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GREETINGS

Editor's Message

Carlos Islam, United Nations, USA

Hopefully you have had time to read the bumper issue of Folio, Vol. 9/2, and you are ready to take on this current issue with its 13 articles. Two of the articles in this issue come in two parts and you'll have to wait for Folio 10/2 later this year for the second halves. The first article in two halves is written by *Alan Maley*. **Alan documents significant creative movements in ELT since the 1960s as he sees it. In this issue he focuses on** *academic* **and** *methodological* **creativity. The second half, which you'll be able to read in November, he looks at** *institutional* **and** *individual* **creativity.**

The second of the two part articles investigates synesthesia, a science which includes the study of the unique ways individuals perceive language. **Pat Duffy** explains this field of research and its relevance to ELT in her accessible and engaging article *Personal Coding: the Varieties of Linguistic Experience.*

Also in this issue **Abigail Bartoshesky** describes her research revealing how teachers are using web-based materials in their ESL classrooms. **Andy Curtis** follows up on some of the challenges in *writing for publication* raised by Dorothy Zemach and Chris Mares in their past columns for *Folio*. Andy details some of his publishing experiences and offers useful insights to new and experienced authors alike.

No matter where your interest in materials development for language teaching originates, there must be something of interest in this issue of *Folio*. From **Judy Macdonald's** advice on publishing for the Elementary Education market to **Andrew Sewell's** illustrative article depicting a materials development project for the casino industry in Macau, our contributors bring an impressive range and depth of interests that I hope will engage your thoughts.

If you have an article to offer, materials to demonstrate, materials for review, a letter commenting on an article published in Folio or advertisement to place in *Folio*, please contact me at *islamc@un.org*. The deadline for the next issue of Folio, Vol. 10/2, is Monday, 5th September 2005.

Cheers,

Carlos

folio 10/1 August 2005

GREETINGS

Greetings from the President

Brian Tomlinson, MATSDA President, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

MATSDA has enjoyed another busy and successful year. In April I was invited to represent MATSDA at the BALEAP/SATEFL Conference in Edinburgh where I gave a plenary presentation on Localising the Global. Also in April Hitomi Masuhara and I were invited to represent MATSDA, first of all at a Materials Development Symposium organised by Pearson Malaysia in Damai Laut and then at the MICELT Materials Development conference in Melaka. Both these events will be held annually in Malaysia from now on and they will be organised by Jaya Mukundan, the MATSDA Committee Member for Malaysia.

In June Hitomi and I ran a MATSDA Weekend Workshop on Localising Materials at the Hark the Bounty in Slaidburn, Lancashire. As is traditional at MATSDA workshops held in pubs in beautiful countryside, we enjoyed eating, drinking, walking, talking and producing materials. Anyone with any ideas for topics and pubs for next year's workshop please get in touch <B.Tomlinson@leedsmet.ac.uk>

From September 2nd-4th there will be a major conference in Norwich to celebrate ten years of NILE and MATSDA will be organising a materials development strand throughout the Conference (see www.matsda.org.uk now for details of the Conference and of how to book). Then in late November and early December Hitomi and I will be travelling to Australia and New Zealand to run MATSDA days at the University of Western Sydney and the University of Auckland.

The big event in the near future will be the MATSDA/ACELS Conference in Dublin on January 21st and 22nd 2006. The theme will be What We Know and What We Do: Connecting Theory and Practice in Materials Development for Language Teaching and the plenary speakers will include Alan Maley, Hitomi Masuhara, Jim Ferguson, Ivor Timmis and Brian Tomlinson. If you are interested in giving a 45 minute presentation related to the theme of the Conference please contact me by the beginning of September. If you want details of how to book for the Conference check the MATSDA website at the end of August.

See you in Norwich, Dublin and a pub in beautiful countryside.

Brian Tomlinson *(B.Tomlinson@leedsmet.ac.uk)*

MATSDA/ACELS CONFERENCE

What We Know and What We Do

Connecting Theory and Practice in Materials Development for Language Teaching

January 21st-22nd 2006

The Teachers' Club, Dublin

The plenary speakers will include:

- *Alan Maley*
- *Hitomi Masuhara*
- *Jim Ferguson*
- *Ivor Timmis*
- *Brian Tomlinson*

Anybody wishing to give a 45 minute presentation related to the conference theme should send a brief abstract to Brian Tomlinson: B.Tomlinson@leedsmet.ac.uk by September 1st.

For details of the Conference speakers, the Conference fees and how to book check the MATSDA website: www.matsda.org.uk at the end of August.

See you in Dublin!

MATSDA/ACELS CONFERENCE

GREETINGS

Greetings from the Chair

Dave Allan, MATSDA Chair, Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE)

Those who know both our President, Brian Tomlinson, and me know that we share a lot of interests and passions in common, materials development, good food and wine, and football being three of them, the latter being the one of the longest duration and certainly the greatest passion. Brian and I have both supported our respective football teams, Liverpool (his) and Sunderland (mine) for around half a century, over which period we've both experienced the highs and lows of the committed fan – rather more of the lows in my case than for Brian. But when Brian talks in his 'Greetings from the President' about big events this year, and the joys of the MATSDA weekend workshop, of the forthcoming NILE/MATSDA conference in Norwich and the annual MATSDA Conference planned for Dublin in January next year, I know they cannot compete with what happened in Turkey earlier this year. No, not the Bilkent Conference, which Brian regularly attends, but Liverpool coming back from 3 goals down to win the European Cup. After that, I'm surprised he can call anything else a big event, but for MATSDA members the coming academic year does have some major treats in store.

First up, at the beginning of September (Friday 2nd to Sunday 4th), the Norwich Institute for Language Education is hosting a joint MATSDA/NILE event, where pairs of speakers will be exploring a range of themes under the title 'Dialogues'. There will be a MATSDA 'track', a materials development strand running through the conference, and many of the other speakers will be dealing with materials issues. Among some 40 speakers in total we will be having sessions from Alan Maley and Brian Tomlinson, Alan Pulverness and Antoinette Moses, Carol Spoettl and Mike McCarthy, Dave Allan and Kari Smith, George Pickering and Nick Owen, Claudia Ferradas and John McRae, Philip Prowse and Scott Thornbury, David A. Hill and Melanie Williams, Hitomi Masuhara and Ivor Timmis, Diana Eastment and Steve Walters, plus singleton sessions from Jeremy Harmer (the opening plenary), Gerhard Finster, Mario Rinvolucri and others. Titles and topics include 'Learner Literature', 'Writing and Using Extensive Readers', 'Technology in Transition', 'The role of metaphor', 'Bringing lessons to life with supplementary materials', 'Internalised texts', 'Creating hyperfiction', 'Creating stories for extensive reading', 'Designing a textbook for business students', 'Coursebooks? Of course!', and many more. Not quite the same levels of excitement as the European Cup Final (nor even as Sunderland being the English Championship Champions), but a wonderfully attractive menu for anyone interested in language teaching and language teaching materials. We'll hope to see you there.

The other big MATSDA event is our 2006 annual conference in Dublin, hosted and supported by ACELS, which Brian has mentioned in his letter, and which promises to take past MATSDA successes in Dublin to new heights. Make sure you get in touch with us if you would like to speak there.

It has been a good year so far for MATSDA in other respects, with the quality of both the events we have run and of 'Folio' itself maintaining the high standards we have tried to reach. This is thanks both to you, our members, who have contributed articles and led sessions of a very high standard, and to the members of the MATSDA Committee, who have put in hundreds of hours of good work to make it all happen.

MATSDA has always been for me a very special organisation, friendly and informal but developmental and professional. Thank you all for keeping it that way.

See you in Norwich, or Dublin, or possibly Wembley or Cardiff.

WORLD WIDE READERS

A Series of Web Readers for Adult Learners of English to Enjoy

Edited by Brian Tomlinson and Alan Maley

The Books

- The books are extensive readers aiming to provide enjoyable and engaging reading in English for non-native speakers anywhere in the world. The writers have not been subjected to linguistic grading or censorship of language or topics. Instead they have been encouraged and helped to write intuitively for older teenagers and adults.

Objectives of World Wide Readers

- To provide reading pleasure
- To help develop reading confidence and competence in English
- To provide an effective means of acquiring English during, outside and after English courses

The Launch

We are launching the series in January 2005 with the following books. We will add an extra ten books every six months.

- The Picture in the Attic by Richard MacAndrew and Cathy Lawday
- Blowin in the Wind by Olivia Farrington
- Dead Cold by Sue Leather
- Finders Keepers by Brian Tomlinson
- Jungle Fever by Jo Appleton
- Lanterns of Childhood by Bao Dat
- Perfect Present by Ron Barnett
- Why Didn't You Tell Me? by David A. Hill
- Family Ties by Jennifer Balchin
- There Is A Time by Alan Maley

The Website

For free samples of the readers and for details of how to download the readers go from January 2005 to: *www.ebooksworld.de*

Brian Tomlinson and Alan Maley

PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES

EAP Skills Development Materials: News material on the war in Iraq

Dominic Hammond, Leeds Metropolitan University, England

I developed and presented these materials at the MATSDA Weekend Workshop, 4 – 6 June 2004, Ingleton.

The materials are intended for an in-sessional course for students on undergraduate courses such as business studies, economics and marketing, although could be applied to a wider range of courses. I was looking to design materials which developed skills closely linked to the tasks students actually carry out on their main course, for example, listening and note taking, data collection and report writing, while building their confidence and competence in spoken English. A case in point is the preparing, piloting and conducting a survey. The process is a simulation of what learners would do when working on a dissertation or thesis, and the outcome could be to print the survey in a student newspaper, or even to post it on the university website.

The subject matter may seem controversial, but I felt that an emotive subject would be a good way to engage the students' interest and provide some motivation to complete the tasks. The listening materials are taken from BBC Radio 4; the hourly news and Moneybox. Although using current affairs material may run the risk of having a short shelf life, I felt that this subject matter will date reasonably well, and by using it in the future, learners would gain a perspective on events by looking back on the situation. Furthermore, the format of the lesson can easily be adapted to other current affairs items; audio or video.

The unit of materials is intended for 2 two hour lessons.

EAP Skills Development Materials: News material on the war in Iraq

In this unit, you will:

- Compare your knowledge and opinions on a news story
- Test your listening skills
- Take and compare notes
- Learn note taking techniques
- Put these techniques into practice
- Prepare, pilot and conduct a survey based on the news story
- Write up a report of this survey.

Pre-listening

You're going to listen to a news item about the conflict in Iraq. First of all, talk in small groups about what you already know about the situation, using the following questions to guide you.

- When and why did the war start?
- When did the war finish? What is happening now?
- Which countries are involved in the conflict? What are the names of their leaders?
- Which countries were opposed to the war? What are the names of their leaders?
- How do you feel about the situation in Iraq? What is your opinion?

First listening

Listen, and answer the following questions.

- Choose 1 or 2 of the following words to describe President Bush's view of Iraq's future according to what you have heard. Do not state your opinion at this stage.

  a) Optimistic
  b) Aggressive
  c) Pessimistic
  d) Confident

- When is the handover of power in Iraq due to take place?

Second listening

Listen again, and take notes, organising them under the headings below:

Bush's view:
Meetings in Europe:
Bush's plan for future of Iraq:
UN's view:

It may help if you use the following abbreviations:

B. = President Bush
Be. = Berlusconi (Prime Minister of Italy)
C. = Chirac (President of France)

After listening, compare your notes in small groups.

Whose notes contain the most information? Whose are easiest to follow?

Language Focus: Note taking techniques

Do you know any good note-taking techniques?

When listening to any kind of spoken English, it's obviously not possible to write down every word you hear. Therefore, you have to be selective and know which words are essential to write down.

Study the first sentence from the listening extract:

'President Bush has said he's confident that the UN Security Council will pass the American sponsored resolution on the future of Iraq.'

Which words do you think are unnecessary? Cross out any unnecessary words and make sure you can understand the remaining words. Be careful to keep all the essential information.

Speaking

In groups, discuss the following questions (you may want to use your notes).

- How confident do you feel about the situation in Iraq?
- Do you think the country will have better future?
- What role will the UN and the USA play in this?
- In what ways have the troubles in Iraq affected the world? Think about economic, political and security implications.

Take notes of your opinion on these issues. Later, you will use this information to help you prepare a survey.

Abbreviations

How many abbreviations do you know? Compare in your small groups, and make a list.

Note taking practice

Work in pairs using the cards provided. One student should read out a sentence, and the other should take notes, using the techniques you have learned. (see below for Student A and Student B sentences)

Homework: Preparing a survey (1)

You are going to prepare a survey to find out people's opinions about the situation in Iraq. Use your notes from the listening and from your own discussion to make ten questions. Try to make the questions as varied as possible. You may want to follow the news on the TV or radio to get more ideas for your questions.

Pre-listening

Previously in the unit, you listened to a radio news item about Iraq. Now, you are going to listen to a longer item from a radio programme about how the conflict in Iraq has affected the world economy. With a partner, make a list of different ways in which you could be affected by this.

First listening

Listen to the recording with your list. Were any items on your list mentioned?

Note taking practice

Listen again, and take notes, organising them under the headings below. Remember to use the note taking techniques you learned earlier in the unit.

Bank of England/The City
Oil/petrol price changes
Oil price predictions (2 opinions)
Influences of Chinese/Indian economies
Effects on UK economy
Prediction on interest rate rises
Personal debt
Pensions

Preparing a survey (2)

In pairs, compare the questions you prepared and do the following:

- Using your notes from the listening, make five additional questions
- Choose the ten best questions; you will use these for your survey
- Check the questions for grammatical accuracy

Language Focus: Pronunciation

Practice asking the questions, bearing in mind the following pronunciation points:

- Which word in the question will you stress?
- How should you use your voice?

Piloting a survey

In each pair, one student should ask the questions and the other should take notes of the answers. Alternatively, you may each want to do a bit of both.

Look at the handout provided, and consider how you would like to introduce the survey, and what questions should you ask in order to get the respondent profile.

Find another pair, and practice asking/answering the questions. After this practice, discuss with your partner how you think the survey went. Do you want to change anything about the way you conduct the survey?

Conducting a survey

In your pairs, find ten respondents from around the campus and conduct the survey. If possible, try to find respondents from various age groups. Do remember to use your note taking techniques, as this will save time when conducting the survey.

Homework: Writing a report

Write a 200 word report based on the findings of your survey. In the next unit, we will be looking at report writing techniques.

Sources of listening materials

BBC Radio 4; extract from the hourly news, midday, 5/6/04.

BBC Radio 4; extract from Moneybox, 5/6/04.

STUDENT A

Look at the sentences below. Read one sentence; your partner will take notes. Then listen to your partner's sentence and take notes.

Mr Bush was speaking in Rome after talks with the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlosocni and ahead of a meeting in Paris with President Chirac who opposed the war in Iraq.

Now the world understands the importance of working with the Iraqis to encourage the development of a free society.

STUDENT B

Look at the sentences below. Read one sentence; your partner will take notes. Then listen to your partner's sentence and take notes.

There may have been differences of opinion about Saddam Hussein and the enforcement of Security Council resolution 1441.

Mr Bush said he sensed a spirit of unity in Europe towards helping the new Iraq.

