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## Editorial Policy

The MEXTESOL Journal is dedicated to the classroom teacher in Mexico. Previously unpublished articles and book reviews relevant to EFL teaching and research in Mexico are accepted for publication. Articles may be of a practical or theoretical nature and be written in English or Spanish. The Journal reserves the right to edit an accepted manuscript in order to enhance clarity or style. The author will be consulted only if the editing has been substantial.

Research-Based Articles: A research-based article should report original research or discuss research-related issues. These articles are usually submitted as refereed (judged as acceptable, conditional, or not acceptable) by two members of the Editorial Board who are experts in an area related to that of the article. The refereeing process is blind but, if an author wishes, a referee may be assigned as a mentor to guide the author through the revision process. A footnote will state that the article was refereed.

Professional Practice Issue Articles: In order to open the publication process to more authors, refereed or non-refereed articles are accepted in this section. These normally describe professional teaching experiences or library research related to teaching which the author wants to share with the readers. These articles will be read, judged and styled by members of the Editorial Staff for originality, quality and clarity of ideas.

Reviews: The Journal welcomes review articles summarizing published research or professional practice, position papers which promote or defend positions on a current, controversial topic, and book reviews of classroom texts, recorded material, computer software or other instructional resources. Reviews are non-refereed but are subject to editing.

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La revista MEXTESOL está dirigida al maestro de inglés. Se aceptan manuscritos y reseñas relevantes a la enseñanza del inglés como idioma extranjero e investigación que no hayan sido previamente publicados. Los artículos pueden ser de naturaleza teórica o práctica y pueden ser escritos en inglés o en español. La revista se reserva el derecho de editar un manuscrito aceptado para brindarle mayor claridad o mejorar su estilo. El autor será consultado únicamente para sugerir cambios.

Artículos basados en la investigación: un artículo basado en investigación debe reportar investigación original o discutir asuntos relacionados con la investigación. Estos artículos generalmente se someten a arbitraje (juzgados como aceptable, condicional o no aceptable) realizado por dos miembros del consejo editorial expertos en un área relacionada con el artículo. El proceso de arbitraje es anónimo, pero si el autor lo desea se le puede asignar a un árbitro como mentor para guiarlo en el proceso de revisión. El artículo se publica con una nota al pie de página para indicar que es arbitrado.

Artículos relacionados con la práctica docente: con el propósito de abrir las posibilidades de publicación a más autores, se aceptan artículos arbitrados y no arbitrados. Generalmente describen experiencias docentes o investigación bibliográfica relacionada con la enseñanza. Estos artículos son leídos y juzgados por miembros del personal editorial para asegurar su originalidad, calidad y claridad de ideas.

Reseñas: la revista acepta reseñas de investigación publicada o de práctica docente, ponencias que argumentan a favor o en contra de temas actuales o controvertidos y reseñas de libros de texto, materiales audiovisuales, programas de computadoras, y otros recursos didácticos. Las reseñas no son sometidas a arbitraje pero son sujetas a edición.

Indicaciones para enviar una propuesta: para facilitar el proceso de publicación se recomienda enviar el manuscrito por correo electrónico a la dirección de la revista. Se debe utilizar un procesador Microsoft Word o Word Perfect para el artículo y gráficas que lo acompañen y ser enviado como un attachment. Además se debe enviar una copia del manuscrito a la Dirección postal de la revista ya que las gráficas, tablas o diagramas que contenga el artículo pueden sufrir alteraciones al ser enviado por correo electrónico. Si no se tiene acceso al correo electrónico, se debe enviar el manuscrito acompañado de una copia en diskette de 3.5". Favor de indicar si se desea que el artículo sea o no arbitrado.

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## From the Editors

We, Ma. Guadalupe Santos Espino and Ulrich Schrader, have taken over as Co-Editors of the MEXTESOL Journal at the request of Yamilett Martinez Briseño, President of National MEXTESOL. We would like to thank the members of the Journal Editorial Board for their support during this change, and for their fast reviews. In addition, we would like to thank JoAnn Miller for volunteering to be the Interim Editor for the last issue. We have had some difficulty getting started and we thank the authors of the articles in this issue for their patience in seeing their work finally published and in the hands of the MEXTESOL Journal readership. We hope to make up the backlog of missing issues of the Journal as soon as possible.

This issue of the Journal contains a large variety of articles catering to many different interests within the field of ELT. We feel that there will be something for each of the many diverse readers of the MEXTESOL Journal who work in many different settings and who have many different professional concerns. The first article, "Acquiring Vocabulary Through Story-Songs" by Suzanne Medina provides a technique for helping children learn vocabulary through the use of stories accompanied by music. In the second article Luz Maria Muñoz de Cote compares and contrasts two ways of dealing with grammar in an EFL setting. Linda Parkyn, John Beaney and Kim Yuñez have collaborated on an article which examines aspects of cultural linguistic imperialism in the teaching of languages as presented in popular movies.

In the next set of articles Jessica Lindner presents a technique for organizing a "Travel Fair" for students. Tom Alibrandi comments on ways to be an "...Inspiring, Authentic ESL/EFL Teacher", and Kimberly Anne Brooks-Lewis addresses the researcher role of ELT professionals and provides some practical suggestions for how to go about doing research and writing up a research paper.

In this issue we also have a response to a controversial article published in the Spring Issue of the Journal. Anne Towgood presents a different view of the issues presented by Douglas Goodwin in "An Intercultural Perspective on Conflicts between Language Teachers." And finally, Peter Putnam provides us with an insightful review of Alastair Pennycook's book, The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language.

We hope you enjoy this issue and we will make every possible effort to put the MEXTESOL Journal back on its regular publication schedule as soon as possible.



# Acquiring Vocabulary Through Story-Songs<sup>1</sup>

BY SUZANNE L. MEDINA, PH.D., CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, DOMINGUEZ HILLS<sup>2</sup>

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It is common practice for teachers of first and second language learners to read stories to children. By engaging in this practice, teachers not only model literacy skills, but they also cultivate listening skills and promote vocabulary acquisition. One particular type of story, the "story-song" is frequently used by educators of young children. The story-song is basically a poem with a story-line woven through it. Furthermore, because it has been set to music it can be sung rather than spoken. Yet, are story-songs simply novelty items or does the melodic element make an important instructional contribution? An empirical investigation of a group of 48 third grade second language learners measured the amount of vocabulary acquisition which was produced when two variables were investigated: illustrations and music. Thus subjects either heard a story which was (1) sung and illustrated, (2) sung, but not illustrated, (3) spoken and illustrated, or (4) spoken yet not illustrated. Subjects were exposed to their respective treatments for three minutes a day for three consecutive days. Apart from being pre-tested, they were post tested immediately after their last treatment and again two weeks later. The statistical analysis revealed that the illustrated spoken and sung stories were equally effective means of supporting language acquisition. However, close examination of the descriptive data revealed a definite bias in favor of the illustrated story-song. That is, second language learners who listened to the illustrated sung stories acquired an average of 1.5 words by the end of the treatment period, while those who heard the illustrated spoken rendition of the story acquired an average of 1.0 words. This difference of .5 words grew after two weeks. At that time, the average vocabulary acquired by the illustrated story-song group was 1.75 as opposed to the illustrated spoken story group's 1.08. As expected, the effects of music were greatest with the subjects who knew the least amount of vocabulary initially. After two weeks, beginners in the music-illustration group acquired an average of 3.33 vocabulary while low proficiency level learners in the no-music-illustration group averaged 1.5 vocabulary words. Although this research was conducted on a relatively small number of subjects, it points to the positive effects which music may have upon language acquisition. More specifically, it suggests that illustrated story-songs may

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<sup>1</sup> This article is refereed.

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produce greater vocabulary acquisition than illustrated traditional spoken stories (Medina 1993).

### Research Into Practice

Teachers of second language learners can similarly increase the vocabularies of their learners by following some simple guidelines.

#### ***Step 1-Select a Story-Song***

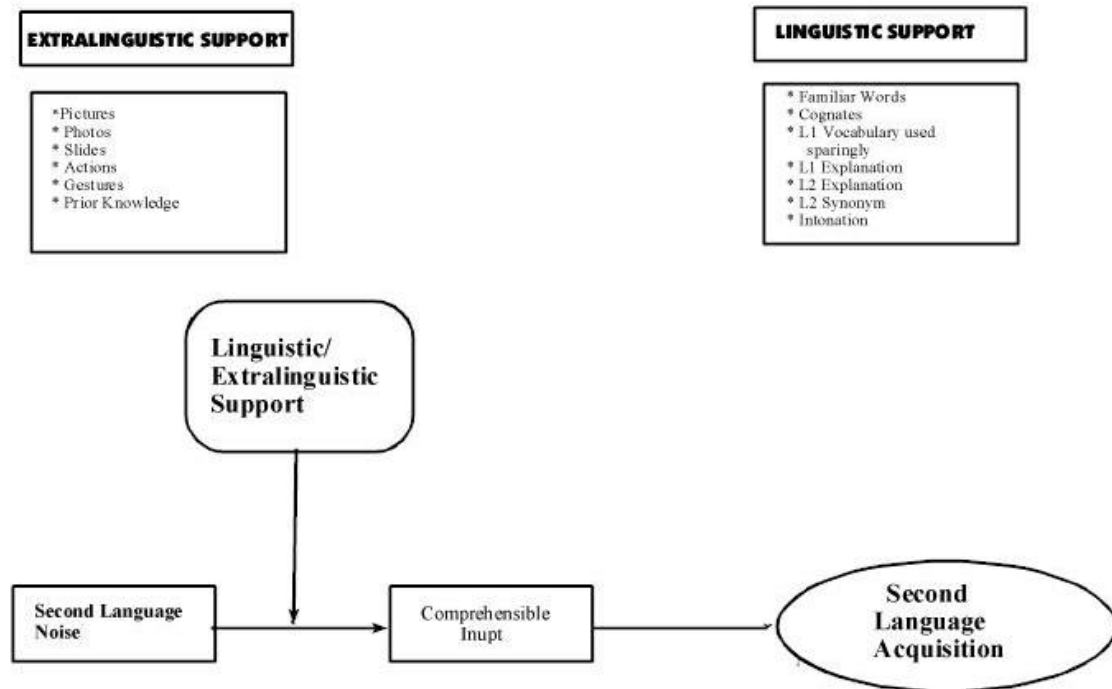
Before you begin, make certain that you have selected a story-song which will produce maximum results. First, follow the same principles you would use when selecting any story for your learners. Find a story-song with a story-line which will be of interest to your learners. In Elley's (1989) investigation, not all stories resulted in the same amount of language acquisition. It is not clear at this time what characterizes such an optimal story, although interest level certainly might be a critical attribute. Also, select a song which contains an appropriate number of unfamiliar words. According to Krashen (1985), language acquisition occurs when the learner is exposed to only a few new words, what Krashen refers to as "i + 1." Acquisition will not take place if learners are inundated by an inordinate number of unfamiliar words (i.e., i + 9). Furthermore, the story-song should expose students more than once to each new vocabulary word. It is particularly helpful when the target vocabulary words are critical to the plot of the story. The contextual environment in which a new vocabulary word is found should be rich. That is, learners should be able to easily infer the meaning of key vocabulary words on the basis of the context (Elley 1989).

Stories should also be rich in a necessary requirement for language acquisition--what Krashen refers to as "extralinguistic support." As the term implies, extralinguistic support refers to non-verbal means of communicating a word's meaning (e.g., pictures, photos, actions). Meaning can also be conveyed verbally as is the case when a teacher provides a synonym or varies her intonation. This is referred to by Krashen as "linguistic support." (See Diagram 1)

In short, when selecting an appropriate story-song, both forms of support need to be tended to. Therefore, story-song books should abound with illustrations which clearly communicate the meaning of new vocabulary. It is particularly helpful when illustrations of new vocabulary words appear numerous times in the story (Elley 1989).

Diagram 1

## Relationship of Extralinguistic Support and Linguistic Support to Second Language Acquisition



The music heard on the story-song tape cassettes should also be appealing to the students. This will increase the likelihood that learners will want to hear and sing the song once again after it has been learned in class. The melody line should be simple and uncomplicated. Complex melodies unnecessarily tax memory, forcing the students to focus attention on learning the melody rather than the lyrics. The tempo should also be moderate. If the song's cadence is too brisk, your learners will be unable to capture new vocabulary words (Medina 1993). Instead, learners will hear nothing more than musical "noise."

### **Step 2-Preparing for the Story-Song**

A few preparatory measures should be taken prior to playing the story-song for your learners. Familiarizing learners with the story content prior to hearing the story-song will increase the comprehensibility of the story and ultimately the amount of vocabulary acquired. Begin by stating the topic of the story-song. Have students share their experiences on the topic in order to tap their prior knowledge. Next, briefly explain what the song is about without summarizing the entire storyline. Finally, read the story while pointing to pictures. Further support your reading with other types of comprehensible input. Elley (1989) found that using three types of "comprehensible input" produced the

greatest amount of vocabulary acquisition: (1) contextual clues, (2) illustrations, and (3) other types of comprehensible input such as pictures, synonyms, explanations (in the first or second language) while the story was being read. In order to maximize vocabulary acquisition in your learners you would be wise to similarly provide multiple forms of linguistic and extralinguistic support while reading the story.

