Volume 11.1
November 2006
www.matsda.org.uk

folio

Journal of the Materials Development Association
MATSDA

In this issue:

Contents

ISSN 1357 406X

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GREETINGS

Editor's Message

Jo Appleton, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

Hi. I would like to welcome you to the new issue of Folio, Vol 11.1 and to me Jo Appleton, your new editor. The committee would like to wholeheartedly thank Carlos Islam for the wonderful role he has played as editor for Folio over the last 4 years. His fun, easy going nature and professional manner has made all who have liaised with him a pleasure and I know that our designer, Will Cove, will miss working with him.

You may be wondering how I've managed to take over this new role. Well, luckily one of my colleagues at Leeds Metropolitan University, Helen Crossley has kindly agreed to become the Membership Co-Secretary and Folio Manager along with the invaluable help of Nevil Owen. Helen can be contacted at h.crossley@leedsmet.ac.uk. Thanks guys!

We also have a new Promotions Manager, Clare Poulson who will be working to raise the profile of MATSDA around the world. So, thanks and welcome Clare.

I know this issue has been long in the offing, with all the changes to our committee and a rather hectic summer, delays have unfortunately occurred. So, huge apologies and many thanks for your patience. We should now be back on track for the usual autumn and spring edition.

Now, let me take you through this new exciting issue which I hope you'll enjoy find as engaging and enjoyable as I have.

To kick off with, Ivor Timmis shares one of his innovative lessons and Barbara Gesicka looks at how materials produced with the help of the learners can be more engaging and relevant.

Peter Jones talks about his experience of developing some electronic based teaching materials.

People have been busy researching and so this article includes a bumper number of research findings, so I'm sure there will be something of interest in this issue of FOLIO.

Dr Denis Santos reports on an interesting exploration into the interaction of students and teachers with the class text book. Ann Margaret Smith and Dawn Perkins, post-graduate students demonstrate the contribution that expertise studies can make to materials development by describing a research project conducted in 2005 by the Lancaster University Language Teaching Expertise Research Group.

Josefina C. Santana reports on the findings of a study carried out with high intermediate students of English at a Mexican university and Patricia Lauría describes a case study on a collaborative ESP materials development at the University of Cordoba in Argentina.

Anthony Haynes quit his job at Continuum and with his wife, Karen, founded The Professional and Higher Partnership (www.professionalandhigher.com). Find out more in Publishing Perspectives.

Barry Bakin in his Computer Perspectives column tells us about a fun and easy-to-use web-based template for making animated cartoon "movies" to help students.

No review this edition I'm afraid but Carrie has a wonderful excuse – she was busy getting married! Congratulations Carrie and Carlos! AND last but by no means least we have the talented Philip Prowse as our featured writer disclosing hot tips and insights into his world of writing.

So with this impressive range of interests and thoughts, I hope your teaching and writing will be energised and fruitful!

If you have an article to offer, materials to demonstrate, materials to review, a letter commenting on an article published in Folio or advertisement to place in Folio, please contact me at j.appleton@leedsmet.ac.uk. The deadline for the next issue of Folio 11.2 is Monday 15th January.

Oh and before I go, don't forget to visit our website at www.matsda.org.uk in between issues with news of forthcoming events.

Enjoy!

Jo

GREETINGS

Greetings from the President

Brian Tomlinson, MATSDA President, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

MATSDA Writing Workshop

We've just had another of those materials writing workshops which epitomises what MATSDA is all about – enjoyment, development and quality materials production. From Friday September 8th to Sunday September 10th we ran an extensive reader writing workshop at the Marton Arms in Thornton-in-Lonsdale near Ingleton in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales. On the first day Alan Maley and myself led discussions and workshop tasks investigating issues in extensive reading and facilitating the writing of readers designed to promote language acquisition and development through engagement in well-written stories. We all then got down to writing and soon we had enough material for us to help each other with responses and advice. By Sunday afternoon we had all finished a complete short story and had started on a longer one. Before we left we all read our short stories aloud and then provided each other with constructive feedback. These stories are now being edited by myself and Alan Maley and they will soon be published as Tales from the Marton Arms in the World Wide Readers Series. In addition to working hard, the participants visited the nearby church which features in Julian Barnes'new novel Arthur and George and in which Conan Doyle got married, they enjoyed the five mile Ingleton Waterfall Walk and they achieved a lot of quality eating and drinking. Watch out for the next MATSDA Writing Workshop. It will be certainly be worth joining.

MATSDA Publishing

The World Wide Readers Series is a series of extensive readers at different levels edited and published by myself and Alan Maley. At the moment we have fifteen books written intuitively by EFL teachers for enjoyment by learners of English at pre-intermediate, at intermediate and at advanced levels. Towards the end of the year they will be published on a new MATSDA website which will allow learners to sample them and then pay to download them. On this same website we will also be publishing innovative ELT materials which we think deserve a wider audience. If you are developing innovative materials which you think would add extra quality for the teacher and/or learner, send an outline and a sample to me at *B.Tomlinson@leedsmet.ac.uk*.

MATSDA Japan

From October 28th-29th 2006 we'll be holding the first ever MATSDA Japan Conference at Reitaku in Chiba Prefecture near Tokyo. The theme will be using materials development to promote and facilitate change and the main speakers will be myself, Hitomi Masuhara, Chris Binch, David Barker, Brian Cullen and Javier Avila.

MATSDA Spain

We are working with Javier Avila to organise the first MATSDA Spain Conference. It will be held in Cordoba in early 2007 and will feature speakers from all over Europe. Watch out for an announcement on the MATSDA website (www.matsda.org.uk)

MATSDA at IATEFL

I'll be leading a Symposium on the last day of IATEFL Aberdeen in April 2007 at which Alan Maley and Hitomi Masuhara will work with me in investigating the issue of Creativity in Materials Development.

MATSDA Dublin

We'll be holding another of our sell-out joint conferences with ACELS in Ireland in January 2008. It will either be in the Teachers' Club in Parnell Square in Dublin as usual or in Limerick. Watch out for an announcement.

See you at one of our MATSDA events!

Brian Tomlinson
Founder and President of MATSDA
Leeds Metropolitan University

PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES

The lexical approach in action

Ivor Timmis, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

When I first read the Lexical Approach (1993) by Michael Lewis I was, like many other teachers, instinctively attracted by many of the ideas in it – it struck a chord. I was, however, not at all clear how the principles of the lexical approach could be translated into practice. Clearly I was not alone. In 1998 Scott Thornbury questioned whether the Lexical Approach was 'a journey without maps', and as recently as 2001, Richards and Rodgers described the Lexical Approach as 'still an idea in search of an approach and a methodology'. Even Michael Lewis in Teaching Collocation (2000) conceded, "It is by no means clear how best to incorporate lexical views into books or courses..." The more I have thought about the question of translating the principles of the lexical approach into practice, the more convinced I have become that the lexical approach does not need its own tailor-made methodology. A methodology is available 'off the peg' in the kind of text-based approach advocated in slightly different ways by Dave Willis (2003) and Brian Tomlinson (1998). The materials below show my attempt to marry a lexical approach with a text-based approach. If you like the materials, please do try them out and let me know how it goes.