Dominic Hammond teaches at Leeds Metropolitan University on general English, EAP and ESP courses. He may be contacted at d.hammond@leedsmet.ac.uk

SURVEY ON IRAQ

Profile of respondent:

Question	Answer
1	:
2	:
3	:
4	:
5	:
6	:
7	:
8	:
9	:
10	:

INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

The Creative Spark in ELT: A Retrospective … Part One

Alan Maley

(This is the first half of a two part article Alan has written for Folio. The second half will be published in the Autumn, in Volume 10/2 of Folio.)

The original brief for this article was to survey the development of creative ideas in ELT over the past 25 years (1980-2005). On reflection however, this time constraint seemed to be both artificial and unnecessarily limiting. Where had the creative ideas of the past 25 years come from in the first place? How did we get to where we are? It was the search for answers to these questions which prompted me to push back the limits of the survey to the 1960's.

Why the 1960's? I view the 1960's as a period of intense creative ferment – politically, intellectually, scientifically and artistically. It was a time when traditional lifestyles, beliefs, values and ideologies were being vigorously challenged. This was most obvious in the wave of sometimes violent student demonstrations, sit-ins, and public debates which swept across Western Europe, particularly affecting France (where they almost brought down the government), Germany, and Italy. In the States, Martin Luther King gave his famous 'I have a dream' speech in 1963, and was assassinated in 1968 at the height of the Civil Rights campaign. There was protest all across America against the Vietnam war. In China the first home-made atomic bomb was exploded in 1964, and in 1966 the 'Cultural Revolution' began its 10-year period of chaos. Yuri Gagarin was the first man in space in 1961, and Neil Armstrong the first man to set foot on the moon in 1969. Quite a decade!

At much the same time the philosophers-cum-literary/social critics such as Derrida, Foucault, Baudrillart, Lyotard (1992), Lacan and others were busily 'de-constructing' the accepted world around them. The effect of this post-modernist project of de-construction was to shake the foundations of certainty on which society had until then rested. In a de-constructed world, nothing is certain: everything is open to 'contestation'.

In literature too, critics and writers such as Roland Barthes and Alain Robbe-Grillet were inventing new modes of literary expression in the 'nouveau roman'. Writers like Simone de Beauvoir were taking the lid off feminism. The effects of surrealism (itself from an earlier period) were beginning to trickle down and attract more attention as the work of painters like Magritte, de Chirico, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, and of course Picasso became better known. In the theatre, the 'theatre of the absurd' (Esslin 2004), exemplified in the plays of Ionesco, and the 'theatre of cruelty' was in full swing. And directors such as Alain Resnais, Francois Truffaut, Louis Malle, Jean-Luc Godard and others were re-inventing cinema, in the films of what became known as the 'nouvelle vague'.

As an anglophone teacher of English, you might well ask what all this has to do with creativity in ELT. Who are all these French people anyway, and what possible connection do they have to ELT? I would agree that there is little direct connection. However, I also believe that the complex kaleidoscope of ideas characteristic of a particular period of time – what is sometimes called the 'Zeitgeist' or 'spirit of the age' – subtly and indirectly interpenetrates and influences thinking in all areas of activity.

In any case, things were moving on the anglophone front too. The humanistic philosophy of Carl Rogers (1969), with its emphasis on the whole person, could not fail to affect the way we came to view our learners. In philosophy, the ideas developed by Austin (1962) in his *How to Do Things with Words* were hugely influential, and formed part of the foundations for the 'functional-notional' movement of the 70's. John Searle's development of speech-act theory (1969) on the basis of Austin's work also formed part of this new way of viewing language. The work of Karl Popper (1959) with its insistence on the disprovability of theories, was shaking the positivist foundations of science. Thomas Kuhn's coining of the term 'paradigm shift' (1962) was also a defining moment in the way we view the process of scientific discovery (even if he profoundly disagreed with Popper.) The unconventional ideas of R,D.Laing and his colleagues were likewise transforming views of insanity and how it should be treated, with some interesting spin-off for language. And Arthur Koestler (1964) was inquiring into the very nature of creativity itself.

The British educational scene was also undergoing massive change with the enforced democratisation of access to secondary education. The 'New Maths' was creating original ways of making mathematical concepts clear to young children through 'hands-on' activity ('I do and I understand'). And, partly under the influence of the ideas of Raymond Williams (1958) and

other socialist thinkers, there was a similar movement towards creativity, oracy, freedom of expression and liberalism in the teaching of English as a mother tongue. These were given expression in the work of educationists such as Douglas Barnes (1969, 1976), James Britton (1970), John Holloway, Nancy Martin and Geoffrey Summerfield.

In the world of the theatre, the unnervingly absurdist plays of Harold Pinter were drawing attention. Satirical attacks on the establishment in the form of the magazine *Private Eye*, founded in 1961, and the cabaret review *Beyond the Fringe* (launched the same year) were beginning to wrinkle the British stiff upper-lip. But perhaps the most ostensible sign of change was the explosion of creativity in the world of pop culture in 1960's Britain. The fashion world, with Carnaby Street at its epicentre, and the advent of music groups such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones were the epitome of youthful creativity. After almost two decades of post-War gloom and drabness, 1960's Britain was suddenly all colour, movement, and iconoclasm. It was the time of 'flower power' and London was where it was at.

There were also powerful currents of protest and educational change in the world at large. Among the most seminal I would list Ivan Illich in Mexico (1970), Paulo Freire in Brasil (1970), Postman and Weingartner (1969) in the USA. We should also not forget that the 1960's also saw the translation of Vygotsky's work into English (1962). Krishnamurthi's (2000) unconventional educational ideas were also becoming better known and appreciated, particularly his claim for individual responsibility for learning.

The 1960's then were the seedbed or launching pad for many of the creative ideas which surfaced in the following decades. More importantly perhaps, the 60's established a climate of thought – freedom to think the unthinkable; to flout convention; to critically scrutinise and challenge established assumptions; to seek new ways of solving old problems. It is the 1960's which made possible the astounding mushrooming of creative ideas which have characterised our Applied Linguistics / Language Teaching world ever since.

If we can accept 'meme' theory (Dawkins 1973, Blackmore 1996, Watson-Todd 2004), even if only as a metaphor, we can view the 1960's as a particularly rich period for the formation of new memes – ideas which spread rapidly, and become common property.

In the remainder of this article, I shall, for the sake of convenience, group the creative minds and movements under four headings: Academic Creativity; Methodological Creativity; Institutional Creativity; Individual Creativity.

Academic Creativity

Here I shall try to summarise some of the major contributions to emerge from Academia. I have separated this off because the theoretical breakthroughs rarely, if ever, translate directly into classroom practice. They nonetheless serve to create a climate of thought which often influences, however slowly, unconsciously or indirectly, the direction of more practical manifestations of creativity.

Chomsky's devastating review of Skinner's *Behaviourism* (1959) marks a watershed in our thinking about the nature of language. The review, and the publication of *Syntactic Structures* (1957) and *Aspects of a Theory of Syntax* (1965), forced a major re-examination of the principles on which language teaching was based, and its ripples can still be felt. The fact that all humans are hard-wired to learn language, that surface structures are manifestations of 'deep structure', that learning takes place through exposure to language in contexts of use – such ideas all but destroyed the Behaviourist canon of beliefs. Chomsky must therefore be considered a major academic genius of our time – the Einstein of linguistics.

In Europe, and with a much more direct impact on the classroom, it was Wilkins (1976) who put forward the powerful view of language as a set of 'notions' and 'functions' – language for doing things, in contradistinction to a view of language as a set of grammatical structures. This insight set in motion a wave of academic books and articles, (Brumfit 1984) and the first 'new look' courses based on a functional organisation of language. (Abbs and Freebairn 1977) The intellectual ferment and dialectical debate provoked by Wilkins' ideas surely places him among the most creative contributors to our field in the late 20th century.

The influence of Michael Halliday (1978, 1985) has also been of great significance. Taking up the baton from Firth (1957) his work pointed to a view of language as socially-embedded, and socially constructed. This has had a major impact on the way English is now taught, especially in Australia, through work on the teaching of genres at school level. Hallidayan thinking permeates much of the practical work done in classrooms in many parts of the world.

Until the 1960's, study of language was largely confined to phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. 'Grammar' meant essentially the grammar of the sentence. This began to change with the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Their investigation of classroom discourse revealed higher order patterning of texts – above the level of the sentence. This opened the door for the subsequent explosion of studies into text and discourse, both spoken and written. The work of the ethnomethodologists, such as Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Goffman (1981), and on relevance theory and pragmatics (Brown and Levinson 1987, Levinson 1983) has run in parallel with these developments, and has given us better insights into the way spoken

language is managed. (Tsui 1994). The move towards a more socio-cultural view of language owed much to the work of pioneers like Fishman (1968), Gumperz and Hymes (XXXX) and Labov (1972) in putting sociolinguistics centre-stage.

It was Sinclair too who pioneered the computerised study of language corpora, particularly through the Cobuild project (1987). This work has been taken forward by others such as Biber (1998, 1999). One of the main fruits of this study was the emergence of collocational patterns based on actual instances of usage rather than armchair speculation, and the spawning of a whole new generation of dictionaries. The way we now view vocabulary and its teaching was also heavily influenced by these studies. The frontier between grammar and lexis became blurred: grammar at the level of the word was back in business. (We should not, of course, forget the much earlier pioneering work of Palmer in this area (Howatt 2004, Palmer 1938, Smith 2003).

In the area of phonology, the independent spirit of inquiry demonstrated by David Brazil (1985) in his work on intonation has still to percolate fully through into instructional materials, though there are some exceptions (Bradford and Brazil 1988). His insight that the major function of intonation is to distinguish given from new information surprises through its simplicity, originality and elegance. His further work on describing a spoken grammar of English, separate and different from written grammar (1995) was tragically interrupted by his death but has been taken forward by Carter and McCarthy in their work on spoken corpora (1997).

A further area of creative endeavour resulted in the opening up of SLA research. The big research question, to which all others are in a sense tributary, is 'How do we learn languages?' It was largely through the work of Corder (1981) in the UK, and Selinker (1972) in the States with their investigations of Interlanguage that this question began seriously to be addressed. Previously the question had been answered by a mixture of dogmatic assertion and folk beliefs about language learning. Thereafter began a long and arduous search for answers based upon careful observation and experimental research. While it is true that the yield has been relatively meagre compared with the effort expended (see Ellis 1994), we do have at least some firm data on which to base pedagogical decisions. (The most accessible account of these is Lightbown and Spada 2000)

By the 1980's there was a gathering body of opinion that the locus for research should shift to the classroom itself. The pioneering work of Allwright and Bailey (1991) deserves special mention for laying the basis for classroom research, together with the developments fostered by Freeman and others (1982). One implication of this work was that teachers would become 'researchers' by undertaking action research projects in their own classrooms, rather than relying on the theoretical pronouncements of the academic pundits. Action research has since become an important card in the Teacher Development pack (Edge and Richards 1993). Indeed, the emergence of Teacher Development (TD) in a complementary relationship with Teacher Training (TT) (Head and Taylor 1997) has accomplished a great deal in freeing up teacher creativity, and in restoring teacher self-esteem.

The spread of English as a language of international communication has been one of the hallmarks of the past 30 years or so. The implications of this have led to some highly creative thinking about the role English now plays in world affairs. Tom McArthur was one of the first to recognise the importance of this new role for English, and his founding of English Today (in 1985) marks a milestone. Braj Kachru's now famous three circles model (1986) helped sharpen awareness both of the spread of English and of some of the inequalities it helped to promote. These were taken up later by researchers such as Robert Phillipson (1992), Suresh Canagarajah (1999), and Alistair Pennycook (1994). All of them challenged the notion of English as a neutral, beneficial and 'natural' phenomenon. This critical take on English in the world has led others, such as Jennifer Jenkins (2000), to attempt a re-balancing of power relations by drawing attention to the differences between metropolitan varieties of English and English as an international Language (EIL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

In the area of reading research, frontiers were being pushed back by scholars such as Kenneth Goodman (1967, 1986), Louise Rosenblatt (1978) and Frank Smith (1978). Goodman's 'whole language' approach to reading – as a process of meaning-making was in stark contrast to earlier 'bottom-up' approaches. Rosenblatt is chiefly to thank for the 'reader response' approach to reading, with its emphasis on an aesthetic, personal response to texts rather than a purely instrumental, efferent, referential approach to texts as repositories of 'meaning'. Reading, literature and culture have always been closely linked. The work of Claire Kramsch (1993) among others has highlighted the language/culture connection. The importance of literature in a language teaching context has been strongly put by Widdowson (1992), Carter and Long (1987), and McRae (1991) among many others. After a long period of neglect, the use of literary texts in language teaching was being reasserted.

Approaches to the teaching of writing were revolutionised when the practices of the 'process-writing' school (initially developed in the context of mother tongue teaching in the States) were applied to second language teaching. The key figures in this movement included Donald Murray (1980) (see also Flurkey and Xu 2003), Peter Elbow, Janet Emig (1971,

1977), Ann Raimes (1991)and Vivian Zamel (1982). Although the process-writing approach has since been widely criticised, there is no doubt that it significantly altered perceptions about how writing might be taught by shifting attention from the textual product to the processes writers engage with in their writing.

In this section, I have focussed on major academic contributions to our understanding of language and how it is learnt and taught. These might be summarised as language and the mind (Chomsky), language and the world (Halliday, Wilkins et al), language and text (Sinclair), language and the learner (Corder et al), language and classrooms (Allwright et al), language and power (Kachru et al.), language and phonology (Brazil et al), language and reading (Rosenblatt et al), language, literature and culture (Kramsch et al) and language and writing (Murray et al).

Methodological Creativity

In this section, I shall focus on creative contributions to methods of teaching. For a comprehensive recent survey of this area, see Richards and Rodgers (2001).

Undoubtedly the most comprehensive methodological development in this period has been the slow evolution of the Communicative Approach, based in part on the perceptions of Austin and Searle, and on those of Hymes (1972). From the earliest prototypes in its Functional-Notional beginnings to its latest manifestations in the Task-based and Lexical approaches (see below) it has become the commanding paradigm, to the extent that, for some critics, it is now so ubiquitous as to have no meaning. When everything is communicative, what distinguishes it from anything else? In its early days however it provoked a flurry of creative experimentation in classroom techniques, in syllabus design and in published materials. A heady mixture of techniques ranging from roleplay, drama, using pop songs, information and opinion gap activities to jigsaw reading (and listening), and problem-solving were tried, especially in the private sector schools in the UK. The educational philosophy was one of learner-centredness, with the teacher in the role of facilitator. The overall focus was on communicating genuine meanings, with an emphasis on the use of 'authentic' texts. The former P-P-P paradigm was inverted: first students were engaged in communication; only later would attention be given to the linguistic aspects of the communication. 'Learning to use' became 'Using to learn'. It is now hard to convey to anyone who did not live through this phase of creative ferment just how exhilarating and exciting it was. A new wave of course materials was also being published in support of the Communicative Approach. (See below – Institutional Creativity - for the role of publishers as agents of creativity.) *Kernel Lessons* by Robert O'Neill et al (1971) marked a clear break with the past, to be followed by Brian Abbs and Ingrid Freebairn's Strategies (1977), Michael Swan and Catherine Walter's *The Cambridge English Course* (1992), John and Liz Soars' *Headway* – and a host of others. All of these both drew upon and contributed to the sense of creative adventure released by the Communicative Approach.