### Step 3-Introduce the Melody

It is often helpful to play the instrumental version of the story-song at this point if it is available. If your tape recording does not contain a separate instrumental version, then play the sung version several days before presenting the story-song as described in Step 4. Students can listen to this music while engaging in other activities (e.g., working on an art project or while engaging in a physical education activity). By playing either the instrumental or sung versions, you will provide students with the opportunity to become familiar with the melody prior to hearing the story-song. This is a particularly important step if the genre of music is totally unfamiliar to the learners. Danlan (1975) found that learners responded differently depending upon whether the music they were exposed to was familiar or unfamiliar. Introducing the melody first makes pedagogical sense for still another reason. When humans are simultaneously exposed to several new stimuli, they experience what is referred to as "secondary task overloading." This cognitive overstimulation can prevent students from learning the skills which they are attempting to acquire. Therefore, in order to avoid this effect, it is advisable to first expose students to the melody of the story-song prior to introducing the story-song itself.

### **Step 4-Present the Story-Song**

Play the recording of the story-song while pointing to the story's illustrations. Repeat this process two to three times each day for several days. Students may wish to take turns pointing to pictures in the story-book as it is heard. In the investigation which was described earlier in this article, vocabulary acquired through music was retained in memory two weeks beyond the treatment period. That is, there was no additional exposure.

Vocabulary acquired through music increased after two weeks even though students had not heard the story-song during that time. Therefore, it stands to reason that additional exposure to a story-song will help the language acquisition process. Given this, it is advisable to play the story-song intermittently over the next month or two. Enthusiastic students will most likely ask you to play the story-song again and again. That is what typically occurs when using music in the second language classroom.

### **Step 5-Continue to Support Language Acquisition**

To add variety and further support the language acquisition process, provide different forms of comprehensible input each time the story-song is heard. One way to do this is to have students create artistic works that will be used later on during subsequent readings of the story. For example, students can create illustrations of key vocabulary items or scenes in the story. Later on, when students hear the story-song played, you can point to the students' illustrations rather than those in the storybook. Similarly, students can create puppets, costumes or masks which can be used to playact the story-song as it is being heard.

The effects of music upon human learning are not entirely understood. Yet, there is reason to believe music can be used by educators to promote second language acquisition. While additional research is needed on this topic, there is reason to believe that story-songs may result in greater vocabulary acquisition than more traditional spoken stories. Teachers can begin immediately to witness the effects of music on their second language learners. By following a few simple guidelines they can use story-songs to boost the acquisition of vocabulary in their learners.

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# Ways of Approaching Grammar Teaching<sup>1</sup>

BY LUZ MARIA MUÑOZ DE COTE, UNIVERSIDAD DE GUANAJUATO<sup>2</sup>

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## Introduction

The Presentation-Practice-Production model to introduce new grammatical structures could be said to be an influential approach to the teaching of grammar which has provoked debate in terms of its effectiveness (Cullen 2001) for the past two decades. In this paper I will try to explain the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model basing my arguments on relevant information regarding the rationale behind the model, and by providing examples from a textbook (Richards, Hull and Proctor 1998). In the second part of the paper, I will evaluate the model, outline its strengths in terms of clarity and predictability for teachers and learners; and its weaknesses, such as the lack of consciousness-raising opportunities as well as its linear approach to learning grammar and the dangers of *fossilization*. I will support my arguments with activities from the textbook and from relevant literature. In the third part, I will propose changes to implement a Task-based learning approach to the aforementioned activities to help learners raise their consciousness and notice grammar and probably prevent fossilization. I will conclude by saying that an informed and well thought out choice of activities or tasks following different approaches to grammar teaching may be the better option in order to cater to different kinds of teachers and learners.

## Description of the Presentation-Practice-Production Model

The Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach to grammar teaching involves three stages in a given order to fulfill the assumption that language is learned as a skill (Anderson in Mitchell et al. 1998; Johnson 1994). The implication of these assumptions is that language can be acquired<sup>3</sup> through practice until it becomes automatic. Thus, the first stage focuses consciously on accuracy, the second stage practices language using accuracy activities to help proceduralization (also referred to as automatization), and the third stage focuses on fluency to help automatization.

The presentation stage presents new language in context through a short written conversation, a written text or a short story told by the

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<sup>3</sup> In this paper, the terms acquisition and learning will be used indistinctly.

teacher (Harmer 1991) (see Appendix 1). Language is introduced inductively (Thornbury 1999), exposing learners to form and meaning from which learners could infer the rule. The second step of this stage focuses consciously on accuracy as a source of declarative knowledge (Johnson 1994) using a deductive approach or overt explanation of the target structure (Hedge 2000). The objective is to provide learners with a clear framework to work towards proceduralization, as explained by Johnson (1994). In general, at this stage the learner is expected to demonstrate understanding of the form and the teacher is in full control (Harmer 1991). In most cases, the context also provides learners with unanalyzed language (formulaic chunks) that learners are encouraged to use during the production stage.

The second stage is practice. Its objective is to help learners start the process of automatization, which is fundamental for skill development (Johnson 1994; Anderson in Mitchell et al. 1998). At this stage learners practice language through teacher-controlled activities paying conscious attention to form. Anderson (in Mitchell et al. 1998) explains that this stage provides learners with opportunities to work out a method to perform accurately. If students fail, the teacher considers going back to the first stage. Activities for the practice stage can be done in pairs, individually or, as a whole class; the teacher acts as monitor while learners practice (see Appendix 2).

To achieve automatization, learners proceduralise their declarative knowledge in the production stage where they have the opportunity to personalize and produce language more freely (Hedge 2000; Harmer 1991). During this stage, it is hoped that learners do not pay conscious attention to form, but focus fully on the message. According to Johnson (1994) and Thornbury (1999) activities for the production stage should have a communicative purpose in order for the skill to become more rapid and automatic (Anderson in Mitchell et al. 1998) giving learners more control over their linguistic choices (Hedge 2000). Even though at this point of the lesson the main objective is to develop fluency, learners are expected to produce accurate language. If mistakes arise, the teacher assesses the need to go back to either the second or the first stage of the framework. Appendix 3 is an example of an activity that requires accurate answers. If learners have achieved the necessary linguistic comprehension to enable them to answer while listening to the tape, then the teacher may proceed to a freer activity.

### Evaluation of the PPP model

I will start the discussion by considering aspects like clarity and predictability of the model. As mentioned by Batstone (1994) and from personal experience as a teacher and coordinator of an EFL program, PPP provides inexperienced teachers with a sense of structure that helps

them build their confidence as teachers. In addition to the teacher's confidence, there is also evidence from research (and from personal experience) that beginning learners may also benefit from the clarity and predictability of this framework as they also feel insecure using the language and need to gain confidence to succeed in their learning process (Batstone 1994). Furthermore, even though PPP is a vehicle for teaching grammatical structures through analysis, most of the time this model provides some formulaic language that motivates beginning learners when they find themselves using speech at an early stage. In fact, I can recall many students expressing their amazement when they find themselves communicating with peers in English at an early stage using their limited linguistic knowledge. These chunks of speech can be memorized as unanalyzed wholes and are likely to occur while learners are engaged in conversational activities during the production stage (Ellis 1986) (Examples of formulaic language are found in Appendices 1 and 3). Yet, a drawback to teachers' and learners' confidence is that very frequently teachers' expectations are far from the reality of learners' learning (Hedge 2000). The latter comment is in agreement with Skehan (1996) who states that level of attainment in many classrooms using a PPP approach is rather poor.

It could be said that presenting language in context (see Appendix 1) which Skehan (1994) calls *'form-meaning pairing'*, provides learners with pragmatic and sociolinguistic information which would enable them to process this knowledge and develop competence in these areas (Ellis 1994; Tarone & Yule 1989; Kasper 1997). This aspect could be considered a strength of the model as it would help learners produce grammatically correct language that is also appropriate when used in real life contexts (an example could be the use of formal and informal language). However, material designed to implement a PPP approach has been criticized (Scrivener, 1996) for its simulated authenticity and sometimes it does not provide reliable pragmatic information.

An important issue that has been questioned by many researchers (Skehan 1996; Scrivener 1996; Thornbury 1999) is the presentation of one structure at a time. A PPP approach assumes that language is learned linearly (Willis 1996b) while research (Nunan 1998; Willis 1996b; Rutherford 1987; Leech 1994) shows evidence that language is learned *'organically'*, several grammatical items at a time. Learners form hypotheses when they first encounter a structure without fully understanding it, while, and at the same time, working out the meaning of other aspects of the language (Rutherford 1987; Skehan 1994; Batstone 1994; Long in Batstone 1994). While this happens, learners develop new hypotheses. Based on this evidence, expecting learners to proceduralize knowledge in a straight forward line through PPP, in my opinion, could be considered a narrow view of a complex process that has not

taken into consideration learners' interlanguage development. In fact, it has been found that in order to develop interlanguage, learners need opportunities to notice and raise their linguistic awareness (Thornbury 2001; Cullen 2001). In fact, there is evidence, as Skehan (1994) and Hedge (2000) explain, that rarely do learners integrate new structures into their repertoire after the first two stages. Bialystok and Faerch et al. (cited in Stern 1992) explain that learners probably use explicit knowledge (consciously learned language) and implicit knowledge (automatic knowledge) interactively in order to develop automatization which could also explain why learners do not integrate new language so readily.

While engaged in fluency activities, most learners use the minimum possible language and the forms they feel confident with even if communication is based mainly on lexis (Batstone 1984). In my opinion, the relevance of using grammar is not made evident after the presentation and practice stages or it may be difficult to state that learners have been given the opportunity to notice form. To solve the lack of grammar use, some authors (Batstone 1994; Thornbury 1999, 2001) state the need to give learners the opportunity to notice grammar. Both authors suggest providing learners with opportunities to formulate hypotheses and reformulate them as gaps are noticed (Thornbury 2000). Under these circumstances, and based on Tarone & Yule's definition, grammatical competence would be difficult to achieve through the PPP model because learners are not given opportunities to become consciously aware of the grammatical form. On the other hand, lack of opportunities to notice language and reformulate hypotheses may cause fossilization (Thornbury 1999; Batstone 1994).

### Proposal

In order to find solutions to the issues addressed in the evaluation of the PPP model, I propose to adapt the activities shown in Appendix 3 by implementing a task-based learning approach (TBL) (Willis 1996b). Willis states that TBL provides opportunities to move from language experience to language analysis. The objective is not only to reverse the process (first fluency and then accuracy) but also to give learners the opportunity to proceduralize through consciousness-raising activities. This provides learners with opportunities to develop their interlanguage and integrate new forms into their linguistic repertoire in order to prevent fossilization.

The TBL framework (Willis 1996a, 1996b) involves a pre-task, a task cycle and language focus. During the pre-task phase the teacher introduces the topic and provides input for learners. The task cycle provides learners with opportunities to use all the language they have integrated in their repertoire by working on a meaningful and purposeful

task. The language focus stage gives learners the opportunity to analyze form and raise their consciousness by promoting noticing activities.

### Proposed Activities

The following activities were used with a group of beginners. Most learners are university students who have studied English for about 120 hours. They meet five times a week and have one-hour classes.

Pre-task. The teacher sets the context and activates learners' schemata. Working in pairs, students discuss the kinds of experiences people migrating to other places have. After the discussion, the teacher elicits the information discussed by the students and helps them categorize it. The categories could be 'positive' and 'negative'. Categorization helps learners better understand the information they gather and raise their awareness.

Task cycle 1. Learners are exposed to the language through a recording (Appendix 3). The second part of this stage gives the learner the opportunity to focus on form in order to be able to communicate as accurately as possible. Students listen to activity 4 (Appendix 3) finding as much information about the topic as possible. After listening, students compare their answers in small groups (2-3 students). Once they have listened twice to the recording and completed the chart, students prepare to report answers to the group. Each pair has to present their answers to the class in a minute only.

Language focus. At this stage, learners will focus on the use of the simple past tense. Working in small groups (3-4 people), learners discuss the information they have listened to in order to better understand the recording. After reporting their answers to the class, learners read the tapescript while listening to the recording to find things done before and after moving to the US as well as positive and negative experiences in the US. Students work individually while the teacher helps with any questions that might come up by guiding them and encouraging them to reflect. The purpose is to guide the learners to find the rules that will enable them to form and use the simple past. To wrap up the activity, the teacher elicits examples from each category and writes them on the blackboard. If there are still problems, they are dealt with as a whole class. Even though the activity focuses on the simple past, the teacher will have the opportunity to help individuals with different learning abilities.

