The current theory views reading as an interactive process. That is to say, the brain receives visual information and at the same time, interprets or reconstructs the mean-

ing the writer had in mind when he wrote the text. This process does not only involve the printed page but also the reader's knowledge of the language in general, of the world, and of the text types. During the process of reading, all these factors interact with each other and compensate each other. Therefore, a proficient reader should have good language skills: recognising words and phrases, understanding sentence structures. Also, he/she should have relevant knowledge about the topic, the organization of the type of text and general knowledge about the world. Based on such understanding, teaching reading in the classroom divides reading activities into basically three stages in which bottom-up and top-down techniques are integrated to help students in their reading comprehension and in increasing their language efficiency in general. The three stages are **pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading.**

10.5 Pre-reading activities

By pre-reading activities, we mean tasks/activities that students do before they read the text in detail. Such activities could be pooling existing knowledge about the topic, predicting the contents of the text, skimming or scanning the text or parts of the text for certain purposes. The purpose of pre-reading is to facilitate while-reading activities. Harmer (1983) calls this stage of reading Lead-in, where the students and teacher prepare themselves for the tasks and familiarize themselves with the topic of the reading exercises. One of the major reasons for this is to create expectations and arouse the student's interest in the subject matter of the text.

Let's look at some pre-reading activities in detail : **predicting, setting the scene, skimming, and scanning.**

Predicting

Predicting is an important reading skill. The reader's predictions, no matter right or wrong, will get his mind closer to the theme of the text to be read. Then the real reading will either confirm or reject the predictions. The reading results will be better than the situation where the reader starts reading with a blank mind. Predictions can be done in many different ways.

Predicting based on the title

Good titles always contain the most important information of a written text. Predictions based on studying the title seldom go far wrong.

TASK 4

Work in pairs. Look at the three titles in the box below and predict the contents of the texts. When you are ready, join another pair and compare your predictions and the clues that helped you to make the predictions.

A Nation of Pet-Lovers

Save the Jungle: Save the World

Police Hunt for Child

To begin with, students may not be good at predicting. If so, the teacher can help them by asking certain questions. For example, for each of the three texts above, we can ask these questions:

Text 1: What is a pet? What are pets for? Why do people love pets? Are there any problems with pets?

Text 2: What is a jungle? Where can you find jungles? What do you think has happened to the jungles?

Text 3: What happened to the child? How do you think the parents would feel? What could the police do?

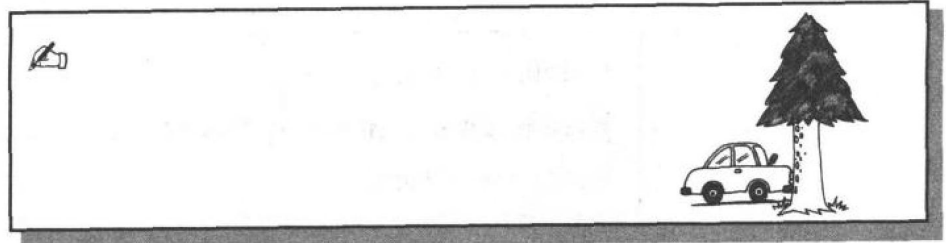
**Predicting
based on
vocabulary**

Having made predictions based on the title, students can be asked to predict some lexical items that they think are likely to occur in the text. Then the students read the text to confirm their predictions.



TASK 5

Work in pairs. Predict the contents of the text entitled “Drinking While Driving”. When you are ready, join another pair and compare your predictions and the clues that helped you to make the predictions.



A variation of this prediction activity is the teacher provides students with a list of, say, twenty words. Ten of them occur in the text to be read. Students can be asked to predict which ten are used in the text, and guess their context. Then ask the students to scan the text to find out which ten words actually appear in the text.

**Predicting
based on the
T/F questions**

The teacher gives the students some true or false statements. The students predict if these statements are true or false. Then the students read the text and check if they have made the right predictions.

TASK 6

Read the following statements about how to behave at a job interview. In the “Before reading” column, tick (✓) the statements that you think are true. Then read the article “How to Shine at a Job Interview” (See Appendix 2) and do the exercise again (tick in the “After reading” column).

	Before reading	After reading
1. Always try to please the interviewer.		
2. Do not try to dominate the interview.		
3. Never interrupt the interviewer.		
4. If necessary, disagree with the interviewer.		
5. Never change your mind.		

**Setting the
scene**

The second type of pre-reading activity is setting the scene, which means getting the students familiarized with the cultural and social background knowledge relevant to the reading text.

One problem with reading in a foreign language is that many texts are culture-bound and students cannot bring their knowledge of the world to help them understand the text. The culture-bound aspect of the text can start right at the beginning with the title. For instance, what do you think the following titles probably mean?

Green Bananas

All Greek to Me

Of course, the culture bound aspects of a text are often of great interest to students, and they can be used to provoke an interesting discussion not only about the “other” culture, but also about the “home” culture. The discussion results may facilitate the forthcoming reading tasks and can serve as a basis for a cultural comparison later in the lesson.

Besides discussing culture bound aspects of the text, we can also set the scene by relating what students already know to what they want to know. For example, we can ask the students to write down three things that they would like to know concerning the theme of a text they are about to read. Then ask the students to read the article to see if they can find what they want to know.

 **TASK 7**

Read the following text quickly and decide how you would design a “setting the scene” activity. If possible, give a mini demonstration.

ESKIMOS

Eskimos live in the polar areas between latitude 66 N and the North Pole. There are Eskimos in Northern Canada, Greenland and Siberia. This means that they are the only people who have their origins both in the Old World (Europe and Asia) and in the new world (America).

It is difficult to make an accurate estimate but there are probably about 50 000 Eskimos. Eskimos are not usually tall but they have powerful legs and shoulders. They have a yellowish skin and straight black hair. Eskimos have a common language and can understand members of another group although they may come from many thousands of miles away. The most important unit in Eskimo society is the family. Marriage is by mutual consent: the Eskimos do not have a special marriage ceremony.

In the Eskimo community, the most important people are the older man. They control the affairs of the group. The economic system of the Eskimo communities works like a commune: they share almost everything. Eskimos live by hunting, fishing and trapping. When they go to hunt seals, they sail in Kayaks (light boats made from skins) and when they hunt animals, they travel across the ice in sleds pulled by teams of dogs. The Eskimo snow house is very well known, but, in fact, Eskimos usually live in houses made of wood and turf. When they are not hunting and working, Eskimos like to carve: they use ivory and wood and they often make very beautiful objects.


Skimming

The third type of pre-reading activity is skimming, which means reading quickly to get the gist, i.e. the main idea of the text. There are many situations where we do skimming. For example, when reading a newspaper, we usually read very fast to get the main information and only spend more time on those items that are more important.

Below are some suggestions that may help teachers to set up skimming activities.

- Ask general questions (avoid detailed ones) which allow students to focus on one or two things, e.g. “Why did the writer write the article?” “Where do you expect to read such an article?”
- Provide 3–4 statements one of which represents the main idea. Ask students to read the text and decide which statement is the correct one.
- Provide subtitles for different parts of a text and ask students to put them in the right place.


TASK 8

Study the texts “A City Is Dying” and “Save the Children” (See Appendix 2) and design a skimming activity for each text. If possible, give a mini demonstration.



Scanning

The fourth type of pre-reading activity is scanning, which means to read to locate specific information. The key point in scanning is that the reader has something in his mind and he or she should ignore the irrelevant parts when reading. On a day-to-day basis, we scan figures, train schedules, time-tables, phone numbers, news headlines, dictionaries, etc. So it is useful to use these materials for practice in the classroom. Questions for a scanning activity are often about specific information, such as:

Find Mr. Smith's phone number.

How many people were injured in the explosion?

Who met X at Y?


TASK 9

Study the text “A City is Dying ” and write five questions for scanning practice. Then ask your partner these questions and see if he or she finds the questions too easy or too difficult.



Besides scanning for specific information, we can also ask students to scan for vocabulary. Each text must have some words within a semantic area of the theme. These words usually have certain semantic connections. The teacher can pre-teach these words, which will facilitate the reading tasks that are to follow.

TASK 10

Scan the text "A City Is Dying" and find words which are about the city being *crowded* and *polluted*:

Words about being *crowded*:

Words about being *polluted*:

Similarly, we can also ask students to scan for certain structures, for example, tense forms, discourse connectors, particular sentence structures. The scanning result can serve as the basis for grammar study.

When conducting scanning activities, the teacher should bear in mind the following things:

- Set a time limit.
- Give clear instructions for the task.
- Wait until 70% of the students finish. (Think about why so).
- Make clear how you are going to get feedback.
- Make sure that answers to the scanning questions should be scattered throughout the text rather than clustered at one place.

TASK 11

Design three alternative pre-reading activities for the following text.

At two minutes to noon on 1 September 1923, the great clock in Tokyo stopped. Tokyo Bay shook as if a huge rug had been pulled from under it. Towering above the bay, the 4 000 metre Mount Fuji stood above a deep trench in the sea. It was from this trench that the earthquake came, at a magnitude of 8.3 on the Richter scale.

The sea drew back for a few moments. Then, a huge wave swept over the city. Boats were carried inland, and buildings and people were dragged out to sea. The tremors dislodged part of a hillside, which gave way, brushing trains, stations and bodies into the water below. Large sections of the sea-bed sank 400 metres; the land rose by 250 metres in some places and sank in others. Three massive shocks wretched the cities of Tokyo and Yokohama and, during the next six hours, there were 171 aftershocks.

The casualties were enormous, but there were also some lucky survivors. The most remarkable was a woman who was having a bath in her room at the Tokyo Grand Hotel. As the hotel collapsed, she and her bath gracefully descended to the street, leaving both her and the bath water intact.

**Summary on
pre-reading
activities**

We have looked at a number of pre-reading activities. Can you think of any others that you like? Of course, you would not use all of these activities on every text — otherwise you would never actually get round to reading it! But the use of one or two of such tasks should both stimulate your students' interest and make their reading more directed and easier. Such tasks may help them to move from learning to read to reading to learn.

10.6 *While-reading activities*

Different texts offer opportunities for different kinds of exploitation. Yet a reading passage in a traditional reading comprehension book has generally been exploited by means of asking multiple choice questions, T/F questions, open questions, paraphrase, and translation. In this section, we will look at different ways of exploiting different texts focusing on the process of understanding rather than the results of reading.

**Information
transfer
activities**

Information presented in plain text form is not facilitative for information retention. When information in text form is transferred to another form (for example visual form), it can be more effectively processed and retained. The way to transfer information from one form to another is called a transition device. Its function in reading comprehension can be shown in the following diagram:



Below are some transition devices that are often used in teaching reading.

Pictures	Pie charts
Drawings	Bar charts
Maps	Flowcharts
Tables	Chronological sequence
Tree diagrams	Subtitles (providing subtitles)
Cyclic diagrams	Notes (taking notes while reading)

Most of the transition devices listed above make use of visual aid so that information in text form is visualized. Research has shown visualization can help second language learners to comprehend meaning while reading (Tomlinson, 1998).

Now let's look at some examples of the use of transition devices in teaching reading.

Example 1

Read the follow passage and complete the table, which compares the two earthquakes.

At 5:13 on the morning of April 18th, 1906, the city of San Francisco was shaken by a terrible earthquake. A great part of the city was destroyed and a large number of buildings were burnt. The number of people who lost their homes reached as many as 250 000. About 700 people died in the earthquake and the fires.

Another earthquake shook San Francisco on October 17th, 1989. It was America's second strongest earthquake and about 100 people were killed. It happened in the evening as people were travelling home. A wide and busy road which was built like a bridge over another road fell onto the one below. Many people were killed in their cars, but a few lucky ones were not hurt.

Luckily the 1989 earthquake did not happen in the centre of town but about 50 kilometres away. In one part of the town a great many buildings were destroyed. These buildings were over 50 years old, so they were not strong enough. There were a lot of fires all over the city. The electricity was cut off for several days too.

(Taken from *Senior English for China*, A1:26)

	Time	Date	Location	Number of people killed	Damage
Earthquake in 1906					
Earthquake in 1989					

It is very important that students fill in the table **while** they are reading rather than **after** they finish reading. A follow-up output activity can be conducted based on the results of the while-reading activity. For example, the teacher can ask students to compare the results of the two earthquakes by asking questions like “Which earthquake caused more damage and why?”

Example 2

David is an Englishman. He works in a large company. His wife, Sue, is a housewife. Their son, Daniel, is only two years old. Do you think they are a happy family? Read the following conversation between David and Sue and make a list of the things that each of them does.

David: What’s the matter, Sue?
 Sue: It’s just life ... it’s so boring.
 David: It’s not so bad, you’ve got Daniel.
 Sue: But he is only a baby. It’s all right for you. You leave home in the morning and won’t come home until seven!
 David: One of us must go to work, dear.
 Sue: Yes, but your day will be interesting, and my day will be the same everyday.
 David: No, my work isn’t always interesting.
 Sue: But you travel around, meet different people and do different things. I’ll have to wash up, feed the baby, clean the house, take the dog for a walk...
 David: But I also have a lot of office work and...
 Sue: Then I go shopping, prepare dinner, meet you at the station, have dinner, put the baby to bed, what a life!
 David: I’m sorry, Sue. But this is life, isn’t it? You will be OK later.
 Sue: Will I?

<i>Things that David does:</i>

<i>Things that Sue does:</i>

 **TASK 12**

Use transition devices to design a while-reading activity for each of the following texts. When you are ready, work in groups. Each student should choose a

text and give a mini demonstration.

Text 1

Mr. Smith's house has got four bedrooms, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, a bathroom and a lavatory. There is a lavatory in the bathroom too. The bedrooms and the bathroom are upstairs, and the living-room, the dining-room, the kitchen and the lavatory are downstairs.

The first bedroom is Mr. and Mrs. Smith's, the second one is John's, the third one is Mary's and the fourth one is Anne's. Catherine's bed is in Anne's bedroom too.

Go into Mr. Smith's house now. The room on your left is the living-room, and the room on the right is the dining-room. Where is the kitchen? It is next to the dining-room. And where is the lavatory? It is in front of you. There is a garden behind the house, but it is not big. Is there a garden in front of the house too? Yes, there is, but it is very small.

Go upstairs now. Which is Mr. and Mrs. Smith's bedroom? It is on your left. The bedroom on your right is John's and the bathroom is between his bedroom and Mary's.

There is a big bed and two big cupboards in Mr. and Mrs. Smith's bedroom, and there is a small bed and a cupboard in John's room. John's bed and Mary's bed are the same size, but her cupboard is bigger than his, because she has a lot of clothes. Anne's room is next to her Dad and Mum's room. She's got a small bed but it is not as small as Catherine's.

Anne's room has got blue walls, and there are white ships and green islands on them, because it is a children's bedroom. John's bedroom has got white walls, and Mary's has got grey walls. John has got pictures of horses on his walls, and Mary has got pictures of beautiful clothes.