At more or less the same time that the Communicative Approach was spreading its tentacles, there emerged a number of rather unusual methodologies, all of which exhibited a high degree of creativity in the sense that they flouted prevailing conventions. The Silent Way, brainchild of Caleb Gattegno (1972), offered minimal inputs which were to be worked on intensively by each individual learner. Learners were made to rely on themselves in building 'inner criteria'. The paraphernalia of coloured rods, pointer and charts became the distinguishing features of a demanding method, the rigours of which many learners did not survive. Community Language Learning (CLL), propounded by Charles Curran (1976), which had its origins in Rogerian psychology, with a tincture of Freudian psychology, and a dash of religious redemption, was truly original in the sense that it was the students who, from the outset, decided what they wished to learn. The teacher became a 'knower' who needed to respond quickly, flexibly and sensitively to learners' needs and to guide them from total dependence to independence. Suggestopoedia, the method developed by Georgi Lozanov in Bulgaria (1988), aimed to lower learners' threshold of resistance to learning by means of music, comfortable chairs, dimmed lights and an atmosphere of relaxed alertness. It was the complete opposite of the Silent Way, in that students were exposed to very long texts, a great deal of teacher talk, and were urged not to make a conscious effort to learn. Total Physical Response (TPR), developed by James Asher (1977/1982) emphasised a comprehension approach to foreign language learning based upon the 'silent period' observed in L1 learners.. Learners were not required to speak in the early stages, but simply to carry out actions in response to the teacher's instructions. Although none of these methods attracted a mass following, possibly because of the almost religious fervour required of their devotees, they have nonetheless contributed significantly to current methodology, and many of their practices have been quietly incorporated within our contemporary practice.

Stephen Krashen's (1985) 'monitor model' has also made a significant, and iconoclastic, contribution to current methodology. Krashen's ideas are couched in a number of intuitively plausible assertions: that there are two separate modes of learning a foreign language – conscious learning and unconscious acquisition; that acquisition is what we should be aiming for; that there is a 'natural order' for acquiring the language; that acquisition will take place naturally if learners are exposed to plentiful input; that this input should be at the right level of challenge (the famous i+1 formula), and mediated in a non-threatening atmosphere. So far these assertions remain unproven but they chime to some degree with Chomsky's ideas on L1 acquisition, and with Lozanov's notion of unconscious learning. They also fit neatly with the rising tide of proof that extensive reading is perhaps the most effective way to learn a language (Day and Bamford 1998). Krashen's ideas have found concrete expression in 'The Natural Approach' which he developed with Tracey Terrell (1983).

Communicative Language Learning has continued to evolve in response to changes in the linguistic and pedagogical landscape. Two developments merit particular mention: the Lexical Approach and Task-based Learning.

The notion of a process (or procedural) syllabus owes its existence to N.S.Prabhu (1987). One of the most original methodological thinkers of the period, Prabhu asserted that language learning takes place best when the mind is engaged elsewhere. His classic experiment – the Bangalore Project (Prabhu 1987) – was designed to show how a syllabus based uniquely on tasks, would work in practice. In essence, the learners were required to solve a number of problems, related to their real-life needs. With skillful teacher mediation, Prabhu claimed that this produced better results than approaches which attempted a frontal assault on the language. Though this was never proven to the entire satisfaction of the academic research community, Prabhu's pioneering work is at the base of all subsequent work in this area. (Willis 1996, Willis and Willis 1996, Ellis 2003)

The Lexical Approach was the brainchild of Michael Lewis, who promoted it untiringly both through conference presentations and workshops, and through his publications. (Lewis 1993 ; see also Willis 1990.) Essentially, Lewis was arguing for a redressing of the balance between syntax and lexis in language teaching. The work of researchers such as Nattinger and de Carrico (1992) had shown how much of language is lexically stored, rather than syntactically generated. The corpus-based studies at Cobuild and elsewhere added substance to a view of language which was primarily lexical. It was Lewis who put these insights to practical use in his work, and it is largely to his credit that vocabulary and collocation are now so firmly entrenched as organising principles in many materials.

(Go to http://www.matsda.org to see the full bibliography for this article.)

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INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

Personal Coding: the Varieties of Linguistic Experience - Part One

Patricia L. Duffy, United Nations, USA

> *'Until very recent years, it was supposed by philosophers that there was a typical human mind which all individual minds were like... Lately however, a mass of revelations have poured in which make us see how false a view this is.'*
>
> – William James, 1890

As far back as the nineteenth-century, the psychologist and philosopher, William James concluded that human minds came in a variety of types. His research into psychology had shown him that each individual apprehended the world in a unique way, processing and coding it with a unique stamp. In fact, in his work, James was perhaps among the first to emphasize auditory, visual and kinetic components of individuals' inner 'representational systems' as the essence of the workings of the mind.

In our own time, researchers into learning theory and learning style have reinforced James' conclusions, stressing the importance of the individual's unique way of internalizing knowledge – its unique blend of auditory, visual and kinetic elements. Each person has a way of absorbing, processing and coding information from the outside world – with a mix of visual, auditory, and kinetic components that is not quite like any other person's.

As language teachers, we have tried to apply this understanding to our own teaching, sometimes using learning style tests to better know our students' unique ways of processing and coding. However, some researchers, such as Carlos Islam (see 'Research into the Learning Style Preferences of Spanish EFL Students and its Implications for Materials Developers and Teachers'), have at times found the results of such indicators confusing, feeling they may not provide the expected insight into their students' learning styles. Why is this? Could it be that most (if not all) such testing instruments simply cannot account for the full complexity of what they are measuring, i.e., the 'inner landscape' an individual human mind has constructed to code language?

In an attempt to address this question, let's take Vladimir Nabokov as an example. In his autobiography, *Speak Memory*, the great twentieth-century multilingual author, describes his inner perception of letters of the alphabet and words:

'.... a French *a* evokes polished ebony. This black group [of letters] also includes hard *g* (vulcanized rubber) and *y* (a sooty rag being ripped). Oatmeal *n*, noodle-limp *l*, and the ivory-backed hand mirror of *o* take care of the whites. I am puzzled by my French on which I see as the brimming tension-surface of alcohol in a small glass. Passing on to the blue group, there is steely *x*, thundercloud *z*, and huckleberry *k*...I hasten to complete my list before I am interrupted. In the green group, there are alder-leaf *f*, the unripe apple of *p*, and pistachio *t*. Dull green, combined somehow with violet, is the best I can do for *w*. The yellows comprise various *e*'s and *I*'s, creamy *d*, bright golden *y* and *u*, whose alphabetical value I can express only by "brassy with an olive sheen." In paler *j*, and the drab shoelace of *h*. Finally, among the reds, *b* has the tone called burnt sienna by painters, *m* is a fold of pink flannel...'

As Nabokov writes in *Speak Memory*, his description 'presents a fine case of colored hearing'; that is, spoken words regularly evoked for him an automatic, consistent inner experience of color and texture. Nabokov's regular experience of blended perceptions in response to language is what neuroscientists term *color-lexical synesthesia*, a form of perception that, over the last two decades, has been increasingly studied at universities around the world - from Cambridge University, where major research began in the 1980's, to the University of Hanover, to the University of Melbourne, to several branches of the University of California, to Yale University – to name just a few. For synesthetes like Nabokov, the color/tactile attributes perceived in letters and words never vary but remain constant each time that word is heard, read or thought of.

Although the phenomenon of synesthesia has been known for centuries, it is only in the last twenty years or so (since scientists developed brain-imaging technology, enabling them to look inside the brain and see what is happening when such experiences are reported) that synesthesia has been more and more studied. In 1995, a Cambridge University neuroscientist, Dr. Simon Baron-Cohen headed a team that undertook brain-imaging studies of color-lexical synesthetes. Upon hearing a list of words read aloud, the synesthetes showed increased neural blood flow to a part of the brain that controls aspects of color perception (while a control group did not). The results of the study indicated that hearing words produced a perception of color for the synesthetes. What's more, color-language synesthetes often report inwardly perceiving their colored alphabet letters in a certain configuration, almost a kind of landscape. One synesthete, for example, describes the alphabet as 'a string of letters gradually sloping uphill.'

But why is this study important? Does it have any implications for the 199/200 people who don't experience color-lexical synesthesia?

Among other things, the study of synesthesia has opened the door to the realization that each of us processes language in a unique way. Even among synesthetes, the pattern of processing is not uniform; researchers are discovering a range of possible experiences and neural patterns for processing words and letters. Also, as we will explore later, scientists are finding that all of us have a degree of synesthesia from mild to strong (which is why such synesthetic, i.e., cross-sensory metaphors as 'loud colors' and 'sharp cheese' make sense to all of us). The study of synesthesia is helping researchers to understand the variety of ways that the human brain can process and code language.

Let's return for a moment to the case of the synesthete, Nabokov. Nabokov died in 1977, emigrated from his native Russia first to Europe, then later to the US in 1940 -- decades before much scientific research into synesthesia or even modern theories of learning styles was underway. But imagine, for a moment, a different scenario: imagine that Nabokov had been born half a century or so later, immigrating to the U.S. in the 1980's. Imagine that he did not arrive fluent in three languages including English. Imagine him, rather, in an ESL class taking a learning style quiz, dutifully given by a teacher hoping to better understand how most effectively to present language to him and to other students, given their different modes of processing. How would Nabokov, with his particular inner perception of language, have scored on such a quiz? Would he have come out as an auditory learner, a visual learner or a tactile one? What would the results have revealed to the teacher about his preference for taking in language? Would any learning style quiz be adequate to address the complexity of Nabokov's inner experience of language?

It may be tempting to argue that a literary genius like Vladimir Nabokov had an extraordinary inner experience of language, far beyond that of most 'ordinary' people – However, recent research has shown that such 'extraordinary' inner experiences of language may be far more common than previously thought.

What the study of synesthesia is revealing

While in the early 1980's, some researchers put the incidence of color-lexical synesthesia at 1 in 10,000,000, over the last two decades neuroscientists like V.S. Ramachandran, of the University of California at San Diego's Center for the Study of the Brain and Cognition, have changed the estimate to 1/200. And even among those 1/200, persons, there is no uniformity -- not all synesthetes perceive the same colors/textures for the same words or alphabet letters—even among synesthetes, the color-sound perception is unique, idiosyncratic.*

What's more, Dr. Ramachandran says, all of us (the other 199) have some experience of synesthesia, i.e., cross-sensory associations/experiences when processing language. The difference in processing between the 1/200 and the 199 may be a matter of degree and conscious awareness. Also, sensory features besides color may be prominent.

The study of synesthesia may open a dialogue that reveals the unique way that each of us inwardly experiences language and the unique 'personal code' that we have unconsciously evolved to represent it. And this new dialogue may reveal why some researchers have found learning style indicators fall short of providing the expected insight into how language is apprehended in given individual cases. While learning style theorists have sensed the importance of the unique mix or dominance of auditory, visual and kinetic elements in a given individual's absorption of language the testing instruments so far developed may be inadequate to match the inner complexity of this process.

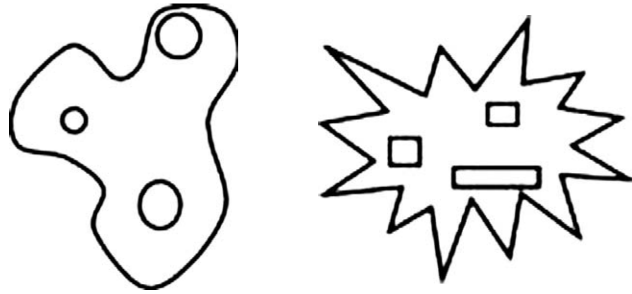
The individual's own reflecting upon and describing of the process may provide some useful insight. Could the results of any learning style indicator have provided more insight into Nabokov's mode of processing than Nabokov's own description did?

Synesthetic elements are common to all modes of language processing.

The study of classic (color-lexical) synesthetic modes of language processing – because its features are so salient and so accessible to the color lexical synesthete – may reveal something about the idiosyncratic nature of all language processing. For, as mentioned earlier, research indicates that all language processing contains sensory components or synesthetic elements on a continuum from mild to strong (Marks).

Dr. V.S. Ramachandran of the University of California at San Diego's Center for the Study of the Brain and Cognition, offers an interesting exercise that shows the synesthetic element at work in language processing. It is important to restate here that synesthetic perceptions

do not always involve words (i.e., sounds) triggering perceptions of color; they can also involve, among many other other combinations*, given sounds triggering perceptions of given shapes. In his fascinating series of 2003 BBC Reith Lectures, titled 'The Emerging Mind', Dr. Ramachandran offers an example. Look at the two shapes below. Which shape is the 'kiki' and which shape is the 'booba'?



Did you answer that the image on the left is the 'booba', the one on the right, the 'kiki'? If so, you have answered as 98 per cent of the population does. But why do most of us answer like this? It is because we are making a cross-sensory, synesthetic connection between sharpness of sound and sharpness of shape. As Dr. Ramachandran explains,

'... if you do this experiment, 98% of people say the jagged shape... is kiki, and the bulbous amoeboid shape is a booba. Now why is that? The answer is you're all synesthetes. And I'll explain. Look at the kiki and look at the sound kiki. They both share one property, the kiki visual shape has a sharp inflexion and the sound kiki represented in your auditory cortex, in the hearing centres in the brain also has a sharp sudden inflexion of the sound and the brain performs a cross-modal synesthetic abstraction saying the only thing they have in common is the property of jaggedness. Let me extract that property, that's why they're both kiki.'

In a similar vein, Yale University researcher Dr. Lawrence Marks writes,

'Some of the strongest evidence to support the view that visual auditory correspondence found in synesthetes are similar or identical in nature to correspondences found in [others] (non-synesthetes) adduces from studies of sound symbolism in speech – what is often termed phonetic symbolism. The notion that the sounds of words convey meaning has a history that ges back to at least Plato (*Cratylus*) and was echoed, in one form or another by Rousseau (1753) and later by Balzac (1832) who asked rhetorically, "Are not most words colored with the idea that they represent externally?" (p.74-75)

Some years ago, I was doing research for a book on synesthesia (my own personal inner experience of colored words had led me to contact neuroscientists and other 'colored-word' synesthetes in an effort to understand more about the phenomenon). While interviewing a given synesthete about his or her regular experience of colored words, I found that there would often be someone else in the vicinity (friend, spouse, etc), who, upon hearing the synesthetic description would be prompted to report features of their own regular inner language experience. Often, the person would say something like, 'Well, I don't experience words or letters as having color, but I do experience...' and then would then go on to relate a personal inner way of coding language that was not quite like anything I'd ever heard before. It also became clear that, as the person described the inner perception, s/he became more and more conscious of its features, often finding it personally revealing.

It is important to point out that, as in the case of strong color-lexical synesthesia, the perceptions reported were not anomalous or occasional events, but regular and consistent, i.e., the perception always happens in response to a given language trigger. This consistency, considered a hallmark of synesthetic experience, seemed to be a regular feature of the other descriptions I received as well.

Can 'personal codes' for language be useful as a language study tool?

I began collecting reports of inner perceptions of language, finding them fascinating in and of themselves—but also wondering if they could be used in a practical way to promote memory or language learning. If a person became more conscious of his or her own particular way of coding language, could this 'personal code' be used as a learning tool? Could the personal code suggest ways the individual might best absorb and retain the language to be learned?

Below are some 'personal language code' descriptions I collected. They range from practical to poetic (and there is a reason for this 'poetic' quality, as this article will explore later: the metaphor-making part of the brain is located next to the part that's active when processing 'characters', i.e., alphabet letters, digits – in some individuals, there appears to be more cross-activation between these adjacent parts).