Task cycle 2. This second cycle gives learners the opportunity to personalize what they have learned. The purpose of this task is to find out the types of experiences that people living in Guanajuato face. The first step (working in groups of 2 or 3) is to choose a topic and design an in-

interview. After that, each student has to interview someone and prepare a written report to be posted in the classroom.

Working in pairs or trios, students prepare a set of questions for the interview. They can choose one of the following topics: a) Being a young woman/man in Guanajuato; b) Living in a university town; c) Combining entertainment and school work during the semester; d) Studying away from home. After discussing and writing their questions, each learner interviews at least one person. After the interview, they go back to their groups and select the information that they will include in the written report. The teacher will be available for any help needed. While preparing the written report learners have the opportunity to use all the grammar they have integrated into their repertoire.

Language focus. Learners have the opportunity to analyze the language and focus on accuracy in order to produce a well written composition to be displayed for others to read. Even though the main focus of this lesson is on the simple past tense, other grammatical structures may emerge. Learners will be encouraged to discover and discuss what they understand. According to Willis (1996b) this stage creates a real need to focus on accuracy. Students will organize the information they have. The teacher will be available to help as needed but only by giving learners the opportunity to reflect and work with the language to express their ideas clearly considering appropriateness and accuracy of language in general, rather than by producing a single form (Willis 1996b). Learners are encouraged to ask about any aspects of language they notice. Further practice focusing on form can be done while preparing the written report of the results.

## Conclusion

As I have tried to explain, there are positive aspects of the PPP model as well as issues that should be discussed further. Through TBL, some of the issues like awareness raising are dealt with, but other problems arise. An issue that is of concern, and involves both approaches, is the kind of interaction used by students during the task cycle and the production stage. Seedhouse (1999) mentions that there are tasks that can constrain the kind of turn taking used by learners making it repetitive and far from real life interactive patterns. Nonetheless, when I implemented the tasks suggested in the proposal, I noticed that students used limited patterns while they were interviewing each other; but, when they were discussing the information to include in the report, they were engaged in rather complex interactive patterns. Therefore, some of the communication strategies that students used during the first stage of the task remain a problem that needs a solution; yet, the discussion in groups provides further opportunities to use the language as each learner has different ideas and they seemed to use it differently.

On the other hand, as Skehan (1994) mentions, the task cycles provide a balanced combination of listening, speaking and language focus activities that could probably have an impact on interlanguage change. If so, it would help learners avoid fossilization of all the language they have integrated so far and not only of the language that the teacher would focus on if a PPP approach were used.

While using the proposed tasks in class, I found it difficult to go through the language focus stage. Almost all the learners had different problems and their different interlanguages were made evident. It took me a long time to give feedback to each pair (there were 11 pairs) and I think it was done somewhat inefficiently. However, I should say that even though it caused me some anxiety, for most students it was a gratifying experience as they produced a rather well-written report for their level (most learners have been studying English for approximately 120 hours) (Appendix 4 shows sample reports). In fact, I believe that the tasks catered to the needs of analytical—as well as memory-oriented learners who would probably provide formulaic language, as mentioned by Skehan, “learners use the planning time to take risks and to incorporate more ambitious language in what they want to say” (1994:184).

Tarone & Yule (1989) point out that linguists cannot agree upon a single view of the learning process. Accordingly, experience has shown me that different approaches help solve some problems while others remain unsolved. For this reason, I suggest using an approach where PPP and TBL are used depending on learners' confidence or lack of it as well as teachers' confidence and experience. If the learning process starts by using a PPP framework, and gradually changes to a TBL setting, much can be achieved without upsetting learners' expectations which, as Willis (1996b) explains, can have a negative effect on the learning experience. It would involve “a philosophy of local solutions to local problems” (Tarone & Yule 1989). However, I believe that adopting an alternative approach to teaching grammar involves more than altering and adapting material. It would be necessary to understand the rationale behind the approach to be used in order to build a sequence and provide learners with adequate tasks to develop their interlanguage.

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## Appendix 1

Example of a Presentation Stage activity.



# A time to remember

## 1 SNAPSHOT



Source: UN Department for International Economic, and Social Affairs

**Talk about these questions.**

Why do you think these cities have so many immigrants?

Are there any immigrants in your city? Where are they from originally?

## 2 CONVERSATION


**A** Listen and practice.

Ted: Oh, I'm really sorry. Are you OK?  
 Ana: I'm fine. But I'm not very good at this.  
 Ted: Neither am I. Say, are you from South America?  
 Ana: Yes, I am, originally. I was born in Argentina.  
 Ted: Did you grow up there?  
 Ana: Yes, I did, but my family moved here eight years ago, when I was in high school.  
 Ted: And where did you learn to Rollerblade?  
 Ana: Here in the park. This is only my second time.  
 Ted: Well, it's my *first* time. Can you give me some lessons?  
 Ana: Sure. Just follow me.  
 Ted: By the way, my name is Ted.  
 Ana: And I'm Ana. Nice to meet you.



**B** Listen to the rest of the conversation.  
 What are two more things you learn about Ted?

### 3 GRAMMAR FOCUS

**Past tense** 

Where <b>were</b> you born?	I <b>was</b> born in South America.
<b>Were</b> you born in Brazil?	No, I <b>wasn't</b> . I <b>was</b> born in Argentina.
Where <b>did</b> you <b>grow</b> up?	I <b>grew</b> up in Buenos Aires.
When <b>did</b> you <b>move</b> here?	I <b>moved</b> here eight years ago, when I was in high school.
<b>Did</b> you <b>learn</b> Spanish in high school?	No, I <b>didn't</b> . I <b>studied</b> it in college.
<b>Did</b> you <b>go</b> to college in California?	Yes, I <b>did</b> . I <b>went</b> to college in Los Angeles.


## Appendix 2

Example of a controlled practice activity

**A** Complete these conversations. Then practice with a partner.

- A: Could you tell me a little about yourself?  
Where ..... you born?  
B: I ..... born in South Korea.  
A: ..... you grow up there?  
B: No, I ..... I ..... up in Canada.
- A: Where ..... you ..... to high school?  
B: I ..... to high school in Ecuador.
- A: ..... you study English when you .....  
a child?  
B: Yes, I .....  
A: How old ..... you when you began to  
study English?  
B: I ..... eleven years old.


**B Pair work** Take turns asking the questions in part A. Give your own information when answering.



## Appendix 3

## Example of a fluency activity

**4 LISTENING**

 Listen to interviews with two immigrants to the United States. Complete the chart.

	Yu Hong	Ajay
1. Where is he/she from?	.....	.....
2. When did he/she move to the United States?	.....	.....
3. What does he/she do now?	.....	.....
4. What is difficult about being an immigrant?	.....	.....
5. What does he/she miss the most?	.....	.....

## Tapescript

Listen to interviews with two immigrants to the United States. Complete the chart.

## Yu Hong

Interviewer: Where are you from originally, Yu Hong?

Yu Hong: I'm from China...from near Shanghai

Interviewer: And when did you move here?

Yu Hong: I came here after I graduated from college. That was in 1992.

Interviewer: And what do you do now?

Yu Hong: I'm a transportation engineer.

Interviewer: I see. So you're an immigrant to the United States.

Yu Hong: Yes, that's right.

Interviewer: What are some of the difficulties of being an immigrant in the U.S.?

Yu Hong: Oh, that's not an easy question to answer. There are so many things, really. I guess one of the biggest difficulties is that I don't have any relatives here. I mean, I have a lot of friends, but that's not the same thing. In China, on holidays or the weekend, we visit relatives. It isn't the same here.

Interviewer: And what do you miss the most from home?

Yu Hong: Oh, that's easy: my mom's soup! She makes great soup. I really miss my mother's cooking.

## Appendix 4

Examples of Learners' reports.

Sample 1

*Being a young man/woman in Gto.*

The majority of the people interviewed were born in Guanajuato. The average age of these people is 25 years old. All the people interviewed study in the University of Guanajuato. Many of these people spend their weekend dancing and practiced some sport. The interviewees have living in the city between one week and 12 years. Hte favorite places to dance of the youngs are Guanajuato Grill, El Capitolio and Bar. The 66 percent of the interviewed wake up at 6:30 a.m. and the rest of them do it between 7:00 and 8:00a.m.

Sample 2

The group interviewed three people. They said that most come here to Guanajuato , but one of them is from Apaseo el Grande, and she's here because she is studying. All the people interviewed don't like to do the homework but they like to visit places of the city for example the Jardin Union, La Presa and the Church.

The people that we interviewed like to go dancing. The average age of three people interviewed is twenty five years.

Theirs names are Perla, Imazul and Lourdes.



# Pedagogical Implications of Teaching and Learning English in American Film<sup>1 2</sup>

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Several years ago, my daughter went to see Oliver Stone's new movie, *JFK*. She came home with her friend, and as we were eating dinner and discussing the Warren Commission Report, we verbally wondered if there might be more to the story than the initial report about John F. Kennedy's death. My daughter's friend Mike was incredulous at our conversation. He was having dinner with his friend's family, and we were verbally debating the veracity of people who worked in the US government. In the middle of his third helping of lasagna, Mike turned and said: "You don't actually believe that anyone in the government would not tell the whole story, do you?" Gales of laughter exploded from all members of the family assembled, until we all realized Mike wasn't laughing. He was serious, and he didn't believe that anyone in the US government would not reveal all to the American people. My daughter, a vocal political junkie, was ruthless. She asked question after question to shake his belief in the metanarrative of the United States of America, and Mike verbalized over and over again his firm faith that our leaders always have our best interests at heart.

Mike's version of America is the official or grand narrative. Some academics refer to it as the hegemonic narrative. Michael Peters and Colin Lankshear (1996) define hegemonic narratives as legitimating stories propagated for specific purposes to manipulate public consciousness by heralding a national set of common cultural ideals (Peters and Lankshear:2). Mike did not believe that there would be alternative explanations for the death of JFK. He thought that Oliver Stone was a kook, a moviemaker who had an active imagination. Some of us might agree with Mike, but Oliver Stone is an excellent example of a filmmaker who won't let the grand or official narrative be the only narrative. Oliver Stone is a postmodern filmmaker. His goal is never to offer one oppos-

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<sup>2</sup> This article was originally presented as a paper in Puebla, Mexico at the MEX- TESOL Conference in October, 2001 by Dr. Linda K. Parkyn. For the 2001-2002 academic year, Dr. Parkyn was a Fulbright Scholar at the Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes. This paper was written in collaboration with two of her colleagues from her home institution, Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.

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ing grand narrative, but rather to offer many other little narratives that call the grand narrative into question.

Often, little narratives are the stories of individuals and groups whose knowledge or histories have been marginalized by the larger culture. In the telling of the hegemonic narrative, these parts of the story have been excluded or ignored (Peters and Lankshear, 2). Recently, we all heard about "the little story" of Thomas Jefferson and the slave woman who was the love of his life. For 225 years, the hegemonic narrative, the official story, didn't let this story come to light. And now the story is changed. How long will it be until we see Oprah play the role of the slave woman and Richard Gere, the grieving widower, who loves her clandestinely inside Monticello until the end of his life? When this movie is written, there won't be a dry eye among serious moviegoers in America, and the hegemonic narrative of Thomas Jefferson will be amended. The little story will be incorporated into the grand narrative.

Other examples of how our thinking is altered by new portrayals of historical events are the movies *Saving Private Ryan* and *Thirteen Days*. The dramatizations of these invasions contain images that become etched in our minds in ways that affect our perception of D-Day, 1941 and the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. Not only do these films influence what we think about these events, but they also invite us to connect emotionally with the dramatic situation in a way that makes us feel like we know the characters and understand what they are going through. When I saw *Thirteen Days*, the story of the Bay of Pigs, I expected to see a glimpse of Marilyn Monroe running down a hallway in the White House. My hegemonic narrative of JFK has been forever changed by the little story about his life that has become embedded into the overall plot of the movie, 30 years after his death.

These little stories have been called by postmodern philosophers counter narratives, little oppositional stories, or extra stories, that allow the point of view of marginalized groups to find a place in academia. They often are oppositional in nature to the official story. They call into question the very nature of an official narrative. In the wake of September 11, many war movies are finding their place in telling the official narrative of the United States. Some of the recent war movies seek to change the common hegemonic notions that the public holds from earlier movies about wars our country has been involved in. These retellings make people like Mike very nervous. They give multiple points of view and often are the stories of uncomfortable realities that have been covered up.

Movie-goers like Mike, who have allowed the official version to construct their thinking, simply dismiss or discredit the alternative viewpoints. More discriminating movie-goers discuss and critique the central

narratives of the film, especially when they pertain to a subject of national debate or to an ongoing controversy. However, minor and incidental narratives, which are not likely to attract so much critical attention, often slip by undetected and unquestioned and thus, begin to control the way we see things.