There's a first time for everything

You first!

1. Complete this sentence so that it is true for you:

COMMENTARY:
Lexical rationale: practises the chunk 'the first time I...' Pedagogic rationale: Warms the learners up to the topic of the unit and begins the unit in the mind of the learner.

I was really nervous the first time I

2. Now describe this experience to a partner.

COMMENTARY: *Pedagogic rationale: Recycles the chunk 'the first time I...' Previews the topic and, perhaps, the vocabulary of the texts.*

Read all about it 1

1. *Partner A read story A. Partner B read story B. As you read the stories think about questions (a) – (c).*
2. *When you have finished reading the stories, Partner A ask questions (a) – (c) to Partner B, and then change so that Partner B asks the questions.*

COMMENTARY: *Pedagogic rationale: Creates an information gap through a 'jigsaw reading' and the questions focus the learners on the most important parts of the story.*

(a) Why did the person in the story feel nervous?

(b) How exactly did s/he feel?

(c) How does s/he feel now?

Story A: The First Time I Met My Husband

María Del Rosario Lamshing from Mexico

The last time that I felt butterflies in my stomach was when my friend at that time (my husband now) invited me to go out. I was so excited because he was the most charming person that I had ever met.

When we initially met, both of us were involved in other relations, but a few months later, we had the opportunity to work together. Each time that I knew that I needed to talk to him, I remember that my heart raced too fast and I almost couldn't control my nerves.

It was great when a mutual friend who was our French teacher, told me that he had no relationship with anybody. So once I knew that he was also single, I couldn't believe how lucky I was.

Now I've been married to him for almost eighteen years, and I don't feel butterflies in my stomach any more when I see him, but it is pretty nice to remember when I did.

Story B: Everything Was New and Different

Hengameh Mirzay from Iran

When I left my country and come to the United States, I had butterflies in my stomach. It was very hard for me. It was a sad moment when I had to say good-bye to my family and my friends. I didn't want to leave my hometown because I grew up there and I had memories.

I was nervous because I was going to enter a new place with new people and new customs. I couldn't even understand their language. Everything was different. I had nobody to talk with. I just had my husband, and he was a new person for me too. So, thinking about all these changes made me nervous and I worried about my new life. But that was a decision I made myself. I had to continue and accept the challenge

Language Study 1

Partner A and Partner B work together. Complete sentences (a) – (h) below by using one word from Box A and one word from Box B. Try to do this without looking back at the text.

COMMENTARY:
Lexical rationale: This task focuses on some of the key collocations (word combinations from the texts).
Pedagogic rationale: the detailed language work follows general comprehension work.

BOX A	BOX B
sad	nerves
charming	opportunity
accept	friend
mutual	decision
pretty	moment
have	nice
make	person
control	challenge

(a) I was so excited because he was the most ..... that I had ever met.

(b) ... a few months later, we ..... the ..... to work together

(c) I remember that my heart raced too fast and I almost couldn't ..... my .....

(d) It was great when a ..... who was our French teacher, told me that he had no relationship with anybody

(e) It was a ..... when I had to say good-bye to my family and my friends

(f) ... and I worried about my new life. But that was a ..... I ..... myself.

(g) I had to continue and ..... the .....

(h) ... and I don't feel butterflies in my stomach any more when I see him, but it is ..... to remember when I did.

Language Practice 1

Choose one question from questions (a) – (d) below and ask the question to 4 or 5 other people in the class.

COMMENTARY:
Lexical rationale: Recycles the key collocations from the task above.
Pedagogic rationale: The aspect of choice allows the learners to focus on the language that interests them. It is quite a challenging fluency activity, so the learners should get something out of it even if they don't learn the 'target language'.

(a) If you have butterflies in your stomach, how do you try to control your nerves?

(b) What is the most important decision you have ever made?

(c) What is the biggest challenge you have ever faced?

(d) Who is the most charming person you have ever met?

Read all about it 2

Read the story below and then decide which of these phrases you might say to the person telling the story:

(COMMENTARY:
Lexical rationale: We often use lexical chunks when we are responding to what someone says.
Pedagogic rationale: The task allows the learners to respond to the text without asking for detailed comprehension.

a) She sounds like a lovely teacher

(b) It must have been a terrible experience

(c) Sing us a song

I'll Never Forget That Music Class

Yong K. Ahn from Korea

When I was in elementary school, my music teacher gave us an exam. We had to sing a song in front of our classmates. She didn't give a paper test. She played the harmonica, and we had to sing a nursery rhyme. My class number was thirty-six. She called on us one after another.

Ultimately, my examination time came up. My heart began to flutter with fear. I didn't like to sing songs, even when I was alone. Moreover, in front of other people, it was even worse. It was a desperate state of affairs for me. I had butterflies in my stomach.

Finally, number thirty-give passed and I stood up in front of the teacher. Many people were looking up into my face, but I couldn't see anyone. I couldn't hear anything except the sound of the beating of my heart.

In the end, I didn't sing a song. I got a "GA" grade. It is the same as an "F" in English. About twenty-five years have passed since then. My heart still flutters if I am in front of many people, and I still don't like to sing a song in front of anyone

Language Study 2

1. *Now look at a different version of the story written by a native speaker. What differences do you notice between the 2 versions?*

COMMENTARY:
Lexical rationale: This text is much richer in collocations and chunks than the original text.Pedagogic rationale: This is quite an open 'noticing' task. Different learners might take different things from it.

> When I was at elementary school, my music teacher set us a really tricky exam. Instead of setting us a written exam, she made us sing a song in front of the whole class, while she played the harmonica. She called us up in class number order: my number was 36 so I had to wait a long time for my turn, which made me even more nervous.
>
> Eventually, it was my turn. My heart began to flutter with fear. I didn't even like to sing songs alone, let alone in front of a large audience. It was a really embarrassing situation and, as you can imagine, I had butterflies in my stomach.
>
> When I got up to sing, I felt as if everyone was staring at me, but I couldn't see anyone. I couldn't hear anything but the beating of my heart. In the end, I didn't manage to sing a song so I got a "GA" grade, which is the same as an "F" in English. More than 25 years have passed since that awful moment, but to this day my heart still flutters if I am in front of an audience and I never ever sing a song in front of anyone.