Let's start with one of the more practical descriptions:

Xiao Fan, a young woman attending my writing class, related this description:

'Whenever I am writing in Chinese and looking for a word, I get a picture of a screen in my mind - something like a tv or computer screen. When I think of the word, the character appears on my mental screen.'

'My mental screen is really useful,' she continues, 'but it only works in Chinese. The screen doesn't work in English. I wish I could make the screen work when I am writing in English too. Then the English words I need could come up on the screen.'

Is Xiao Fan on to something with that wish? Is she sensing that she might use her naturally occurring inner language imagery to help her develop her writing in English too? By reflecting on her inner experience of language, what we might call her 'personal language code', she may be able to develop its potential as a tool for more effective language learning. It is, after all, in that inner experience that learning happens. Could Xiao Fan represent such imagery in her notes (taking the concept of picture notes one step further), in a language-learning diary -- perhaps a PC diary in which such visual imagery might be easily represented.

Another personal language code description comes from Laurent Schlemmer, a journalist and translator, who reported an inner kinetic experience of language when translating from her native French into German, languages with differing word order.

'Whenever I translate a sentence from French into German, I have an inner sensation of flying with the verb to the end of the sentence,' Laurent says. 'Because the verb comes at the end of the sentence in German, there is a real inner sense of moving with the language. I inwardly see the sentence and also fly above it with the verb that has to move to accomplish the translation.'

Je vole avec le verbe.. .

Du solltest dich auf jede Unterrichtsstunde vorbereiten ⇨

Such inner sensations would seem to indicate that Laurent is a visual/kinetic learner, one who experiences movement as part of using language. But doesn't a designation like 'visual/kinetic' pale alongside Laurent's actual perception? Is the abstract label useful if one has the description of the inner experience itself?

Part 2 of *Personal Coding: the Varieties of Linguistic Experience* will appear in the next issue of *Folio*. It will contain descriptions of neuroscientific research indicating variety in neural patterning for language processing.

Marie Ponsot, recipient of the 2005 Robert Frost Medal for Poetry, said in her acceptance speech for the award,

"No two people have language in mind in quite the same way...With our language to think with and through, with language to bind and loosen memory, we have access to that boundless...world where we are whole because we are on our own and therefore, incomparable." -Marie Ponsot in her speech accepting the 2005 Robert Frost medal for her poetry

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Publishing Your First Book: Easier than you think?

Andy Curtis, Queen's University, Canada

At the appropriately addressed website, WriteQuickly.com, for only 49.95 (US) they guarantee to enable you to write a book 'in under one month, working 1 hour per day'. I just wish I had known how easy it is to write a book before I spent years learning how. According to the publisher of computer software and hardware books, O'Reilly: 'If you have ever thought, even half seriously, that you would like to write a practical book about computers or computer software, then you probably can' (*http://oreilly.com/oreilly*). This might explain the quality of most of the 'how to' computer books I have tried, unsuccessfully, to read over the years. In terms of financial benefit, Jo Jaffa recommends you 'start a writing career and turn your words into profit' (*http://www.jojaffa.com*). Following the 'you-can-if-you-think-you-can' self-help mantra of the 1980s, this site encourages writers to: 'Build your belief that you CAN write an e-book (you can by the way - anyone can). Education can't stop you, money can't stop you, time can't stop you. Only you can stop you!'

The online wisdom-in-a-page series, PageWise, attempts to answer the question: How can I write a book? They reply: 'There are easy ways to spark your writing and continue it until you have a book completed to your satisfaction' (*http://idid.essortment.com*). There are many useful points within their list of 15, such as their final point: '15. Brace yourself for rejection from agents and publishers. Only a small number of books written each year actually get published by vested publishing houses.' However, their time-to-volume advice may be a little too standardizing, not to mention optimistic: '7. Make time to write. 15 minutes per day should produce one page. If you wrote daily for 6 months, you would have approximately 180 pages. One hour per day could increase that to over 720 pages, which may be longer than necessary.'

Researching and reviewing around 100 hundred websites within this area, I found that there are sub-genres of the 'how to write a book' site, such as the 'how to write a book report' sites. For example, it turns out that my own university, Queen's, has a website that gives advice on how to write book reviews (*http://library.queensu.ca/inforef*) based on six main stages and around 20 steps: scan the books' preliminaries; read the text; consult additional resources; prepare an outline; write the draft; revise the draft. However, of all the sites I saw and surveyed, I found my favourite piece of advice at the opening of a site entitled *How To Write a Book* and written by Jim Kunstler: 'First you have to write a few long manuscripts that suck so badly they will never become books' (*www.kunstler.com*). Mr Kunstler describes himself as 'starting thirty years ago when I was a reporter for the old Albany evening paper, the *Knickerbocker News*, and was afflicted with what quaintly used to be called literary ambitions'. It is difficult to assess the authenticity of sites such as this one, but that makes them nonetheless fun to read. Indeed, the lack of verifiability may even be part of the pleasure.

My First Book: Learning to Walk in Ten Steps

At the end of the old millennium, I was extremely fortunate to be invited to work with Kathi Bailey and David Nunan on a book for Donald Freeman's Teacher Source series (published by Thomson), based on our work together for a TESOL Quarterly special issue on teacher professional development, guest edited by Donald Freeman. Over the two to three years it took us to produce the book, Pursuing Professional Development: The self as source (2001), I kept notes on what I was learning. Recently, four years later, I reviewed those notes and in the style of the online advice I reviewed, I have summarized what I learned into the following ten points.

1. Read the contract

There may be no such thing as a 'standard' contract! I know this seems obvious, but faced with so many pages of such small print, it is very tempting to just go over the main details, sign and return. In our PPD: SaS (*Pursuing Professional Development: The self as source*) contract there was a clause, which I must admit I had not noticed, that would have bound us to produce additional material, such as a CD ROM, to support the book. As we, the three authors, had never had this as part of our original thinking/plan, we crossed out that particular clause! If you have not seen a publisher's contract before, you should have someone who has have a look at it first, before you sign, and if there are any queries, check with the publisher before you sign. Do not be afraid to challenge, query or just cross out something if it seems wrong to you, and do not assume that all publishers' contracts look the same. They do not.

2. Allow enough time

There is a saying that the first part of a job takes 90 % of the time, and the last part takes another 90% again! Christmas 1999 we were working flat out to finish the revisions to the original manuscript, based on the reviewers' feedback. One year later, Christmas and New Year 2000, we were still working flat out to finish it. One year from submitting the **revised** text to having it go to the printers, during which time we did three complete readings of the entire manuscript, based on feedback from one copy editor and two proofreaders. So, one year of 'detail' work, which in total took longer than the original, major revisions to the text. This 'detail' work included: making sure all the dates and name spellings in the text and in the reference list matched; making sure all quotes had page numbers; getting permission to reprint texts from other works, i.e., a lot of important 'small' things adding up to something big and time-consuming.

So, in terms of planning your research and writing time, allow for the considerable amounts of time needed to read through and give feedback on a number of full versions of the manuscript after the first round of writing is finished. The authors seem to have little say in when these are sent out, and if the authors are working as full-time teacher-researchers, there is likely never to be a 'good' time for an extra 300 to 400 hundred pages of text to arrive, which need to be gone through as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. So, you may not be able to schedule these times, but at least you can bear them in mind as you approach what you may think is the end of the process – and start committing yourself to other big writing/ research projects.

3. Be patient (and productive 'elsewhere')

All of point 2 above should illustrate the importance of being patient. If it is your first book, then, like your PhD, you are likely to be very keen to get it done. But, in addition to all the time needed for detail work, there will be delays. **Writing** a book can be an individual or small group endeavor, but **producing** a book, actually making the thing that goes on the shelf (hopefully to be snatched off by eager readers!) involves so many other people, that delays are inevitable. Copies of your manuscript may get left on a desk or in a post room over a Christmas break. People at your publishers may move to different companies, so the writer-publisher relationship has to be built up again. Even if you and your co-authors are permanently contactable (see point 7 below), other people may not be available during their summer vacation. All of these factors, and many more, may slow down the process and progress of your book, as they did ours, but they are largely unavoidable, as large complex projects like creating a book involve large, complex groups of individuals (not to mention large groups of complex individuals, as well as complex groups of 'large' individuals).

One way to deal with these delays, apart from learning to take lots of deep breaths, is to be working on other projects at the same time. I know this might seem like contradicting my last point above (in 2), but if the other projects are (much) smaller than the book, these can curb any tendency you might have to become overly focused on the book, and therefore become anxious and agitated at each set of delays.

4. Do it for love

If financial rewards are an important part of your motivation, you will be disappointed. There are no big bucks to be made with this sort of book. If you want to write for money in our field, write language enhancement/ development textbooks (preferably, it seems, for the Asian and Latin American markets). So, if you write the kind of book that we did, write for love not money! The royalties are generally small, especially if you and your co-authors split the royalties, so your book would have to sell tens of thousands of copies to make any kind of serious money, and those sorts of numbers generally only happen with language enhancement/development books. In fact, it may cost you. As all three of us were very busy whilst writing our book, we put some of our own money together, to pay for graduate students to help us. Without their help, another year could easily have been added to the process, so it was definitely money well spent. Whether our royalties will cover the cost of our help is another matter.

In my case, as the junior partner, both in terms of teaching and writing, I had much more to gain than financial benefits. As I write in my first Teachers' Voices section in the book: 'To write what I've already learned from working on this book would be a chapter in itself'(p.5). I later say, commenting on my contributions to the book: 'Making those contributions, and responding to theirs [Kathi's and David's], has been a major part of my own professional development' (p.5). So, for me, the collaborative and creative, personal and professional benefits far outweighed anything I could have gained in monetary terms.

5. Check co-author compatibility

Do co-author if you are new to this game. But choose your running mates carefully: you are in for a long journey. If you are very lucky, you will be invited to work with experienced authors, as I was. But know that 'experience' does not necessarily mean compatible. In fact, someone may have so much experience that they are not flexible. My point here is, make sure you get on well together, professionally but also personally, because writing of even the most professional kind draws on a whole range of personal experiences, perhaps especially if your profession is teaching and learning. 'Getting on well' here does not mean agreeing with each other, but being able to resolve differences in a mutually acceptable way with an agreed upon outcome, and at the next level, it means creating something better than the original as a result of the divergent views and opinions (see 'some of the whole' type clichés :)

One way of seeing if you and your co-authors do get on well enough to write a book is to make sure that you have worked together on one or more smaller but **refereed** publications together, as we did with our *TESOL Quarterly* article. Refereed is important, because then you have to make changes based on the reviewers' comments, which require you and your co-authors to engage in another set of negotiation, communication and joint (re)construction of meaning, especially if the comments require more substantial changes. Kathi said to me a long time ago, with some other co-authors in mind I think (and long before Tom Hanks made castaways and FedEx folk sexy), 'make sure you feel as though you could spend a week on a desert island with this person, before you start to write a book with them'.

Later in the same Teachers' Voices section of our book, I write: 'As we have been collaborating on this book, David and Kathi haven't considered my rank or seniority. Instead they see what I can contribute' (p.5). This, I would say, is a key question: Can you and your co-authors see clearly and continuously what each of you has to offer and brings to the project? With Kathi and David, what they brought to the project was obvious and considerable. For me, not so. But they saw, partly as a result of our earlier *TQ* collaboration, as well as our teaching and talking together, what I might bring as well.

Know your co-authors' professional and personal strengths and weaknesses, their preferred learning styles, communication styles, and their work patterns. For example, whether they habitually prefer dealing with their emails late at night or early morning affects when circulated text extracts, emails, etc. are responded to. Knowledge of this kind can not only increase efficiency but also help avoid or at least reduce misunderstandings.

6. Do not expect experience to be transferable

It may not be. I had written quite a few publications, of different sorts, before starting on our book, but writing a book is not like writing anything else. I thought my PhD was the biggest single, single-authored text I would ever write, and in terms of pages it was. But not in terms of the type of work it involves. A PhD is for a very limited readership, in fact I often tell my graduate research students, that their thesis or dissertation will be, for most of them, the biggest thing they will ever write for the smallest readership they will ever have. A PhD is also written for very different reasons, primarily to demonstrate what you have done and what you know, but books, especially ones designed to provide practical help, are primarily to help the readers to know more, and this is especially true in the case of the Teacher Source series. As the Editor (Donald Freeman) points out in his Series' Preface (pp. viii-ix), our aim was to help teachers to learn more about their own ways and worlds rather than attempting to incorporate the latest received wisdom into their everyday practice. So, because of the different readerships, different purposes and processes, the experience may involve much more learning of 'new' lessons, rather than transferring of existing knowledge and skills.

7. Always be contactable

Even though it is much easier to stay connected in the brave new wired world, it is still not guaranteed. The greater our dependence on technology, the more we are at the mercy of its whims (and breakdowns). It is especially important to be contactable during critical phases, such as just after reviewers' comments come back, or just before the manuscript goes to the printers. Kathi was always very good at informing us of where she would be and how she could be contacted at all times. One critical time she did not have the email address of someone at our publishers, but Kathi was able to contact me by email. I checked my email records and was able to call her in her hotel room in the States from my office at home in Canada and give her the contact details within minutes of receiving her email request for help. A good example of 'old' and 'new' technologies being used in conjunction.

8. Reference religiously

Again, something I thought I had learned well enough from writing my PhD was 'Always keep a full and complete list of all reference works consulted, especially those you quote (or plan to quote) from.' However, this advice proved to be another example of 'easy to say, difficult to do' and another case of practice Vs preaching, i.e., of advice we always give our (research) students but do not always follow ourselves! In the case of our book, full reference details

meant **full**, as the Teacher Source series likes to have all of the authors' first names as well as family names. We did not realize/remember this initially, so had to do some back tracking at the beginning.

I counted, and there are around 250 references listed in our book over about a dozen pages (pp.264-277). Even functioning at 95% efficiency in terms of recording full details of all references, that would still leave a dozen or more needing to be tracked down, and we had a great deal more than one dozen to find over the three years.

9. Set up 'electrotext' management systems

Another good candidate for the category of advice we like to give but do not always follow ourselves is about management of electronic text, such as 'backing up' files. The Y2K transition, described by some as the biggest non-event in the history of computers, sorted those who always do full and regular back ups (their seriousness shown by zip drives, burnable CDs, etc) from those of us whose serious backing up in more to do with crises, actual or anticipated. But many of us went back to our bad habits of irregular and incomplete backing up once the danger was (apparently) gone. None of the three of us suffered any significant losses of text through technological-human misalignment, but all of us had copies of chapters in various forms: in hard drives, on discs, as email attachments and hard copies. A clear and logical system of files and sub-files within the directory can also be a big help in management of such large and multi-component texts.

A very important, but often less obvious aspect of this is email. So many details, everything from early ideas and initial frameworks to names and dates, reference details (see 8 above), email addresses, contact details when on-the-move (see 7 above), etc. are contained and located within email messages. Again, folders and sub-folders help a great deal, especially when the written product takes years to produce, at the end of which questions about things discussed in the early days often re-surface and need to be referred back to.

One example from our book was metaphor. Towards the end of a first draft, Kathi asked David and I about a unifying metaphor for the book. We exchanged various ideas, but decided that that might be too 'forced' if we tried to apply one metaphor (or group of metaphors) to the whole book. But, towards then end of a later draft, we came back to the idea of metaphors and needed to refer back to those email exchanges made years ago.