(Taken from Abbott & Wingard, 1981:84-5)

Text 2

At the bottom centre of a piece of paper, draw a one-and-a-half inch line from left to right parallel to the bottom of the paper. This will be line A. Put your pencil at a point in the centre of line A. Draw a six-inch perpendicular line up from that line. This will be line B. From the end of line B, draw one line at a right angle one inch to the right (line C) and another line at a right angle one inch to the left (line D). Now estimate a point about one and a half inches up from the end of line B and make a dot (•). Draw lines from the ends of lines C and D and join them at the dot. What do you have?

Text 3

Where does the rain water come from? Where does it go? It's always cycling. First, because of the sunshine, seawater evaporates into the air. If it meets cold air, it becomes clouds, which are actually very small drops of water. Then the wind may carry the clouds towards the land. When the clouds meet mountains, they will rise. The higher the clouds rise, the colder they be-

come. When they are cold enough, the clouds become rain or snow, which falls down on the land.

The water from rain or snow may flow into lakes and rivers, which is called surface water. Then the rivers carry the water back to the sea. Sometimes when the rain is heavy, the rainwater goes into the deep ground, which is called groundwater. Part of the groundwater goes back to the sea, and part of it stays in the ground. When water goes back to the sea, it has finished the cycling.

Of course, this is only a water cycle model. The real water cycling is much more complicated.

(Take from *English for Vocational School*, Book 2:140)

Text 4

Clerk: Good morning, Sir. What can I do for you?

Monty: Good morning. I've lost my brief case.

Clerk: Where do you think you lost it?

Monty: I was on the 8:30 train to Stockport.

Clerk: Right. Can you give me your name, Sir?

Monty: Yes. Monty Ball.

Clerk: And your address?

Monty: I live at 26 Ash Avenue, Manchester.

Clerk: Can you describe your briefcase, please?

Monty: Yes. It's black and made of leather — one of those flat sided ones.

Clerk: Anything in it?

Monty: Not much. Just my lunch and a few papers.

Clerk: Well, if it turns up we'll let you know. Where can we ring you?

Monty: At my office — the number is 483 7692.

Clerk: Right, Mr. Ball. I'll see what I can do.

Monty: Thanks a lot. Bye.

Text 5

Nature gives plants and trees four ways to scatter their seeds. The first is by wind. The seeds of some plants are very light, like the dandelion and the sycamore. They have wings or parachutes so that the wind can carry them easily. The second is by birds and animals. Some seeds, like the seeds of burdock stick to the fur of animals, and drop off as the animals move about. Birds carry others, such as berries. The third way is by the plant itself. The plant itself twists and breaks the walls of the fruit. It throws out or shakes out the seeds, e.g., the pea, the bean, the poppy and the squirting cucumber. The last is by water. The seeds float on the water either because they are very light, or because they have air inside them, e.g. the water-lily and coconuts.

Text 6

Cloth is brought to the factory and examined. If it is torn or dirty, it will not be used. The cloth is taken to the cutting room. Here a special pencil is used

for drawing on the cloth, and then it is cut. Boxes of dressing-gowns are sent to the sewing room where they are sewn. In another room the sleeves, pockets and belts are put on. When the gowns are finished they are examined. Then they are folded and put into their boxes. The price and the size are written on the boxes, and then they are sent, by train or by lorry, to other towns in England. Some of them are exported by boat and sold in other countries.

(Taken from Abbott & Wingard, 1981:98)

Text 7

Rosa Morello is from Columbia in South America. She is a student. She has come to London to study English. Rosa is eighteen years old and single. She has dark hair, dark brown eyes and is 1.65 m tall. She likes pop music, dancing, reading and good food. She is also interested in travel and languages. In London, Rosa lives in a small flat with her friend Linda Morris. The flat is in north London.

Text 8

“Long Live the King” (See Appendix 2)

Summary on transition devices

When using transition devices, we need to ensure that it is an appropriate form to encapsulate the main information contained in the text. We need to bear in mind the purpose(s) of TDs:

- Focus attention on the main meaning of the text.
- Be able to simplify sophisticated input so that it becomes the basis for output.
- Allow students to perform tasks while they are reading.
- Highlight the main structural organization of a text/part of a text, and show how the structure relates to meaning.
- Involve all the students on clearly defined reading tasks.
- Precede one step at a time (i.e. students should do easier tasks before doing more complicated ones).
- When a TD task is completed, provide students with a model for oral and /or written work.

Reading comprehension questions

One of the most frequently used methods in teaching reading is asking the students to answer comprehension questions. Nuttall (1982) suggests that we can classify questions according to the kind of information that they require students to get from the texts, or the kind of thinking that we wish the students to engage in. She lists five types:

- 1) **Questions for literal comprehension.** Answers to these questions are directly and explicitly available in the text. Usually they are answered in the words of the text itself.
- 2) **Questions involving reorganization or reinterpretation.** These questions require students to obtain literal information from various parts of the text and put it together or reinterpret it.
- 3) **Questions for inferences.** This type of questions require students to consider what

is implied but not explicitly stated.

- 4) **Questions for evaluation or appreciation.** These are the most sophisticated questions which involve making a judgement about the text in terms of what the writer is trying to convey.
- 5) **Questions for personal response.** The answers to these questions depend most on the reader's reaction to the content of the text.

 **TASK 13**

Read the text below and the questions following it. Decide which type the questions belong to and suggest an order for asking them.

A Son to be Proud of

Last week, Rahman's wife had an accident. Rahman's youngest child, Yusof, was at home when it happened. He was playing with his new toy car. Rahman had given it to him the week before, for his third birthday.

Suddenly Yusof heard his mother calling "Help! Help!" He ran to the kitchen. His mother had burnt herself with some hot cooking oil. She was crying with pain and the pan was on fire.

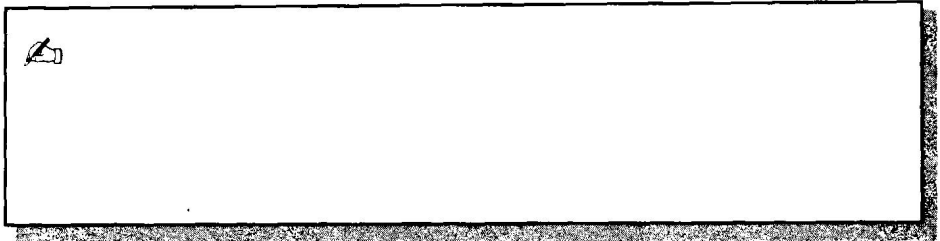
Rahman had gone to his office. Both the other children had gone to school. Yusof was too small to help his mother, and she was too frightened to speak sensibly to him. But he ran to the neighbour's house and asked her to come and help his mother. She soon put out the fire and took Yusof's mother to the clinic.

When Rahman came home, his wife told him what had happened. He was very proud of his son. "When you are a man, you will be just like your father." he said.

	Type	Order
1. How old was Yusof?		
2. What was Yusof doing when the accident happened?		
3. Why didn't Yusof help his mother?		
4. Which people were in Rahman's house when the accident happened?		
5. How many children did Rahman have?		
6. Why was Rahman proud of his son?		
7. Do you agree that Rahman should be proud of his son?		

 **TASK 14**

Study the text “A City Is Dying” (See Appendix 2) and design one question for each type of the questions we have discussed above. When you have finished, try out the questions in groups.


 **Understanding references**

Sometimes students have difficulty with certain texts because they are unable to follow clearly the use of references. All natural language, spoken or written, uses referential words such as pronouns to refer to people or things already mentioned previously in the context. Understanding what these words refer to is crucial for comprehension.

 **TASK 15**

What do the underlined words in the text below refer to? Suppose you are going to teach this text, in what ways can you help the students to understand the reference system of the text?

The idea of evolution (which is gradual change) was not a new one. The Greeks had thought of it, so had Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles, and also the Frenchman, Lamarck. It is one thing to have an idea; we can all of us guess and sometimes make a lucky guess. It is quite another thing to produce a proof of the correctness of that idea. Darwin thought he had that proof in his notebooks. He saw that all animals had a struggle to survive. Those which were best at surviving their environment passed on the good qualities which had helped them to their descendants. This was called “the survival of the fittest”. For example, in a cold climate, those who have the warmest fur will live. Darwin believed that this necessity for an animal to deal with their environment explained the immense variety of creatures. (Take from Grellet, 1990:46)

 **Making inferences**

Making inferences, which means “reading between the lines”, is an important reading skill. It requires the reader to use background knowledge in order to infer the implied meaning of the author. For example, what can you infer from the following three sentences:

- Blandida is a country which has every climatic condition known to man.
- When she came into the room, the large crowd grew silent.
- The painting had been in the family for years, but sadly Bill realised he would have to sell it.

Making inferences is actually the process of relating the given information to what we have known about the world. From the first sentence above, we can probably infer that climate in that country varies greatly from place to place. The second sentence probably implies that the woman was an important person or the crowd was talking about her when she came in. The third sentence probably implies that Bill was involved in a financial crisis.

Of course we do not make inferences only from single sentences. Very often, we make inferences from the whole text. And sometimes, inferences can be made only after we have read the whole text and reinterpreted the text.

**Summary on
while-reading
activities**

Now, we have looked at a number of while reading tasks. Of course, you cannot use all of them at one time or with one text. You need to choose from them the ones that best suit your students as well as the materials that you are using.

10.7 *Post-reading Activities*

Having looked at pre- and while-reading activities, in this section we will consider a number of possible post-reading tasks. It is in this area, perhaps, that teachers have to be most inventive or imaginative. They have to design tasks which are relevant to the text being studied and appropriate to the students' level. The tasks can fulfil several functions, whether they are used in an extensive or an intensive reading context.

At the post-reading stage, teachers often rely upon reading aloud, asking comprehension questions or asking students to paraphrase sentences of a text. Sometimes sentence by sentence translation is conducted. We consider these activities inadequate to fulfil the functions of post-reading tasks. Post-reading tasks should provide the students with opportunities to relate what they have read to what they already know or what they feel. In addition, post-reading tasks should enable students to produce language based on what they have learned.

TASK 16

Read the text below and discuss the post-reading activities that follow. Do you think these activities fulfil the functions of post-reading tasks? Do you think students would enjoy doing these activities?

A doctor working in a village was very annoyed because many people used to stop him in the street and asked him for advice. In this way, he was never paid for his services, and he never managed to earn much money. He made up his mind to put an end to this. He was stopped by a young man who said to him, "Oh, doctor, I'm so glad to see you. I've got a severe pain in my left side". The doctor pretended to be interested and said, "Shut your eyes and stick your tongue out of your month". Then, he went away, leaving the man standing in the street with his tongue hanging out... and a large crowd of people laughing at him.

Discussion questions

Do you think he was a good doctor?

How do you think the young man felt?

Reproducing the text

Tell part of the story from these prompts:

A doctor — village — annoyed.

People — stop — street — advice.

Never paid — never — money — made up his mind — put an end

Role Play

1. Act out the conversation between the doctor and the young man.
2. Act out an interview between a journalist and the doctor.

Gap-filling

One day, the doctor _____ by a young man. The doctor _____ to be interested. He left the young man _____ in the street with his tongue _____ out.

Now let's have a look at some other types of post-reading activities.

Discussion

Discussion in class is quite often used as a way of exploiting reading texts. And discussion is often used for exchange of personal opinions. This sort of discussion can start with a question like "What do you think of...?"

Discussion, however, need not only involve the stating of personal opinions on general issues. It can also be used as a basis for other activities, such as problem-solving, the ranking of alternatives, deciding upon priorities etc.

TASK 17

Now, please read the text "Local Crime News" (See Appendix 2), which is

about a number of specific crime cases, in which the criminals have been sentenced to different degrees of punishment. Design a post-reading activity for the text.

Another activity that can be used as a basis for discussion is sometimes referred to as “ranking”. Here students are given a list of items and asked to place them in order according to stated criteria. For instance, there is a text entitled “Creative Justice”, which is about how some criminals have been punished in various creative and productive ways. After reading the text, students could be given a list of crimes or be asked to brainstorm such a list — e.g. murder, fraud, burglary, arson, drink driving, blackmail etc.— and then be asked to rank them in order according to which crimes they believe deserve the more severe punishments. Then students think about how to punish the criminals creatively.

Role-play

Role-play is a very common language learning activity where students play different roles and interact from the point of view of the roles they play. Role-play is valuable in a language classroom for several reasons: 1) it is motivating; 2) students interact in small groups so that they have less pressure; 3) students have the chance to practise the newly learned language; 4) there is enough room for creativity.

In order to be effective, a role play activity needs to be carefully set up. Rushing into a role play activity often leads to confusion and dissatisfaction. Role play usually has the following stages:

- Defining the roles and setting up goals.
- Pairing / grouping students and assigning roles.
- Preparation: a) Whole class brainstorm possible questions; b) Students playing the same roles go into a group to work out the questions.
- Role play in pairs / groups.
- Class viewing / demonstration.
- Teacher gives feedback based on active monitoring.

Gap-filling

The teacher provides the students with a summary of the text, leaving some blanks for the students to fill in. Encourage students to use as many different words or expressions as possible.

Retelling

The teacher provides key words and phrases and students retell the story according to these words. Or the teacher asks the students to retell the story from another character’s point of view.

False summary

The teacher prepares a summary of the text. However, it contains some wrong information. Students are to correct the wrong information based on *their understanding of the text*.

Writing

The students are asked to write something based on what they have read. Below is a short list of writing tasks that could be used as post-reading activities.

- Produce a tourist brochure for a place described in a text.
- Produce an advertisement for a product described in a text.
- Rewrite a story from another character's point of view.
- Write a short summary of the text based on a TD activity.
- Write a paragraph stating personal opinions about the issue discussed in the text.

10.8 *Conclusion*

In this unit, we started with the discussions about how and what people read in real life. We think the teaching of reading in traditional pedagogy does not reflect how and what people read in real life. Most of the traditional reading exercises are actually testing students' reading comprehension. We have emphasized that the teaching of reading should focus on developing students' reading skills and strategies, which can be achieved through pre-, while- and post-reading activities. In Sections 5, 6, and 7, we have provided a number of types of activities that teachers can do in teaching reading. Of course different texts need different teaching methods. We hope teachers can apply the ideas suggested in the unit to design their own reading tasks creatively.

In this unit, we did not make a distinction between intensive reading and extensive reading. Traditionally, intensive reading is an accuracy-oriented activity involving reading for detail. The main purpose is to learn language embedded in the reading texts, which are usually short. Extensive reading is a fluency activity. The main purpose is to achieve global understanding. The reading texts are usually much longer than those intended for intensive reading. Nowadays, the distinction between these two types of reading is becoming more and more blurred. Probably the distinction has evolved into the distinction between reading in the class and reading outside the class. Most of the ideas suggested in this unit are intended for reading tasks in the class. However, many of them are certainly applicable for reading in other contexts as well.