2. *Repair the broken sentences below (without looking back at the text). You will need to add words e.g. articles, prepositions, auxiliary verbs. You will also need to change the form of some words e.g. put a verb into a past tense form.*

COMMENTARY: *Lexical rationale:* COMMENTARY: *This task focuses on a variety of language points which are more or less on the border between lexis and grammar. In the example, the learners need to manipulate these points:*

- *Instead+of+verb-ing*
- *Make+object + base verb*
- *Preposition 'in front of'*
- *Article 'the whole class'*

Pedagogic rationale: Again, the detailed language work follows comprehension of the text. To do the task, the learners can rely partly on memory, but they also have to use their own grammatical and lexical resources.

> Example
>
> - Instead / set/ us / written/ exam/ she/ make/ us/ sing/ song / front/ whole/ class
> - Instead of setting us a written exam, she made us sing a song in front of the whole class

(a) time / my/ life/ I/ feel / most/ nervous/ when/ I teach/ my/ first /class.

(b) I / butterflies / stomach/ because/ not/ know/ everything

(c) It/ sad/ moment/ I/ have/ to/ good-bye / family / friends.

(d) So,/ think / all/ these /changes/ make / nervous/ and/ I/ worry / my/ new/ life.

(e) I / so/ excited/ because/ he / charming /person/ I/ ever/meet

Put pen to paper

Write a paragraph describing a time when you felt really nervous (you can use the experience you spoke about in You First*). Try to use some of the language we have looked at in this unit.*

COMMENTARY:
Lexical rationale: The task encourages the learners to use the texts in the unit as scaffolding for their own texts.
Pedagogic rationale: The task is personalised to increase motivation and to increase chances of the language being internalised.

1. Complete these sentences and then discuss them with a partner:

COMMENTARY:
Lexical rationale: The task recycles some of the chunks in the unit.
Pedagogic rationale: Again this is a 'Two for the price of one activity' as the task leads to challenging fluency practice which should be useful even if the learners don't internalise the 'target language'.

a) I would love to have the opportunity to.....

b) I have good memories of.....

c) I have bad memories of.....

d) I have a good relationship with.....

Biography

Ivor Timmis is a Senior Lecturer in ELT at Leeds Metropolitan University. He has many years experience as an EFL teacher and teacher trainer, but more recently he has been involved in teaching on the MA in Materials Development and in materials writing projects for China, Singapore and Ethiopia as part of the Postgraduate Unit in the School of Languages.

He's interested in the teaching of spoken language, having completed his PhD – the place of spoken grammar in ELT - at Nottingham University in 2003. His current language research interest is in creating a corpus of spoken English in Bolton from the Mass Observation archives of the late 1930s. In terms of teaching research, he has been interested for some time in combining the lexical approach with a text-driven approach to teaching.

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Implementing self- designed materials in a Polish grammar school

Barbara Gesicka, Poland

'I expect my students to be involved in the lesson, to be interested, to do their homework as well as work independently after school. I want my students to participate actively in the process of learning and to enjoy my lessons.' Most teachers would probably say so when asked to express their wishes concerning the learners. So did my colleagues when I conducted a short survey before designing the materials for my MA dissertation. As a teacher with a 14-year experience I usually evaluate my lessons against the above expectations and I have often been disappointed to find that the learners tend to prefer private, after-school tutorials, in which they invest much more time and work.

However, a careful analysis of the teachers' wishes will reveal a few very important aspects that, although stressed in private lessons, are unfortunately so often overlooked or underestimated in state school classes, i.e.: involving and interesting materials, motivating activities and challenging tasks and a shift of control from the teacher to the student.

When enrolling for a Professional Development for Language Education studies at Leeds Metropolitan University I was vaguely familiar with these issues but I faced the question of how to implement them when teaching. The period of the studies and the research I carried out with my students considerably improved my knowledge and boosted my confidence as I had an opportunity to gain experience in the matters I mentioned above. As a final assignment for my studies I designed 3 units of materials to use with a group of my students.

It must be pointed out that the issues listed at the beginning are just a few in a wide range of aspects related to the question of improving the teaching – learning process and every teacher may find other problems more interesting and pressing, nevertheless, implementing these three in the context of my target group brought about significant and desired changes.

Involving and interesting materials

A careful evaluation of the course books available on the Polish market is very likely to show that most of the materials are neutral and repetitive, i.e.: topics such as food, environment, jobs or daily routines can be found in almost every book regardless of its level. It is only the vocabulary and grammar issues that change. As a result, students are certain to come across the same topics with similar attitudes at least once or twice a year for about 6 years on average, which is more or less as long as every student takes English at school.

The first step I took to improve my materials was a questionnaire designed to establish students' reading preferences to determine the topics for materials. The results of the survey gave me an insight into what the students find involving as far as the subjects and types of reading are concerned. It then led to a selection of texts that were likely to be interesting for a target group of learners. The students were asked to read and rank them according to their likes and as a final outcome a list of several texts was presented. The analysis of the top ones showed that the students chose the texts closely related to their experience, funny, unexpected or a bit bizarre, which agrees with the opinion that the element of bizarre and fun increases positive impact and affective involvement, particularly with teenagers (Tomlinson, 2003), and most of the texts were anecdotes or newspaper reports.

Motivating activities and challenging tasks

The chosen reading passages formed a basis for language activities. As the texts attracted the students' interest and attention, they were also likely to make them get involved in the materials. One of the principles behind writing the activities was that the learners should feel encouraged to express their opinions, as they need an opportunity for meaningful and purposeful use of language where there is an exchange of opinions. Therefore, the activities should offer ample opportunities for the students to contribute and share their own experiences (Duff & Maley, 1990). To reach this aim I designed the tasks so that they were reasonably challenging, cognitively demanding and attracting the students of various learning styles. As a result, I managed to achieve some important goals.

First of all, having participated actively in the selection of texts, the students reported to have more personal feelings towards the materials. It was 'their text' so they engaged more emotions in completing the tasks.

What is more, the activities involved visual, auditory and kinaesthetic students, i.e. they required a variety of actions and responses, some of them unexpected in a generally rigid lesson framework in Polish schools. The students were invited to draw, move around the classroom, exchange materials, arrange tables for various groups, mime, and choose among the pictures. Although the activities may seem quite ordinary, the target group of students firstly responded with some surprise and several more introvert learners felt ill at ease. However, they soon realised that the choice of tasks (they could draw or mime, work individually or in groups) gave them independence and emotional comfort as relaxing, stress-free atmosphere is likely to facilitate learning (Lozanov, 1978, Krashen, 1982). Even during the first lesson it could be noticed that the most reserved and shy students started reacting openly (laughing, responding, taking notes) firstly to other students' performance and then to the tasks. It cannot be judged now to what extent the learners stretched their styles participating in the activities designed for various styles, but I can assume this process has certainly started.