Related to both of these aspects of management of electronic text/communication is the fact that having three of us work on the book meant that three sets of texts were being stored. Although each of the versions were somewhat different, when you single author a text, if your version of it is irretrievable, then it is gone for good.

10. Get used to virtual collaboration

With fewer tenure track positions and more contract staffing, the life of the professional academic is less and less geographically stable (and many would argue it is unstable in many other ways now too) and increasingly nomadic. Even those who do have what are considered to be (relatively) 'stable' positions go away on sabbatical leave, sick leave, take up appointments as visiting scholars, etc. When we first talked about writing our book, all three of us were in Hong Kong. By the second year, Kathi had finished her one-year appointment as a Visiting Scholar in Hong Kong and was back in Monterey, and by the third year, I was a Visiting Scholar in Canada (on the East Coast).

Over the three years, the three of us met up only very occasionally, for example at the annual TESOL convention in North America. More than that, I am fairly sure that all three of us **not once** during the three years sat down in the same room, face-to-face in order to work on the book. Even when David and I were in Hong Kong, we never met to talk about the book. Phone calls were few and far between, and no tri-party conference calls, as what few calls there were, were between Kathi and myself, Kathi and David or David and myself.

All of these details serve to illustrate the fact that distance is no object. In fact, having three of us in different places (and having grown up in three different countries; the USA, the UK and Australia) meant that we were able to bring different perspectives, from different backgrounds and day-to-day teaching contexts, to the same topics. In fact, there may even be advantages to not meeting face-to-face as this creates some of the distance which can help us to see more clearly sometimes, although it does mean that 'staying connected' (see point 7, above) is even more important than if you and your co-authors live/work near to each other.

Summary

As I wrote the ten points above as they occurred to me, it is possible that the order in which I wrote them reflects their relative importance for me, but the order may also relate to the order in which parts of the process occurred, for example, starting with the contracts. Furthermore, when I looked at how much I had written about each topic, although I had started off with the aim of writing a paragraph or two on each point, it was clear that some points were much longer (up to three times as long) than others. It is also possible, then, that the length of my entry on one point reflects more accurately the relative importance I gave

to the points, based on my own experience.

Re-ordering the points in this way, we can see that one point appeared to be most clearly important to me: **Check co-author compatibility**, and I do think, if I had to choose one key point, that would be it. The remaining nine points fall neatly into three groups, in descending order of size/importance:

- Set up electrotext management systems
- Get used to virtual collaboration
- Allow enough time

- Be patient (and productive 'elsewhere')
- Do it for love
- Do not expect experience to be transferable

- Reference religiously
- Always be contactable
- Read the contract

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INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

Communicative competence among Malaysian learners

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Introduction and background information

The world of academia was jolted when the Malaysian government decided in 2002 that the English language would be resurrected as the medium of instruction for science and mathematics after being taught for more than a decade in Malay, the national and official language. The print and electronic media was deluged with the pros and cons of such a move. Taking centre stage as justification for the enhanced status of English beginning with science and mathematics was the overriding concern that the poor communicative competence of graduates in English was hampering their movement in international and intranational domains.

In this paper, I would like to share the approach and materials used in a small-scale research to ascertain whether or not the communicative competence of Malaysian learners have indeed improved some three years after the decision to use English as the medium for science and mathematics. The subjects of the study are 20 third-year undergraduates from University Technology Mara in Selangor, Malaysia. All 20 were abruptly expected to write class assignments and respond to examination questions in English since the mid to late 2002. The sudden top-level decision also exerted pressure on instructors to deliver their lectures in English, and this meant an additional challenge for the students viz their ability to listen to and understand the lectures and materials used by their teachers in English.

How best to test the students' communicative competence? Here, by communicative competence, I refer to a speaker's ability to use appropriate language in a given context. In the study, the result of years of interacting with students have led me to believe that examining their request behavior during interaction with their instructors would be one useful way of determining the level of their communicative competence. By request behavior I mean what they would say with regard to typical student-instructor situations such as 'You have been given the topic of your oral presentation by your instructor. However, you would like to change the topic. How do you request this from your instructor?' The context in this case study can be described as a formal one where the unequal relationship in terms of status and rank between instructors and students requires the latter's linguistic behavior to also encompass a sense of deference and politeness to gain the instructor's cooperation. Could, however, the strategies used in making requests in English be reasonably seen as an index of their communicative competence?

Input: Activities and materials described

There were three types of activities to gather the input necessary for the study. The first activity required the 20 subjects to list down 5 types of situations commonly faced by undergraduates, situations that require them to make requests to the relevant instructors. Once the objectives of the task was understood, the students were given at least an hour alone to brainstorm a possible list of situations. The list, thus, aforesaid, was generated without any prompting or recommendations on my part to preserve in my opinion, the genuineness of the data collected.

A handout of the 5 situations listed then became the primary material used to determine the students' level of pragmatic competence.

In the second activity, the students were given an additional hour and a half to indicate in writing the types of requests they would make in each situation. During this activity, the students were instructed to work individually in order to access the maximum amount of data possible for discussion.

The following section displays the 5 situations and responses indicated by the students. Altogether, there were 15-20 responses given in each situation. For practical purposes, the responses in this paper are grouped according to similarities in cited language use. Hence, only 4-6 forms of requests are represented below:

SITUATION 1: you have given the topic of your oral presentation by your teacher. However, you would like to change the topic. How do you request this from your instructor?

a. May I change the topic of my presentation?

b. Could we change the oral presentation project?

c. Is it possible to change the topic of my presentation?

d. I'm sorry teacher, I would like to change the topic of my presentation.

e. Please let me change the topic of my presentation, okay.

f. I need to change my topic. Allow me please.

SITUATION 2: you would like to discuss the marks given for your oral presentation as you were not happy with it. How do you request this from your instructor?

a. I'm sorry but I would like to discuss the marks for my oral presentation because I am not satisfied with it.

b. I'm sorry, but I would like to know what went wrong in my oral presentation.

c. Do you mind if I discuss with you about my oral marks?

d. Excuse me Sir, may I have a discussion with you regarding my performance during the Oral Presentation.

SITUATION 3: you would like to see your lecturer. However, she is not in the office. You decide to leave a note requesting an appoinment with her. You write:

a. I would like to meet you at 12 noon on 28 March 1996 in your office.

b. I hope I could meet you tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. in your office.

c. I do hope that we can make an appointment together.

d. Would I see you on Monday?

e. Can I meet you at 12 noon in your office tomorrow.

f. I will come to your office tomorrow nine o'clock in the morning. Please wait for me.

SITUATION 4: the students have 2 tests on monday as a class representative, you would like to request from your lecturer to postpone the English class. You say:

a. We have 2 tests on Monday. Could you please postpone the English class.

b. Do you mind postponing the English class to Tuesday?

c. Sir, shall we postpone the English class because we have 2 tests on Monday?

d. I'm sorry, I would like you to postpone the English class to another day because.....

e. We have 2 tests on Monday, I on behalf of the class would like to suggest to you to postpone the English class to Wednesday

SITUATION 5: your class is 2 hours long. You would like to request a break as you are feeling tired. You say:

a. Sir, I think we should have a break because we all are too tired and could not continue any longer.

b. Shall we have a break? I'm feeling tired because the class hour is quite long.

c. Excuse me Sir, Can we take a 5 minute break? We're all feeling rather tired.

d. Excuse me. Please would you give the class a five minute break because I am feeling tired.

e. Sir, I think we should have a break because we all are too tired.

f. We are feeling tired. Give us a break.

An robust interactive exchange between the researcher and the students with regard to the types of requests listed marked the final activity in the input gathering stage.

Excluding an in-depth analysis of language use in each situation above due to space, we can observe, however, that in the types of requests listed above, the responses can range from the conventionally indirect ,for example, in the use of modals to phrase the request or the use of the formulaic phrase "I'm sorry…" "please" or "excuse me" to begin a request, to the use of rather direct strategies. Examples of direct strategies are presented in 1e, f, 3c, f and 5e, f. The use of conventionally indirect strategies can demonstrate the subjects' knowledge of polite forms of making requests and the intentional use of such forms with an interlocutor having the power to grant the types of requests made. As instructors or linguists, the use of direct strategies, seemingly "rude" or "inappropriate" forms of requests given the context can cause many of us to ponder on whether the use of direct strategies is the result of a lack of communicative competence or an insufficient level of proficiency i.e linguistic competence in the English language itself?

Feedback from the students confirmed one of my worst suspicions about appropriate language use among many Malaysian undergraduates and graduates:

Many students did not realize the inappropriate and impolite use of many of their requests. Why is it inappropriate, How was it impolite, What should I say then were three questions commonly asked.

In conjunction with the above, the session also revealed the following observations:

- Materials used in their English language classes to improve communicative competence skills seemed highly restricted to the use of textbooks displaying forms and functions isolated not only from the social and cultural roles they will be expected to play in the working domain, but also the norms and values that will be an integral part of their social and cultural expression. In both aspects, appropriate language use would be paramount.
- Instructors do not seem inclined to suit the varying levels of proficiency in English among the students.
- Materials and in-class activities are dull and do not lend themselves to creative and analytical thinking.
- Materials used tend to portray outdated and stereotypical images of the various ethnic groups in Malaysia.

My readings in the field of materials development indicate at least the first 3 observations listed above as also a feature of other teaching contexts and a concern shared by many researchers. Together, thus, we researchers must sound like a broken record to say that a concerted effort to enact a positive change in materials development is crucial but can be a slow process especially with regard to the necessary change in mindset among teachers.

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Concluding remarks

I wish to first challenge the intention to improve the communicative competence of Malaysian graduates in English by installing the English language as the medium of instruction in science and mathematics. Why science and mathematics? No doubt the window to advances in science and technology are through English and the compulsion to now use English might provide a bridge to new and exciting discoveries, but I seriously doubt given the current syllabus in science and mathematics, the urgency to use English will necessarily lead to the students' being communicatively competent when they graduate. This competence, I feel comes from a healthy diet of reading in English, and getting acquainted with the nuances and idiomatic expressions in the English language.

I conclude by arguing for the concurrent revamping of the materials and activities used in the students' English language classes. It goes without saying that materials and activities used must be relevant, germane and authentic to ensure maximum benefit for the learners during the learning process. Indeed, the types of requests made in the 5 situations presented in this paper can illustrate a glimpse of the urgent need to improve or to enhance the levels of two aspects of communicative competence viz linguistic and/or pragmatic competence among learners to equip them with a deep understanding of how the English language works and the appropriate use of English in any context. Only then will they be on the road to acquiring effective communication skills.

The findings from a similar but extended study was raised at a department meeting, and instructors were encouraged to take heed of the need to supplement their textbooks with authentic materials and relevant in-class activities. I take comfort in this, but being painfully aware at the same time that meaningful change will take some time to materialize.

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INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

How the Cambridge Learner Corpus Helps with Materials Writing

Felicity O'Dell, Cambridge, UK

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As someone who writes materials for Cambridge University Press, I am able to use their enormous English language corpus. This continuously expanding corpus is, I believe, already the largest in existence as it currently has roughly 700 million words of written English and 40 million words of spoken English. It comes to users together with CUP's in-house concordancing software to enable lexicographers, academics and materials writers to process this mass of words in the ways they would like to. One of the most unusual and most powerful features of CUP's corpus is the fact that there is also a separate corpus of about 20 million words of learner English based on student scripts from Cambridge ESOL examinations. The number of words in this corpus – known as the Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC) – also grows considerably each year.

The CLC is invaluable for the materials writer. Even if we teach multilingual classes, we inevitably have a restricted knowledge of the kind of errors that learners are likely to come up with. My own classroom experience has been predominantly with students whose first languages are Romance, Germanic or Slavonic. So I am used to the overuse of the present perfect and to the way sympathetic is used to mean nice. I am much less able to anticipate the things that, say, Chinese or Arabic learners are likely to find difficult. The learner corpus provides me with examples of language from students with a hundred different L1s in one hundred and fifty different countries. There are examples of learner English at all levels as extended pieces of student writing from KET, PET, FCE, CAE, CPE, BEC, IELTS and CELS – how Cambridge ESOL love acronyms! – have all been used.

So, how is it all done? The scripts are word-processed by a team at CUP. These keyers have to be very accurate as well as fast! They must make sure they key the mistakes the candidates have made and don't correct the errors. For example, when a student has written `finaly' the keyer must not type `finally'! Quite difficult sometimes! Then the computer files with the scripts are taken by a specialist team who deal with error coding. They find and code all the errors according to type – wrong preposition, unnecessary verb, missing determiner, for example – and also indicate how the error should be corrected. The people who do this are linguists with TEFL experience and they need to be highly trained to do this work.

The coding is, of course, crucial and one of the most complex aspects of developing CLC. These are a set of nearly a hundred acronyms such as MP for missing punctuation or W for word order error. Much of the classification hinges round F (standing for wrong Form used), M (something is missing), R (a word or phrase needs replacing) and U (an unnecessary word or phrase has been used). To these basic F, M, R, U codes are added codes which indicate the part of speech involved. When the person doing the error coding comes across an error, they must insert the error code followed by the wrong word followed by the corrected word followed by the error code again. So if they are typing the sentence, It depends of the weather, they will actually type:

It depends RP of/|on RP the weather.

If you ever feel fed up with the pile of marking that you have to do, just imagine what it must be like to spend your days preparing texts in this way for the Cambridge Learner Corpus! I hope that the people who do this very concentrated and I would imagine often tedious task are at least aware of how enormously useful what they are doing is for those who will ultimately use the corpus.

Each student text is, of course, anonymous but basic data about the writer is recorded – L1, of course, nationality, gender, age, educational background, the exam session from which the script comes. Having found a page of cites that you are interested in, you can find out all these biographical details about the original writer of any individual citation. You are also able to double click on any one line of text you have found in order to be able to see it in its bigger context.

How, then, can all this wealth of information be used by the materials writer? I myself have used it for preparing materials for a CAE course and for a CAE writing skills book. I select just the CAE part of the learner corpus and I find what errors are typical for exam candidates at this level. I can identify, say, the twenty most frequent spelling errors at this level and focus on those rather than wasting time dealing with spelling errors that may be common at FCE level but have been mastered by CAE.

I know from my own experience as a teacher with students at this level that CAE students need to work on verbs and on prepositions; so I can use the corpus to search on the code for, say, Incorrect tense of verb or Replace preposition and I can see exactly which aspects of tense and which examples of preposition use it will be most useful to address for students working towards CAE.

I may suspect that candidates at CAE level have difficulties with certain lexical items – with eventually, say, or with nature or with travel. I can use the corpus to search on these words and to see whether candidates are generally using them correctly or incorrectly – in fact, many do turn out to have problems with these words. The corpus lets me see exactly what kinds of mistakes students are making with them. This allows me – I hope – to choose examples for my materials that have more authenticity and relevance than would otherwise be the case.

The CLC is based on exam scripts but it is, of course, not just useful when working on exam preparation materials. When preparing, say, advanced vocabulary materials, I turn on the sections of CLC that relate to all the advanced exams – CAE, CPE, IELTS and the top levels of BEC and CELS – and then search on those words that I am interested in presenting and practising. Do learners at this level already use these words freely? If so, there may be no point in dealing with them in my materials. If not, what kinds of mistakes do they tend to make with these words? This information helps me to focus tasks more precisely.