For example, in a movie that everyone has seen in the recent past, *Castaway*, Tom Hanks plays a character that is marooned on a desert island for a few years as the sole survivor of a plane crash in the middle of the ocean. In a movie that seeks to portray the human survival instinct, how much do you remember from the movie about a little narrative, the story of FedEx? Hanks' character plays a FedEx delivery manager who never loses sight of his goal to deliver the package. In fact, the FedEx package is instrumental in saving his life. In the movie the hegemonic narrative is the survival of a man alone against all odds. The counter narrative is the story of FedEx. How many of us in this room who saw the movie might now, if given a choice, choose FedEx over UPS when we need to mail a package? How many of us would even realize that we might choose one over the other because of the story? Little stories within the hegemonic narratives are often taken at face value and not critiqued.

Let's move the discussion to our own discipline of language teaching. An example from the popular television program *The Simpsons* will help us to clarify. My introduction to *The Simpsons* was when my middle school age son and his friends called me into the den to see the program where Bart Simpson and his friends are sitting in the middle of a Spanish class. As the teacher circled the room asking *¿Cómo está usted?*, Bart and his friends were muttering under their breath, *taco, burrito, enchilada...* The five boys, all enrolled in Spanish I at the time, were howling. I was not amused, and even a little hurt that they would think that I would laugh. They simply thought I would enjoy it. We agreed to disagree agreeably. *The Simpsons* language classroom was a very different classroom from the one in which I thought I would ever enter to teach. But what did those five middle school boys think a language classroom would be like? How did they imagine it based on their experience of Bart and his friends?

This uncomfortable experience led me to question how movies represent language teaching. How many little stories about language teaching are embedded in the official narratives delivered by films? As I began to think, I centered in on one of the oldest movies I remember seeing, and I thought about Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle. Language teaching may be incidental to the main motif of the plot, the love that Professor Henry Higgins exhibits for Eliza Doolittle in the 1964 film, *My Fair Lady*, but by bracketing the little story of how he taught language,

we can better see how his method of teaching impacted Eliza's social standing. If you can remember, Professor Higgins meets Eliza, who is selling flowers, and he says: "Look at her, a prisoner of the gutter, condemned by every syllable she utters...A woman who makes such detestable noises has no right to live." Could Professor Higgins represent the hegemonic notion that mastery of proper English is justifiably the key to socioeconomic advancement? The student, Eliza, needs fixing, and the scientific management approach to language instruction is the answer.

Couldn't you just see professor Henry Higgins at the MEXTESOL conference? He would have a table with a machine to improve pronunciation: "The rain in Spain stays mainly on the plain... I think she's got it!" The underlying assumptions about language teaching in *My Fair Lady* represent the behaviorist approach. And look how many students were taught just this way: students who can't for the life of them remember one word of the language when they finish their studies or if they do manage to produce a small tidbit of the target language they gleefully resort to an inflexible repertoire of memorized phrases. *My Fair Lady*, in an incidental way, probably reflected and affected the way languages were taught and thought about. In any case, the cultural and pedagogical assumptions embedded in the way teachers taught languages at the time were made clear in the little narrative of the movie.

And so, with this experience, we embarked upon the notion that we would watch American films that have little narratives about language teaching embedded in movies as part of the story. In none of these films is language teaching the main story. The hegemonic narrative of the plots are usually unaffected by the parts of the stories that have to do with teaching language. We decided to explore the cultural and pedagogical assumptions about language teaching and learning embedded in the incidental narratives of American film.

In the movie *Stripes*, two friends who are dissatisfied with their jobs decide to join the army for a bit of fun, to meet girls and to keep the world safe for democracy. Russell, a likeable but altogether clueless drifter, is apparently teaching English to make ends meet. It is evident that Russell does little or no planning for his lessons, but why would he need to, since his objective is "to have a great time." The class is very stiff and the students mechanically repeat whatever input they are given. Further in the movie, Russell wants to sing and fills the time with fun-and-games. Russell will probably not be certified to teach any time soon, but had he continued his career in education, his teaching would have served as a classic example of what methodology instructors have called the 4-*f* approach to teaching, an approach to teaching culture that centers around folk dances, festivals, fairs and food.

Whereas Russell teaches English to put a few dollars in his pocket, the protagonist of *Good Morning Vietnam*, does so to attract the attention of a language student. In this film the entertaining radio DJ Adrian Cronauer pursues a Vietnamese girl through the streets of Saigon to the door of her English class. After bribing the regular teacher to abandon the class, he instantly becomes an "English teacher," hoping to impress the girl with his newfound status. After a few uncomfortable moments of failed communication, Cronauer admits, "I can't really teach English...I can only tell you about how you can talk on maybe the real streets of America." In a flippant manner he then proceeds to teach the class some street jargon like "baby what's happenin'?", "let's groove," and "slip me some skin."

Even though Cronauer is forced to admit that he's not prepared to teach, he does something admirable. He closes the cover on textbook English and invites the students to engage in conversations that might take place on American streets. Even in his impromptu role as teacher, Cronauer has enough sense to manage a classroom conversation in a way that resembles real language use. In a later classroom scene, Cronauer builds up authentic communication situations and prods his Vietnamese students to react as an American might by asking, "What would you say," or "What would you do?"

Cronauer's approach to teaching can be better understood when one considers his approach to radio broadcasting. His show becomes popular because he ignores the constraints of convention and official censorship, in part in order to heighten the comic effect of his offhanded remarks, but also in the interest of truth-telling. Cronauer seems to believe that students, like the GIs, deserve the chance to prepare themselves to deal with reality, or maybe more accurately, with the absurdity of their reality. This of course is very threatening to the officers in charge of radio programming since they only report stories that create the impression that the Americans are in control of the situation in Vietnam. As a broadcaster, Cronauer is interested in cutting through the bunk of the official narrative. With sarcasm he deconstructs the sugar-coated official story and by doing so, simultaneously angers his superiors and wins his way into the GIs hearts.

Just as Cronauer's raw remarks lift the spirits of the American troops who are engaged in an escalating war, his light-hearted approach to teaching helps students to laugh at their imperfect command of the English language. Language teachers know the feeling when students enjoy the classroom, and we would feel gratified by a comment from a student like the one made by the woman as she exits Cronauer's classroom, "We like your lessons better than the books." Cronauer's students are not bogged down with thinking about what the book says and the

monotonous drills and repetitions that characterize the audiolingual method.

Although Adrian Cronauer's off-the-cuff approach to teaching American street jargon is immensely entertaining, the underlying assumption of these types of classroom scenes subtly suggest that any clown who speaks English can teach it. As much as we as language teachers would like to think that most viewers of this film would not share this assumption, we may need to think about how students think that their native-speaking peers should be able to tutor them simply because they speak the language. The truth is that sustained learning does not occur in the absence of deliberate pedagogy. Our students succeed because we deliberately set them up to succeed and they are doing their part as well. We prepare our students for a range of situations by connecting new information to the knowledge base that is slowly and deliberately built up over a sequence of language courses. Adrian Cronauer taught his novice level students just enough to get them into trouble. A quick and simple test of which method works best, that of traditional conversation, or the spontaneous method of the stand up comic will assist here. In the year 2002, which of these phrases has endured the test of time, "I want to buy some butter and some cheese, please," or "Hey baby, slip me some skin."

In stark contrast to Adrian Cronauer and Russell, the restrained protagonist of *Mr. Chips* conducts his class with utmost propriety. A Latin teacher during World War II at Brookfield Academy, an all male boarding school in the English countryside, Mr. Chips represents the image that many Americans have of language teachers. His teaching is, quite frankly, atrocious. He asks his students to stand and read a passage in Latin, then translate that passage into English. The students do their homework and they can translate, but they hate it, because they find it boring and unimportant for them. Mr. Chips does try to interest his students in the Latin language and the Roman culture, but he fails miserably. In an early scene he explains the *lex canulaerer*, the law which allowed patricians to marry plebeians. He suggests that the students can remember this law if they just think of a Miss Plebeian who wants to marry a Mr. Patrician. When the patrician says that this is not allowed, she responds, "yes you *can you liar*."

This contorted piece of logic leaves his students both speechless and uninspired. His attempt is a total failure, and even he knows it. In an earlier scene with a colleague, Mr. Chips rhetorically asks, "What is a worse failure than a teacher who can't make his pupils grasp the importance of what he has to teach?"

After he completes this sad language lesson, he tries to motivate the students with the explanation that, "we have a mutual duty." He has

a duty to teach, and they a duty to learn. Isn't this how many of our students in the lower level classes view language class? We know that students sometimes enroll in our classes because they must fulfill the language requirement, whether they like it or not.

Near the end of the movie Mr. Chips finally is able to interest his students in the Latin language and Roman culture. As the German bombers fly overhead, his students heroically translate Caesar's *Gaelic Wars*. As the students translate the Latin into English, they are intrigued to discover that the *germani* fought the Romans centuries ago, just as the Germans fight the English as the students translate in class in 1944. Mr. Chips says, "You can see how these dead languages can sometimes come to life again?" A student goes on to translate, "Our men attacked the enemy so fiercely when the signal was given." Latin is no longer a burden, but is now a useful tool to gain relevant information. A spark of interest has been ignited, and the students no longer focus on the language itself, but rather the cultural content which is revealed to them through the tool of language. They have finally grasped a small glimpse of the importance of what Mr. Chips has to teach them.

The hegemonic narrative is, "Latin teachers are terribly boring, and the material is completely irrelevant. Students must learn this material, although they detest it." Here the counter narrative is, "Latin class can be interesting, if the students can see the relevance to their lives." Although as language teachers we may be uncomfortable with this movie, we would probably agree that both the hegemonic and the counter narrative are true. If we were to begin the first day of class by saying that we are going to learn this language because it is our mutual duty, how many students would be motivated to learn? Whereas some students appreciate structure and design for its own sake, most students need us to demonstrate why language is significant to them. Unless we help them acquire the cultural content which is revealed behind the structures of language, they will see language class as a mere duty.

The 1972 movie *Cabaret* presents Liza Minnelli as Sally Bowles, a young American entertainer, and Michael York as Brian Roberts, a young English student of German in Berlin in 1931. Sally has been in Berlin for only a few months, and despite the fact that she states that she has begun to think in German, her proficiency level is at best novice mid. As she shows Brian the boarding house where she lives and where he will rent a room, she uses a few broken German phrases, such as *Fraulein Schneider nicht zu Haus*, or *das Toilette*. In another scene when she leaves her laundry at a laundry service, she cannot even explain that she wants it ready on Tuesday. She is rescued by Maximilian, a wealthy Jewish German who speaks flawless English. The official narrative suggests that her inability to speak German is a mere inconvenience be-

cause many Germans speak enough English to help. Language learning is not very important for Americans because other people speak English. Sally Bowles can function at the novice mid level and expect other people to come to the rescue. Even though she lives in Germany, we do not expect her to advance beyond the novice level.

Brian hopes to pay rent in Berlin with his earnings from English lessons. Since his room is so small, Sally graciously suggests that he give lessons in her room, which has a separate sitting area with a table. In one scene Brian reviews verb conjugations with Herr Wendell, as Sally arrives. Herr Wendell becomes so frustrated with the verb conjugations that he swears. This presents the official story of how the American culture has perceived language teaching and learning: We must go through the tedious, frustrating process of study and review of verb conjugations in various tenses. The next student, Fraulein Landauer, a very wealthy German, arrives for her lesson. Apparently she would prefer to forgo a review of the verb tenses, as she suggests that all four engage in English conversation. It is at this point that the counter narrative begins. As Fraulein Landauer speaks of a recent cold she had, she mispronounces the word *phlegm*, and is corrected by Brian. His authority as an English teacher is brought into question when he cannot explain why the *g* in the word *phlegm* is not pronounced. Sally then moves the conversation to the topic of syphilis, and she uses an impolite word, which the Germans do not know. Sally searches her meager German vocabulary and eventually finds an appropriate German word. This leaves both Germans speechless, because they believe that such vocabulary is improper for polite conversation. This type of vocabulary would be used by ill-mannered, uneducated people, yet they associate knowledge of English with the upper, well-educated class in Germany.

The official narrative proposes that knowledge of English is desirable for social advancement and is a symbol of superior social status. Whereas Sally will probably remain at the novice mid level in German, we expect that Herr Wendell will improve his proficiency level.

This also presents the counter narrative about language teaching. Brian is prepared to give a grammar lesson (the official narrative of how language is taught and learned) to his next student, but his control of the learning environment quickly erodes as the counter narrative begins. Herr Wendell stays beyond his lesson so as to get acquainted with Fraulein Landauer, who changes the lesson plan. Then, Sally not only refuses to leave, but she also leads the topic of discussion. With this total lack of control, the lesson plan goes out the window. As language teachers we understand the difficulty which often arises when we try to initiate open-ended conversation in the target language. We experience moments of silence, and the conversation is often stilted at first, as we

try to find a topic that interests and motivates students enough to focus on the content rather than on the structure. Nevertheless we know that this is the only way that our students can acquire language in the classroom setting. Both Herr Wendell and Fraulein Landauer learned much more in open-ended conversation, than he did with the verb conjugations.