Furthermore, the materials undertook to pose linguistic and cognitive challenges. The students were asked to deduce linguistic rules from the examples, invited to elicit the acquired knowledge as well as draw comparisons between other linguistic patterns in Polish, German or French, which are taught at school. Some of the tasks required factual knowledge of other subjects or sciences such as biology, psychology, physics, and food processing, which gave the learners an opportunity to share and expand their interests. These principles conform to the statement that hypothesising about the language and making discoveries involves higher cognitive skills and helps to learn language faster and memorise better (Rutherford & Sharwood-Smith, 1988). An interesting and very satisfactory result could be observed, i.e. two most reserved students, one excelling in physics, the other an extremely competent sportsman, both rather poor linguists, joined in discussions and presented outstanding pieces of oral and written work in connection with their hobbies. When reflecting and evaluating their performances, all students particularly stressed the possibility to choose both the moment to speak and the type of the activity, which created a stress-free atmosphere in class.

Another very important issue that arose from the students' evaluation was the cognitive challenge of the tasks. Many typical activities require only basic cognitive and metacognitive skills such as repeating or taking notes that are below the learners' abilities in their native language. The materials that the students were presented with included many higher cognitive and metacognitive strategies like resourcing, elaboration, monitoring or evaluating. As a result, the students reported to feel appreciated as independent and confident people not as 'small kids in a playgroup.'

Moreover, without the pressure, the learners declared to engage more willingly and speak out faster than during a usual, teacher- controlled lesson.

A shift of control from the teacher to the student

Out of these three issues, the learners definitely appreciated the shift of control the most. In a usually teacher- centred class the learners hardly have a chance to take responsibility for the process of learning, which de-motivates them and decreases the ability to continue independent learning after graduating.

To encourage the students to engage actively in classes, I invited them to participate in designing the materials, i.e. selecting texts. As White says when asking learners to provide their own materials, a teacher makes them read a substantial amount to select one (1981). Most importantly however, I invited them to participate in decision making during lessons. "Involvement means investment which suggests a deep sort relating to the whole person. It's not only participating in classroom activities but also in decision making and managing language learning." (Allwright, 1981). The students could decide on the style to complete an activity as well as whether to work alone or in groups. They also had an opportunity to bring their own materials and expertise on various topics and share their experiences. The feedback related to the learners' independence revealed that the students were much more likely to combine in and out of class knowledge and strategies such as independent search for resources and systematising language acquired in random situations like films, songs or street signs.

Summary

The implementation of the materials, although targeted at the group of the students brought mutual benefits.

The learners:

1. despite various learning styles could engage in the activities
2. could exercise more independence
3. showed a considerably deeper involvement in the tasks
4. reacted much more emotionally to the units, compared with the previous course book lessons
5. shared their experience and opinions
6. showed less stress than usual
7. unlike with typical homework, willingly completed the tasks of their choice

8. appreciated routine breaking
9. showed interest in the topics and grammar issues included in the materials.

The author of the materials:

1. gained insight into the students' interests and preferences
2. developed confidence in searching for and creating materials as well as in adapting them to the needs of a target group
3. gained experience in providing materials for various learning styles, interests and preferences
4. practiced relinquishing control
5. appreciated the students' involvement and feedback when creating the materials
6. established cooperation with the students when creating the materials
7. learned how to work with texts as language resources
8. learned and practiced how to evaluate the usefulness of various resources against the specific criteria
9. learned how to estimate the profile of the target group
10. practiced research into the learners' needs and interests.

Apart from the above results, there were also additional positive outcomes of the implementation, i.e.

- The materials will definitely be included in the set of the author's teaching resources to be used with other groups after necessary adaptation.
- In future, each group will begin the classes with needs analysis questionnaire and the students will be invited to participate in materials search and creation.

As a result, it can be believed that the materials produced together by the teacher and learners will be more suitable and better received by the students.

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Biography

Barbara Gesicka graduated from the University of Lódz and Leeds Metropolitan University where she specialized in English Literature and methodology of teaching EFL. She now teaches English in the private Salesian Junior and Senior Grammar School and Business English in a Business and Marketing College in Lódz. She is also a state examiner for MATURA.

Thoughts on Making Electronic-Based Teaching Materials

Peter G. Jones, Language Centre, Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland

Many teachers are accustomed to adapting published materials and producing materials for their classes. Each class has specific needs that are often not met by global or national coursebooks and methodologies. Teachers adapt materials for a myriad of reasons; to add relevance, to add interest, to provide additional practice on particular problem areas, to address cultural sensitivities, to propagate their own values, to make the material suit their own teaching style and philosophy, or merely because of time and resource constraints. And the above list is by no means exhaustive. It has even been suggested that materials writing be used as teacher development.

The increasing use of electronic-based materials with their technical complexity poses new problems for teachers used to writing their own materials. From the point of view of normal classroom teachers, the production and adaption of electronic-based materials can appear daunting.

The aim of this article is to discuss salient issues in the development of electronic-based teaching material, based on the author's experience developing the **Electronic Vocabulary Building Book (EVBB)**, available at www.severasolutions.fi/kike (May 2006).

Electronic Vocabulary Building Book (EVBB)

The **Electronic Vocabulary Building Book (EVBB)** was a project financed by the Finnish Virtual University and began in 2002. The EVBB is web-based material promoting the learning of 144 items of vocabulary. Its aims are: to allow learning of vocabulary specific to the needs of individual students, to encourage learners to take responsibility for their own vocabulary learning, to make vocabulary learning more systematic, to provide the opportunity for regular and easy revision, and to motivate learners by producing a professional-looking end product.

The **EVBB** is in effect a series of on-line forms into which users input information. The data inputted is stored in a database on a server, i.e. not on the user's PC. When the user is ready, the work is printed out. The formatting is done automatically, leading to a professional-looking end product, something the user can be proud of.

The **EVBB** follows a very simple step-based procedure. The simplicity of the structure means that the users quickly learn how the system works and do not get lost in a jungle of tasks and links.

Step 1 – The teacher or student chooses a text to work with. The EVBB, although originally conceived for written texts, works particularly well with audio texts from the internet or elsewhere. The text chosen must be of interest and relevance to the student.

Step 2 – A brief summary of the text is written.

Step 3 – The student chooses 12 items of vocabulary he/she wishes to learn.

Step 4 – The student makes a bilingual wordlist of the items chosen. This exercise is optional but most learners want a mother-tongue equivalent of new items of vocabulary.

Step 5 – There is a handling exercise in which the user "uses" the words or phrases they have chosen. The aim of the exercise is to improve retention by creating a mental link with the new vocabulary. The task per se is not of importance.

Step 6 – Steps 1-5 are repeated for another text. Each handling exercise in the programme is different.

Step 7 – A revision handling exercise is done for vocabulary chosen from texts 1 and 2.

Step 8 – Steps 1-7 are repeated for a further two texts, whereupon there is another revision handling exercise for texts 1-4.