The other way in which I personally have found the Cambridge Learner Corpus particularly useful is when giving a talk or seminar to a teachers' group in one specific country. I can select the L1 I am particularly interested in – Japanese, say, or Czech – and can then see what kinds of errors are most typical for these learners either across the whole range of levels or for one specific level as preferred. On the whole, my experience is that the information provided by the corpus here simply backs up teachers' own intuitions and knowledge about what errors learners of a particular L1 tend to make; nevertheless, teachers appreciate the reassurance provided by the corpus's more extensive and rigorous approach.

The Cambridge Learner Corpus also has the potential to do a range of wonderful and slightly weird things which I personally have not yet been able to make practical use of. It can check whether male or female learners are more likely to use a particular word or make a specific error. It can compare the typical errors of 15-year-olds with those of 23-year-olds. It can show how errors made in 1999 differ from those made in 2001. If anyone can think of a purposeful way of exploiting these features, do please let me know.

A learner corpus is a wonderful resource for materials writers. However, if you do not have the good fortune to have direct access to this material, there is no need to feel deprived. Much of the practically useful information to be gained from it has been analysed for us and is available to everyone through modern learners' dictionaries, grammars and other study materials. It is fun playing with CLC's many different tools and seeing what you can discover. But it does have the potential to be almost as time-wasting to have on your computer as Solitaire or DX-Ball. Much more appealing to see what the most frequent errors for Albanian learners are than to get on with that writing that next exercise. As a user, my only real frustration with the CLC is that it is not available for use on a Mac.

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INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

High Rollers: English for the casino industry

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The former Portuguese enclave of Macau is undergoing an economic renaissance that may forever end its travel guide reputation as Hong Kong's sleepy, laid-back neighbour. Since the return of the tiny, 24-square-kilometre territory to the People's Republic of China in 1999, the local administration and the central government have cooperated to create an investment-friendly 'business service platform' for the Pearl River Delta region. One of the most dramatic policy innovations has been to open Macau's homegrown casino industry to outside competition. Several operators, including Las Vegas Sands and Wynn Resorts, have opened or are constructing new casinos and 'themed mega resort projects', as a local publication puts it.

Macau's economic engine, fuelled by vastly increased tourist arrivals, has also created opportunities for language training in the casino and hotel industries. In 2002, Macau Polytechnic Institute (MPI) invited Player. Ink the UK's Bell International to set up a specialised English language training centre. The MPI-Bell Centre of English opened in October 2003, and one of our first activities was designing specialised teaching materials for use in the Macau Tourism and Casino Career Centre (the CCC). Less than a year later MPI-Bell and the CCC jointly published a three-level coursebook, called *High Rollers*.

In this article I will outline the process by which a small team of teachers, busy with teaching responsibilities and with no previous experience of the casino world, produced a tailored language teaching publication. After doing so I will focus on two aspects of the project which illustrate materials development issues. These are:

a) The integrative nature of materials development: the project's teacher training component.

b) The management of materials development: the nature of 'teamwork' in a project of this kind.

The stages of the production process

1. Needs analysis

Every project of this nature needs to begin with a consideration of students' language needs. The teacher-writers at MPI-Bell were somewhat hampered in this by one of Macau's government regulations – as civil servants, we are not permitted to enter any of the region's casinos! The main method of performing a needs analysis was, therefore, to speak to the existing, locally-recruited trainers at the CCC. As they had previously relied on non-specialist general English coursebooks, the trainers were also able to point out the usefulness and limitations of such publications.

2. The writing process

Within MPI-Bell, the project assumed a collaborative nature right from the start, with each of the five teachers taking responsibility for several coursebook units. Because the CCC needed teaching materials with which to begin the new semester's teaching, we began by drafting a syllabus and writing units one by one, delivering them to the CCC in time for each week's teaching. This had the advantage of providing clear deadlines, the bane of writers and editors but helpful in focusing the mind and developing time management skills.

Several 'feedback loops' featured in the design process, and one of these grew naturally out of another of MPI-Bell's responsibilities at the CCC – that of providing training in communicative language teaching techniques to the CCC's teachers. In training sessions, participants were encouraged to reflect on the different ways in which the new materials could be used. This contributed to the CCC teachers' professional development, as well as providing valuable feedback on how the materials could be designed in such a way as to provide the best learning opportunities for students.

The editing and production process

By the end of the first semester's teaching we had a bank of piloted core teaching materials and supplementary activities. The next task was to edit the materials and start to visualise them as books, rather than banks of materials. After rejecting several of the many possible names provided by the book's casino English content (*Hit the Jackpot, Aces High* and so on) we chose *High Rollers* to give the books an identity with connotations of success, achievement and prestige (a 'high roller' is a person who gambles large sums or spends freely).

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At this stage, another important feedback loop was incorporated into the design process. Students had completed an evaluation form at the end of the semester, and their views and comments provided pointers for the direction that the project should take. Then the hard work of editing began – making decisions about when to keep, add to, omit or replace materials, how to grade language and how to sequence units, constantly moving between the 'micro', activity-level and 'macro', book-level perspectives.

When the content and sequencing had been finalised, the tasks of page design and formatting were also carried out by MPI-Bell teachers, leaving only the job of designing the front cover to the CCC's publishing department. ISBN numbers applied for, sample copies checked, the project which had begun as a home-grown materials development exercise just one year earlier was transformed into a first print run of 2,000 copies. *High Rollers* is currently being used in the CCC's classes for members of the public who want to improve their English skills. Future developments will include audio and video materials to accompany the books.

There is nothing particularly noteworthy about the production process, following as it did the usual stages of needs analysis, design, piloting, evaluation and improvement. Indeed, Hamp-Lyons (2001) notes that 'all the [EAP] textbooks mentioned in this section began as in-house materials and were later polished into textbooks'.

In the remainder of this article I will discuss two aspects of materials development that were perhaps most salient in this project, and which may be of interest to those contemplating similar projects.

The integrative nature of materials development

Taking a bird's eye view of language teaching, Long and Crookes (1993: 9) identify six areas for consideration: needs identification, syllabus design, methodology, materials writing, testing and evaluation. Choices within these areas need to be 'theoretically coherent', according to Long and Crookes. Materials development can thus be seen as an integrative process which is at the very heart of language teaching, because it has a close and interdependent relationship with other areas. It also touches upon various fields in the study of language, as well as language teaching; as Tomlinson (2001) observes, 'the study of the design, development and exploitation of learning materials is an effective way of connecting areas of linguistics such as language acquisition, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, language analysis, discourse analysis and pragmatics, of developing teacher awareness of methodological options, and of improving the effectiveness of materials.'

In the *High Rollers* project, the integration of materials development with teacher training (i.e., methodology) provided an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of both areas. For example, in class observations we noticed that local teachers tended to use more 'traditional', teacher-centred methods of instruction, based on a 'knowledge-transference' model of teaching and learning. However, the materials we had designed, perhaps inevitably, had a more communicative, 'skills-based' orientation. In the implementation of the materials by local teachers there was a tendency to emphasise their language content at the expense of their intended function - providing opportunities for varied exposure, meaningful practice and language use.

How we negotiated this complex cross-cultural situation is beyond the scope of this article, but two points are worth mentioning. Firstly, teacher training sessions were designed to raise awareness of alternative methods of instruction. They included topics such as the concepts of accuracy and fluency, deductive versus inductive presentation, error correction and the use of pair and group work in creating spaces for language use.

Secondly, our increased knowledge of classroom realities fed back into the materials development process. For example, we attempted to prevent teachers from over-emphasising grammar by applying strict criteria of usefulness when deciding what to include. One instance of this was in the area of modal verbs, which developed into a unit looking at a few, carefully-selected modal verbs in use in various situations, as opposed to the original materials' more extensive coverage of modal verbs as a language system. In other words, the overall orientation of our syllabus and materials design shifted towards a more situational and task-based direction, and away from the broadly functional-grammatical orientation of the original materials.

As well as enabling local teachers to develop their awareness of teaching methodologies and techniques, the 'feedback loop' described above also forced the MPI-Bell teachers to reflect on their own beliefs about language teaching, which generated a lot of discussion in the staff room. This highlights the powerful professional development benefits of collaborative materials development projects.

Teamwork in publishing projects

The huge amount of work involved in producing a textbook should not be underestimated, and collaboration between materials writers is both desirable and necessary. Tomlinson (2001) observes that in such projects, 'teams are often large...deliberately pooling the different talents available'. Even in our small group of five teacher-writers there were different talents and interests to combine; some preferred coming up with ideas, others were happy to take on more routine tasks

like proofreading, and those with relatively more IT expertise helped to transform others' ideas into pages and units.

Later on in the production process, I found that it was necessary for someone to take responsibility for the day-to-day decisions that have to be made. The **de facto** editor needs to establish a consistency of style and approach across the entire book, taking a more macro-level, global perspective than the writers of individual units. This was a difficult task; no writer likes to have his or her work altered, but as any editor knows, alterations are often unavoidable for reasons of style, length or even page formatting. The perceived relegation of materials to 'supplementary activities', for example, was a contentious issue, and the editor then faced the challenge of justifying decisions that had often been made largely intuitively. The time-consuming nature of collective decision-making, as well as the need for an editor or editorial team to achieve and maintain a global perspective suggests that a certain amount of executive decision-making may be required in otherwise collaborative projects. This perhaps explains why many well-known materials writing teams - the Soars, for example - have relationships which extend beyond the purely professional.

On the other hand, when an acceptable level of consistency had been achieved and the project deadline approached, the need for teamwork was once again paramount as the labour-intensive jobs of printing, collating, proofreading and page numbering had to be tackled.

Conclusion: think globally, publish locally

One of the obstacles preventing more projects of this kind from being attempted is the amount of time required. For a book of 125 pages, even minor tasks can take longer than expected. I was fortunate in being given a reduced teaching load for the duration of the project, but the inevitable prioritisation of teaching is the major reason why relatively few teaching centres undertake publishing ventures. It is a pity, because learners are best served by materials that are specific to their needs and are localised (*High Rollers*, for example, makes frequent references to Macau and its surroundings). Moreover, as I have tried to show in this article, there are other arguments in favour of localised, collaborative publishing projects: they serve as integrative forces which greatly contribute to the professional development of all those involved. Ideally, teachers should be helped to localise materials by producing local textbooks, in collaboration with other teachers, institutions and students. Such books will still include the 'global' aspect of the participants' varied experience and backgrounds.

The *High Rollers* project shows how it is possible for a group of busy teachers to create professional and effective materials designed specifically for the local context, if they are given time and support.

Andrew Sewell is currently based in Macau, where he works for the MPI-Bell Centre of English. He teaches on a variety of courses, from ESP to academic writing, and is also involved in materials development, teacher training and testing. He has been teaching in Asia for over ten years, and holds an MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL from the University of Leicester.

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RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Using Web-based Language Teaching Materials in Higher Education

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Abstract

This article describes a small study, which examined how 74 higher education instructors of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are currently accessing and using Web-based materials. It also provides information on how cyber resources can be used in all language learning areas. Results indicated that many teachers use Web-based materials to teach grammar, reading and vocabulary but that only a small percentage of the teachers reported teaching speaking, pronunciation, language functions and literature with cyber resources. This article will conclude with some recommendations for future research.

Introduction

Near immediate access to a myriad selection of cyber resources frequently causes Internet-proficient educators to wonder how we managed to locate information and adequately supplement our language classes before the advent of the Internet. In addition to books and other published didactic materials, language educators now have a new, dynamic source of instructional materials. This article describes a piece of a larger study designed to investigate how post-secondary teachers' of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and other world languages use cyber resources in language education.

The purpose of this research study was to add to the literature on the use of Technology in Higher Education Language curriculum and instruction. This was accomplished by identifying how teachers use Internet-based Language Teaching Materials (LTMs) and Authentic Target Language Materials (ATLMs). If current Web use can be determined and analyzed, guidance can be provided for users with all levels of technological knowledge, educators can evaluate and share effective and useful sources, and Web-resource developers can simplify, adapt, or organize Web-resources according to the reported needs and interests of teachers.

Post-Secondary Language Learning Materials

Trends in higher education language instruction such as a focus on the learner, new insight about the construction of knowledge, a multidisciplinary focus on learner diversity and the importance of technology in education shaped the conception and instrumentation of this study. Language faculty who want to enhance their Web use and department chairs who would like to encourage teachers' adoption of technology could benefit from information on current use of Web-based materials.

How can language educators simulate authentic target culture experiences in the classroom? One effective way is to integrate authentic target language materials (ATLMs), such as movies, songs, advertisements, maps, comic strips, travel brochures, newspaper and magazine articles, dictionaries, writing guides, and encyclopedias into the curriculum (Fox, 2000; Green, 1997; Li & Hart, 1996). Abrams (2002) found that exploring German video clips, music, news headlines, art, and advertisements (many of these found on the World Wide Web) broadened students' cultural perspectives. Cunningham and Redmond (2002) maintained that Web-based ATLMs expose students to current events and contemporary popular culture and prepare students for the 'global information of the future' (p.53). Osuna and Meskill (1998) concluded that Spanish students using the ATLMs on the Web enjoyed learning about Hispanic culture. The researchers summarized contemporary views on language learning as they pointed out that 'in the tasks, as in real life, language and culture remained together, without one overpowering the other, to foster authentic communication' (p.8). Since teaching culture is a primary objective of ESOL and foreign language standards, using Web-based ATLMs could greatly enhance language teaching and learning (TESOL, 2002; ACTFL, 1996).

Reporting on classroom observations and activities from her ESOL class in Poland, Krajka (2000) found that Web-based materials enhance basic writing genres critical to language learning, such as letters, descriptions of people, advertisements, news reports, and opinion papers. Language educators have reported on the didactic value of electronic ATLMs such as newspapers (Krajka & Mickiewicz, 2000; Seedhouse, 1994), news magazines (Bermejo, 2000), downloadable video (Fox, 2000), downloadable audio (Tuzi, 1998) and artistic images (Sturani, 1999). Abrams (2002) concluded that Internet-based ATLMs are effective tools for teaching culture. Language Teaching Materials (LMT) and ATLMs will also provide a multicultural perspective on course content.

CALL literature indicates that Web-based materials help meet language goals. This study investigated the degree to which language teachers use them.

Methods

This is a descriptive piece of a larger study, which examines how post-secondary world language educators use Internet-based teaching and learning materials. The study was conducted based on the assumption that Web-based language Teaching Materials and Authentic Target Language Materials are valuable and effective second language acquisition resources. All of the respondents indicated using the Internet in some form or another.

The data were collected using a survey that was constructed based on a literature review and input of a focus group of language instructors and educational researchers. Seventy-four higher education ESOL educators completed an electronic survey administered through language teacher listservs. Listserv subscribers are generally active members of the teaching and learning community who seek new ideas and professional development. Although the data provide an informative examination of language instructors' use of Web-based language learning materials, the nature of recruitment meant that the sample population was not representative of all post-secondary language educators.

The research question sought to categorize how ESOL educators make use of the following materials in instruction: culture, grammar, reading, writing, speaking, listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, literature or language functions (such as a making a phone call, ordering from a menu or asking for advice).

Results

The percentages of how teachers use web-based materials to teach across language areas were calculated. It was not surprising to find that most of the participants reported using Web-based materials to teach vocabulary (77%), grammar (77%) and written communication (reading 70% and writing 70%). A somewhat smaller percentage of the teachers used Internet materials to teach culture (64%). About half of the teachers used the materials to develop students' listening (53%) and less than half to develop speaking (41%). A limited number of participants reported teaching pronunciation (30%), literature (24%), and language functions (20%) with cyber resources.