*Dances with Wolves* presents a 19th century lieutenant assigned to an isolated outpost near Lakota territory on the prairie. Just as he slowly befriends a wild wolf, so too he befriends the members of a Lakota tribe, as he experiences all aspects of their culture. He eats their food, uses their tools, adorns his body with their paint and jewelry, wears their clothing, and celebrates with them. He participates in courtship and marriage rituals, and he bonds with the men when he hunts the buffalo and in battle against an enemy tribe. We know that hunting is a highly valued skill in the Lakota culture, as he enters into their folklore as a hunting hero, and is repeatedly asked to tell the story once again of how he killed the buffalo single handedly. Future generations will repeat the story of the lieutenant's heroic actions. Most significantly for our purposes, the lieutenant is able to enter the Lakota culture to the extent that he does, because he learns to speak their language.

We all know that Lakota is a difficult language for English speakers, yet knowledge of the language is essential if the lieutenant is to enter into the culture, be accepted as an equal, and become a folk hero. The significance of the Lakota language is stressed throughout the film with the use of subtitles whenever the Indians speak. Before he becomes proficient in the language, the lieutenant must rely on the translations provided by Stands with a Fist, who was taken by the Indians from her white family as a young girl, and who must strive to find distant English words.

As the lieutenant repeats a phrase, she corrects him with an explanation of the meaning of his mistaken discourse. She does not focus on any particular element of the discourse, but rather repeats the entire phrase.

In another scene of the movie, the conversation between the lieutenant and tribal chief suggests that the lieutenant's language training lasted over an extended period of time. By this time his language ability is pretty impressive. As the Lakota flows from his lips we read the English translation below his face. We suddenly feel that he has crossed a cultural line and has gone over to the other side. We wonder whether he will ever return.

The entire narrative of *Dances with Wolves* is in opposition to the official narrative that our culture had so long promoted about native Americans. The narrative suggests that, "not all Indians were uncivilized

sub-humans. Some of these tribes may very well have had civilized values of right and wrong. It is our task to move beyond our cultural stereotypes and prejudice, and learn about a people's culture from their perspective. What we learn may not only dispel our cultural notions about the "uncivilized" others, but may also reveal uncivilized behavior in our own culture." This last aspect is eloquently demonstrated when the Lakota discover that white men have slaughtered hundreds of buffalo only for their skin. When the Lakota find the bloody carcasses left on the prairie to rot, they are shocked as they contemplate this uncivilized behavior. The embedded narrative tells us that proficiency in the language is the key to successful entry into a culture, and that a language is best learned by extended contact with native speakers.

The humility with which the lieutenant approaches the Lakota people allows him to free himself from the shackles of ethnocentricity. This attitude toward other cultures and languages is sadly lacking in the other films that we have selected. In this way *Dances with Wolves* serves as a positive model. Most language teachers can identify with the lieutenant as we have learned about other cultures in a similar manner. We would be very proud if the lieutenant had started his path of cultural exploration in one of our language sections of Lakota, and went on to spend the semester with a Lakota tribe, and returned to campus proficient in the language.

*Pocahontas* is another cookie cutter Disney movie with the same plot as all the others. An enticing young girl meets a strapping young man, but some obstacle stands in the way of a relationship. By the end of the movie the obstacle has been overcome, and the two live happily ever after. The obstacle here, of course, is that the Englishman, John Smith, cannot have a relationship with Pocahontas because she is an Indian.

When they have their first conversation she speaks no English. Suddenly and magically Pocahontas is overcome with understanding when she hears the song of the willow tree, which sings, "Listen with your heart; you will understand. Let it break upon you like a wave upon the sand." After the inspiration passes over her a few times she states, "My name is Pocahontas." She learns English in a few seconds. She needs no teacher, no practice, no extended contact with native speakers. She merely listens with her heart, and she understands. This embedded narrative teaches American children that learning a language is a simple matter, and teachers are unnecessary in the accomplishment of this task.

The 1956 classic movie, *The King and I*, is the story of Mrs. Anna Leonowens and her son Lewis who travel to Bangkok where she has been contracted to teach English to the children of the royal household.

She goes to Siam and she finds Siamese customs to be quite different from English ones, which often brings her into conflict with the king. Anna's reasons for being there are seen in opposition to the king's assumptions about what an English teacher might be like. The king, in expressing his views about teaching and learning languages, says to Anna: "Siam to be scientific country, everybody speaking English." But he also shows his ambivalence to all that he seeks to learn when he says "How am I to ever learn the truth if different English books state different things?" In this movie the pedagogical assumptions from the king's point of view portray that English is a civilizing, modernizing entity. The Siamese are backward and insensitive. The future lies in English books. The relationship between the teacher and the student is conflicted by their different assumptions from their distinct cultures. The king of Siam wishes to send elephants to help Abraham Lincoln with the civil war and as much as Anna would like to try to explain, but she can't for the life of her figure out what to say or how to explain why this would not be a good idea.

A lavish remake of the now familiar story of *The King and I* was produced in 1999 and entitled *Anna and the King*. It is the same story. The young British widow travels to Siam in 1862 to work as a schoolteacher for the king's 58 children. Put off at first, she and the monarch soon develop an understanding and an unspoken attraction that cannot be fulfilled. However, the interesting part of this particular narrative is that the Siamese people seem to have changed dramatically from the 1956 version. In this version the young prince balks at the idea that the imperialist English schoolteacher has something to teach him. He inquires of his father "Have I done something to offend you? His father responds, "Of course not." The son then asks, "Then why do you punish me with imperialist schoolteacher?" The metanarrative of English teaching being a civilizing and modernizing entity is narrowed in the politically correct culture of 1999.

When we juxtapose the incidental narratives of American films with our actual pedagogical practice, we begin to understand the disconnect between public opinion and what we really want and hope to do in a language classroom. The film quotes and images and representations on the grid at the end of this paper demonstrate that most of these films reinforce deficient paradigms of language instruction, study and learning. The portrayal of modern language teachers as clowns or the students of languages as ignorant dupes affect student expectations. The myth of immediate socioeconomic gains without regard to race, class, or power is real in many students' lives, especially as they approach the discipline of second language study. The myths of becoming bilingual and bicultural overnight can be demoralizing to students who take the first year of a language and still can not have meaningful con-

versations with native speakers. We cannot easily dismiss these films as Hollywood fictions if these images coincide with the mainstream cultural myths about our profession and student perceptions of what is going to happen in a modern language classroom. Movies are everywhere, and they shape our world. As language teachers we need to be prepared to question the metanarratives and refute the misconceptions about our profession that pervade our culture. And isn't this why we come to conferences such as MEXTESOL, so that we not only understand the attitudes that our students have, but that we also learn to better articulate our own pedagogical assumptions?

The teaching and learning of modern languages does not happen in a vacuum. There is a need for us as language teachers to realize where the culture is situated, and to know where our students are coming from. We need to contextualize our practices and realize that students come to us with several of these myths in their minds as they approach our classes. We need to be sure of the bases from which we teach: language teaching and learning would benefit from an attempt by us as teachers to make our theories of how we learn languages more explicit. The continuing struggle to understand, clarify, and articulate why we do certain things in our classrooms does matter. We as teachers need to choose our options for what happens in the classroom based on what the learners bring with them, as well as how neatly our lesson plans are formed. We need to remember the little stories, the counter narratives that mitigate against our tightly woven teaching practices. If what happens in class is situated oppositionally to a students' expectations, more work needs to be done.

Counter narratives are not readily critiqued by the movie-going public. We would all agree that the students in our classrooms today certainly qualify as part of the movie-going public. The pedagogical implications of English teaching in American films changes classroom expectations. As a result of these changes, and as a sign of them as well, we as instructors would do well to pay attention to them and to use them as analytical tools to improve our pedagogy.

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- My Fair Lady*, Warner Video, 1964.
- Pocahontas*, Walt Disney, 1990.
- Stripes*, Columbia Pictures, 1981.

Film	Film Quotes	Images/Representations
<b>My Fair Lady</b> 1964 Warner Video	“Look at her, a prisoner of the gutter/condemned by every syllable she utters.” “A woman who makes such detestable noises has no right to live.”	The key to socioeconomic advancement is mastery of the English language! Learning a language is behavioral; acquiring good English is a sophisticated response system acquired through operant conditioning. <b>Behavioral</b>
<b>Stripes</b> 1981 Columbia Pictures	“I’ve never done this before...you know some English?” “OK, let’s try it one more time: I met her on a Monday and my heart stood still.”	Teaching language is all fun and games. Teaching culture centers around folk dance, festivals, fairs and food. Students are ignorant and as learners don’t bring anything useful to the classroom. <b>4-F Approach</b>
<b>Good Morning Vietnam</b> 1987 Touchstone Pictures	“I’ve never done this before. Can we try, my boyfriend’s back? Why do I feel like the miracle worker up here. Hey baby, what’s happening. Let’s groove, slip me some skin.”	Authentic classroom situations prepare students for using language in the real world; but without deliberate pedagogy students are prepared only for a limited range of communicative situations. <b>Impromptu</b>
<b>Mr. Chips</b> 1969 MGM/UA Studios	“We have a mutual duty, in fact, and it is not a duty I, for one, am prepared to betray.” “Sometimes these dead languages come to life.”	Learning a foreign language is a duty: It’s a formal obligation. Latin is boring and irrelevant but just learn it. Relevance enhances instruction and learning! <b>Duty</b>
<b>Cabaret</b> 1972 Warner Brothers	“So, we shall make a party for speaking English, yes?...All the phlegm was here. Then why are they putting the g please?” “So, Mr. Professor! You do not know?”	Other people can just learn English. The teachers cannot explain everything! USE IT, as a teacher and a learner, to advance socioeconomically. <b>Conversational</b>
<b>Dances with Wolves</b> 1990 Orion Pictures	“Wrong. You said fire lives on the prairie.” “I did? Well no laughing, though.”	Live with native speakers and repeat what you hear. Language proficiency becomes the key to cultural assimilation. <b>Acculturation</b>
<b>Pocahontas</b> 1999 Walt Disney	“Listen with your heart; you will understand. Let it break upon you like a wave upon the sand.”	Learning a language is simple...you start speaking flawlessly, immediately! You don’t need teachers. <b>Magic</b>
<b>The King and I</b> 1956 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox	“Siam to be scientific country; everybody speaking English. How am I to ever learn the truth if different English books state different things?”	Advancement will come to the people if they learn English. English will make us modern and important. The Siamese are backward and primitive and learning language will make all the difference. <b>Civilizing</b>
<b>Anna and the King</b> 1999 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox	“Have I done something to offend you?” “Of course not.” “Then why do you punish me with imperialist schoolteacher?” “Reform is vital for my country’s survival. As tiny feet change, so will Siam.”	In this version, the Siamese speak for themselves. English is shown to be a civilizing entity, but the people are less sure than the king. 1956 vs. 1999? <b>Questioning</b>

# Travel the USA

BY JESSICA LINDNER, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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Many students who study English hope some day to spend some time traveling in the United States. To do this, they are required to determine appropriate sites and make the necessary arrangements for a safe and comfortable trip.

The exercise below capitalizes on students' curiosity about and desire to travel in the United States. It has the added advantage of being an excellent vehicle for language study--especially as it is done in small groups as a classroom activity. Students are actively engaged in reading about the United States, discussing (in English) places to go, designing a travel tour, writing a brochure that outlines their tour, and competing with others to "sell" their tour at a "travel fair" to students and teachers in their school.

Students should have a reasonable grasp of English to do this project, though they do not have to be fluent. Ideally, they will have access to a computer, the Internet, a scanner and a photocopier, though the activities can be modified so that the use of these kinds of technology is not necessary. For example, in place of a brochure, which must be photocopied, students can create a poster. Travel guides, such as The Lonely Planet, can substitute for the Internet. If pictures cannot be scanned in, students can cut pictures out of magazines or even draw pictures of various "must see" places in the United States.

The following is a seven-day activity. This activity was done with both low/intermediate and intermediate/advanced students who were studying English as a Second Language at a university in the United States. The lesson plan is based on 50-minute class periods. Appendices are provided at the end of the lesson plan. These are samples of the handouts given to the students who actually did the project and, of course, would need to be modified for each class.

The lesson plan with descriptions is outlined below.

## Day 1

Introduce the idea of the project:

- a. Small groups -discuss places of interest in the US students would like to visit. Some prompting may be necessary, e.g. the East (including Washington D.C.; New York), New England, (Boston, Massachusetts; Maine; Vermont; New Hampshire), the Southwest (including Arizona and New Mexico) the South (including New Orleans, Louisiana; Memphis, Tennessee; Florida), the Northwest (including Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon),

- the Midwest (including Chicago; Cincinnati, Ohio; Madison, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota). (7 minutes)
- b. Large group -discuss the places suggested in the small groups. Write ideas on the blackboard. (10 -15 minutes)
  - c. Discuss the Internet workshop; distribute and go over the hand-out (See Appendix 1). (5 minutes)

## Day 2

### Workshop on the Worldwide Web. (50 minutes)

(Teachers who present the workshop would undoubtedly want to browse the Internet before the workshop so that they know what kind of information is available.)