Step 9 – The above cycle is repeated twice more, meaning 12 texts in total are worked with and 144 items of vocabulary are chosen.

An additional feature is that all the items on the bilingual vocabulary lists are automatically compiled and a bilingual glossary produced.

Key Issues

The author was faced with many difficult questions during production of the EVBB, some key issues will be presented here.

Does the material really need to be in electronic form?

First and foremost, does the material need to be in electronic form? What value is added by the use of computers?

Teachers are often under considerable pressure to adopt electronic-based materials; pressure from administrators, who see computer-based teaching as a way of saving costs and improving the institution's profile, and pressure created by the influence of software companies, who see the educational market as a lucrative source of income. Computer-Aided Language Learning (CALL) has, however, many drawbacks. Computer programs are inflexible, they lack creativity, and they introduce additional complications into the learning process.

The strengths of computers in language learning can, in my opinion, be found from two acronyms from the field. The first is ADP, Automated Data Processing. Here the key word is automatic. Computer technology's strength is carrying out repetitive and automated tasks. The infrastructure of the developed world; the electricity grid, water systems, transport network, industrial processes etc, is dependent on ADP. The second acronym is ICT, Information and Communication Technology. Here the key words are information and communication. Modern computers, through the internet, give access to vast amounts of information – from on-line newspapers and magazines to scientific articles, from on-line reference books to personal "blogs", from audio-on-demand to flash animations. They allow easy communication through text (email, messenger programs etc), sound (audio streams, internet telephony, etc) and pictures (graphics on web pages, video-on-demand etc). Electronic-based teaching materials should play to the strengths of the medium. In the case of the EVBB, the information comes from the internet; the creativity and language is produced by the users; the structure, organisation and neat appearance is provided by the computer.

An example of good use of computer-based technology is the **AWL Highlighter** and **AWL Gapmaker** from Sandra Haywood, University of Nottingham. This application allows students to post texts of their choice into an on-line form, the application matches words in the text with the **Academic Word List** produced by Averil Coxhead, and highlights or gaps the words, respectively. In the case of the **AWL Highlighter** and **AWL Gapmaker**, the student chooses relevant texts, the language items are chosen based on more than the gut feelings of the language teacher, and the exercise is created automatically by the technology.

Much commercial language teaching software does not seem to make the best use of the medium, as defined above. The texts are pre-ordained by the programme – making them irrelevant and uninteresting to many users – and the exercises – gap filling, true/false, sequencing jumbled texts, word searches etc – do not get learners to produce longer pieces of language. The danger is that learners become good at gap filling and word games but not at communication.

It is often claimed that the use of computers in the language classroom motivates learners. While this may have been true in the past, when computers had novelty value, as computers become ubiquitous it becomes less and less true. Students are no longer impressed by gimmicks like the sound of applause on getting an answer correct, and the sophisticated graphics needed to impress the current generation accustomed to **Play Station 2** and **Xbox** are certainly beyond the budget of any language teaching software producer. A further statement that I believe is often questionable is the claim that web-based teaching material frees students from the constraints of time and place. While this is true, books, too, are free of time and place constraints, with the advantage that they need no electricity and can be read anywhere.

Merely using an electronic format is not enough. There must be clear benefits from using the electronic medium and the benefits must clearly outweigh the costs in terms of added complexity.

To use, or not to use, a computer expert: that is the question

The issue of whether the technical production of the material is done by the teacher or a professional software developer is one that needs to be addressed from the outset.

Simple exercises can be produced with authoring software, e.g., **Author Plus** from Clarity, or **Hot Potatoes**, or indeed with standard programs such as **MS Word**. E-Learning platforms, such as **Web CT** also allow teachers to create electronic materials. Yet, do the types of exercises created using the above, despite their claims of interactivity, make the best use of computer technology? Innovative material, making full use of modern technology, is beyond the capabilities of most classroom language teachers, whose expertise is in language and pedagogy, not computer coding.

An advantage of using professional software designers is that they produce a professional result, following accepted standards in the field, for example regarding support for various web browsers. The disadvantages are, firstly, cost – software designers need to be paid; secondly, the more people involved, the more difficult a project becomes; and, thirdly, the issue of contracts – contracts must be clear regarding rights to the work, if it is to be developed further or commercialised.

Technical realisation of the **EVBB** was by Nexon Consulting, now Severa Solutions. The problems encountered were to do with differing approaches

to the project: for the software company the project was a standard business project; for the university administration it was a minor project that caused more headaches than it was worth – the paperwork does not distinguish between a project involving millions of Euros or one with a budget in this case of EUR 5,000; and for the teacher involved it was an additional burden on top of an already heavy workload. Project management of the EVBB was poor, reflecting perhaps that the author is a classroom teacher and not accustomed to project work.

Who is the material for?

The type of user raises three key issues. Firstly, the users have different backgrounds and knowledge –both linguistic and technical. In the case of the **EVBB**, differences in the language level of the learners is not a problem because the language comes from the students, the program only provides a framework in which to put the language. The technical background of the users is more problematic; even at a university of technology, the differences between students' knowledge of computer technology are enormous.

The second issue is the instructions used in the material. Clear instructions are vital to the material's success; there is no teacher present to help sort out how the material should be used. Writing clear instructions took a lot of time. The **EVBB** has three levels of instructions. An introduction to the material is given in L1 so that the users get a clear overview of the material and how it works. The introductions so far are in English, Finnish, French, German and Bahasa Malaysia, reflecting the interests of the author. Each exercise has an instruction rubric in English describing what has to be done. And finally each exercise has a "hint box" giving further advice for those who need it. There are plans to add a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) section dealing with issues raised as a result of a user survey conducted in summer 2004.

The final issue is the question of accessibility: who is going to have access to the material? If accessibility is limited, for example, to students of a particular institution, then issues like the language used in the instructions are easier to resolve. Yet, the question then is whether it is worthwhile making the material at all if it is going to be limited to a small group. The **EVBB** is currently open to all. The decision to make the material freely available was the subject of considerable debate. The author felt that since production of the material was paid for by taxpayers, the benefits should be available to more than just students at one institution. Furthermore, nothing is lost by making material freely available on the web. On the other hand, the university administrators found the idea of giving something away for free a somewhat alien concept. Issues to do with computer security and costs for hosting the web site have further muddied the issue. The question of accessibility of web-based material is one that developers must consider carefully.

How future-proof is the material?

Since making electronic material involves a lot of work, it must not get out-of-date too quickly. Important issues are thus flexibility and maintenance. Flexibility is important since it allows the material to cope with the unexpected. For example, in practice it was found that the **EVBB** works best with listening texts, e.g. audio-on-demand programmes from the web, even though it was originally designed with written texts in mind. A second example of the unexpected was the benefit of having student texts in electronic form, which meant plagiarism checks, using the computer program **EVE**, could be done for students using the material as part of credit-bearing courses.