UNIT 11

Teaching Writing



Aims of the unit

In this unit we will discuss how teachers can help students to develop their writing skills. We will focus on the following.

1. The nature of writing in reality
2. A communicative approach to writing
3. Problems in writing tasks in existing textbooks
4. A process approach to writing
5. Writing through e-mail

11.1 *The nature of writing in reality*

On a day to day basis, we write many things, we write for various reasons, and we write in various ways. But are there any common things that we all have to write, common reasons for all of our writing, and common rules that we all should follow in writing? Is writing in our mother tongue the same as or different from writing in a foreign language?

TASK 1

Think about your daily writing in Chinese and your experiences of writing in English. Fill in the table below with things that come to your mind first. When you finish, compare your ideas with your partner.

	Writing in Chinese	Writing in English
What do we write? e.g. diary		
Why do we write? e.g. to keep record of things we do		
How do we write? e.g. write without planning		

When doing **Task 1**, you might have realised that there is a great variety of things we write in reality, for example, letters, journals, notes, instructions, posters, essays, reports, menus. Filling forms and answering questionnaires are also tasks involving writing. We write for various reasons, such as to convey messages or just to keep a record of what is in our mind. As to the way we write, we all have our own way. Some people never put down a word before rehearsing the sentence many times in their mind, while other people write down anything that comes to their mind and then do a lot of editing and proof-reading.

Comparing writing in our English teaching classroom with writing in reality, it is easy to find two major differences. First, writing in the ELT classroom (also as homework) is often seen as a means to consolidate language that is recently studied. Very often the students write from someone else's ideas. This kind of writing is seen as "writing as language learning". And very often, when given a topic, the students make up things to write about because their personal experiences cannot contribute to the given topic. We can say this is pseudo writing. Whilst in reality, most writing is for communication, that is, to convey messages or for self creation, such as poems which reflect the students' inner thoughts or feelings.

Second, in the ELT classroom, especially in traditional pedagogy, writing often goes this way: the teacher gives a topic or a selection of topics, a set of requirements, and a time limit. The students finish the task within the time limit and hand in the final product. The students' work is evaluated based on the accuracy of the final product. The process which the students go through while doing the writing task is virtually ignored; that is, the teacher turns a blind eye to how the students produce the product. In reality, we may have some ideas long before we put them on paper. And we often plan, draft, and rewrite. Also, teachers tend to overlook the quality of ideas in students' writing. Instead, they only comment on the quality of the language.

If writing tasks lack authenticity, they do not motivate students. If writing tasks focus

on the product rather than on the process, they do not help students to develop real writing skills. In order to motivate students, we should advocate authentic writing; that is, ask our students to write things we write in reality or things they want to write about. In order to make the teaching of writing effective, we should advocate the process approach to writing; that is, guide the students through the process of writing. We believe we should make students want to write in the first place, then teach them how to write.

11.2 *A communicative approach to writing*

Current methodology does recognise the place of written exercises as a means to consolidate language already studied. However, it also acknowledges that mechanical writing activities do not by themselves motivate students. To motivate students, it is necessary to engage them in some act of communication. This means either writing for a specific recipient, e.g. writing a letter to a friend or parent, or engaging in an act of creative writing where their work is intended to be read by other people, in other words, an intended audience. In short, students can be motivated by authentic writing tasks that have some communicative elements.

A typical writing task in traditional English textbooks is like this: Write a composition with one of the following titles: *A Day on the Farm*; *A Day in the factory*. Some students may have never been to a farm or a factory. When forced to write about one of these two topics, they have to invent or imagine what they have seen or done on the farm or in the factory. Furthermore, even if they have been to the farm or factory, what is the audience of the writing? Are the students supposed to write the composition as a tour report, a journal, a letter to a pen pal, or simply a piece of writing to review the *simple past tense*? *With different audiences and different purposes, the writing piece could vary greatly.*

It should be noted, however, that at the stage of language learning (in contrast to language use in real life), not everything can be purely communicative; that is, the learners do many activities while keeping an eye on certain language elements. So some writing activities can be between “writing for learning” and “writing for communication”.

TASK 2

Read through the following writing activities and decide which activities are writing for consolidating language, which are writing for communication, and

which are perhaps for both. Try to give reasons for your decision. When you are ready, go into groups and share your ideas.

Activity 1

Writing Join the pairs of sentences, using **when** / **where**

Example: Kentucky is the state. Lincoln was born there.

Kentucky is the state **where** Lincoln was born.

1. This book is about **the time**. Lincoln was President then.
2. This is **the house**. Lincoln was born there.
3. **The school** is still standing. Lincoln learnt to read and write there.
4. There were many poor people in **the town**. Lincoln grew up there.
5. Lincoln had very little **free time**. He could study then.
6. **The theatre** is in the same city. Lincoln was shot there.

(Taken from *Senior English for China*, Book 1A:52)

Activity 2

Letter writing

A friend is coming to visit your hometown / village. Unfortunately you will be away. Write a short letter to your friend and make some suggestions about sightseeing and other activities in your area.

Activity 3

Writing

Have a look at our classroom for a moment. Then write a paragraph to describe our classroom. Make your writing as interesting as possible.

Activity 4

Writing

Imagine you are a caged bird. You saw another caged bird in the park this morning. Write a letter to her / him and introduce yourself.

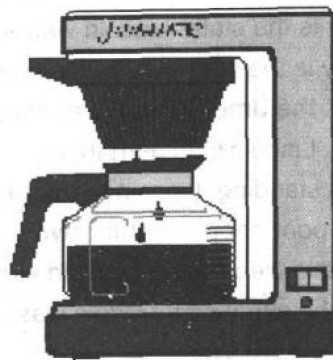
Activity 5

Letter writing

Do you think any of the courses (maths, physics, English, history, etc.) you are taking now can be improved in some way. If yes, write a short letter to the teacher and present your suggestions.

Activity 6

Write an advertisement for each of the following products. You can write your advertisement based on your imagination.



11.3 *Problems in writing tasks*

Many writing tasks in existing English textbooks fail to have a communicative element due to the following deficiencies:

1. They are mainly accuracy-based.
2. They are designed to practise certain target structures.
3. There is insufficient preparation before the writing stage.
4. There is no sense of audience.
5. There is no sense of authenticity.
6. Students are given ideas to express rather than being invited to invent their own.
7. There is no opportunity for creative writing, particularly for expressing unusual or original ideas.

Given these deficiencies, it is not surprising that writing is often considered by students as their least favourite language course. However, with a minimum of adaptation, writing tasks in existing textbooks can be made more creative and more communicative. Below is a writing activity taken from SEFC. Let's look at the original task and then see how it can be adapted.

Writing

Write about the sports which you like. Use phrases like these:

I don't like ...	I enjoy ...	My favourite sport is ...
I quite like ...	I prefer ... to ...	I like ... because ...

(Taken from *Senior English for China*, Book 1A:40)

Obviously there is no specific audience for this writing task. The students may ask, “Why should I write about the sports I like? For what purpose? Who is going to read my writing?”

In reality, we may write about our favourite sports or hobbies when we prepare a curriculum vitae. Or if we wanted to join a sports club, we might describe our favourite sports. Or if we applied for a position as a sports commentator, we might describe the sports that we are familiar with or we like most. Anyway, we would write about our favourite sports for a particular reason. With different reasons, we may put emphasis on different aspects and we may choose to use different styles of language. Bearing this in mind, we can adapt the above writing task as follows:

Writing

A pen pal has written to you and has described the sports that he/she likes most. He/she asked you about your favourite sports. If you have something in common, you may want to talk about it or suggest that you play it together sometime in the future. Write back to your pen pal.

TASK 3

Study the writing activities in **Task 2** again and adapt those that you do not think are in line with the principles of a communicative approach to writing. Choose two activities and write out the detailed steps of how you would do the activities in the class.

11.4 *A process approach to writing*

The product-oriented method of teaching writing pays great attention to the accuracy of the final product but ignores the process, which the students go through to reach the final goal. If the students fail to produce something satisfactory, they are told to do it again. This kind of practice is fruitless because, without the right approach to writing, the students might produce equally unsatisfactory work again. What really matters or makes a difference is the help that the teacher provides to guide the students through the process that they undergo when they are writing. Of course this kind of guidance should be gradually withdrawn so that the students finally become independent writers. This is called the process approach to writing.

**Features of
process writing**

There is no widely accepted definition for the process approach to writing. Brown (1994b:320-1) summarises the features of process writing as follows:

- Focus on the process of writing that leads to the final written product;
- Help student writers to understand their own composing process;
- Help them to build repertoires of strategies for prewriting, drafting, and rewriting;
- Give students time to write and rewrite;
- Place central importance on the process of revision;
- Let students discover what they want to say as they write;
- Give students feedback throughout the composing process (not just on the final product) to consider as they attempt to bring their expression closer and closer to intention;
- Encourage feedback both from the instructor and peers;
- Include individual conferences between teacher and student during the process of composition.

The process approach to writing does not only pay attention to what students do while they are writing, it also attaches great importance to what the students (and the teacher) do before they start writing and after they finish writing. Many students spend a lot of time trying to come up with a topic that they would like to write about or that they think is interesting to the other students or the teacher. And when they have decided on a topic, they try to rack their brain to come up with ideas that they can put on the paper. Working individually, this process may take a long time and may not be so productive.

It is suggested that if a group of students work together to brainstorm topics and ideas, it will be more productive, because their thoughts can be inspired by each other's ideas. Of course the group do not necessarily write about the same topic. Or they can write about the same topic, but from different points of view or focusing on different aspects.

As soon as the students start writing, it is basically an individual activity. They should not be interrupted by the teacher or peers frequently. Of course, if a student really has difficulties, such as putting related ideas together (such as ordering, linking), he or she should feel free to seek help from the teacher.

When students finish writing, there are a lot of options for the teacher to decide what to do next, such as peer reading or group reading, discussion, rewriting, etc. Peer reading has proven to be an effective way for students to learn from each other. Identifying peers' errors in writing provides another opportunity for students to learn. Helping peers with correction or edition encourages co-operative learning among students. The teacher could provide the students with a checklist of common errors (e.g. verb agreement, singular or plural forms) and of ways to improve expression (e.g. characterisation). The students can use their checklist to guide their peer reading and feedback.

 **TASK 4**

Study the following description of a writing activity and see what features of the process approach to writing have been reflected in the activity. How can you further adapt the activity? When you are ready, go into groups and share your ideas.

Writing task: write about how you would solve a problem that our city is faced with.

Step 1

The teacher asks the students what problems their city is confronted with and puts on the blackboard the problems that the students mention.

Step 2

A brief discussion on what problems are more urgent than the others. Rank them according to degree of severity if time allows.

Step 3

Group discussion on possible solutions to the problems, especially the more urgent ones.

Step 4

Each student chooses one problem and writes a draft composition entitled something like "My Solutions to the Problem of ...". They can use ideas brought forward by the peers, but the composition should not be just a report of the discussion.

Step 5

In small groups, the students read each other's composition and if possible give suggestions on how to make improvements, focusing on ideas rather than language.

Step 6

Students rewrite, making alterations on the selection and organisation of ideas and keeping an eye on language.

Step 7

The teacher puts the students who have chosen the same topic/problem in one group and the students read each other's composition.

Step 8

Students make a list of optimal solutions to the problem addressed. The list should be based on group members' compositions and should be produced as a product of the whole group.

Step 9

Create a Class Newsletter with a focus on something like "Problems and Solutions in Our City"

When doing **Task 4**, you may have realised that the writing task involves a lot of oral discussions. And some people may ask why there should be so much oral work in a writing activity. We would argue that writing and speaking are always related to each other because both are forms of language production, and in reality, much writing is done based on what has been discussed, for example, in group project work. And please bear in mind that integrated teaching of language skills is what we try to advocate. (See Unit 12.)

TASK 5

Choose 2 or 3 writing activities from **Task 2** and adapt them so that they reflect the principles of the process approach to writing. Write out the steps (teaching plan) as in **Task 4**.



11.5

Writing through e-mail

Traditionally, compositions have to be written out or printed out, turned in on certain dates, and then handed back to the students. This places a limit on the natural give-and-take that often takes place in more authentic forms of writing. Research indicates, rather than handing in the “perfect” final product, students are more willing to submit drafts one at a time to the teacher and revise their work after seeking comments or advice from the teacher (Warschauer, 1995). In doing so the students are actually guided through the process of writing, and the teacher has more understanding of the process that leads to certain drafts or the final product. In order to do this, the tradi-

tional hand-in-and-return method will not suffice. The modern miracle of e-mail can help us out here.

E-mail provides a perfect mechanism for students to submit drafts and for teachers to look them over at their convenience and send them back with comments — once, twice, or several times. New ideas are shared promptly and can be responded to quickly. Another advantage is that the teacher can easily store all the drafts of a document for later review and analysis of the revision process. All these help to promote the application of the process approach to writing in the ELT classroom.

In an e-mail based writing scheme, the students can not only send their writing to the teacher, they can also send their work to each other simultaneously. As a result, an individual student can receive comments from all peers. This increases the chances of exchanging and sharing ideas among the students.

When writing through e-mail, students have a feeling of real-time writing. They feel they are writing for real purposes of exchanging ideas. Traditionally, handing in the composition means asking the teacher to make corrections. But when writing on e-mail, every word the students put down is not for the purpose of being corrected by their teacher, but rather for the purpose of sharing ideas with their classmates.

Some people may argue against promoting the use of e-mail in the teaching of writing based on two reasons. First, their students do not have access to computers, let alone e-mail. Second, they do not have the technology for running the e-mail list.

Information technology (IT) has been developing more rapidly than people could ever have expected. About ten years ago, e-mail was new to most people. But now, it is so common that some people use it more than the telephone. In many universities in the western countries, all students have free access to e-mail all day long. In China and other developing countries, IT is also developing rapidly. In the near future, students at all levels, either in school or at home, will have easy access to e-mail.

To set up an e-mail list on the computer network requests neither high technology nor tedious time-consuming work. As long as they see the benefits of such an e-mail list, the computer centre staff are very likely to help ELT teachers to set up an e-mail writing list.

E-mail based ELT writing courses have existed in many parts of the world for quite a few years. Some teachers in China have also been doing research into the running of e-mail based writing courses. Of course, e-mail lists can be used for the development of all the other general language skills.

11.6 *Conclusion*

Writing skills have been neglected in ELT in China for a long time. In recent years, as more and more important English tests incorporated writing as components, both teachers and students have begun to realise the importance of writing. However, at the moment, most of writing exercises in English textbooks are designed with the purpose of “writing for learning” rather than “writing for communication”.

In this unit, we have introduced two approaches to writing: the communicative approach and the process approach. These two approaches are not exclusive to each other. On the contrary, we hope teachers can combine the two approaches in their actual teaching in the classroom. We have emphasized that the teaching of writing should focus on the process rather than the product, and that writing should have communicative purposes.