Students are shown (if they don't already know) how to get onto the Internet. One good source for travel information about the United States is yahoo.com. After getting into Yahoo, type *Travel USA* as a search. The Internet will send you to a page entitled *search results* dealing with information about traveling in the United States. On this page there are many good options. Two in particular work well. The first is a listing in *search results* under *directory category matches*: "United States Travel." Clicking on this option brings the students to another page. On this page, "Destination Guides" is a particularly fruitful site. The other notable--and perhaps preferable--site is "USA Travel," which is travel information about the United States listed by state. (It is number 4 on the list.) This is in the section under *web matches* on the *search results* page mentioned above.

Students are encouraged to browse the sites they find. The teacher helps as necessary.

## Day 3

- a. Review what students learned during the WWW workshop. (5 minutes)
- b. Review areas of interest to go to. What is there to see? (5 minutes) Add the ideas below if they haven't thought of them:
  - Northeast: Boston, Cape Cod, Bar Harbor, Acadia
  - Southeast: Miami, Everglades, Orlando, Savannah, Atlanta
  - Southwest: Las Vegas, Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon
  - Northwest: Seattle, Olympic Peninsula, Portland, San Francisco
  - National Parks: Glacier, Yellowstone
  - Midwest: Chicago, Galena, IL, St Louis
- c. Describe the project, distribute and go over the handout (See Appendix 2). (5-10 minutes)
- d. Individuals choose the primary area they want to go to as well as two alternatives. (2 minutes)

- e. Form groups of 3-4 students based on their areas of interest. (10 minutes)
- f. Provide examples of brochures and go over them. These are readily available in any travel agency in the United States. (Barring access to these, a page from one of the Internet sites can be used as well.) Discuss what kinds of information the brochure contains. Discuss the visual aspects of the brochure. Have students brainstorm other ways of saying the same thing. (15 minutes)
- g. Groupwork (remaining time)
  - Discuss step 2 on the handout: Who will the tour appeal to? What kinds of activities do you want to do?
  - Discuss where you can go to find the necessary information and decide who will be responsible for obtaining it.
- h. Homework: Get information about your area according to the decisions made in your group. Bring the information to class the next day.

#### Day 4

- a. Large group -discuss what kinds of media are available for advertising:
  - slides/videos/audiotapes/hawkers, etc. Suggest that they might want to use some of these for their booth at the "travel fair." (5 minutes)
- b. Small groups -share information and begin writing the text for the brochure. (This can be an individual, pair or group activity.)
  - (N.B. refer to step three of the handout [appendix 2]. They will need to address these issues in order to write a good brochure.)
  - Remind them to be sure to consider visuals.
  - Each student will be responsible for writing a section of the brochure.
  - (Students, especially beginning students, may inadvertently plagiarize some of the text material. They should be reminded that they must use their own words. Teachers should require that the students provide the address or a copy of the pages of any website the students have visited . This is, after all, normal practice in any research endeavor. Teachers should also be aware of the likelihood of finding plagiarism. Normally this is easy to spot. Should they find it, teachers can help students paraphrase.)
- c. Homework: Finish writing your section of the text for the brochure.

### Day 5

- a. Groups -peer review each others' text sections. Make changes and additions as necessary.
- b. Go to the computer lab and input text and graphics.
- c. Homework: As a group, finish the brochure. Make a copy of it for your teacher.

### Day 6

- a. Individual conferences with groups about the brochure.
- b. Homework: Revise the brochure. Make one good copy for your teacher and another for distribution.
- c. Xerox copies to hand out at the travel fair.

### Day 7

Travel Fair. Appendix 3 is the flier that was actually distributed for this project. It would, of course, be adapted to fit different situations.

In preparation for the fair, we photocopied US money (a \$1.00 bill on which we wrote denominations of \$100, \$50, etc.) and handed stacks of them out to people who came to the fair.

We also posted the flier (Appendix 3) on walls around the building. Besides capturing people who were strolling down the hall, we cajoled colleagues to come as well. Each time the project was undertaken, it was a great success!

## Appendix 1

### Tour of the Worldwide Web

We will have a special training session on how to search the Web using Netscape. You only need to know how to get on the Internet.

During this session, you will have both a demonstration of how to find materials and the chance to look for some materials. The topic that we will be using in the session on Monday, and in class thereafter, is "Travel in the United States."

In order to be prepared for the training, you need to start thinking about what part of the United States would be interesting to visit. You may have some idea of places, but if you do not, the list below will give you some ideas of a few of the popular tourist destinations in the United States:

Alaska

Hawaii

New England -e.g. Boston and Cape Cod

The Grand Canyon

Florida and its environs -e.g. Orlando and Disney World, Miami

California -e.g. Yosemite Park, Napa Valley, San Francisco

New Orleans

The Southwest -e.g. Phoenix and Sedona, Arizona

New York

Please think about what areas you might like to explore on the Web. For the training session, you will probably be working with another person (two people per computer); for the class work on travel you will be working in groups of 3-4. Talk a little with your classmates about areas you're interested in visiting and then come to class ready to SURF THE NET!!!

## Appendix 2

### Travel Project

In this writing assignment, you will be working in a small group to create a tour of one area of the United States, write and produce a travel brochure (or poster) of that area, and compete with other groups in your class to "sell" the tour. Your tour will be complete; that is, you will be responsible for providing all the necessary amenities typical of any tour package: travel arrangements, food, sightseeing, etc. Your tour package should be based on realistic prices, but it should also be competitive. Your audience will primarily be students and teachers. You will present your tour and brochure at a "travel fair," which will take place on (specify date) from about 1:30 -3:00 p.m. The brochure will be done on a computer and will, ideally, be in the format of a typical brochure. You will be using scanner technology to insert photographs or other images into your brochure. You can, then, expect to spend some time in the library using the scanners. The brochure is required, but feel free to use any other

kinds of advertising gimmicks, such as videos, slides, etc, that you feel will enhance your presentation. The visual aids are entirely up to your imagination. (If you need equipment that you don't have, talk to me and we'll see what we can work out.)

In preparation for the travel fair, you and your group will need to do the following things:

1. Determine which area of the United States you think people would be interested in visiting.

2. Determine who your tour will appeal to; that is, who your audience will be. Will you be creating a tour for people of your age? Will it be for older people? Families? Will it be for a mixture of people? Will they all be speakers of Spanish, or will your tour appeal to people who speak other languages?

3. Find out the important information about the area you choose. This will include everything you will need to tell people about the nature of the packaged tour:

- a. What is there to see and do?
- b. When, precisely, will your participants do it?
- c. What kinds of transportation will you provide?
- d. Where will the tour participants stay?
- e. What meals will they eat? Will all the meals be provided with the tour package or will your participants be required to supply some of their own meals?
- f. Do you have any special accommodations for people on restricted diets or for people with disabilities? Do you want or need that?
- g. How much does it cost? What, exactly, does the cost cover? Do you include the flight to get to the destination, or do the participants all meet there?

Much of this work will be done in small groups outside the classroom. You may want to use other sources besides the Internet to find out information as well. Can travel agencies provide you with any extra information? Can you find some English travel guides about the United States? How about the United States Consulate for information about visas? You may even want to interview some Americans who have been to these places for additional information.

On the day of the "travel fair", you will set up a booth so that interested people can come around to see which plan they like best. As with any business, this will be a competition to see who can do the nicest, most appealing presentation and, at the same time offer the best value for the money. You may not want to discuss your plans with class members outside your group. The visitors to the fair will come with "money" in hand, ready to buy a tour. Your job will be to sell yours.

### Appendix 3

#### Want to Take a Vacation but Don't Know Where to Go? We Can Give You Ideas!

The first section of English 110 is hosting a "Travel Fair" this Wednesday from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. in 583 Van Hise Hall.

We have developed travel brochures offering tours to the US. You can choose among a variety of exotic places. If you're interested in the Southeast, you may want to use *Moon Airlines* with Moon, Pete and Soon as crew. Or travel with JiHyun, KwangJae and Siba to the East Coast cities of Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C. If you would prefer to go west, you can travel with Armando, Clara, and Min on a trip to San Francisco. If your taste takes you farther afield, you can go with Lee, Manzura and Sergio to Hawaii.

Whatever your travel needs, we can meet them, so check us out this Wednesday, May 8 in 58

Van Hise Hall between 1:30 and 3:00.



# The Inspiring, Authentic ESL/EFL Teacher

BY DR. TOM ALIBRANDI, LAKE TAHOE COLLEGE <sup>1</sup>

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*The world is not what I think, but what I live through.*  
--Maurice Merleau-Ponty

In the years I have been a teacher I have become increasingly convinced that inspiration, more than any external reward, is the well-spring of most meaningful learning and doing. I have spent the past decade or so investigating the phenomenon of inspiration. Naturally, I began with honest reflection on my own educational career, and found that not one teacher in grammar school, high school, or undergraduate school had inspired me to go beyond the drudgery of rote or drill-and-kill learning. For example, I took a dim view of learning grammar rules. While dear, but deadly boring Sister St. Agnes diagrammed sentences on the board in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of Blessed Sacrament School, I fixated on the red second hand of the clock, attempting to set new records for holding my breath. I got up to two minutes and fifty seconds by the time she finished that awful business of attempting to put rules to what I already knew before I entered school. I understood how to use the language; I simply didn't know what exactly it was I was doing. More importantly, neither the teacher nor the material fired my imagination to learn it.

Further, I began asking my students to reflect upon their educational background. Excellent, critically-thinking students most often could point to at least one teacher or instructor who'd fanned a fire in their belly to learn; poor students, those in special high schools, even jail, and dropouts, *stated emphatically that they'd **never** once been inspired during their school career.* Formal research I've conducted has corroborated those findings (Alibrandi 1998; Alibrandi 1999).

In terms of 1<sup>st</sup> language acquisition, it is widely accepted that how well we learn our native tongue is largely dependent upon our parents, siblings, and adults with whom we come into contact as infants and small children. Whether due to Chomsky's theory of a universal genetic syntactical imprint in each of us, or due to the massive amounts of phonemes, words, and sentences that an infant receives from her/his parents and other caregivers, a child more or less masters a language by the time she/he enters kindergarten. We educators then begin the proc-

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ess of badgering young people with grammar rules for what they already know: how to use the language.

Even beyond the realm of language acquisition, human consciousness and schemata are developed in relation to one's experience; how we relate to individuals with whom we come into contact, or what we read or learn, is based on how it fits into our experiential warehouse. That is to say that something within each of us connects with something or someone outside of us in a way that causes us to be extremely receptive to the idea of learning. I know that most of who I am and what I've learned has been the result of another person appearing in my life at the right time, at a point I was consciously or unconsciously open for change. Usually that person possesses virtues I admire and want for myself. Whether wittingly or not, he or she became the inspirer (the one doing the inspiring) and I became the aspirer (the one seeking changes).

Maybe it's time to break down the phenomenon of inspiration.

First, there is the teacher. Inspiration, an ontological event—what is real, usually derived through experience, research, or study—is made possible when the instructor or teacher shares honestly with her/his students from her/his experiential warehouse. Honesty and concern for the emotional and educational needs of one's students are essential ingredients in the makeup of the authentic, inspiring teacher. The instructor's cognitive reality, embodied in his/her subjective human experiences, when directed toward something other than him/herself, becomes like a magnet to which the student is attracted. The environment established is non-shaming, supportive, and creative. In other words, the inspirer/teacher generates a situation in which, as Stephan Strasser postulated, "a reciprocal relationship is not necessarily symmetrical" (Strasser 1969). The teacher is present for the student not in the same way the student is present for the teacher; *however, it is not a one-up/one-down or master/slave relationship*. The dialogical mode, set up by the teacher, is a dynamic interplay in which, despite differences in history, the aspirer and inspirer establish the possibility for a common ground. A creative tension is born in this common ground as both participants become attuned to and understand one another, for instance when the EFL/ESL instructor, through authentic teaching, causes the student to identify with him/her. Both instructor and student become empathic with one another, a byproduct of authenticity. This teaching style is in contrast to the autocratic method found among many teachers throughout Mexico and Central and South America. The Dialogical Mode gives birth to a creative, transcendent inbetweenness in which the worlds of both parties open up and action is initiated. Reciprocity, the

dynamic of give and take, is created. Change is made possible. New perspectives are revealed.

The student thus is attracted to who the teacher is, how he/she presents the material, as well as the material itself. And when the student is in a state of openness, the material presented is integrated into that student's experiential warehouse or schema, and the student *relates* to the material presented rather than simply learning it. The classroom thus becomes a place of process. The teacher and student move into the transformative state of intentionality, that is being directed toward something other or bigger than oneself. As a result of the authentic dialogue between the two, the focus changes from what is mine to what is ours. The student/aspirer becomes part of the action; the teacher/inspirer is also changed by the event. It is much like Participatory Research, in which an authentic dialogical mode is established between researcher and subjects, and both parties are changed and transformed by producing and then reflecting upon the research dialogues.