Much materials writing is done as a project and little attention is paid to what happens when the project ends – the material is there, waiting to be used. Web-based material, unlike books, needs to be maintained. This leads to the questions; who does the maintenance and who pays for it? The **EVBB** has got stuck on this problem. Maintenance and development need to be done by a computer expert but since the project is officially over, money is no longer available. It would be interesting to know how many other web-based projects end up in a similar state of suspended animation.

How does one get feedback? And what does one do with it?

With web-based material it is more difficult to find mistakes and errors than with paper-based material. For this reason feedback from users is important. In theory, this is quite easy; a feedback email address can be provided. The problem in practice is that merely providing an email address does not guarantee quality feedback. Users of the **EVBB** must register giving an email address and this information was used in summer 2004 for targeted research. A **webropol** internet-based survey was sent to all Lappeenranta University of Technology users (n=77). The most relevant findings are as follows: a) technical glitches caused the most negative comments, implying that any electronic-based teaching material must be absolutely fully-functional and bug-free b) students were very conservative regarding exercise types, suggesting that the lack of a teacher to justify and explain exercises in electronic-based material is a considerable drawback c) students particularly enjoyed the freedom of being able to choose their own reading and listening texts.

As mentioned earlier, the question of responsibility for maintenance of the material has not been resolved, so many of the suggestions and ideas resulting from the feedback have not been acted upon.

How does one accommodate people who hate computers?

This final question is linked to the first question; does the material really need to be in electronic form? It should be remembered that for many people computers are an anathema. This fact is easily forgotten by producers of electronic-based material, who tend to be interested in modern technology and comfortable using computers. Yet, the group of computer-averse students must be catered for. The **EVBB** attempts to do this by providing a simplified version of the material in .pdf form. This simplified version can be downloaded, printed out and the work done with pen and pencil.

Conclusions

The aim of this article was to discuss relevant issues in the development of electronic-based teaching material, based on the author's experiences developing the **Electronic Vocabulary Building Book**.

The key lessons from the **EVBB** project are: a) The electronic medium must give added value to the material and the form of the material must play to the strengths of computer technology b) with the exception of very simple material, which can be produced using authoring suites, electronic material should be coded by professionals. Teachers should not spend their time learning PHP, MySQL, Javascript etc. c) electronic-based materials writing is best approached as a project. In addition to normal project management issues, such as the schedule, budget and quality, the whole life-cycle of the material must be considered; especially who is responsible for maintenance after the project, and its associated financing, has ended d) provision should be made for students uncomfortable with e-learning.

We have considered materials development from the point of view of "normal" classroom teachers, focussing on whether they are able to develop electronic-based teaching materials. Clearly it is possible. The experiences from the **EVBB** show that the amount of work should, however, not be underestimated and the teacher should concentrate on the language learning aspects of the material. Derewianka, quoting Chun and Plass, presents a list of theoretical questions that should be addressed by researchers before designers of electronic materials can be confident about the effectiveness of their materials. Rather than waiting for these fundamental questions to be totally clarified, classroom teachers, with their vast and up-to-date experience of the realities of day-to-day language teaching and language learning, can make a contribution by developing materials and simply seeing what works. Trial-and-error can be surprisingly effective.

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RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Framing the textbook in classroom events

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An important, yet relatively unexplored issue in research looking at textbooks in the classroom is the extent to which teachers, students and textbooks define the event in which the textbook participates in similar ways. The objective of this article is precisely to engage in this exploration. I will start by defining key concepts in this study and will then proceed to the analysis of a classroom interaction around an activity proposed in an EFL textbook. A brief summary of my findings and implications for materials writers will be outlined at the end of the article.

The background

Another way of phrasing the objective of this article is to ask whether teachers and students frame classroom events involving the textbook similarly. The term 'frame' is being used in a Goffmanian sense involving participants' definitions of the situation. According to Goffman (1974:24), descriptions of events are not always articulated, and nor is the question 'what is going on here and now?'; but 'whether asked explicitly, as in times of confusion and doubt, or tacitly, during occasions of usual certitude, the question is put and the answer to it is presumed by the way the individuals then proceed to get on with the affairs at hand' (ibid: 8). Because participants' definitions of social events are likely to emerge in interaction (Gumperz 1999), the meanings attributed to the textbook in the dynamics of the classroom are therefore co-constructed by teachers and students in classroom events.

In the remainder of this article I seek to unpack the frames evoked by a group of teachers and students when interacting with and through their textbooks in an EFL class for children in Brazil. The discussion to be outlined here is part of a larger study (Santos, 2004) looking at how individuals made sense of their textbooks in one educational community. For the purposes of this article I look at one interaction around the textbook in an elementary class involving 8 students (ranging from 8 to 10 years of age) and their teacher. The class took place early in the academic year and further details of the textbook activity around which the interaction developed is given next.

The text

The classroom events in focus revolve around an activity from Littlejohn and Hicks (1996a:9) entitled 'Think!' Following this main directive (which incidentally is given in bold, unlike the rest of the instructions), the rubric goes on to ask students to 'Look at the picture. How many words can you understand?' The picture portrays a crossroads in which some other visual elements play important roles: we can see a big house on one of the corners, the entrance to a park on another one, two people on opposite sides of the road talking to one another, cars, a telephone booth, a mailbox, a bus stop, a billboard and various signs. Some of these non-verbal elements co-occur with verbal language, e.g. the signs 'No ball games' and 'Open 8:00-20:00'at the entrance to the park; 'Drink Sola Cola' on the billboard; the words 'computers', 'cameras', 'radios', 'televisions' and 'video' on the façade of the big house – which is in fact a store called 'City Electronics'; balloons with the utterances 'Hello, Peter! How are you?' and 'Fine, thanks' for the two characters; plus various signs and 'labels' such as 'telephone', 'bus', 'taxi', 'Grand Hotel', 'one way', just to mention a few. At the right hand side of the picture, we can also see a page of a notepad. There are two columns on the page and their headings are 'Word' and 'Meaning'; under the former, we can see the words 'computer', 'sandwiches' and 'park' (and further blank space). Nothing is written under 'Meaning'.

As suggested by the rubric, the text locates the activity within a reflection frame. This frame is reinforced by the guidelines in the Teacher's Book: 'A lot of exercises in the book ask the students to work things out themselves. Here, students can work in pairs to make a list of the words they can understand, with the meanings.' (Littlejohn and Hicks 1996b:21) The idea is, then, to encourage learners to activate their prior knowledge and together come to the conclusion that (1) they already know a lot of things in English; and (2) they can 'work out' some of the things they don't know. In other words, the overarching frame established by the task is a reflection frame. We can also argue that according to the textbook the task should be framed in three subsidiary, supporting, ways: through a reading frame (in that 'words' need to be read for students to carry out the activity), a writing frame (as established

by the partially completed notepad), and a getting-things-done frame (given that there is a 'product' to be achieved). It is important to note that, according to the text, these three frames are in a sense instrumental to the central 'reflection frame'.