UNIT 12

Integrated Skills



Aims of the unit

In this unit we look at how we can integrate the four language skills. In particular we are going to discuss the following aspects:

1. Why should we integrate the four skills?
2. How can we integrate the four skills?
3. What are the implications for teaching?
4. What are the limitations of integrating the four skills?

12.1 *Why should we integrate the four skills?*

In the last few units, we have talked about the four language skills and the need to integrate them in our teaching. When we communicate, we often use more than a single language skill. On the telephone, for instance, we listen and speak—maybe we also write down a message and read over what we have written. Transferring language from one medium to another is itself a skill. Think of dictation: we have to convert the spoken word accurately into written language.

TASK 1

Think of the language skills that might be used in the following situations. Tick the appropriate columns. Then add four more situations and tick the skills that might be involved. Can you think of a one-skill situation, a two-skill situation, a three-skill situation and a four-skill situation?

Situation	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Discussing a magazine article with a friend				
Attending a lecture				
Riding a bicycle on your own				
Ordering a meal in a restaurant				

There are many situations in which we use more than one language skill. For this reason alone, it is valuable to integrate the language skills, but there are other reasons why integration can enhance the students' communicative competence.

Many educationalists stress the importance of building new knowledge and skills on to what students already know and can do. So, if students are able to read a short story, this skill will help them to write their own story. In the same way, if they can understand a dialogue about buying things in a shop, they can use this as a model for practising their own speaking skills in a similar situation. Also, integrating the skills allows you to build in more variety into the lesson because the range of activities will be wider. Instead of just having listening, the students can have speaking, reading and writing practice. This can raise their motivation to learn English.

Above all, integrating the skills means that you are working at the level of realistic communication, not just at the level of vocabulary and sentence patterns. Realistic communication is the aim of the communicative approach and many researchers believe that handling realistic communication is an integral part of essential conditions for language learning:

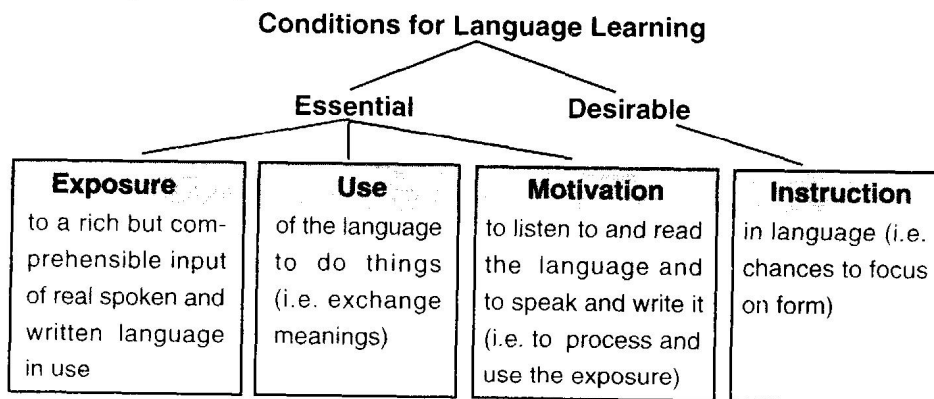


Figure 12.1 Essential and desirable conditions for language learning

(Adapted from Willis, 1996:11)

Integrating the four skills emphasises the focus on realistic language and can therefore lead to the students' all-round development of communicative competence in English.

12.2 How can we integrate the four skills?

The easiest form of integration is within the same medium (either oral or written), from receptive to productive skills.

	Receptive Skill		Productive Skill
Oral Medium	listening	→	speaking
Written Medium	reading	→	writing

In other words, we would use a listening text as a model for the students' speaking, and a reading text as a model for the students' writing. This is common practice among teachers, and we will call it simple integration.

Here is an example of simple integration, adapted from *Junior English for China*. The reading passage on the topic of introducing oneself serves as a model for the students' own writing.

My name is Jim Green. I live at 152 Jianguo Street, not far from the centre of the city. I have lived there since 1990. I go to Number 14 Middle School. I've been a student there for nearly two and a half years.

Now write about yourself in the same way.

TASK 2

Look in English language textbooks and find more examples of simple integration. What communicative language function or text is the focus of each example?

The second kind is complex integration. This involves constructing a series of activities that use a variety of skills. In each of the activities, there is realistic, communicative use of language. For example, look at this sequence of activities:

Reading activity: a poster giving information about an English Club



Oral activity: students make up a dialogue between the club secretary and a person who wants to join the club



Writing activity: students complete a membership application form for the English Club based on their partner's information

Notice how one activity is closely linked thematically to the next. The information that the students get from the reading is useful in the oral activity, while the writing activity is based on information from the oral activity.

Here is another example. Look how the reading comprehension exercise also serves as the basis for an oral activity.

The Classroom Bank

Every Tuesday, Carina Zhang goes to work in a bank. She knows all her customers very well, because they are her classmates. In fact Carina and her customers are all ten years old.

Carina's bank is in a primary school in Chicago, in the USA. The bank is a branch of a national bank, but the children run it themselves. It is open for 30 minutes a week.

During the mathematics lesson on Tuesday morning, Carina opens the bank. Her classmates deposit or withdraw money from their savings account. The bank pays interest on their savings.

The idea for the bank came from the mathematics teacher, Mr. Green. He took his idea to the national bank. The bank agreed to his plan.

"Our bank teaches the children how to take care of their money," said Mr. Green

The bank is popular with the children. Carina Zhang said that it was a fun way to learn something very useful.

The newspaper reporter is interviewing Carina Zhang. Complete the following dialogue, using the information from the passage.

Reporter: How old are you, Carina?

Carina: _____.

Reporter: Uh-huh. Does the bank belong to the school?

Carina: _____.

Reporter: Why did Mr. Green start the bank?

Carina: _____.

Reporter: I see. And what do you think about the school bank?

Carina: _____.

Reporter: When does the bank open?

Carina: _____.

Reporter: And what services does it offer?

Carina: _____.

Reporter: Thanks, Carina.

Now interview your classmates and find out what they think about the classroom bank. Ask them to give reasons.

The fill-in-the-blanks activity that the students are asked to carry out in completing the dialogue above is actually a form of reading comprehension. As the comprehension questions take the form of a realistic dialogue, the students can then practise their oral skills as well as their reading skills. The dialogue can then be used as a basis for the students' own conversations, in which they discuss the idea of a school bank.



 **TASK 3**

Look at the following passage and design:

- a) a reading comprehension exercise in the form of a dialogue;
- b) a communicative activity based on the dialogue.

Silent Wheels

Mr. and Mrs. Li's new car is very special. It does not have a petrol engine. Instead it has an electric engine.

"We were worried about pollution," said Mrs. Li. "Our car is cleaner and quieter than other cars on the road."

However, their car was not cheap to buy. It cost double the price of a normal family car. There are other problems. Twice a week, the Lis have to recharge the battery, which takes a long time.

"Another good thing about electric cars is their working life," said Mr. Li. "They last much longer than cars with petrol engines."

The Lis car is made of a very light, but strong material called fibre-glass. The car has four doors and can hold five passengers. It can travel at 100 kilometres per hour.

"It's a good car for people who live in Beijing," said Mrs. Li. "We don't need to travel long distances."

 **TASK 4**

Here's an outline of a sequence of activities. Working as a group, use the outline as the guide for designing suitable contents for the first two activities. Then share your ideas with other groups.

- 1) Students listen to an interview between a radio reporter and a famous singer.
- 2) Students read a magazine article describing a famous film star.
- 3) Speaking: students make up and act out an interview between the radio reporter and the famous film star.
- 4) Speaking: students interview each other.
- 5) Writing: students write a magazine article about their partner.

12.3 *What are the implications for teaching?*

As we noted earlier, integration of the four skills is concerned with realistic communication. This means that we are teaching at the discourse level, not just at the level of sentences or individual words and phrases. Discourse is a whole unit of communicative text, either spoken or written.

Focus on discourse

The main implication for teaching is that we need to be aware of the discourse features of a text and to be able to make students aware of them. This helps the integration of skills because it makes clear the teaching points and, for simple integration, the discourse features are the main language aspects that we transfer from one skill to the other. *Discourse features include aspects such as:*

- the way that the text is organised
- its layout (for written text)
- the style of the language (formal or informal?)
- the register (the vocabulary that is commonly found in such discourse).

TASK 5

Look at the text below. What are the features of its organisation, layout, style and register?

33 Whitefield Road
Lancaster, England
25th January

Dear Liu Ping,

Thanks for your letter. It was good to hear from you. I'm glad you are enjoying your new school.

We had a very nice Christmas. All my family had Christmas dinner at home. My parents gave me a new dress. I got some lovely presents from my friends as well.

I saw on television that Spring Festival is coming soon. What are you going to do then? Please write and tell me.

Best wishes,

Carman

Oral language tends to be less structured than written text, but there are some discourse features that we can teach our students. Look at this conversation as an example. (It comes from an integrated sequence. After this conversation, the students write to famous people inviting them to visit the school and enclosing instructions on how to get there.)

Tourist:	Excuse me! Do you speak English?
Zhu Qing:	Yes, a little.
Tourist:	Oh good. Please can you tell me the way to Wuyi Street please?
Zhu Qing:	Wuyi Street? Yes. Go down this road...
Tourist:	Yes.
Zhu Qing:	Then turn right after the park. That's Wuyi Street.
Tourist:	I see. Can I go on foot?
Zhu Qing:	Yes, it's not very far. About ten minutes, I think.
Tourist:	Okay. Thank you very much for your help.
Zhu Qing:	Not at all. Goodbye!
Tourist:	Goodbye!

Notice how the conversation is organised. The tourist opens the conversation, asks questions about the way and listens carefully to Zhu Qing's directions, and then closes the conversation. The style is quite formal and polite. Typical vocabulary items include:

Opening:	Excuse me!
Asking the way:	Please can you tell me the way to...? Can I go on/by...?
Giving directions:	Go down this road. Turn right after the park.
Listening carefully:	Yes. I see. Okay.
Closing:	Thank you very much for your help. Goodbye!

As teachers, we have to use our professional judgement, based on our knowledge of the students, to decide how much detail we should include in our lesson. It is important to keep a balance. Too much information may confuse them. Too little information may mean that they are not clear about the features of a particular type of discourse.

Another aspect of our teaching that requires attention if we adopt an integrated approach is the use of the textbook. Although many modern textbooks have some integration of the four skills, we may still need to make some changes to the contents.

This could involve altering the order of the contents. If the discourse of the writing activity is closely related to the reading passage, but is placed in a different part of the unit in the textbook, we could focus on the writing straight after we finish the reading passage.

For simple integration, we can design a listening or reading comprehension activity that becomes a plan for speaking or writing. Imagine there is a short story about a silly mistake. The comprehension activity could focus on the main discourse features of the short story:

Answer these questions about the short story:

Who are the main characters?

Where does the story take place?

What happened first?

What happened in the end?

What was the silly mistake?

Now plan your own story about a silly mistake. Use the questions to help you.

For complex integration, it could mean making changes to the activities in the textbook. Imagine there is a reading passage about a visit to a museum, which is followed by these comprehension questions:

1. Where did the children go today?
2. What did they see there?
3. Which part did Lily like best?
4. What did Lily think about the visit?

This activity could be changed into a fill-in-the-blanks dialogue between Lily and her mother (similar to the dialogue about the classroom bank earlier in this chapter) or a fill-in-the-blanks entry in Lily's diary.

Adjusting the timetable

There also are practical implications for integrating the four skills. One is related to timetabling. In some schools, a whole lesson is given to teaching one skill. For example, there is a "listening" lesson one day, a "reading" lesson another day, and so on. Sometimes this is encouraged by the arrangement of materials in the textbook. We have to make the timetable arrangements more flexible so that we can integrate the skills better.

12.4 *What are the limitations of integrating the four skills?*

While integrating the four skills can help the development of students' communicative competence, we must not overlook the useful role that a separate focus on individual aspects of vocabulary, grammar and skills can play. If taught well, these aspects can accelerate the students' language learning. It is therefore necessary for teachers to maintain an appropriate balance between integration and separation.

Integrating the four language skills can be demanding of the teacher. We need to have a good understanding of discourse, and to be able to use textbooks flexibly. This can also be time-consuming, requiring a lot of preparation. Sometimes teachers are so busy that they cannot spare much time for extra preparatory work.

Another limitation is the problem of designing suitable materials that take into account students' different skill levels. The four skills tend to develop at a different pace: receptive skills are stronger than productive skills, for example. This means that teachers have to be skilful in selecting or designing integrated activities for their students.

12.5 *Conclusion*

In this unit we have discussed why integrating the four language skills is desirable. It enhances the focus on realistic communication, which is essential in developing students' competence in English. We then identified two ways of integrating skills: simple integration, whereby a receptive language skill serves as a model for a productive language skill, and complex integration, which is a combination of activities involving different skills, linked thematically.

We also discussed some of the limitations of integrating skills. The role of a focus on individual language elements, such as vocabulary and grammar, should not be overlooked, as they can play an important role in helping students to understand the English language system and in enlarging their range of language production. Integration is also demanding of teachers in terms of finding or designing suitable materials, particularly when it is necessary to take into account the differing rates of progress of students in mastering the individual skills.

Overall, however, these limitations should not prevent teachers from using the integrative approach. As we have seen from this chapter, the focus on realistic language in use can help students' to develop communicative competence. Learning English can be more motivating, because the students are using the language for a real purpose, instead of, say, just practising the grammar. Integration requires skilful teaching, but it can bring worthwhile results.

UNIT 13

Assessment in Language Teaching



Aims of the unit

In this unit, we are going to discuss how to conduct assessment in language teaching. We will mainly talk about the following:

1. Assessment purposes
2. Assessment methods
3. Assessment criteria
4. Assessment principles
5. Testing in language assessment

13.1 Assessment purposes

To put it simply, assessment in ELT means to discover what the learners know and can do at a certain stage of the learning process. Before we look at assessment in detail, let's discuss why assessment is necessary. With different assessment purposes in mind, we may adopt different assessment methods.

TASK 1

What do you think are the purposes of assessment? The chart below has twelve possible purposes of assessment. Do you agree with them? If yes, choose the six items that you think are the most important purposes of assessment. Then add one or two assessment purposes that you think apply to an ELT classroom.

	Agree/ Disagree
1. To discover learners' weaknesses	
2. To discover learners' achievements	
3. To evaluate the existing curriculum	
4. To check upon teachers' performance	
5. To motivate learners	
6. To provide an incentive for learning	
7. To provide the basis for further planning of teaching: what to teach next	
8. To qualify students	
9. To provide the basis for correction	
10. To provide criteria to qualify for higher level studies	
11. To provide learners with a sense of accomplishment	
12. To foster the ability to learn.	
13.	
14.	

A close study on the assessment purposes will make it clear that all the people involved in education have some reasons to consider assessment necessary. They are **administrators, teachers, parents and students**.