According to James Kidd, there are three basic dynamics that make up inspiration (Kidd 1985:50-69). These are:

**Aspiring**—being available. This is a value-oriented dynamic, in which the student is open to change her/his belief system or preset opinion, or trustingly available to gain wanted knowledge.

**Authentic Moments**—turning points. An unseen, invisible instant when the field of inbetweenness between teacher and student crackles with transformative energy. It is the moment when the student is on fire to learn or to get something from the inspirer/teacher. It is the moment of "Aha." It is when the student comes to believe that anything is possible.

**Breaking Through Boundaries**—a transcendent event. This is the moment in which the aspirer or student sees her/his resistance to change melt away, and that student's consciousness is suddenly transformed. New information and new insights result. It is the moment when inspired action—an *intellectual* thing—becomes enacted action, the actual *doing*. Barriers fall away, new insight fuels one's desire to achieve. There is the potential for *both* parties to go beyond where they are.

As I've stated, for inspiration to occur there must be an inspirer and an aspirer. Beyond that, certain conditions need be met for the establishment of the necessary creative, transcendent inbetweenness. These qualities seem to be:

- Being Available. The teacher and student must present themselves physically, emotionally, and intellectually for the process of inspiration to occur.
- Being Included. This is primarily the teacher's responsibility. She/He must utilize inclusive and creative techniques to initiate the bringing of the student into the process. These techniques should be as student-driven as possible in order that the student may move from the inspirational moment to being an independent learner.
- Being enlightened. This is both a didactic and a calling-from-within process. What the teacher offers sparks some Hermeneutical action—how one relates to what one reads or learns—within the student. It is an interpretation and understanding by the student.
- Being enlivened. Both parties become energized from the experience. New horizons open. It is a synergistic encounter, exposing new worlds to both inspirer and aspirer.
- Being attracted. Initially, the aspirer is attracted to the inspirer; the student is drawn to the authentic, creative teacher. In short time it becomes a mutual attraction, fueled by the imaginative tension of discovery and transcendence. As Kidd says, "A reciprocal mode of caring for the other extends without conscious thought of one's own boundaries. This is an existential risk which fosters and strengthens the interpersonal bond" (Kidd 1985:50).
- Being Encouraged. This is also a reciprocal event. At first, the student is encouraged by who and what the teacher is. The aspirer is given confidence by the inspirer, who in turn is encouraged by the field of energy between the two, and by the student's newfound enthusiasm for learning.

There are many tools and techniques available to the inspiring, authentic teacher. I've used drama, group process, class chronicles, student-generated performance contracts, journals and creative writing, and generative themes to establish that field of transcendent in-betweenness that is critical to the process of inspiration. I've witnessed students on whom parents, teachers, school districts, society, even themselves had given up become inspired by an authentic teacher and succeed—even excel—in school.

We can make a conscious choice: Inspire or smother ingenuity and meaningful learning in our students. It is time for us teachers to hang

loose, have fun, be creative, and get real with our students. This authentic, inspirational style of teaching does not have to detract from the demands of a curriculum; rather it accelerates language acquisition in that it inspires the learner and lowers her/his affective filter.

*Method must always be directed toward an object.*  
*--Aristotle*

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# Managing Research

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Managing research is a big topic, but if we take it step by step, have a plan, and go at it in an organized manner, it can be a most enjoyable and fruitful experience. The research process is not limited to academics: it is one that we regularly undertake in everyday life. For instance, we can relate the process to that which we follow if we decide to buy a car. After the decision is made, we begin by recognizing our desires and then narrowing these down to our actual requirements. We then move to details, such as the timeframe involved, how much we will spend, where the money will come from, etc., formulating the plan and beginning the search. We start opening our eyes to possibilities and talking about our project to everyone we come into contact with, asking for advice and information, defining the parameters within which we will work towards our goal. As you can see, the process of research is nothing to be intimidated by – it is one that you have followed many times in your daily life.

I am writing to you about this subject because it is one that I enjoy, and it is a great part of my life. I believe that research is (or most certainly *should* be) the name of the game in teaching, especially in teaching English as a foreign or second language. I would like to help you see that although research is hard work, it is tremendously rewarding and does not have to be terribly daunting if you go about it happily, with a plan. I have done numerous and varied formal research projects, and have taught Research Methodology at the Master's level. My thesis for the Master's Degree in Teaching Social Science was centered on bibliographical research methodology, resulting not only in the acquisition of my Degree, but the analysis and presentation of the data collected is the basis for the recently published book *El Mito del Rito*. Currently, I am studying for my Doctoral Degree in Language Studies, this time employing action research methodology. I would like to share some of my experiences with you, and offer some brief ideas for coming to terms with research.

There are several methodologies that can be undertaken in research, including a purely bibliographical one. However, bibliographical research is an essential factor in *all* types of research. The process of bibliographical research begins as soon as the decision to do research has been made. You must determine whether your hypothesis has d-

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ready been proved or disproved, and if you can in fact make a contribution to the field. This beginning also helps you to clearly identify your hypothesis and narrow it down to a definite point. This is imperative, as you must get to the very essence of your hypothesis so that you can describe and develop it from its root.

Your hypothesis is the canvas for your art. With your original idea you should have a pretty good sense of what you want to paint (research). From that point you start thinking about the picture itself (your final presentation). The next step is to decide how you are going to go about producing your work of art – how are you going to “prove” or substantiate your hypothesis? Is your research going to be entirely bibliographical, or will you also collect ethnographical, sociological and/or other types of data? Are you going to test your hypothesis in action? Once you have answered these basic questions you can decide on how you are going to go about doing your actual research. With this base things become more concrete, and you will find that your picture is becoming clearer in your mind. At this point you should be able to actually think out the chapters you will write up to present your research, and your imagination really starts kicking into gear. Now you can begin making your working plan.

One of the most important parts in doing any kind of research is the planning stage. Once you have your hypothesis well defined, a general, overall plan of how to progress is necessary. The pattern of the steps taken in the progression of the research process resembles a great spiral that starts out big and works down to a point. But this point is not the completion of the process. (The concept of ‘completion’ is a fictitious one in the case of research, as there is no *end* to research.) When this point has been reached, the work then proceeds back up the spiral through the writing and presentation of the data collected and its analysis for the final product. (Again, a ‘final product’ is a bit of a misnomer, as there is rarely a ‘final’ in either research or writing.)

I have broken the research process down into five general areas. Although I have made these divisions, please remember that the research process is a whole and these areas frequently overlap -there are always several things going on at the same time! Every research project is different, but I hope these suggestions will inspire you, help you get started, and make the going a little easier.

### Scheduling

Scheduling for research must be recognized as an integral part of the planning of the research project. One must have a timetable in order to get a job done, otherwise it could go on forever! One must formulate research goals in a progressive, step-by-step manner, and have a

schedule to meet them all along the way. A research project does not just flow along and suddenly come to an end. There are many steps that must be taken, and the steps should be progressively staged.

Once one has defined the project and the methods that will be implemented to carry it out, a schedule can be developed. The school or authority requesting the research usually delineates the beginning and ending of the schedule, and from there one can proportion the time allotted according to the needs of the research process. The first stage should be set aside for reading. This gives the researcher background information and an ever more definite idea of what he or she is attempting, and will also offer much information on *how* to go on. Be careful and do not cut yourself short on this step, because if you do, you will find the going much more difficult later on. Decide how much time you can set aside for reading *on a daily basis*, and stick to it!

The next stage for scheduling should be that for designing the instruments to be used in the research, such as questionnaires, tests, classes, etc. Plan time for this because it does take time and will provide the actual data for your research. From there one can plan the timing for the application of the instruments, not forgetting that *others* are involved at this point, and *their* scheduling must also be considered. It is a good idea to pad your timing on this part of the plan for unexpected delays. When you are setting up the schedule for this stage, do not forget to figure in time for personal journal entry sessions, if you plan on keeping one.

Next comes the scheduling of your revision and analysis of data gathered. This again is something that you should really *plan* for because it is not a "given", it does not happen just because you have done the work, even if you have been truly conscious of organization. You must analyze and synthesize your information, and this takes time. You must remember to include thinking time too!

Then, time must be scheduled for writing. Hopefully you will be doing *some* of this all along, at least making notes on specific ideas you want to discuss and explain. In any case, writing time *must* be scheduled. Once again, do not cut yourself short here. Although you should have a firm schedule for writing every day (as you did with reading), sometimes you will be in front of a blank piece of paper, and it will just stare back at you and stubbornly insist on staying blank. The muse is a capricious character; she will not come every time you call her, but she surely will not visit you if you do not invite her and make time for her! Also keep in mind that nothing is written right off. You will make many drafts of every single page before you get to anything even *approximating* a real presentation of your work, so plan time for this.

## The Bibliographical Facet

As stated above, the core of any research is the bibliographical work, which is an on-going, constant process. If you already have your hypothesis, then you have probably already started this part of your project, because ideas rarely simply fall into our minds. Reading must be a daily part of the life of a researcher. Always keep your eyes and ears open for possible resources, because you will be surprised at the places they can turn up. Bibliographical research is essential in the research process and in any academic writing. Here we will look at the general process involved.

You will need to set aside time from the very beginning of your research for reading in order to get a good firm grasp of what research has already been done before you get going. You cannot read, or even *find, everything* that has ever been written about your subject, but you must do your dead level best. When I begin doing bibliographical research I like to begin with the earliest published works; the “fathers” of thought on the subject. I feel that this historical research is a necessary step because knowledge is *built* – it is rarely *discovered*, and we build knowledge from studying what others have done. Once I feel that I have a firm foundation laid, I begin to search for more recent publications. For my current project, I decided that I would pretty much limit myself to nothing published before 1970. Well, I found that there was so much information that I needed further limitation and drew the line at nothing published before 1980. I again found the timeframe to be too broad and have finally placed my starting line at 1995! Of course there are and will be exceptions to a timeframe limitation, but one must have a basic framework within which to function.

It is not enough to read and learn, because eventually you must write, and you will use information gathered from your reading to substantiate and even show contradiction to what you have to say, and of course you must give credit to the author for helping you. You must start your bibliography from the very first book and form the habit of updating it with every book you read.

Keep your bibliography in one place. This is much easier if you have a computer, but it is important to carefully maintain records even if you are doing everything by hand. Do not try to keep scraps of paper or think that you will remember to take the bibliographical data at a later date, because not only is this double work, many times it is impossible to remember where you found something. Before you start your project, make a plan for how you are going to keep your bibliography current, and stick with it. It is a good idea to find out from the very start

what bibliographical format is expected by those for whom you are doing the research. Once you have made this format a matter of habit, it will be a matter of course, and you will not have to go back later and arduously redesign your bibliography.

It is a good idea to keep an additional bibliography, one that I call "Books Needed." In your reading you will constantly encounter other sources that could help in your research. In fact, this is actually how one goes about bibliographical research. You start with one book, and from its references you start your journey. You need to keep track of this information so that when you have the chance to go to a bookstore or library, you can look for the sources that you know are pertinent to your study so you will not be floundering around. Some floundering around in the search is good, because as I have said, you never know where you will turn up really good material, but it takes a lot of time that we usually do not have. The authors, books and other references that have attracted your attention and that you have culled from your reading are part of your research, gems that you have mined that you should not misplace or forget.

### Note-Keeping

Another plan to be formulated from the beginning of your bibliographical research is the keeping of notes. While you are reading, you will be marking the text in some way to remember salient ideas. Mark your reading with a highlighter and make notes in the margins, communicating with the author and the ideas. This will make your reading active rather than passive. Make it a habit that once you have finished the reading, copy these ideas verbatim in some form. Do not think that you will keep the book, copy, article, or whatever and will remember the ideas and where they were and come back to it all later. This will be most improbable at the time of writing-up. Not only will the sheer quantity of reading make this infeasible, but it is very difficult (if not impossible!) to try to go back and search for some idea or information that you remember having seen *somewhere*. You are on a search-and-find mission and must treat your findings as the valuable treasures they are. It is a good idea to include a note of where the book or information is or where you got it from, which library or wherever, because you may need to go back and recheck and will need to know exactly where the original information can be located.

Believe it or not, you need to plan for note-keeping. There are many ways of going about it, and you should think about which method will be best suited for your personal work style before you get started, because it is difficult to change systems in the middle of the stream. Some people keep a notebook especially for this while others prefer to keep cards. Be sure that you include the bibliographical information with

the notes that you have taken so that you will know who said what. I have used the card system, and it has worked very well for me. I used the big cards and noted the bibliographical information at the top of the card and then took down word for word each and every part of the reading that applied to what I was working on. (Do not forget to note the page number!) Sometimes the notes were long and required more than one card, so if there was more than one I stapled them together. When it came time to write, I could easily go through my notes, separate them according to the chapter or section where I would use them, and proceed from there.