Discussion

Many of the language teaching materials on the Web are designed for teaching vocabulary, grammar and written communication. The nature of the Internet lends itself to finding texts for reading and vocabulary development. Artistic images, advertisements, and university webpages develop reading and writing in a meaningful, cultural context. World ESOL teachers have web-published a great deal of down-loadable and interactive grammar activities and instructional ideas. In addition, teachers can find authentic and didactically constructed models for writing and students can seek out materials of personal and cultural interest. Students can apply their language learning to their study or career fields. Finally, web-publishing allows teachers and their students to showcase their thework and share ideas with others.

Culture is more difficult to define, so finding appropriate materials can be a challenge. Teachers need to decide whether to teach explicit culture such as food, holidays, sports and the fine and popular arts, or implicit culture such as societal values, attitudes, and gender roles. Culture is a critical piece of language education because it develops learners' multicultural perspectives. Teachers can download and use everyday websites from our own culture and find corresponding sites to make comparisons with other world English cultures. For example, an American ESOL teacher and her students from Texas can compare government application forms and municipal sites with similar documents in Maine or South Dakota or regions of England, South Africa or New Zealand. Teachers can also help students make cultural inference based on important cultural images such as heroes and symbols, on currency or artistic images, which she can find through the Google images tool in a matter of minutes.

Although Internet technology is developing rapidly, limited access or knowledge can prevent teachers from using the multi-media components of the Internet. This may account for the low number of teachers who reported using cyber resources to develop students' listening, speaking and pronunciation. However, even if the interactive or audio-visual tools cannot be accessed, the Internet is still a very valuable supplementary source for cues for developing students' oral communication. Teachers can describe cultural images and texts from daily online newspapers, popular culture sites, science and technology, health and nutrition and any other subject relevant to the curriculum and interests of the students. Students can discuss these issues and work on pronunciation by taping their own 'broadcast' accounts of what they have discussed.

The low percentage of teachers who reported using the Web teach language functions may indicate that the researcher did not clearly define this variable. Authentic materials allow ESOL teachers to illustrate how English speakers use language in context. A letter to the editor in a magazine can show learners how to express support or dissent. An obituary shows how loved ones remember someone who has died. Advertisements are often an amusing look into popular idiomatic speech.

The fact that the ESOL teachers in this study were unlikely to use Web materials to teach literature could be due to the ease of locating actual English books

(rather than having to find online versions). It could also mean that the functional objectives of many ESOL courses limit the role of literature in instruction. However, literature and the arts (both classical and popular) play an important role in defining and representing world cultures. The vast selection of old and new stories, poems, and other prose, makes it easy for teachers to integrate even small bits of literature along with cross-disciplinary materials. If students work online, copyright issues can be avoided because there is no need for having multiple printed copies of pieces of literature. The use of folk and popular literature is another wonderful way to weave aspects of all world English cultures into instruction. Any teacher at loss for which cross-cultural materials to include can post a request on one or more of the many ESOL listservs. Responses are generally quick and insightful and may come with some activity or teaching ideas.

Suggestions for Further Research

The results of this study point toward a variety of further research possibilities. First, specific studies on each language area could determine which web-based materials teachers use to teach culture, literature or the other language areas. Clarifying the types of cyber resources teachers access and use could help materials developers create evaluations for quality and could suggest undiscovered information sources. Second, a large-scale quantitative study could verify these findings so they could be generalized to the various higher and adult education ESOL teacher populations. Third, qualitative research on the effectiveness of specific materials would provide busy teachers with ready-to-use materials. A collaborative effort linking classroom-based action research would be a valuable resource for administrators, materials developers and teachers. Lastly, holistic studies on thematic units or whole language approaches could identify how Web-based materials are used to teach concepts or ideas that cross language learning areas.

Conclusions

The Internet provides language teachers with instant access to authentic language text and media resources. Teachers can find Web-based authentic materials, activities, and lesson plans on a range of topics and language learning functions and instructional designs. Information on how language faculty use these materials can offer suggestions on how to enable instructors to enhance higher and adult education ESOL by incorporating Internet LTMs and ATLMs into curriculum and instruction. While ESOL literature and professional development efforts encourage language teachers to use technological resources to enhance their teaching, the results of this study indicate that many educators are not taking full advantage of Internet resources. In addition to conducting further research on how to help teachers access and use Web-based materials, ESOL educational professionals are challenged with the task of promoting and facilitating teacher use through professional development and materials development and dissemination.

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PUBLISHING PERSPECTIVES

Elementary ELT Publishing: Notes from the Field

Judy Macdonald, McGraw-Hill, Australia

The emergence of English as the language of international business is creating obvious new opportunities for global ELT publishers. This is particularly so at the elementary school level, with parents keen to give their children an edge by having them learning English as early as possible. At the same time, governments, wanting to improve their country's economic prospects, are legislating for compulsory English classes beginning in the first years of schooling.

The demand for ELT material will potentially be extremely high, particularly in countries like Mexico and Brazil and others in Asia and the Middle East with very large official school populations. The challenge, however, is that although the numbers are attractively large, prices are discouragingly low and it is often not profitable for publishers to enter these markets, particularly when a series has to be developed from scratch to meet a particular official syllabus.

It is for this reason that the biggest market for ELT publishers will remain private schools and language institutes for some time to come.

Private language schools in every country where English is taught vary greatly in what they offer in the way of English classes. However, whether they have English for only a couple of hours a week or a couple of hours a day, what they all want are basal series: that is, series teaching the four skills and which offer a student book for every year of elementary school and the standard components of workbook, teacher´s guide, and audio.

Complementary materials such as flashcards, posters, video, and increasingly, CD-ROM and web site, are also desirable.

ELT teachers everywhere, despite cultural differences among countries, have several things in common: They are generally badly paid; they are required to manage large classes; and they are often poorly trained. Their proficiency in English varies greatly and the native English speaker teacher is the exception.

As a result, in choosing materials for their English class, teachers tend to go for series that make their lives as easy as possible, within an often very tight budget.

This means an ideal series will typically have an easy-to-teach student book for a determined number of classroom hours that follows a logical scope and sequence.

The books should have non-controversial topics appropriate to the interests of the students, accompanied by an interleaved teacher´s guide that provides everything needed to teach a class (audio script, answers to student book and workbook exercises, teaching tips). Support material like monthly lesson planners and blackline masters for additional and extension activities are also important. It is, in addition, essential to have an excellent audio program with plenty of dialogues and lively chants and songs as this will often be the only exposure students have to native-speaker English.

How important is it to be innovative? It is our experience that teachers are generally quite conservative. They would prefer to work with the tried and tested than experiment with something new. Though they look for new series constantly, they tend to not stray too far from what they have had before.

McGraw-Hill´s best-selling ELT series, as a result, are generally the more traditional ones. With that said, it is important to include trends in teaching and methodology, as long as they are handled in a way that is manageable and not threatening to teachers.

A clear explanation of the methodology, backed up by research findings, in the teacher´s guide introduction will be well-regarded. It is important to keep in mind in writing also the limitations of many foreign schools, such as large classes and limited technology.

Basal series, therefore, comprise the bulk of publishers´ ELT lists. The next question is how and where do we find authors to write these series? There are several potential avenues:

- Established author of an existing series, both within a company and outside
- Word of mouth: Recommendations from other authors and teachers
- Presenters at ELT events
- Authors of supplementary materials who may be ready to embark on something more ambitious

With that said, and in spite of the overwhelming preference for basal series, it is certainly worth approaching a publisher if you have what you think is a good idea. There are, however, several logical steps worth following:

The first is to identify the right publisher; that is, make sure they actually publish in the area in which you're writing.

Once you have identified the right person to whom to send your proposal, keep the initial contact brief. Do not send busy publishers a complete manuscript as they most certainly will not look at it. Send a cover letter giving your credentials and a brief summary of your proposal.

You also need to do your homework and not only sell yourself but also identify the competition and explain why your proposal is different and better.

You need to think carefully about your market. If you have a brilliant idea but no one else has published in the area, chances are that is because there is not a sufficient market .

It is also important to keep your material culturally and politically neutral. Publishers think globally and want series go into multiple markets with little or no adaptation, which means nothing too racy or controversial.

Although getting your idea foot in the door may seem daunting, there are some keys to success:

- Have a good idea
- Identify the right publisher
- Present a convincing proposal
- Be creative and hard-working
- Keep your ego in check
- Be willing to put in the time over what may be several years to write, rewrite and rewrite

Judy MacDonald is Editorial Director, K-12 ELT for McGraw-Hill. She is always happy to hear from potential authors, especially those who have read her 'Keys to Success'.

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PUBLISHING PERSPECTIVES

One Writer's Dream: What I would be writing if they'd only let me

Chris Mares, University of Maine, USA

I think I have become quite good at talking with publishers, that is to say that I can at make them feel comfortable with me as a writer, and explain how I view what I do and how it can be worked to fit in with their current and future needs. I understand that a book project has to be a team effort, informed by various sources and driven essentially by the same goal – to produce the best possible materials for both students and teachers. I define 'best' as meaning most useful, interesting, and motivating for language learners and most transparently teachable for teachers. The bottom line, however, is that the commercial world of publishing is understandably governed by sales and profit. What is truly marketable are materials which are essentially the same but different, i.e. though they may be informed by research findings and current best practice they can not rock the boat. Visualization activities or a contents page with no grammar column may be too much of a leap sometimes for an inherently conservative market populated primarily by non-native speaker teachers. As a writer of materials this is naturally where my concern lies. Is an acquisition model fundamentally just too different for the commercial publishing world? What may be a cutting edge leap in SLA research findings applications may simply not be 'sellable' in a language school in Taiwan, or a University in Brazil. And here lies the rub. Materials focusing on rich input rather than production would be hard to sell in a market whose whole rationale is geared around 'conversational' English where production is clearly forced at lower levels. This forced production, to my mind is mistakenly viewed as 'communicative' when in reality it is more often the semblance of language use, where functions are memorized and practiced. I think of this as essentially phrasebook English, language for limited practical purposes, not for communication where student production sounds like natural language use but doesn't necessarily allow for any generative use.

On theory (What I believe/What I don't believe)

I'm not sure where you are in your understanding of or beliefs in SLA research findings or your views on language teaching in general, but over my impassioned quarter century in the classroom, let me explain where I am (and I'm still going by the way). My principles are eclectic and some of them may be stretching the definition of 'principled', but I don't think my beliefs are atypical. I am informed by journal reading, research reading, book reading, conference attending, and conversations I have had with friends and colleagues.

What I believe

Here we go. In short, I believe the market is still driven by a 'learning' model that organizes language according to perceived difficulty (according to historical precedent) moving structurally from the simple to the complex. I believe, however in an acquisition based approach founded on comprehensible input, following the cycle mentioned about: listening, reading, writing, and immersion with production an option. I believe as others do that we partially learn lots of things and we do this individually, and in our own time but we do it and we can only do it given comprehensible input. Finally, I believe we should focus on the skills progressively from listening to reading to writing, to full immersion, with much less focus on production and much more on schema raising, individual investment, and finally understanding.

What I don't believe

I don't believe that we can predict what any individual will acquire whatever it is that we intend that individual to learn. I don't believe we proceed incrementally from the simple to the complex, and I don't believe that having studied, for example, the simple past, in unit 7, that it has been learned, let alone acquired. I don't believe, in fact, that the way mainstream coursebooks, including the ones I have written, are organized in a truly principled way. I believe they merely conform to expectations whether they be from sales managers, managing editors, acquisitions editors, editors, sales representatives, or some form of 'market research'.

My good fortune

I have the good fortune to work at a university where it has been possible to introduce an acquisition based model following Ashley Hasting's Focal Skills Approach. In real time this means that beginner listening students work primarily with movies for context and schema raising, the teacher providing the comprehensible input as talk over. Beginner readers have guided individual reading time where they can choose their own reading material from a wide range of magazines, books, and internet sournces. Beginner writers have personal writing times, when they can write freely on any topic for any amount of time, receiving feedback from the teacher when they want it. The model is more complex than this with skills overlap as students transition, but the point is that the focus is skills based. Students progress at their own speed and anecdotally I will report that they progress faster and with more confidence than in any program I have ever worked.

What I would write

My materials would be first and foremost skills based. A four skills course would be fundamentally different in that the skills would not be integrated from the beginning but in a progressive manner. Level one would begin with mostly listening, followed by listening and reading in level two, and listening reading and some writing in level three, and full immersion in level four. Each level would consist of two or three texts. At the end of each text students would take a placement test and would either move to the next level or continue at the same the level. The placement test would discretely test the skill the student has focused on, it would not be a short term memory test as so many language tests are.

For example listening/guided reading

A course, therefore might consist of four levels with three texts at each level. A learner could proceed to the next level after completion of one, two, or three texts within a particular level.

The material would be organized topically according to the key interests of the target group. Young adults in east Asia would have topics such as 'dating', 'making friends', 'values', 'money', 'image', 'change', 'work', 'fitness', 'diet', 'dreams', 'personality' and 'shopping'. The questions and issues would be geared to the issues the target group find significant. Other less common topics might deal with 'body image' and 'self-confidence'.

Activities would involve schema –raising, prediction, personalization, and total physical response. In short, the range of activities would cater to a range of learning styles and intelligence preference, not simply the studial, bookish model.

Sources would draw up stories, anecdotes, myths, urban myths, humor, etc. Readings would include cartoons, pictures, poems, fragments, urban myths, short short stories, and extracts from longer texts.

Many of these features can be found in creative materials either already published, or made public through professional journals or on the web. We are getting there, but we have a way to go.

Chris Mares is the Director of the Intensive English Institute at the University of Maine. He is a teacher, teacher trainer, and moderately successful writer. He is particularly interested in activities and techniques that foster second language acquisition, especially story telling. He can be contacted at Chris.Mares@umit.maine.edu

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Two Computer-Based Projects Which Encourage Beginning Level Students to Write!

Barry Bakin, Los Angeles Unified School District, USA

Even low level English language learners can express themselves successfully using written language in the context of simple computer-based projects that inspire them to write about an image they've chosen from easily accessible ClipArt found on most computers, downloaded from the Internet, taken with a digital camera, or created themselves using specialized "photo art" software. I have found the following two projects to be within the computer-skill level of beginning students and have been quite pleased with the written content that Beginning Level students have produced.

I call the first project "ClipArt Comics". It is a modernized version of cutting a comic strip out of a newspaper, using "White Out" to cover up the words the characters in the comic strip are saying, and having students provide their own words for the pictures (see illustration 1).

Illustration 1

In this particular example, an actual comic created by a Beginning High level student, the students were also instructed to try to use the language structure that we had been working with in class; in this case, the Past Continuous Tense. Another component of this project which increases the interest as well as introduces a higher-level social/communicative competency is the ability to experiment with the idea that people often are thinking something differently than what they are saying. In fact, Marc Helgesen, in his January 2005 folio article "The Dinner Conversation", discusses an activity for exploring what is called "innervoice" and having students discuss and write the "innervoice" that might accompany a supplied dialogue. Having students produce a ClipArt comic is a way they can bring that exercise to the computer lab or classroom computer.