Administrators provide money and personnel for education. They need to know whether the programmes they have planned are working well. The only way to do this is to discover how well the pupils are doing with their courses. If assessment results are different from what they have expected, they need to replan the programmes so that better accomplishment can be achieved later.



Teachers put the administrators' plans into practice. In the continuum of learning, teachers need to know what has been done and what needs to be done next; what the pupils already know or can do and what they do not know or cannot do yet. If the programme is well planned, it pretty much depends on the teachers' performance whether the programme eventually leads to success.



Nobody is more anxious than parents to know how their children are doing in school. Unable to watch their kids in the class, parents value the feedback about their children's performance from the teachers and the school.



Finally, students need to know what they've accomplished, be aware of what they need to work on next, and build up their confidence and satisfaction from what they have achieved.

It should be noted that both positive and negative assessment should be made available to the learner, as honestly as possible. It is essential, however, for such assessments to be given in an atmosphere of support and warm solidarity, so that learners feel that the teachers' motive is honestly to promote and encourage their learning, not to put them down. The problem in negative assessment is often not the assessment itself, but rather the accompanying implications of aggression on the side of the assessor and humiliation on the side of the assessed (Ur, 1996).

More often than not, the problems with assessment are not with its purposes but with the aspects of its nature, namely, methods, criteria, principles and feedback, etc.

13.2

Assessment methods

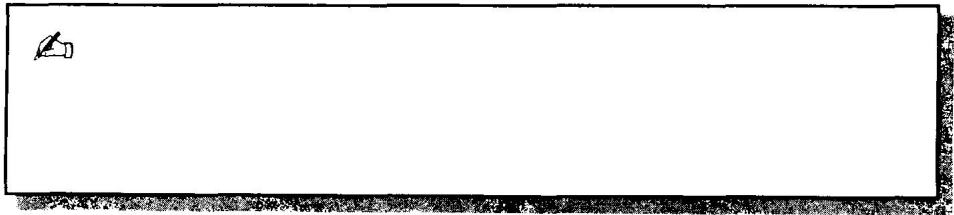
Assessment is often associated with testing, so speaking of assessment methods, many teachers immediately think of tests. However, there is an important difference between assessment and testing. Assessment is usually based on information collected about the learners' current situation. Testing is only one of the different ways to collect information. Testing is a single-occasion, unidimensional, timed exercise, usually in multiple choice or short-answer form. Testing is formal, and is often standardised, which means that everyone takes the test under the same conditions. In other words, everyone is given the same procedures for administering and scoring, the same test materials and items, and the same norms against which they are compared.

Assessment is a broader term. It implies evaluation based on a collection of information about what students know and can do. This involves many ways and methods of information gathering, formal and informal, at different times and in different contexts. Testing is part of assessment, but it is only one means of gathering information about a student. The focus in testing is on finding the norm. Assessment is broader than testing. The teacher is looking at progress over time in a variety of contexts.

TASK 2

Work in pairs and answer the following question: Besides testing, what are the

other methods that can be used to gather information about the knowledge and performance of language learners? Please give examples if possible. When you are ready, join another pair and compare your ideas.



To assess accurately, to record, and to give feedback on what the students are accomplishing and where they are on the learning continuum, we need to gather as much information as possible before making decisions about the students. Besides, the information we gather should be accurate and reliable.

Besides testing, which can be formal or informal, there are many other ways to gather information, such as **teacher's assessment, continuous assessment, students' self-assessment, and portfolios.**

**Teacher's
assessment**

Research shows that the teacher's knowledge of children and their strengths and weaknesses is more accurate and sound than testing (Law and Eckes, 1995:44). Very often the teacher's subjective estimate of the learners' overall performance or achievement can be quite accurate and fair. The teacher can get information by observing the students in class and by looking at their work.

**Continuous
assessment**

The final grade given to the student is not his or her mark on the final exam paper; rather, it is some kind of combination of the grades the learner has received for various assignments during the course. It can also include the grades that the teacher has given for students' performance or participation in the class activities. It could also be a written report rather than just a grade.

Self-assessment

The students themselves are given the chance to evaluate their own performance, using clear criteria and weighting systems agreed on beforehand. Kohonen (1999) asserts that students are able to make quite accurate assessments of their own achievements.

Portfolios

Portfolios are collections of assignments and projects that students have done over a long period of time. These materials are usually put in a file kept by the students or the teacher. The portfolios provide the basis for evaluation.

 **TASK 3**

Suppose you have been teaching a Senior 1 class for a year. Now you are

given the chance to assess the students' overall language achievement using whatever methods you like. How would you do it? Write out your steps and reasons for doing so.

	Steps	Why?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

13.3 *Assessment criteria*

It is agreed that assessment means to discover how well learners know things or can do things. But “well” is often comparatively “well”, not absolutely “well”. So the question is what criteria assessment should be based on. How “well” is “well enough”?

Depending on different assessment purposes and the stage at which the assessment is made, assessment should be made according to different criteria or references. The terms “criterion-referenced” and “norm-referenced” are originally used to refer to two types of tests. However, recently they have been extended to refer to assessment in general. A third type of assessment is known as “individual-referenced” assessment.

Criterion-referenced assessment

Criterion-referenced language assessment is based on a fixed standard or a set criterion. The national or local educational authority may have this standard or criterion. A school or several schools in a district may have their standard or set criterion for whatever purposes they might have. A fixed standard is usually the ultimate goal which the students are expected to achieve at the end of the course.

Norm-referenced assessment

Norm-referenced assessment is designed to measure how the performance of a particular student or group of students compares with the performance of another student or group of students whose scores are given as the norm. A student's achievement is therefore interpreted with reference to the achievement of other students or groups of students, rather than to an agreed criterion.

Individual-referenced assessment

Individual-referenced assessment is based on how well the learner is performing relative to his or her own previous performance, or relative to an estimate of his or her individual ability. For example, if a student could only say a few words in English

after a few months of the course, and now after another month's study, he is able to speak with some fluency (although there is some inaccuracy). we can surely say he has made great progress.

TASK 4

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of different assessments based on different criteria? Discuss the question in groups of four and note down your ideas in the chart below.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Criterion-referenced		
Norm-referenced		
Individual-referenced		

13.4 *Assessment principles*

The heterogeneity of assessment methods and assessment criteria does not mean assessment has no principles to follow. On the contrary, some vital principles have to be observed if effective assessment is to be made. Generally speaking, assessment should:

- Assess authentic use of language in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- Assess literacy and language in a variety of contexts.
- Assess the environment, the instruction, and the students.
- Assess processes as well as products.
- Analyse patterns of errors in language and literacy.
- be based on normal developmental patterns and behaviour in language and literacy acquisition.
- Clarify and use standards when assessing reading, writing, and content knowledge.
- Involve students and parents, as well as other personnel such as the ESL or mainstream teacher, in the assessment process.
- Be an ongoing part of every day.

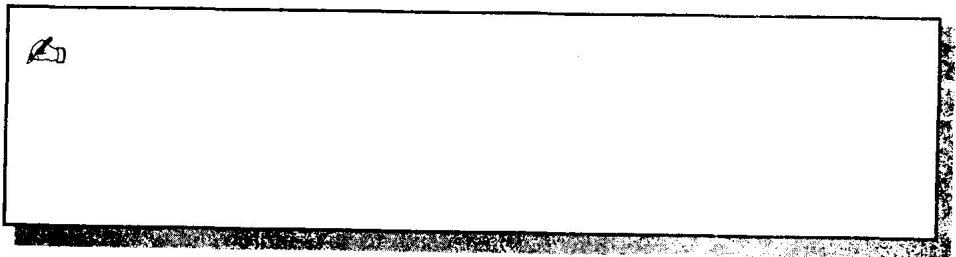
(Law and Eckes, 1995)

It is ideal if assessors can follow all these principles. But in reality, it is very difficult to achieve this. First of all, "assess authentic use of language" is extremely difficult, though desirable. According to this principle, to assess a learner's oral skills, it is best

to see how he or she performs in a real communication situation, for example, asking for directions on the street. Can we do this on the street? What teachers usually do is to give the student a situation and ask what he or she should say in that situation. For example, *What would you say if you want to ask the policeman how to go to the railway station?* But this is not real communication. That the student knows what to say does not mean he or she can really say it in the real situation.

TASK 5

Work in groups and discuss this question: what are the other possible problems that may occur when we apply the above assessment principles to assessment in practice?



13.5

Testing in assessment

We have said that testing does not equate with assessment, but testing is, at least now, the most widely used method to collect information for the purpose of assessment. So it is desirable and necessary for teachers to familiarise themselves with testing techniques.

Before we look at testing techniques, let's first look at some drawbacks of using tests for assessment. Tests are often a one-off event which may not necessarily give a fair sample of the learner's overall proficiency; they are not always valid or reliable; and if they are seen as the sole basis for crucial evaluation in the learner's career, they can be extremely stressful (Ur, 1996).

Tests tend to fragment skills. Most tests test only lower-order thinking skills. These include such thinking skills as memorisation and recall, not higher-order skills such as inferencing and synthesising. Many tests cannot show whether the student knows the material or not. With multiple choice items, the student has a good chance of randomly choosing the correct answer and standardised tests usually have no or little context. Besides, tests cannot tell where exactly the student have failed.

When assessment is solely dependent on test results, teachers tend to begin teaching to the test (washback effect). Teaching has become test practice. Students try find out what will be tested and how it will be tested. However, if well designed and reasonably administered, and the wash-back effect is positive rather than negative. Tests can be a useful component for language assessment.

Test items can be designed in various formats. A test whose items are designed in different formats tends to have more validity and reliability than a test that is designed in a single format, for example, multiple-choice format. Below are the most frequently used test formats.

Questions and answers

Students are asked to answer questions according to information provided in reading texts or recorded materials. These questions can either be wh- questions or Yes/No questions. It is better to have both types. It is very important that these questions themselves should not be too long. Otherwise the students will have to spend a lot of time reading the questions, which means they will have less time reading the original texts or listening to the tape. And furthermore, the questions should be simply worded.

True or false questions

Students are provided with a set of statements related to the read or heard texts and required to decide whether they are true or false according to the texts.

Multiple-choice questions

This form can be used virtually for all language areas, such as reading, listening, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Usually there are 3–5 choices, one of which is the correct answer, and the rest are distracters. Great care is needed when designing this type of questions. If ill-designed, very often either the correct answer is too obvious, or there is more than one possible answer, or it is very easy for students to eliminate one or two distracters. Again these choices should not be too long, especially for reading and listening tests.

Gap-filling or completion

Students are asked to complete paragraphs or sentences by either filling in words that they think are appropriate or choosing the best from the given choices. The test goals

can be of grammar, vocabulary or reading comprehension.

Matching questions

Traditionally matching is only used for vocabulary tests, i.e. students are asked to match words with their definitions or their synonyms or antonyms. Now matching is used in a great variety of ways. For example, in listening tests, students are asked to match pictures with the descriptions in the recording; in reading tests, students are required to match subtitles or headlines with sections of a text.

Dictation

Students write down exactly what is read to them. The dictated materials can be sentences or short paragraphs. Dictation reveals many aspects of language knowledge and skills that the students have acquired, such as listening skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. It is believed all these contribute to a good piece of dictation.

Transformation

Usually students are asked to transfer sentences from one pattern to another but keep the original meaning. A similar term for this form is rewriting. But rewriting can be rewriting a longer text in another genre.

Translation

Students are asked to translate sentences or paragraphs from or into the target language. Again good translation requires many aspects of language knowledge and skills, but it also requires good command of one's native language. So translation is not often used for young learners of foreign languages.

Essay writing


Students are asked to write an essay on a certain given topic. Usually a set of instructions are given regarding the length, format and topic of the expected essay. Evaluation is based on both the language and the contents of the essay.

Interview

Interviews are often used to evaluate oral skills. The testers ask the students questions or ask them to perform some tasks. An alternative to the one-by-one interview is that students are asked to work in pairs or groups, performing a task or debating on a controversial topic.

TASK 6

Work in groups and discuss these questions: What are the usual formats of the tests that you have taken in your experiences of English learning? Is there any particular format that you like or dislike? Give your reasons.



13.6 *Conclusion*

In this unit, we started with the discussion about assessment purposes. We believe that assessment is to find out what the students already know and can do rather than what they do not know and cannot do. However, at the present time, assessment (tests in particular) is often conducted to find out the students' weaknesses, which damages the students' motivation and confidence in language learning.

Assessment can be done in many ways. Testing is only one of them. Varying assessment methods according to assessment purposes and contexts helps to make assessment fairer and more reliable. Whatever methods or formats are used, assessment must always follow a set of principles which guarantee assessment validity and reliability.

When tests have to be used in assessment, great care must be taken when teachers design test formats and items. Tests designed in different formats tend to have more validity and reliability than tests designed in a single format.

UNIT 14

Evaluating and Adapting Textbooks



Aims of the unit

In this we will discuss some basic things about textbook evaluation, selection and adaptation. We will focus on the following:

1. Why and what do teachers evaluate and adapt?
2. How do teachers evaluate textbooks?
3. How do teachers select textbooks?
4. How do teachers adapt textbooks?

14.1 Why and what?

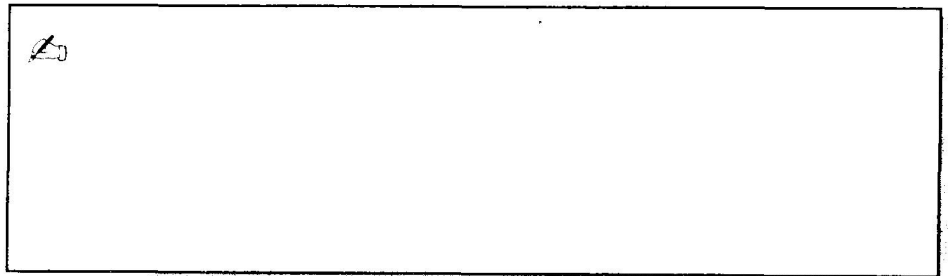
With the rapid ELT development in China, more and more textbooks have made their way to the market. Choosing the right textbook is becoming more and more important at all levels of ELT in schools. With the effort from textbook writers, ELT researchers and classroom teachers, textbook evaluation and selection have evolved from *ad hoc* to systematic action. Although most classroom teachers will not be involved in the production of textbooks, all teachers have the responsibility for textbook evaluation, selection and adaptation. In this unit, we will introduce some principles of textbook evaluation, selection, and adaptation.

So far we have been using the term “textbook”. However, the focus of this unit is far more than just textbooks. Nowadays, textbooks in traditional pedagogy have evolved into a great variety of resources used in language classroom such as audio cassettes,

videos, CD-ROMs, dictionaries, grammar book, readers, workbook, teacher's books, photocopied materials, flashcards, and other authentic materials, such as newspapers, photographs, advertisements, radio/TV programmes, etc. In many cases the term "materials" is used in place of "textbooks", which refers to anything that is used by teachers or students to facilitate the learning of a language. The term "textbooks" is still widely use, but its reference has expanded from books to all the materials used around or independent of the books.