I now have a computer, so my plan for keeping up my bibliography and notes is much easier. I input the complete bibliographical entry and follow it with the notes (including the page number!) from the reading. I then copy the bibliographical entry itself and paste it into its place in my bibliography. (By the way, I not only keep the work on the hard drive of my computer, but I also keep two diskettes updated with all this work.) After I define my chapters and subheadings, I then go back through my notes and separate them out, cutting and pasting them into the sections to which they apply.

### Accountability

With the bibliographical work begins the accountability factor of the research project, as there are other factors of accountability involved. How are you going to provide the accountability necessary in a valid research project? What type of accounting you must follow depends on what type of research you are doing and for whom and for what reason you are doing it. Note-keeping is essential here too, and it needs to be specific. You must keep track of everything: time, place, names, etc., because when you are analyzing your data you may need information that you considered irrelevant at the time of the work. Be thorough as a habit, from the very beginning, even if it seems inconsequential and overly time-consuming, because you will find details difficult to remember in retrospect. Come to like and be friends with note-keeping, and you will find that it is your insight into your work, your defining tool, rather than a tedious task to be endured.

As with your bibliographical data and bibliography, organization is imperative for the accountability process. Keep your notes in an orderly fashion, because when it comes time to write it will make the work much easier, even a pleasure! You do not have to pressure yourself in the beginning to be putting everything into a concrete concept order as you are in the gathering stage, but do keep everything together in one place. You will find that orderliness will not only aid you immensely in your research but that it will be an invaluable asset for the accountabil-

ity factor that will have to be met at all stages along your research process.

### The Write-Up

The write-up is the upward passage of your research spiral. All the steps we have talked about so far lead up to and are part of the structure of writing. If you are doing research, sometimes the concept of 'thesis' is thought of as having two perspectives; that of the beginning idea and that of the final work. But we must remember that the beginning idea is the *hypothesis*, and the prefix "hypo-" means under, beneath, below or subordinated to. At the beginning of a research project one starts with a *hypothesis*, an idea which may be very clear to oneself, but needs background and substance to justify its being and for proving (or disproving) its validity. This is research. When the actual research work has been completed to the satisfaction of the researcher (because remember, research is never really *finished*), analysis of the findings is made. The final product, or thesis, is the written work: an idea is nothing if it cannot be shared.

This brings us to the secret of writing – you must 'just do it', as a famous advertising campaign says. Writing-up research can (and should) be done throughout the research process. Do not feel that you have to start with the introduction and work in a straight line through to the conclusion. You can do this if you like, but it does not matter *where* you begin writing. There is no law that says you must begin with the Introduction, and in fact it is sometimes better to save this until last. You can begin with the second or fourth or ninth chapter if you like! The only real limitation is of course that your conclusion will be written when the research has been completed and analyzed, but even then it is a good idea to keep notes of ideas and suggestions for the conclusion as you go along. Remember that you are going to be doing a lot of rewriting, so do not feel that things once written cannot be changed. The hardest part about writing (or anything else!) is getting started. Do not feel that you have to wait until the end of your research to begin writing. It is much better if you are writing all along, as part of the process. Start as soon as you feel you have something to say!

There are many styles of writing, and academic writing is a specific style. The structure of academic writing must follow a logical path. The easier it is for the reader to follow the steps and thought processes of the author, the better. The point is for others to be able to grasp and understand what is being explained, and making things seem more difficult or involved than necessary does not impress anyone, but rather puts the reader off to the point that she or he may not even bother trying.

The first part of academic written structure is the definition of the hypothesis, opening with an introduction that explains the rationale behind the research, a brief description of its development and an overview of the presentation. Then follows an explanation of *why* the researcher has opted to do the study. Thereafter, the findings drawn from all sources encountered regarding the research, bibliographical and otherwise, are made, supporting the need for the particular subject of research. The process followed in the research is disclosed and outlined. Particular points of the research are discussed. A concluding chapter unites the information and defines the conclusions of the researcher. The concluding chapter should be presented in a summary form, establishing the validity of the hypothesis (or proving it false), and should complete the full circle back to the introduction.

Happy Researching!

Doing research is exhilarating. However, it can be intimidating and really frustrating if you do not have a clear-cut plan from the outset. One can become lost or embroiled in interesting but irrelevant wanderings if a plan has not been made and followed. Research is a process of logical, interrelated steps to be taken with patience and foresight. Take the first step, make a plan, and let your imagination soar!

# The Problem of Cultural Relativism in Inter-Teacher Relationships <sup>1</sup>

BY ANNE TOWGOOD, LANGUAGE SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF GUANAJUATO, MEXICO <sup>2</sup>

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The multicultural framework wherein language teachers often work, having daily contact with co-workers of different nationalities, including Mexicans, together with the realities of being foreigners in Mexico ourselves, creates an interesting intercultural context pertinent to pedagogical study and very worthy of serious academic consideration.

Unfortunately, although this may have been the intention of Douglas Goodwin's article, it was widely perceived here in the language school and beyond within the University of Guanajuato as being poorly written and reflecting a very narrow vision of Mexican society.

This has brought to question why the article was accepted in the first place by the Journal, and there is concern that it could badly reflect on our Language School and the University itself. His assumptions and generalities, voiced, for the most part, from an un-supported ethnocentric point of view, portrayed our school as being in a state of permanent interpersonal conflict, caused by cultural, not personal, differences. His expressed objective of wanting to help resolve this situation has actually resulted in an increased level, or even new issues, of conflict.

As in all workplaces there is, and always will be, a certain level of conflict and differing interactional styles. This can be seen as normal when understood and conceptualized accordingly. In referring to the 'dangers of culturism' in teacher/student perceptions, Holliday states 'Kubota attributes the indiscriminate othering of the foreign to "the persistent racism of contemporary society" (2001:28). [...] I prefer *culturism* to racism as the root process we need to consider here. By culturism I mean reducing the foreign 'other' to simplistic, essentialist cultural prescriptions.' (Holliday 1999:245; 2002: 186, Holliday forthcoming).

The 'othering' of fellow workmates is also a possible risk in disrupting interpersonal relationships and thus affecting professional performance. In the academic guise of informed analysis, Douglas Goodwin has tried to explain the perceived conflicts as results of intercultural tensions beyond any normalcy. These he angles towards the Mexicans'

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<sup>1</sup> A response to the article by Douglas Goodwin in the spring 2002, issue of MEXTESOL Journal vol. 25, no. 4: "*An intercultural perspective on conflicts between language teachers*".

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supposed difficulty in accepting the presence of foreigners, especially in positions of power, (he contradicts himself in the article by describing the larger and better accepted power distance that he says exists in Mexico, compared to the United States). He refers to resentment of Mexicans towards persons better qualified, and to women in authority due to machismo (which he erroneously calls "masculinity") and other unilateral prejudices. Sexism and other forms of social intolerance are present in all societies, not to mention, of course, the United States.

'It can be argued that "nice" middle class people from comfortable societies think that by talking about "cultures", and admiring their "exotic" qualities, they are "accepting" and "being tolerant" and "understanding" of them – whereas in fact they are simply reducing them to these stereotypes. [...] Jordan and Weedon assert that the "commodification" of "racial and cultural difference is a marked feature of the radical twentieth-century avant-garde"(1995:149-50) [...] "Other cultures" thus become objects to be "nice" about instead of groups of real people with whom 'we' can interact and be equally people.' (Holliday forthcoming)

The issue of freedom of expression has been brought up in discussions between the Language School staff, during the after-wake of the publication, as well as some criticism of the MEXTESOL Journal for its perhaps unethical choice of papers. Personal views, which could be interpreted as prejudiced to groups or slanderous of individuals, are perhaps legitimate in private circles, but unacceptable in a public forum, unless disclaimed by that medium as not representing the views of the publishing body or as part of a study of wider focus.

I would like to argue that, in opposition to Douglas's statements, there is, for the most part, a harmonious environment at the University of Guanajuato, both in the Self-Access Centre where I work as well as in the Language School, with a rich mixture of teachers, students and volunteers from around the world.

This wider exposure to a large number of nationalities produces a higher tolerance towards cultural differences, and reduces the 'us' and 'them' mentality that often arises when there is a reduced number of groups, as in Douglas's assertion that the situation is Mexicans versus Americans. There are actually teachers from eleven different countries in all of the language departments, and half of the English teachers are not Americans. It is precisely this multiculturalism that benefits the students in offering more authentic contexts and wider learning opportunities.

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## Book Review

Pennycook, Alastair. (1994) *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* London: Longman Publishing.  
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In this book, Alastair Pennycook examines ways one might consider the role of English in the world that might help teachers comprehend their task differently. He would have them comprehend it differently because one of Pennycook's main concerns is what he sees as limitations in the dominant paradigms in the teaching of English in the world, particularly in the world of Applied Linguistics. He refers to this dominant paradigm as the discourse of English as an international language or EIL (Pennycook 1994:6). He sees this discourse as a superficial one that not only views the spread of English as "natural, neutral, and beneficial" (p. 6), but also as one that harbors an attitude that helps to foster this belief. To illustrate this, he guides us through various cultural and historical perspectives in an attempt to examine the origins of this attitude. He charts the shift in attitude from the colonial beginnings of English as this EIL, to its influence in current world affairs, particularly in today's international free markets as a lingua franca.

His other main theme is what he calls the worldliness of English, which is how and to what extent English has become enmeshed in other nations' social, cultural, and political realities. The author spent considerable time teaching in both Singapore and Malaysia, and he uses his experiences in the classrooms of these two countries to illustrate this cultural entanglement. Later in the book, as the author shifts to suggestions for practice, he highlights these two nations and their experiences with both the learning and the teaching of English as examples of resistance--as testing grounds for re-commandeering English for one's own purposes. These are examples of how to fight back, or as Pennycook puts it, "to write, read, and teach back" (p. 296). And in this pursuit, one uses what is available depending on the situation--what he refers to as the "conditions of possibility" (p. 292). This, he proposes, can be done first by acknowledging the impossibility of teaching English free of its cultural underpinnings (rugged individualism, democratic values, etc.), and then by actually incorporating these themes into the teaching of English, utilizing them as a meta-language. In this way, one opens to discussion the qualities that the language inherently possesses, thus using them as a stepping stone to realize an English that can be better

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put to the learner's purposes. In short, the author advocates that one brings to the teaching and the learning of English an intensely critical approach. He advocates an approach to education "grounded in a desire for social change" (p. 297) --a critical pedagogy.

I found this book a critical-pedagogical call-to-arms, drawing, as it does, on such seminal figures as Paolo Freire and his discussion of the political nature of teaching, and on H.A. Giroux, by incorporating his nine principal features of a critical pedagogy. These features encompass: 1) The role of education in transforming the political life of a society. 2) The need for ethics to be taught in schools. 3) The need to teach about differences--including those between teachers and learners--and how they are established and maintained. 4) The importance of questioning the time-honored concept of curriculum knowledge as sacred text. 5) The need to not only critique existing forms of knowledge, but also to push towards creating new ones as well. 6) The necessity of questioning and reformulating the universalist claims of Enlightenment reason. 7) The need to maintain a vision of a better world worth struggling for. 8) The need for teachers themselves to reassess their own position within education. And 9) the need for a critical pedagogy that incorporates the notion of voice by emphasizing the political nature of the subject and searching for ways that students can come to find a voice that is a critical exploration (p. 299). Through using guidelines such as these the aim is to "pursue a form of critical pedagogy that could intervene between English and the discourses it is linked with" (p. 187).

In relation to multicultural education in general, and to the EFL teacher in particular, this book presents some strong, well-thought out theory that, hopefully, could transfer to the classroom. For example, the author's well-thought out explanation and interpretation of Giroux's ideas provide a number of interesting angles on critical pedagogy that perhaps could expand readers' notions of it.

And finally, Pennycook goes out of his way to address a number of the standard criticisms of critical pedagogy in preemptive fashion. At one point, Pennycook comments how "as a teacher, . . . sections [he'd previously read] on teaching practices often appear frustratingly out of touch with how [he] understands [his] own classroom realities," and that it's his wish to avoid that pitfall by attempting "to lay out some general concerns in developing critical pedagogies of English" (p. 300). I think he accomplishes this objective to a remarkable degree, considering the plethora of varied problems facing an EFL teacher in each country and thus the impossibility of a one-size-fits-all solution.

It is obvious that Pennycook argues these ideas as something to aspire to, as something of a challenge for every EFL teacher, and for that his effort should be applauded. They are ideas that every potential

teacher of EFL should be aware of. And considering the fact that his stated goal is "to seek out ways of thinking about the position of English in the world that will help teachers to understand [their] work differently" (p. 5), I think he accomplishes this beautifully. The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language is an impressive attempt to address an incredibly complex situation.