But is this how teachers and learners will necessarily make sense of this activity? This is the topic of the next section.

The classroom event around the textbook

Excerpt 1 shows the transcription of an interaction around the text described above. It is a long, yet rather illuminating exchange, in which interactants jointly negotiate their expectations about 'what is supposed to go on' in the event involving the activity proposed in the textbook. Students' names have been changed to preserve their anonymity, and transcription conventions can be found in Appendix 1.

It becomes obvious from the very beginning of the interaction that neither the teacher nor the students acknowledged the reflection frame proposed by the text. It could be argued, however, that the teacher somehow encourages some reflection when she rearticulates the instructions of the task in lines 1 and 2 ('if you look at this picture here on page nine look and think a little bit about it'). However, this orientation is immediately rectified through a repetition of the request to look at the picture (lines

Excerpt 1

T: maybe you you could share . er . if you look at this picture here on page nine . look . . and think a little bit about it . look at this . ((shows page to students)) look at this picture here . and see how many words can you write

S1: words?

T: yes . how many words can you write? okay ? you look at this picture . how many words can you understand

S2: talking . . driving

T: okay? you can do this with Branca right? Marcos . can you share your book on page nine?

S3: [come on in . come on in]

S4: teacher? [is it this one?]

S1: teacher? . teacher? [is it this one?]

T: yes . the student's book . . look at this one . can you share this? / you look at the picture and see how many words can you understand . okay? . so this is for you ((incomprehensible, simultaneous talk))

S4: / [what is it that we have to do?]

S5: [are we going to add a title . something . or do we go ahead and write?]

T: no . look at the picture

S4: [what is it that we have to do?]

T: did you understand what you have to do Leninha? . so so? did you understand . Clovis? . hum?

S: (?)

T: look at this picture here . look . there are many words here . there are many things look / there are many words here . right? I would like you to write on this paper the words that you can really understand

S2: / driving . driving . talking . going

S1: (?) [a tape recorder]

T: okay? . did you understand how Silvio?

S4: yes

T: yes . did everybody understand? . yes?. . yes? (?) Branca can you share it with Silvio please?

S: (?)

T: (?) Silvio you can do it with Clovis if you want . (?) ((students start working. They move chairs, they talk, there's some incomprehensible talk))

T: look at the picture . look at the picture . see the words that you can understand .

38 there are some words that you can understand . the ones that you understand
39 the ones that you understand . okay? you write down on a piece of paper
40 S1: [what I . think?]
41 T: what you understand
42 S5: [no idea]
43 T: Carmem did you understand what you have to do? what is this here? what is this?
44 what is that?
45 S6: [a computer]
46 T: okay . so you understand? hum
47 S4: [you we have to get the things you know what it is]
48 S5: [this is from England]
49 S2: [I have to get my pencil case]
50 T: Lucia . did you understand what you have to do? can you please explain to
51 Marcos? Marcos . ask er . (?) Lucia
52 S5: [do we have to put . have to put . have to put this.] page nine =
53 T: no . no
54 T: page nine
55 ((students work on the task, incomprehensible talk))
56 ((silence))
57 S3: teacher . [do we have to do it in English?]
58 T: yes . yes . English.
59 S2: (?) [today is . the tenth]
60 S1: [do we have to write the things from the store?]
61 T: the words that you understand
62 S1: [what we understood . from the store?]
63 T: from the picture
64 S4: [from the picture . okay . we understood . we understood this is a computer store .
65 then we write]
66 T: only the words Branquinha . only the words . Branca . listen . Branca . the words
67 S2: the words?
[...]
80 T: [what is it that we have to do?]
81 S7: [I don't know either]
82 S8: [I think we have to put what you understood from the picture]=
83 S7: [what do we have to do] teacher? . [we haven't understood]
84 S2: (?) [we have to write what you understood from the picture . is that it?
85 T: I think that Lucia understood what we have to do . did you understand? can you
86 explain to the class? [I didn't manage to . explain to the class] to the group can you
87 explain to the group please?
88 S3: [do we have to put the verbs?]
89 S4: [do you have to put what you understood from the picture? is that it?]
90 S5: [do we have to put what we know .what we know from the picture . and write what
91 you know / that's it
[...]
134 T: no problem (?) I am going to talk to you about this . how many words do you get
135 Silvio
136 S4: [what?]
137 T: how many words? . how many?
138 S4: ((counts)) eleven
139 T: eleven? many words . good . .

2-3) followed by another rearticulation of the task in which the invitation to 'think about the picture' is replaced by a direction to 'look at the picture and see how many words they can write' (line 3).

According to Tannen (1993:41-42), rearticulations provide 'evidence of expectations' and an important related issue is whether teachers and students in events involving the textbook 'echo' or 'reformulate' the textual voice in their own rearticulations. The former type of rearticulation will have the effect of endorsing frames outlined in the text; the latter may lead to a

reframing – as shown in this interaction.

Interestingly, the reformulation shown in line 3 ('see how many words can you write') maintains the interrogative structure of the direction in the text, and in this sense the utterance displays a merging of the voice of the text with the voice of the teacher. However, this blend of voices is not fully coincident: after all, the teacher replaces the original verb of the question ('understand') with a new one ('write'), through the use of simultaneous 'omission' and 'addition'. And because additions, as Tannen (1993:51) points out, are 'the most extreme evidence of a speaker's expectations', it is important to consider what this addition suggests about interactants' expectations about the event.

The reformulation in focus here, with the same addition, is repeated in line 5, and it delineates a *writing frame*. In this excerpt specifically, a writing frame is evoked not only by the teacher (in her later clarifications about what this 'writing' involves, lines 24-26 and 37-39), but also, and to a certain extent surprisingly[1], in three utterances made by students either for (1) requests for more precise directions regarding this writing: one student confirms the need to 'add a title' (line 18); another one checks if it is needed to include the page number in the paper (lines 52); or (2) confirmation of a date, which supposedly has to be included in the writing (line 59). All these elements (titles, cross references, and dates) seem to be part of these young children's understandings of literacy events involving writing in association with the textbook.