TASK 1

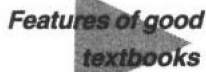
Think about your English learning experience and make a list of the materials you used. Try to be as specific as possible. Then based on the list, answer the following questions: Did you particularly like or dislike any of them? Why? Were the things on your list widely used? Are they still used now? When you are ready, go into groups and share your lists.



14.2 *Evaluating textbooks*

On a day to day basis, we often hear teachers say "Oh, this is a good textbook" or "Well, I don't think my students will like this book". These comments are usually based on *ad hoc* evaluation, that is, impressionistic evaluation based on intuitions, experience of classroom use or "just first impression". Contrary to *ad hoc* evaluation, systematic evaluation of textbooks is based on specification of objectives, principles and procedures. An ideal systematic textbook evaluation would be a longitudinal one, which includes pre-use evaluation, whilst-use evaluation and post-use evaluation.

The core of systematic textbook evaluation is to examine how well a given textbook matches the needs of a language programme and how effectively and efficiently it can realise the objectives of the programme. Therefore needs analysis has to be done prior to textbook evaluation. Due to space limitation, in this unit, we will focus on general features of "good" textbooks and how to evaluate textbooks based on these features.



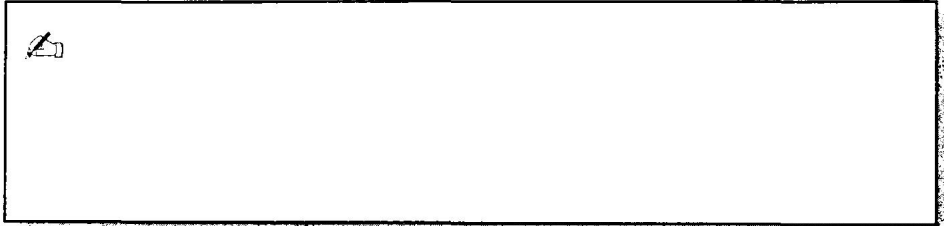
**Features of good
textbooks**

Based on Tomlinson's (1998) conception of what constitutes effective language teaching materials, we believe good textbooks should have the following features.

- Good textbooks should attract the students' curiosity, interest and attention. In order to do this, textbooks should have novelty, variety, attractive layout, appealing content, etc. Of course they should also make sure that learning really takes place when the students use the textbooks. It is not necessarily enough that students enjoy the textbooks.
- Textbooks should help students to feel at ease. The layout of presentation, tasks and activities, and texts and illustrations should all look friendly to the students so that they feel relaxed when seeing them.
- Textbooks should help students to develop confidence. Good textbooks help to build up students' confidence by providing tasks or activities that students can cope with.
- Textbooks should meet students' needs. What is covered in the textbooks should be relevant and useful to what the students need to learn and what they want to learn.
- Textbooks should expose the students to language in authentic use. Generally speaking, textbooks written in authentic language are more motivating and challenging.
- Textbooks should provide the students with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes.
- Textbooks should take into account that the positive effects of language teaching are usually delayed. Research into SLA shows that it is a gradual rather than an instantaneous process and that this is equally true for instructed learning (formal learning). So it is important for textbooks to recycle instruction and to provide frequent and ample exposure to the instructed language features in communicative use.
- Textbooks should take into account that students differ in learning styles. Tasks and activities should be variable and should cater for a range of learning styles so all students can benefit.
- Textbooks should take into account that students differ in affective factors. Good textbooks should accommodate different attitudinal and motivational background as much as possible.
- Textbooks should maximise learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement which stimulates both right and left brain activities. Good textbooks enable the students to receive, process and retain information through "multiple intelligences".


TASK 2

Take a textbook that you have used or you are familiar with. Look through the book and see to what extent the book has reflected the features of good textbooks outlined above. When you are ready, go into groups and share your findings.



If we rigorously applied the criteria outlined above to the evaluation of textbooks around us, we could hardly find any satisfactory books. This results from a fact that classroom teachers' needs and voices are often ignored in the production of ELT textbooks. Masuhara (1998:246–7) suggests that the role division between textbooks producers (e.g. professional textbooks writers and publishers) and the users (e.g. teachers, educational administrators and students) seems to be becoming more and more evident. Remarkable technical advancement has brought sophistication and a great proliferation of ESL/EFL textbooks but it has also created a wider role division between textbook producers and textbook users. The sheer scale and amount of time, energy and different expertise required in contemporary textbook production seems to be alienating teachers as potential textbooks writers, because they often have a heavy workload in often under-resourced teaching contexts. The teachers' homegrown textbooks may be more finely tuned to the local classroom needs with valid methodological awareness but the colourful or glossy appearance of commercial textbooks may be more eye-catching and may even seem to the students to have more face validity.

14.3 *Selecting textbooks*

Some people think evaluation and selection are more or less the same thing. After all, we select after we evaluate. However, evaluating textbooks is one thing, selecting textbooks is quite another. For instance, when we evaluate a textbook without an intention to use it for a certain group of students, we try to examine whether what is covered in the book can really fulfil the original purposes of the writer of the book. In another word, is the book really suitable for the learners for whom the book is intended?

When we evaluate a textbook with an intention of adoption, we try to match what is offered by the book with the needs of our language programme. However, this is no easy jobs for teachers. For one thing, teachers may be overwhelmed by the rich con-

tents of the textbook, which usually has several volumes. For another, teachers do not always have a clear awareness of what their students need. In order to make the job of textbook selection easier, materials researchers have developed several practical and operational checklists for classroom teachers (See Grant, 1987).

Grant (1987) designed a three-part questionnaire which can be used as a checklist when teachers select textbooks for their students. Basically the questionnaire helps teachers to examine the extent to which a textbook suits the students, the teacher and the syllabus and examination:

Choosing a textbook: questionnaire (part 1)

Does the book suit your students?

- | | | | | |
|----|---|-----|--------|----|
| 1 | Is it attractive? Given the average age of your students, would they enjoy using it? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 2 | Is it culturally acceptable? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 3 | Does it reflect what you know about your students' needs and interests? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 4 | Is it about the right level of difficulty? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 5 | Is it about the right length? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 6 | Are the course's physical characteristics appropriate? (e.g. is it durable?) | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 7 | Are there enough authentic materials, so that the students can see that the book is relevant to real life? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 8 | Does it achieve an acceptable balance between knowledge about the language, and practice in using the language? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 9 | Does it achieve an acceptable balance between the relevant language skills, and integrate them so that work in one skill area helps the others? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 10 | Does the book contain enough communicative activities to enable the students to use the language independently? | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Score: 2 points for every YES answer.

1 point for every PARTLY answer.

0 for every NO answer.

(Taken from Grant, 1987:122)

Choosing a textbook: questionnaire (part 2)

Does the book suit the teacher?

- | | | | | |
|----|--|-----|--------|----|
| 1 | Is your overall impression of the contents and layout of the course favourable? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 2 | Is there a good, clear teacher's guide with answers and help on methods and additional activities? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 3 | Can one use the book in the classroom without constantly having to turn to the teacher's guide? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 4 | Are the recommended methods and approaches suitable for you, your students and your classroom? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 5 | Are the approaches easily adaptable if necessary? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 6 | Does using the course require little or no time-consuming preparation? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 7 | Are useful ancillary materials such as tapes, workbooks, and visuals provided? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 8 | Is there sufficient provision made for tests and revision? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 9 | Does the book use a "spiral" approach, so that items are regularly revised and used again in different contexts? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 10 | Is the course appropriate for, and liked by, colleagues? | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Score: 2 points for every YES answer.

1 point for every PARTLY answer.

0 for every NO answer.

(Taken from Grant, 1987:124)

Choosing a textbook: questionnaire (part 3)**Does the book suit the syllabus and examination?**

- | | | | | |
|----|--|-----|--------|----|
| 1 | Has the book been recommended or approved by the authorities? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 2 | Does the book follow the official syllabus in a creative manner? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 3 | Is the course well-graded, so that it gives well-structured and systematic coverage of the language? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 4 | If it does more than the syllabus requires, is the result an improvement? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 5 | Are the activities, contents and methods used in the course well-planned and executed? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 6 | Has it been prepared specifically for the target examination? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 7 | Do the course's methods help the students prepare for the exam? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 8 | Is there a good balance between what the examination requires, and what the students need? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 9 | Is there enough examination practice? | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| 10 | Does the course contain useful hints on examination technique? | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Score: 2 points for every YES answer.

1 point for every PARTLY answer.

0 for every NO answer.

(Taken from Grant, 1987:126)


TASK 3

Choose two similar textbooks which are used in the middle schools or colleges in the place where you are studying. Use Grant's questionnaire and make a detailed evaluation of the two textbooks. Then compare the two textbooks based on the evaluation results.



14.4 *Adapting textbooks*

Despite the great effort that textbook writers make to meet the needs of the intended users, textbooks are subject to adaptation when they are actually used in the classroom. After all, most commercial textbooks are not written for any particular class. Maley (1998:281) suggested the following options to adapt materials:

- omission: the teacher leaves out things deemed inappropriate, offensive, unproductive, etc., for the particular group.
- addition: where there seems to be inadequate coverage, teachers may decide to add to textbooks, either in the form of texts or exercise material.
- reduction: where the teacher shortens an activity to give it less weight or emphasis.
- extension: where an activity is lengthened in order to give it an additional dimension. (For example, a vocabulary activity is extended to draw attention to some syntactic patterning.)
- rewriting/modification: teacher may occasionally decide to rewrite material, especially exercise material, to make it more appropriate, more “communicative”, more demanding, more accessible to their students, etc.
- replacement: text or exercise material which is considered inadequate, for whatever reason, may be replaced by more suitable material. This is often culled from other resource materials.
- re-ordering: teachers may decide that the order in which the textbooks are presented is not suitable for their students. They can then decide to plot a different

course through the textbooks from the one the writer has laid down.

- branching: teachers may decide to add options to the existing activity or to suggest alternative pathways through the activities. (For example, an experiential route or an analytical route.)

Textbook adaptation can be done at three levels. The first level is macro adaptation, which is ideally done before the language programme begins. After comparing what is covered in a textbook and what is required by the syllabus or examination, the teacher may find that certain areas or even whole units of the book can be omitted, and certain contents need to be supplemented. Macro adaptation is very important because it helps to avoid waste of time and energy of the teacher and the students as well. It also helps the teacher to see in advance what he or she needs to supplement so that he or she can keep an eye on materials that could be used.

The second level of adaptation is adapting a unit. This could be reordering the activities, combining activities, omitting activities, rewriting or supplementing exercise material, etc. Unit adaptation helps to make the classroom teaching more smooth and cohesive. It also helps the teacher to better fulfil the aims of a unit.

The third level is adaptation of specific activities in a unit. Occasionally an activity is regarded as valuable, but it is not well-designed or it is not feasible in a particular class. If the teacher does not want to give up the activity, he or she needs to adapt it.

Very often, adaptation involves supplementation, that is, teachers add materials from other resources to the textbook they are using. It is believed that authentic materials are better than non-authentic materials for supplementation. So teachers who make a point of collecting authentic materials find it much easier to adapt textbooks. This is especially true in ELT contexts where authentic English materials are not always readily to hand.

TASK 4

Choose a textbook that you are familiar with. Imagine you are going to use the book with a class in your locality. Find a unit that you think needs adaptation and adapt it.

14.5 Conclusion

In this unit we have briefly talked about textbook evaluation, selection and adaptation.

The value of these actions is so obvious that no one would argue against it. However, these actions can be done only when three conditions are met.

Firstly, teachers need to have the authority to evaluate, select and adapt textbooks. In many cases, teachers are simply told to use a certain textbook. In worse circumstances, teachers are told how to use a book. Some teachers are even criticized for intentionally leaving out activities that they do not consider appropriate or necessary.

Secondly, teachers have to have the initiative to evaluate, select and adapt textbooks. Very often, with a heavy workload, teachers simply do not have the time or energy to do anything beyond lesson planning and marking students' homework. Without explicit encouragement from authorities, many teachers do not make an effort to evaluate and adapt textbooks.

Thirdly, teachers need to know how to evaluate, select and adapt textbooks. At the time when this book is being written, very few ELT teacher education programmes in China offer specific training in materials evaluation and design, and publications on ELT materials are hard to find. If textbook evaluation is ever done, it is mostly *ad hoc* impressionistic judgement based on experience or intuition. It is a concern for this deplorable situation that made the authors incorporate this last unit into a methodology book, which, in normal cases, would not touch the "material" world.

In this unit, we did not specifically discuss textbook creation, though some classroom teachers are already involved in it. However, most of the suggested ideas about textbook evaluation and adaptation are also applicable to textbook creation.

Appendix 1: Solutions to Tasks

Notes:

- 1) This appendix does not have solutions to all the tasks in the book.
- 2) The solutions provided here are the authors' suggestions or materials from other resources. They are better considered as "further comments" than as "answers".

Unit 1

Task 2

Here are sample definitions of "language" found in dictionaries and linguistics books.

- ★ Language is a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols which permit all people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture, to communicate or to interact (Finocchiaro, 1964:8)
- ★ Language is any set or system of linguistic symbols as used in a more or less uniform fashion by a number of people who are thus enabled to communicate intelligibly with one another (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language* 1966:806)
- ★ Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication (Wardhaugh, 1972:3)
- ★ [Language is] a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* 1961:1270).
- ★ [Language is] a system of communication consisting of a set of small parts and a set of rules which decide the ways in which these parts can be combined to produce messages that have meaning (*Cambridge International Dictionary of English* 1995:795)

Task 5

Students' classification will vary. Please note there is no correct or wrong answer for this task.

Ethic devotion	Professional qualities	Personal styles
warm-hearted	creative	flexible
hardworking	resourceful	dynamic
enthusiastic	authoritative	patient
caring	well-informed	attentive

kind well-prepared disciplined	accurate speaking clearly professionally-trained	intuitive humorous
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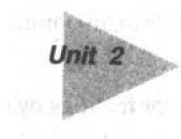
Task 7

Question 1: Stages 1 and 2 are interrelated by a double arrow line because neither of the two stages is really ever terminated. Teachers should always make a point of updating their command of English because language is always changing. This can be done while they are teaching, but very often teachers take time off to have further training in English. This is especially important for teachers who do not have enough exposure to English.

Question 2: Practice and reflection are connected by a circle because they are neither independent or separate sub-stages. Teachers do not teach one week and then reflect one week. Rather, they teach and reflect on a day to day basis.

Question 3: This is because it is believed nobody can ever become a perfectly competent language teacher. There is always room for improvement. There is always something better, but never perfection.

Question 4: TEFL methodology is probably the “received knowledge” located in the second stage.