The second project, which does require some special software, is called "Fantasy Photo" (see illustration 2). The student transforms a picture of him or herself into an imaginary scene and then writes about him or herself within the imaginary setting. While even low level language learners can produce simple but creative descriptions of their imaginary image, this project is especially fruitful with more advanced levels. The variety of fantasy images that can be produced gives students lots of material to write about.

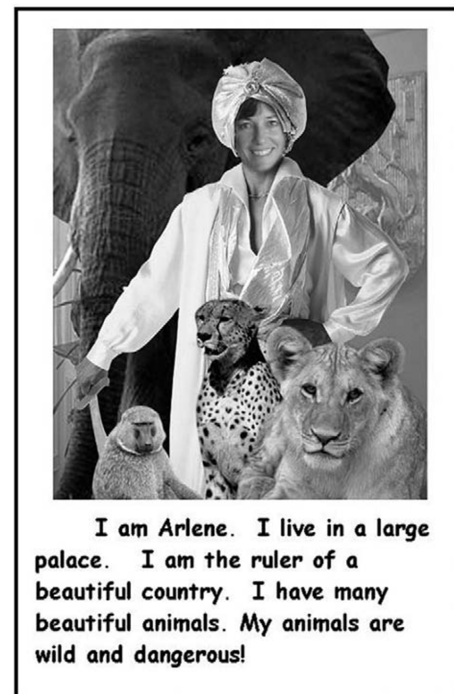

Illustration 2

The software used for this project is ArcSoft Photo Impression™ 2000. If this software or similar software by different companies that can produce the same type of image is not available to you, you can also have students create a "fantasy collage" using a variety of images from ClipArt.

Basic Steps for each Project

Steps for creating a "ClipArt Comic".

Step 1) Open Microsoft Word and a new blank document will appear. Insert a ClipArt image by clicking on Insert/Picture/From File (see illustration 3) and the "Insert Clip Art" frame will appear. Type a "search term" in the "search text" box to find all images in the Clip Art collection related to that key word. Pick a search term that implies the presence of an individual or individuals in the image. For the example, the term "worker" was chosen because it was assumed that there would be a lot of pictures of people working who could then have dialogue attributed to them.

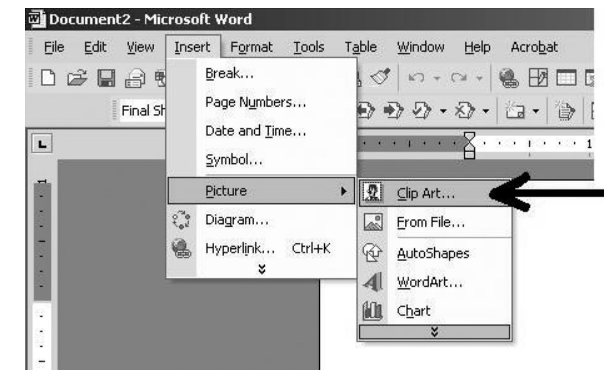

Illustration 3

When you click on "Search" all of the clips having to do with the key word you specified will appear. Scroll through the pictures until you find one you like (see illustration 4). Click on the mini "menu" to the right of the ClipArt image or "double click" on the image itself to insert it into the document.

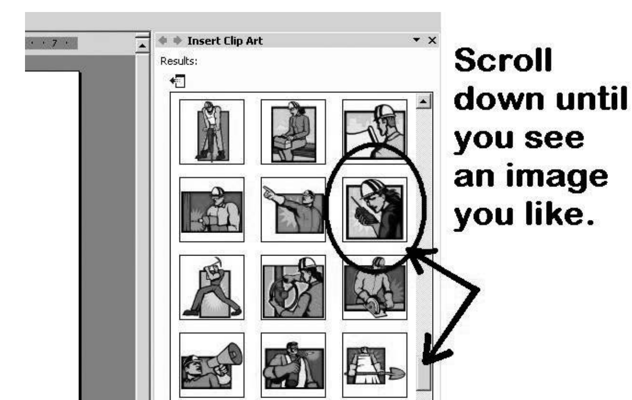

Illustration 4

Step 2) Use the *Insert/Picture/AutoShapes* menu items to create the "speech" and "thought" balloons. Once the AutoShapes menu opens, click on the "callout" group to choose and insert the basic "speech balloon" into the document in the desired location. You can click on the corners of the speech or thought balloon to adjust its size like any other "textbox". Type the desired dialogue into the speech balloon and move the speech balloon's pointer to the person who is supposed to be speaking. Repeat for each speech and thought balloon desired.

Steps for creating a "Fantasy Photo" using ArcSoft Photo Impression™ 2000 software.

Step 1) Take a clear photo emphasizing a clear view of the face from directly in front of the subject and save the photo in a folder on your computer.

Step 2) Open the ArcSoft Photo Impression™ 2000 software. Click on the "Get Photo" button in the upper left corner. Click on "From File" from the menu on the left and then on "Browse" to locate the folder where you saved the photo. Highlight the photo you saved and click on "Open" to open the photo in the ArcSoft Photo Impression™ 2000 work area (see illustration 5).

Illustration 5

Step 3) Click on the "Create" button and select the "PhotoFantasy" tab. Click on the arrow next to the "Role Play" menu item for some additional categories and more backgrounds (See illustration 6).

Illustration 6

Step 4) The selected background will appear superimposed over the original photo (see illustration 7). Click on

the “handles” at the corners of the photo to resize the face and rotate it to the correct angle. When you’re satisfied with the appearance of the face within the new background, click on “Apply” and “Save” to create the final image and save it as a file (remember where you saved it!).

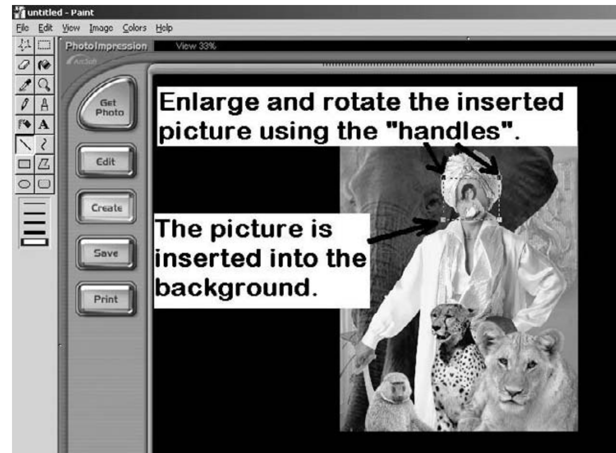

Illustration 7

Step 5) Open up Microsoft Word and start a new document. Use Insert/Picture/From File to insert the Fantasy Photo into the new document. Students type their story or description underneath the photo.

Arcsoft PhotoImpression™ 5 is available directly from the manufacturer’s website at http://www.arcsoft.com/en/products/photoimpression/ The cost is $49.99 (US Dollars).

There is a simplified version of the software which only has the features related to creating the fantasy photos. It costs $39.99 (US Dollars) from the manufacturer’s website http://www.arcsoft.com/en/products/funhouse/index.asp#top .

In general, it’s a good idea to present the projects to the whole group using an LCD projector and go over the steps repeatedly with the students until you’re sure they know all of the steps. If possible, arrange the computer or computers the students will be using so that the screens are visible to you as you move around the room. This will help you spot students who are stuck on a particular step or have gotten “off-task”. Remind students to save their work often! Print and display finished projects on the wall, or if your school has one, on the school website!

Barry Bakin is an ESL instructor and ESL Teacher Advisor for the Division of Adult and Career Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District. He has taught in classrooms with one computer, multiple computers, laptop computers, and as an ESL computer lab instructor. He also writes the monthly column ‘Lessons for the One-Computer Classroom’ for Language Magazine: The Journal of Communication & Education. As an ESL Teacher Advisor, one of his responsibilities is providing training on the use and integration of computers to other teachers in his school district.

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folio 10/1 August 2005

REVIEWS

Material Review: www.selfaccess.com

Carrie Steenburgh, University of Maine, USA

In my English language classroom, I often tell learners that reading is one of the best ways to improve their language acquisition. If you don’t have anyone to talk to in English, pick up something and just read. Yet, learners often have difficulty in choosing level-appropriate material which makes reading challenging and frustrating. Or the appropriate reading is dry and tedious. Enter, SelfAccess.com an English study website for students of English.

Selfaccess.com offers a comprehensive library of almost 300 engaging English lessons that are built around authentic news articles from Reuters. Lessons are leveled in five stages from elementary to advanced and cover grammar, reading comprehension, and listening and writing skills. The website offers General English lessons to learners of all levels and Academic English to intermediate – advanced learners whom might be preparing for English tests like TOEFL, TOEIC, FCE, or IELTS.

Selfaccess.com addresses the potential challenge of choosing an appropriate level by offering a free grammar test. From this test, learners can ascertain which lessons they should focus on. They can then search the lesson library to find a suitable lesson of interest. Searches can be done by level, topic or keywords. Reading topics are highly intriguing, amusing and challenging. In doing one such search for ‘pre-intermediate’ level, I came across 28 different general English lessons: from odd sporting world championships (ice pool swimming in Finland) to gender issues (women in senior management) to marriage topics (did you know that an average wedding in Shanghai is $18,000 while the average salary is $2,208!).

In a language classroom, the instructor might present some front loading activities to introduce the reading topic to the student and Selfaccess.com does the same. After learners choose and click on a lesson, a page will appear with a topic related illustration and lesson objectives. The lesson might contain a focus on skills such as classifying information, describing a process or diagram, identifying points of view, vocabulary, writing a letter or completing a summary. Then a variety of exercises follow. In an upper-intermediate academic lesson on ‘Language, Jobs and Culture’, students had to listen to a three minute presentation, answer a multiple choice exercise based on the talk and then complete a cloze style dictation using word chunks used by the speaker.

Compared with many English self-study websites which often focus solely on prescriptive grammar rules or solely textual materials, Selfaccess.com does expose students to English study skills that will help them deduce form, function and meaning from authentic exposure to English. The exercises recycle vocabulary and subtly steer learners’ attention towards grammar points so that they begin to notice how grammar is really used in the language. A further distinction is in its use of authentic listening tasks. These listening activities are also based on Reuters or a similar topic and help to recycle and reinforce the vocabulary used in the material. Additionally, since Selfaccess.com is not heavy in visual information (which could be a downside for elementary learners), the pages are quick to load, ensuring the continuity of lessons. Most of the exercises allow learners to check their answers and give instant feedback, however, I found some where if the learners couldn’t come up with the answer, the correct one was never supplied. Some learners might find this frustrating as I did.

As a supplement or study aid, Selfaccess.com is innovative, creative and pedagogically sound. The site provides a library of newsletters containing helpful hints for studying and a useful links page that provides a wealth of information. Yet, the classroom is still the place for learners who are looking to practice speaking and more meaningful writing. Instructors can choose to purchase an institutional subscription that allows students the opportunity to use the site in a language lab or for homework purposes while exposing them to more meaningful language skills in the classroom. For example, in a unit on April Fool’s Day which focuses on listening and completing a summary, an instructor could reinforce speaking skills by having students come up with pranks, share their own April Fool’s experiences or talk about prankster figures in their own cultures.

My students who field tested the site found it to be fairly useful and good for improving their reading and vocabulary skills. It is user friendly, visually pleasing and uncluttered. For $15 dollars a month learners can choose an individual subscription for self-directed study that gives access to all the lessons or pay $15 for a 3-month exam preparation course for their individual language level. For students who have access to the internet but not an instructor, Selfaccess.com can be a welcome addition to their English language studies.

Carrie Steenburgh is an ESL lecturer and program development specialist at the University of Maine. As well as teacher training and general ESL teaching, Carrie has been the director of a private English language school in Boston, where she specialised in developing curricula for executive English language programs. She was also an examiner for the Cambridge ESOL examinations.

If you would like Carrie to review your materials in Folio, please contact Carlos Islam, E-mail: islamc@un.org tel.: 1 (212) 963 2985

SPOTLIGHT ON A MATERIALS WRITER

Featured Writer:

David Nunan

1. *When were you born, or born again, as a materials writer?*

   My first project was a two-level series called The Australian English Course, published by Cambridge University Press in the mid 1980s. It was the first series to be built around concepts of task-based learning.

2. *Which materials writing project are you proud of the most / least?*

   The four-level series called ATLAS published in 1995. It incorporated many cutting-edge ideas at the time such as task-based learning, authenticity, and a focus on learning strategies. Needless to say, it was ahead of its time then, and is probably ahead of its time still ten years later.

3. *Who or what has had the greatest influence on your materials writing?*

   I think the realization that you have to start with where the teachers are at. If teachers don't understand what you are trying to achieve pedagogically through your materials, then they will fail, regardless of whether they are based on the latest ideas and research.

4. *What do you regard as your Achilles heel as a materials writer?*

   A tendency to want to get things done quickly.

5. *What do you regard as your strongest attribute as a materials writer?*

   An ability to incorporate new ideas and ways of teaching into materials in a way that makes sense to teachers.

6. *What is your pet peeve concerning ELT materials?*

   Lack of variety, and a tendency to 'crowd out the middle ground'. Most materials are clones of one another.

7. *What is the strangest, funniest or most embarrassing thing you have seen in ELT materials?*

   A grammar series published some years ago in which half of the units were printed upside down.

8. *What one thing would you like to tell the world of publishing?*

   Take more risks.

David Nunan is Chair Professor of Applied Linguistics and Director of the English Centre at the University of Hong Kong. He has published over 100 books and articles in the areas of curriculum and materials development, classroom-based research, and discourse analysis including Introducing Discourse Analysis (Penguin Books), The Self-Directed Teacher (Cambridge University Press), Pursuing Professional Development: The Self as Source (with K. Bailey and A. Curtis) (Heinle & Heinle) and textbooks ATLAS, Go For It, Listen In, Speak Out and Expressions, all published by Heinle & Heinle/Thomson Learning.

You can find out more about David from his website: *http://www.nunan.info/*

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Telephone: ____________________

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Services offered: ____________________

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Burrows, Rob

Qualifications: BA Psychology; Advanced Cert. TESOL (Leicester)

Services: Tailor-made language courses
Teacher training: focus on pronunciation / music
Materials: destructive testing

Website: http://home.t-online.de/home/Klapdor-Burrows

Contact: August-Ganther-Strasse 12c, D-79117 Freiburg, Germany
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Eayrs, Martin

Qualifications: MA (Linguistics & ELT); Postgraduate Dip. TEO; PGCE; BA Hons; TEFLQ, QTS (DES 74/11998)

Services: Copy-editing, content editing, DTP solutions. Website design and maintenance. Application of ICT to ELT. Freelance instructor – talks & workshops.

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Tel: 0044-(0)15-2 38237
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Leather, Sue

Qualifications: BA (Hons); DTEFLA; MA TESOL

Services: Teacher training; materials writing and development

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Contact: 56 Corrie Road, Cambridge CB1 3RB
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van Vuuren, Hannes

Qualifications: BA (hons) English; Higher Diploma in Education; Certificate for Distance Education Practitioners

Services: Courseware design; training for police officers in English communication

Website: http://www.trsa.ac.za

Contact: English Department, Technikon SA, Private Bag X6, Florida 1710, South Africa
Tel:+27 11 471-3789
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Williams, Steve

Qualifications: BA (Hons) German; PhD; Dip. Trans. IoL; Dip. Pub.

Services: Materials development (German and English); editorial services; design and page layout; project management

Contact: 16 Stubble Close, Oxford OX2 9BT, UK
Tel:+44 (0)1865 865794
E-mail:WortSchatz@compuserve.com

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