Task 5

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Communicative purpose	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Communicative desire	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Content, not form	x	✓	x	✓	x
4. Variety of language	x	✓	x	✓	x
5. No teacher intervention	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. No materials control	x	x	x	x	x

Unit 3

Task 2

	Macro/ Micro
1. Write down lesson notes to guide teaching.	micro
2. Decide on the overall aims of a course or programme.	macro
3. Design activities and procedures for a lesson.	micro
4. Decide which language points to cover in a lesson.	micro
5. Study the textbooks and syllabus chosen by the institute.	macro
6. Decide which skills are to be practised.	both
7. Prepare teaching aids.	both
8. Allocate time for activities.	micro
9. Prepare games or songs for a lesson.	micro
10. Prepare supplementary materials.	both

Task 4

The sample lesson probably has the following language contents:

- go ... for a holiday
- take ... with ...
- look after ...
- mind doing sth.
- take good care of ...

Skills: listening, speaking and reading

Communicative functions: requesting help from other people

Task 5

The other stages in lesson plan might be: lesson introduction; giving feedback on previous homework; revision of previous lesson; check homework; lesson summary; setting homework;

Unit 4

Task 3

Numbers 1–6 represent six roles that teachers play.

a (1), b (4), c (3), d (2), e (1), f (6), g (4), h (2), i (5), j (1), k (5)

NB: The students might come up other reasonable answers.

Task 4

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Lockstep	All the class are concentrating; Good modelling from teacher; Comfortable in choral practice;	Students have little chance to speak; Same speed for different students; Nervous in front of the whole class; Not enough communication;
Pair work	More chance for practice; Encouraging co-operation; Relaxing atmosphere;	Students stray away from the task; Using native language; Noise and indiscipline;
Group work	Communication in its real sense; More dynamic than pair work; Promoting self-reliance;	The same as those in pair work; plus some students might dominate; Difficult to group;
Individual study	No outside pressure; Study at own speed;	Less dynamic classroom; No co-operation;

Task 5

The following steps might apply:

- 1) Lockstep: the teacher goes through the instruction with the students to make sure they know what to do exactly. If possible, give some hint.
- 2) Group work: students work in groups of 4 and discuss what things they should use. Reach an agreement by the end of the discussion.
- 3) Lockstep: group leaders report their discussion result to whole class, justifying their decision if necessary.

Task 6

Most ELT teachers would agree with items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8.

Item 1: This does not mean the class is always in lockstep form. It means the class is doing what the teacher wants the students to do.

Item 2: The classroom should usually be quiet unless the students are doing games or group work which has to be a little bit noisy.

Item 3: Cooperation between the teacher and students is vital in the ELT classroom.

Item 4: Everyone deserves respect.

Item 5: Punishment is not a good cure for indiscipline.

Item 6: Indiscipline often ruins the plan.

Item 7: Authority image conflicts with friendliness.

Item 8: The goal of discipline is to provide a good environment for effective learning.

Task 7

Penny Ur chose the following “top ten”: 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17, 19.

Unit 5

Task 1

Students' responses will vary. Ask students to justify their decisions.

1. Students need to be able to read phonetic transcripts of words	X
2. Students need to be able to write phonetic transcripts for words.	X
3. Students need to know phonetics in order to learn English.	X
4. Poor pronunciation may cause problems for the learning of other skills.	✓
5. Adult learners need to focus on pronunciation, but young learners don't.	✓
6. Both consistency and accuracy in pronunciation are very important.	✓
7. Stress and intonation are not important for beginning learners.	X
8. Students should learn Received Pronunciation.	X
9. Stress in pronunciation is sometimes as important as grammar.	✓
10. Bad intonation can lead to important misunderstandings	✓

Task 4

(2) ✓ Get students to repeat the sound in chorus.
(4) ✓ Explain how to make the sound.
(6) ✓ Contrast it with other sounds.
() ✗ Write words on the blackboard.
(3) ✓ Get individual students to repeat the sound.
(5) ✓ Say the sound in a word.
(1) ✓ Say the sound alone.
(7) ✓ Say the sound in meaning context.

Unit 6

Task 1

	Agree/ Disagree
1. Students need to be given detailed grammar rules if they want to learn a foreign language successfully.	X
2. Children do not learn grammar rules when they acquire their first language, so they do not need them either when learning a foreign language.	X
3. If students get enough chance to practise using a foreign language, they do not need to learn grammar.	X
4. Making students aware of grammatical information is one of the teaching objectives, but allowing students opportunities for using the language is just as important.	✓
5. Grammar should be taught to help students to analyze difficult structures in texts.	X/✓
6. Teaching and learning grammar should focus on practice rather than the study of grammar itself.	✓
7. Grammar should be taught and practised in context.	✓
8. Knowing grammar is not enough for real communication.	✓
9. An inadequate knowledge of grammar would severely constrain the capacity for communication.	✓/X
10. Grammar will always be "the boring bit" of language learning.	✓

Unit 7

Task 1

	Agree/ Disagree
1. A vocabulary item can be more than one word.	✓
2. Languages consist of "words" with equivalents from one language to another.	X
3. Vocabulary cannot be taught. It must be learned by the individuals.	✓

4. Both teachers and students need to know that there is a difference between active and passive vocabulary.	✓
5. The best way to explain vocabulary is to translate.	✗
6. English-English explanations are the best for vocabulary teaching.	✗
7. An English-English dictionary is an important aid for students.	✓
8. Words can be taught and learned most effectively in groups of words which are related to each other in meaning.	✓
9. Words must learned in language contexts.	✓
10. If we do not use words, we will forget them.	✓

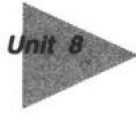
Further comments:

1. Vocabulary does not just mean single word: compounds, phrases and even, on occasion, whole sentences can be items of vocabulary.
2. Most words in one language can be translated into another language, but not every single word has an equivalent. The article "the" in English, for example, has no exact equivalent in Chinese.
3. Students can be consciously taught about ways of learning vocabulary so that they become keenly aware of every opportunity for vocabulary expansion.
4. If teachers and students know the difference between active and passive vocabulary, they can treat them differently.
5. Translation is not the best way to explain new words.
6. English-English explanation is better than translation, but again it is not the best for vocabulary teaching. There are many other more effective ways.
7. An English-English dictionary can be very helpful, though beginners may find it more comfortable to use a bilingual dictionary.
8. It is more effective when words of related meaning are taught and learned together.
9. Studying vocabulary in language contexts are more effective.
10. Forgetting is inevitable. But if words are learned more effectively, they are less easy to forget.

Task 5

Here are some possible groups of words from the task:

1. journalist, newspaper, headline, article, caption, picture, editor
2. push in the clutch, put into gear, look in the mirror, release the handbrake
3. wealthy, well-off



4. breeze, wind, gale
5. drunk, sober
6. depend, dependable, independent, independence
7. jewellery, earrings, ring, bracelet, necklace

Task 2

The following list is adapted from Ur (1996:105).

loudspeaker announcements	telephone conversations
radio news	interview
lesson, lecture	shopping
conversation, gossip	story-telling
instructions	meetings
watching television	negotiations
watching movies	theatre show

Task 5

Answers will vary. Since the tasks associated with these listening texts have not been specified, we can only consider two of the three categories that Anderson and Lynch mention: the type of language and the context that the listening occurs in. Some of the factors to consider are:

1. If other factors are constant, a live speaker is easier to understand than listening to a tape for two reasons: the sound quality of a live speaker is always better no matter how good the recording equipment is; and students have the opportunity to ask a live speaker questions if they don't understand;
2. A videotape is usually easier to follow than an audiotape since there is visual aid; for example, students can see the facial expressions and gestures of the speaker;
3. Familiarity of topic: if the topic is familiar to listeners, it will be easier to understand;
4. A lack of context makes the task more difficult; therefore, the live talk by a Chinese psychologist would be easier to understand because it would be easier for the students to predict the content of the talk.

Perhaps the students can think of more factors. Grading tasks is a very complex decision because there are so many factors involved and it is very difficult to decide which factors are more important in determining the difficulty level of any given listening text and accompanying task.

One possible ordering of these four texts in order of difficulty would be:

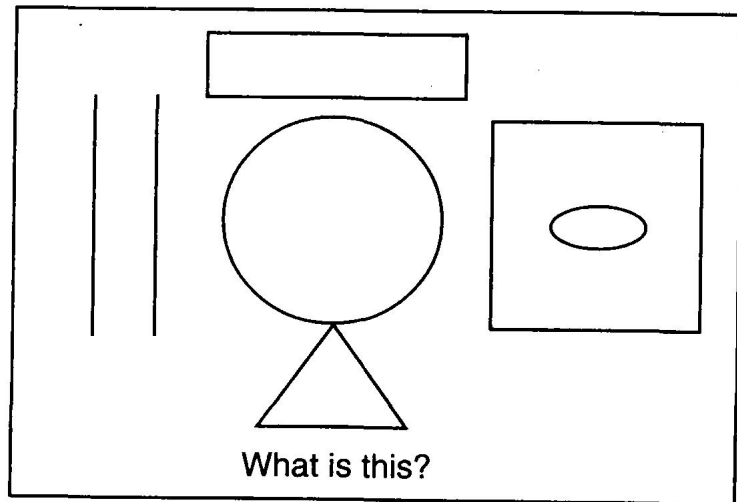
1. a live talk by a competent English-speaking Chinese psychologist about effective study habits (a live speaker is almost always easier to understand due to the reasons

- mentioned above)
2. a videotape of a talk by a native speaker about the school life of middle school students in the United States (videotape is almost always easier to follow than audiotapes because of the visual aid; the topic should also be fairly familiar to the students because school life of American students isn't too different from their own school lives)
 3. an audiotape of an interview with a native English speaker talking about her experiences living in China (the topic should be fairly familiar to them because they are familiar with living in China, although hearing about it from a foreigner's point of view will be different; the disadvantage is that this is on audiotape only)
 4. an audiotape of the news from CRI (China Radio International) (probably the most difficult to understand because it is on audiotape, and the topic is out of context because it probably isn't current news).

Another factor to consider is the accent of the speaker. How important is it to you to expose your students to English spoken by native speakers? It is important to be able to understand English spoken by both natives and non-native speakers, of course, but perhaps with beginning students it is more desirable to expose them to as much native English as possible to help them develop good pronunciation habits.

Task 10

The figure should look more or less like the one below:



Unit 10

Task 1

Assumption 1: Not true. Getting information is the most important but not the only purpose of reading. Sometimes we read for pleasure, i. e., when we read literary works. It is suggested “pleasurable reading” helps ESL students best.

Assumption 2: True. Reading aloud is considered useful for pronunciation practice, listening comprehension, dictation, etc. but it is not a real-world activity. Reading aloud does not help to focus on the meaning of the text because the students have to concentrate on pronunciation, intonation, pausing and the recognition of new words. Remember, even mouthing can affect understanding.

Assumption 3: True. Efficient reading depends first of all on having a purpose for reading, i.e., knowing why you are reading a text. The purpose will usually determine what specific information you are going to look for and the appropriate type of reading skills to be used.

Assumption 4: Not true. First of all, if our eyes are constantly moving in a straight line from left to right, we can see nothing because there is no focus. Rather, our eyes are always jumping. Secondly, the eyes do not jump from letter to letter, word to word, but from “group of words” to “group of words.” For each jump, our eyes take in a phrase, rather than a word.

Assumption 5: True. Though all students are encouraged to read as fast as possible, they always read at different speeds. So students cannot “read together.” They might be using one book, but they are reading individually. The reading result is always different.

Assumption 6: Not true. When we read for meaning, we do not need to read every letter of every word, not even every word in each sentence. We guess much of what is said in a text when we read it.

Assumption 7: Not true. Different reading tasks and different reading materials require different reading speeds. We read very fast if we just want to know the important front page news. But we slow down to ensure accuracy when we read materials like contract terms, medicine instructions etc.

Assumption 8: Not true. Mental translating not only slows down the reading speed, but also makes the reader lose track of the overall meaning.

Assumption 9: Not true. Meeting new words are inevitable for foreign language readers. If the material is of readable level, the reader should always try to guess the new words. Or, if the new words do not interfere with understanding of the context, ignore them. Frequently looking up words in the dictionary slows down reading and makes the reader lose track of the overall meaning.

Assumption 10: True. Research has indicated that lack of cultural knowledge may lead to failure in ESL/EFL reading. Language and culture are inseparable.

Task 4

A Nation of Pet-Lovers: It is about how people love pets in Britain.

Save the Jungle, Save the World: The text is about the decreasing forests in South America.

Police Hunt for Child: A child is missing and the police are looking for him.

Task 5

The text contains these words: alcohol, license, drunk, over-speed, traffic lights, punish, test

Task 6

	Before reading	After reading
1. Always try to please the interviewer.		X
2. Do not try to dominate the interview.		✓
3. Never interrupt the interviewer.		X
4. If necessary, disagree with the interviewer.		✓
5. Never change your mind.		X

Setting the scene**Green Bananas**

Literary meaning: unripe bananas

Implied meaning: someone new and unfamiliar within a cultural context.

All Greek to Me

Greek is a language not many people can speak or write nowadays. "All Greek to Me" means everything is new and unknown to me.

Task 7

Here is an example: The teacher asks the class if anyone knows anything about the Eskimos. If some students know something, ask them to tell the class. Then ask students to imagine what people's life looks like in a place where there is snow all year round. What problems might people have?

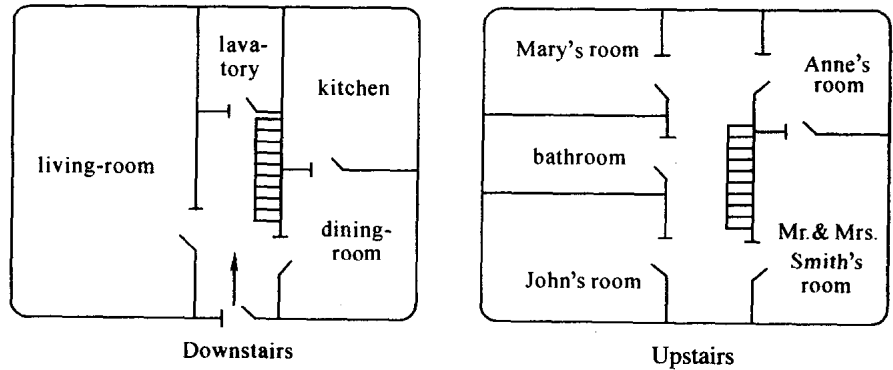
Task 10

Words about being "crowded": jammed, packed, overcrowded, crammed.

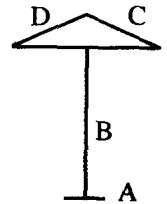
Words about being "polluted": stinking, smog, dirty, contaminated, waste, garbage

Task 12

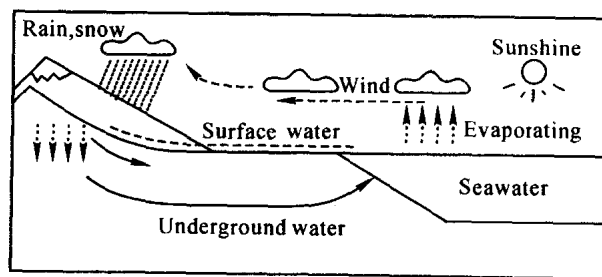
Text 1: An interesting task is to ask students to read the text and draw two sketch maps of the positions of the rooms in Mr. and Mrs. Smith's house: one map for downstairs and the other for upstairs (see the maps below). Alternatively, the teacher can draw the maps but leave out the captions. Make copies and distribute them to the students. Students read the text and mark out the rooms on the maps. The authors have tried this activity many times and found it very motivating.



Text 2: Again the best way is to ask students to read the text and draw a picture according to the instructions. Very likely students will have different pictures. If so, ask students to compare their pictures and try to find out why their pictures are different. The picture should look like the one on the right.



Text 3: An easy task is to ask students to read the text and draw a flowchart to indicate the water cycle. A more challenging and more interesting activity would be asking students to draw a more realistic sketch map like the one below. Again the teacher can provide the map and leave out the captions. Students read the text and mark the captions. This makes the task easier. (The sketch is taken from *English for Vocational School*, Book 2:140).



Text 4: Filling out a form would be a good reading task for this text. The teacher designs a more or less realistic "Lost Property Registration" form, which includes items like personal information about the property owner, descriptions of lost property, and circumstances in which the property was lost. The teacher makes copies of

the form and distributes them to the students. Students read the texts and fill out the form as if they were the property owner.

Text 5: A table will do for this text. The table can have columns like “ways to scatter seeds” and “Examples”.

Text 6: Obviously a flowchart is best for this text. Students read the text and draw a flowchart to indicate the process of making gowns.

Text 7: An imaginative transition device is to design an “International Student Registration” form and ask students to fill out the form while they read the text (Adapted from *English for Vocational School*. Book 1:3).

International Student Registration

Surname _____ Given name _____

Sex Male Female

Age _____

Marital status _____

Nationality _____

Languages _____

Reasons to be in London:

Interests and hobbies:

Photo

Text 8: Make a chronological list of the important events of Presley’s life.

Task 13

	Type	Order
1. How old was Yusof?	2	3
2. What was Yusof doing when the accident happened?	1	1
3. Why didn’t Yusof help his mother?	1	2
4. Which people were in Rahman’s house when the accident happened?	3	5
5. How many children did Rahman have?	2	4
6. Why was Rahman proud of his son?	3	6
7. Do you agree that Rahman should be proud of his son?	5	7

Task 15

Reproduce the text double-spaced. Ask students to draw circles and lines to connect the reference words with the words they refer to in the text. An alternative is that the teacher draws a table on the blackboard with reference words selected, then asks the students to fill out the meaning while reading the text.

Reference words	Meaning referred
which (line 1)	
one (line 1)	
it (line 2)	
it (line 3)	
it (line 5)	
that (line 6)	
his (line 6)	
He (line 6)	

Reference words	Meaning referred
Those (line 7)	
Their (line 8)	
them (line 9)	
This (line 9)	
those (line 11)	
this (line 11)	
their (line 12)	



Unit 11

Task 2

Activity 1 is obviously “writing for consolidating language”. All the students have to do is to combine the sentence pairs into one sentence and make other minor changes. There is no communication in the activity.

Activity 2 can be considered as “writing for communication” though the situation is an imagined one. If the students write truly about the sightseeing possibilities in their locality, the activity promotes a lot of communication.

Activity 3 can be between “writing for learning” and “writing for communication”. It depends on whom the students are writing to. If the writing is to be read only by classmates, there is no communication. If the writing is to be read by other people, it is communication.

Activity 4 is typical of imaginative writing. There is a clear recipient. So the students know whom they are addressing.

Activity 5 can involve true communication, especially if students feel free to make suggestions about the courses they are taking. However, very often students refrain from telling the truth because they do not want to hurt or offend their teachers.

Activity 6 can be considered as between “writing for learning” and “writing for com-

munication". If the things belong to the students and they want to sell them, then the activity becomes more communicative.

Unit 12

Task 5

As a friendly letter, you can see that the main text is organised so that it moves from a greeting to the writer's news, followed by a request for information and then closure. The layout has the writer's address in the top right corner, with the date below; then the letter opens on the left hand side with "Dear ...". The main body of the letter is then organised in paragraphs. At the foot, either on the left or right hand side, there is a valedictory (e.g. *Yours sincerely*) above the writer's signature.

The style is informal and personal. The informality is shown in the register: the use of short form (*Thanks*) and contraction (*I'm*), of Best wishes as a valedictory, and of *Carman* instead of the writer's full name — there is no printed form of the name under the signature either.

Unit 13

Task 1

	Agree/ Disagree
1. To discover learners' weaknesses	X
2. To discover learners' achievements	✓
3. To evaluate the existing curriculum	✓
4. To check upon teachers' performance	✓
5. To motivate learners	✓
6. To provide learning incentive	✓
7. To provide basis for further planning of teaching: what to teach next	✓
8. To qualify students for certain status	✓
9. To provide basis for correction	X
10. To provide criteria to qualify for higher level studies	✓
11. To provide learners with a sense of accomplishment	✓
12. To foster learning ability.	✓

Task 4

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Criterion-referenced	Objective standard of ability level;	Difficult to design, especially for classroom teachers.
Norm-referenced	Maximize the distinction among individuals in a given group;	Difficult to decide the "norms";
Individual-referenced	Make students aware of their progress; Encourage students;	Lack of comparison among students.

Appendix 2: Reading Texts for Unit 10

How to Shine at a Job Interview

The smart job-seeker needs to rid herself of several standard myths about interviewing before she starts pounding the pavement looking for a job. What follows is a list of some of these untruths and some tips to help you do your best at your next interview.

Myth 1: The aim of interviewing is to obtain a job offer

Only half true. The real aim of an interview is to obtain the job you want. That often means rejecting job offers you don't want! Incompetent job-seekers, however, become so used to accommodating employers' expectations that they often easily qualify for jobs they don't want. So, before you do back-flips for an employer, be sure you want the job.

Myth 2: Always please the interviewer

Not true. Try to please yourself. Giving answers that you think will suit a potential employer, losing touch with your own feelings (in order to get in touch with some other person's feelings) and, in general, practicing an abject policy of appeasement are certain to get you nowhere. Of course, don't be hostile — nobody wants to hire someone disagreeable. But there is a middle ground between being too ingratiating and being hostile. An affective interview (whether you are offered the job or not) is like an exciting encounter in conversation with your seatmate on an airplane.

Myth 3: Try to control the interview

Nobody "controls" an interview — neither you nor the interviewer — although one or both parties often try. Then it becomes a phony exchange between two human beings; no business is likely to be transacted. When somebody tries to control us, we resent it. When we try to control somebody, she resents us. Remember, you can't control what an employer thinks of you, just as she can't control what you think of her. So hang loose when interviewing: Never dominate the interview. Compulsive behavior turns off your authenticity.

Myth 4: Never interrupt the interviewer

No dice. "Never talk when I'm interrupting," said McGeorge Bundy. Good advice.

Study the style of an affective conversationalist: She interrupts and is interrupted! An exciting conversation always makes us feel free — free to interrupt, to disagree, to agree enthusiastically. We feel comfortable with people who allow us to be natural. In an interview, half the responsibility lies with you. Do you seem uptight? Try being yourself for a change. And the way to make an effective impression is to feel free to be yourself, which frees your interviewer to be herself!

Myth 5: Don't disagree with the interviewer

Another silly myth. If you don't disagree at times, you become, in effect, a "yes" woman. Don't be afraid to disagree with your interviewer — in an agreeable way. And don't hesitate to change your mind. The worst that could happen would be that the interviewer says to herself, "There's a person with an open mind!" The conventional wisdom says "be yourself," true enough. But how many people can be themselves if they don't feel free to disagree?

(Taken from Walter, 1982:22)

A City Is Dying

Stinking buses, their passengers pale and tired, jam the crowded streets. Drivers shout at one another and honk their horns. Smog smarts the eyes and chokes the senses. The scene is Athens at rush hour. The city of Plato and Pericles is in a sorry state of affairs, built without a plan, lacking even adequate sewerage facilities, hemmed in by mountains and the sea, its 135 square miles crammed with 3.7 million people. Even Athens' ruins are in ruin: sulfur dioxide eats away at the marble of the Parthenon and other treasures on the Acropolis. As Greek Premier Constantine Karamanlis has said, "The only solution for Athens would be to demolish half of it and start all over against."

So great has been the population flow toward the city that entire hinterland villages stand vacant or nearly so. About 120 000 people from outlying provinces move to Athens every year, with the result that 40% of Greece's citizenry are now packed into the capital. The migrants come for the few available jobs, which are usually no better than the ones they fled. At the current rate of migration, Athens by the year 2000 will have a population of 6.5 million, more than half the nation.

Aside from overcrowding and poor public transport, the biggest problems confronting Athenians are noise and pollution. A government study concluded that Athens was the noisiest city in the world. Smog is almost at killing levels: 180–300 mg of sulfur dioxide per cubic meter of air, or up to four times the level that the World Health Organization considers safe. Nearly half the pollution comes from cars. Despite high prices for vehicles and fuel (\$2.95 per gallon), nearly 100 000 automobiles are sold in Greece each year; 3 thousand driver's licenses are issued in Athens monthly.

After decades of neglect, Athens is at last getting some attention. In March a committee of representatives from all major public service ministries met to discuss a plan to unclog the city, make it livable and clean up its environment. A save-Athens ministry, which will soon begin functioning, will propose heavy taxes to discourage in-migration, a minimum of \$5 billion in public spending for Athens alone, and other projects for the countryside to encourage residents to stay put. A master plan that will move many government offices to the city's fringes is already in the works. Meanwhile, more Greeks keep moving into Athens. With few parks and precious few oxygen-producing plants, the city and its citizens are literally suffocating.

(Taken from Water, 982:28)

Save the Children

Save The Children Federation®

48 Wilton Road, Westport, and Connecticut 06880

PLEASE READ MY URGENT PLEAS TO HELP SAVE MARIA
PASTORA AND THE OTHER CHILDREN OF HER VILLAGE

Dear Ms. Reader:

Imagine an 11-year old child whose days are often spent scrubbing clothes, raising a baby brother, struggling with heavy farm chores.

Imagine a little girl who knows there will not be enough food for dinner. Who can't fill her stomach with water because it's contaminated. Who has watched life slip away from her father and her little brother and sister because the family could not afford a doctor.

Hard to believe? For Maria Pastora, these are the facts of life.

Maria would gladly walk miles to school, but her mother, now alone, needs her badly at home. Chances are Maria will grow up illiterate. Her future? In many ways, disastrous.

But for just 52 pennies a day, you can sponsor a child like Maria. Show her that somewhere, someone cares about her plight. Through Save the Children, you can help Maria's mother get the tools and guidance she needs to turn their meager half-acre into a source of good food; earn the money she needs to buy clothing and school supplies for Maria.

To help most, your money is combined with that of other sponsors, so hardworking people can help themselves. Build a school ... a health facility ... reclaim land ... bring in clean water. This is what Save the Children has been about since 1932.

For you there are many rewards. The chance to correspond with your sponsored child. Receive photograph, progress reports. Know you are reaching out to another human being. Not with a handout, but a hand up. That's how Save the Children works. But without you, it can't work. Please take a moment now to fill out the mail the coupon below to help a child like Maria and her village.

It can make such a difference ... in her life and yours.

For the children

David L. Guyer
Executive Director

(Taken from Walter, 1982:78.)

Long Live the King

Elvis Presley came from a very poor family. He was born on 8 January 1935 in Mississippi. Elvis loved music. He went to church every Sunday and sang with other people. When he was 13, his mother bought him a guitar. In the same year Elvis and his family moved to Memphis, Tennessee.

One day in 1954 he went to a recording studio called Sun Records. He wanted to make a record for his mother's birthday. The secretary at the studio heard Elvis and she told her boss, Sam Phillips. Phillips became Elvis' manager and Elvis made his first single *That's All Right, Mama*. It proved to be a great success. When it was played on the radio stations, American young people went wild. Many American parents didn't like Elvis because he made their children crazy.

In 1955 Elvis appeared on TV in New York. The following year he went to Hollywood and made his first film *Lover Me Tender*. In the next two years he had many hit records. Then in 1958 Elvis joined the American army and went to Germany. When he returned to the United States in the early 1960s, pop music was not the same. British groups like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones were the new stars.

Elvis was a millionaire, but he was a very lonely man. In his last years he became fat and sad. He died of a heart attack on 16 August 1977 in his house at Graceland, Memphis.

But for his millions of fans throughout the world, Elvis is still the King. Shane Lyons has got more than 250 albums by Elvis and videos of all his films. "He was great," says Shane. "Elvis could really sing. Not like these kids today with all their electronic machines. He was the King, really, the King of Rock and Roll."

(Adapted from Hutchinson, 1998:20)

Local Crime News

A 26-year-old mechanic, Carl Chadburn, was sent to prison today in South Yorkshire.

Chadburn had brought large amounts of drugs from Spain to Britain before he was caught by South Yorkshire police. He had organized and paid truck drivers to bring drugs into South Yorkshire and organised to sell them in Britain.

Chadburn, married with two young children, used the cash he made from selling drugs to buy a car and repair his home.

Sheffield Crown Court put Chadburn into prison for six years.

Jobless Graham Sate was sent to prison for nine years at Norwich Crown Court yesterday for the murder of five-year-old Lauren Creed.

Sate was described by the judge as a dangerous man to the neighbourhood. Sharon Creed, Lauren's mother, had been cruel to Lauren before she was murdered. She is now awaiting trial.

Before Lauren was murdered, two police officers had been called to deal with a family problem at

the house, but they failed to notice any danger. People called for the government to take more action to protect young children.

A thief who tried to kill the house owner was sent to prison for life.

John Fields was looking for money in the house when he was disturbed by the house owner, Mr. Stephen Bunn. Fields watched Mr. Bunn leaving his home in the morning, believing he was out for the day. He broke in and was looking for money in the bedroom when Mr. Bunn returned.

Fields put a knife to Mr. Bunn's throat and forced him to hand over his money and jewellery before leaving the house.

A 67-year-old man who shot two burglars said he had no regrets as he left the court yesterday.

Six months ago, Bill Allen fired a gun at two men, Charles Neville and Philip Greig, who had broken into his house. Neville was hit several times and needed hospital treatment.

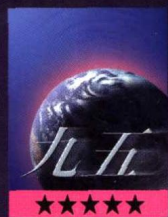
Both men were later caught, but to his surprise, Mr. Allen also found himself in court. He was ordered to pay 2000 pounds for the injuries caused.

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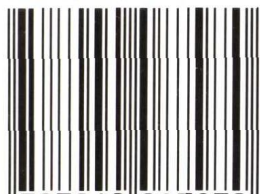
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