In addition to this writing frame, this excerpt also illustrates, though more indirectly, a *reading frame* elicited by the teacher. After all, she repeatedly asks the students to 'look at the picture' in order to look for 'words' (lines 3, 5-6, 14, 25-26, *inter alia*). It could well be argued that this conflicting association between 'picture'(pointing to the visual mode) and 'words'(pointing to the written mode), is embedded in the very rubric in the text; it can also be argued that this long negotiation of expectations can be a result of this mismatch – this idea could be supported by a student's association of 'the words she can understand' (as suggested by the teacher's question in lines 5-6) with 'the pictures displayed on the page' such as 'talking' and 'driving'(as shown in the student's words in line 7). The student offers the same interpretation in line 27, reflecting the fact that she and the teacher differ in their interpretation of the event regarding modality: while the former acknowledges the presence (and perhaps even the dominance) of the visual in the text, the latter neglects any multimodal ways of experiencing the event – she orients students, instead, to construct the event monomodally with an emphasis on the written mode at the levels of both reception and production of their discourses. Lines 24-26 are especially relevant in this respect, and it is important to point out that this focus on reading and writing is shared by the textbook as well, though the latter outlines these frames in a subordinate position in relation to the overarching reflection frame.

Two additional frames are signalled in this interaction: firstly, an *exploration frame*, characterised by a search for something, and whose success is defined in association with the quantity of items 'found'; secondly, a *getting-things-done frame*. The exploration frame is illustrated in the brief assessment of the event (lines 134-139), and the teacher's emphasis on 'how many' and not on other elements present in the original direction (for example, on the 'understanding of words' and its reasons and/or implications, on the observation of the picture, or even on the 'thinking process' suggested in the rubric of the task). The getting-things-done frame parallels what Bloome (1994:106) has described as 'procedural display', that is, 'the display by teachers and students to each other of a set of academic and/or interactional procedures that themselves counted as the accomplishment of a lesson'. In this excerpt, this tendency is suggested by the nature of the verbs elected by interactants in their discussion of what is to be done: action verbs (such as get, put, do) dominate their choices (unlike the combination of *look-and-understand* as a means of thinking as proposed in the text)

One of the points I want to make here is that this interaction illustrates the operation of multiple (sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary) frames by the teacher and the students. And although some of these frames overlap with textual frames, there is no evidence of endorsement of the main frame displayed in the textbook (namely, reflection). An important comment need to be made in this respect: the teacher's constant use of the verb 'understand' does not signal a fostering reflection frame; rather, it is associated either to a reading frame, by continuously emphasing the 'decoding and recognition of written words'(lines 5-6; 13-14; 24-26; 37-39; 61), or, in parallel (note how the lines mentioned next interweave with the former lines) to a getting-things-done frame, by suggesting, explicitly or implicitly, whether students are aware of 'what they are supposed to do' (see lines 21, 29, 31, 43, 46 and 50).

The operation of various frames in interaction does not mean that teachers and students have conflicting expectations about the literacy event around the textbook. On the contrary, except for minor misunderstandings and/or negotiations of expectations (e.g. the 'reading images' frame evoked by a student as opposed to the 'reading script' frame constructed by the teacher), all the frames discussed here intersect to form a common definition of the classroom event involving the textbook around which interactants do

1. It is worth reiterating that students' ages in this group ranged from 8 to 10. In this sense, it is remarkable that these children already display, at this young age, clear and precise ideas about 'codes of behaviour' associated with school literacy practices.

not reveal any disagreement. I will be calling this frame *following a requirement*, and it is epitomized in lines 80-91, through interactants' overt display of their concern with what they 'have to' do.

This shared frame, I believe, permeates the whole event and is foregrounded by interactants on various occasions. Its most typical representation is found in students' question (lines 16-17, 20): 'what is it that we have to do?' (also see line 80). It is important to highlight, though, that students' L1 (Portuguese) is a null-subject language and therefore allows the construction of questions with no explicit subject, as it happened in students' original utterances ('*é pra fazer o quê?*', literally, 'is it to do what?'). In Portuguese, this question implies that somebody has to do something – and agency is therefore blurred both with regard to the source of the directive (i.e., who is giving the order) and the recipient of the directive (i.e., who is to 'do' whatever it is to be done). In other words, the 'we' that I included in the English translation is in fact the result of my own interpretation of the original question, and does not appear in students' original utterances.

Concluding remarks

The main argument of this article is that research into literacy events mediated by the textbook may shed light into our understanding of the meanings that teachers and teachers attribute to textbooks, and to classroom events in which the textbook participates. As shown here, people may construct different meanings on these occasions, and these meanings in turn may depart from the original objectives of the text.

For this particular interaction, I identified the following frames in Table 1.

The discussion outlined in this article has important implications for materials writers, including (in more theoretical terms) the incorporation of research-driven data like these in our work and (in more practical terms) the inclusion, in the materials we design, of activities aiming at reflection about ways of engaging with textbooks – including discussions around the implications of particular choices. Specifically, I suggest that transcripts like the one reproduced in Excerpt 1 should be incorporated in the materials developed for L2 teaching. Firstly, they are 'authentic'

FRAMES	CHARACTERISTICS	FRAME EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY
1.Getting-things-done	- involves 'procedural display'(Bloome, 1994) - is signalled linguistically through the use of action verbs - focuses on the accomplishment of products - is devoid of intentionality on the part of both teachers and students - involves a limited use of semiotic resources	text-teachers-students
2. Writing	- involves the production of script such as labels, titles, page references and dates - purposes and audience are not clear	text-teachers-students
3. Reading	- involves, preferentially, the decoding of written words - may involve the decoding of images	text-teachers-students
4. Exploration	- involves a search for something - as in a treasure hunt, the search implies difficulties - success is measured through the quantity of items found	teachers-students
5. Reflection	- involves cognitive and/or metacognitive strategies	text
6. Following a requirement	- causes and purposes of the requirement are unclear - agency in connection with the origin of the requirement (who imposes it) is unclear - agency is connection with the accomplishment of the requirement tends to be associated with students, but may involve the teacher as well	teachers - students

Table 1: How teachers and students framed the literacy events mediated by the textbook

both for not having been developed for instructional purposes and for illustrating interactions which are likely to be relevant for other learners in linguistic terms; secondly, in more educational terms, they can allow for what Holliday (2001:7) described as the 'ethnography of interaction', i.e., the examination of the textbook as 'the object rather than the means for study' (ibid). By looking at how other individuals make sense of textbook-mediated interactions teachers, students and materials writers should become more critical of their own ways of making sense of their textbooks – and therefore make educated choices as regards their priorities in their educational contexts.

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Appendix One

Transcription Conventions

(?)	Unintelligible speech
/	Onset of overlap
=	No pause between turns
(( ))	Comments or description of non-verbal behaviour
[...]	Omission
.	Pause of 5 seconds or less
. .	Pause of more than 5 seconds
[ ]	Translation of utterance originally produced in interactants' L1

Biography

Denise Santos is Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at the University of Reading. She gained a Masters in English Education from the University of Oklahoma and worked towards her PhD at the University of Reading. She has been involved in L2 education and materials writing for over twenty years and her research interests lie the following areas: interaction and semiotic practices in literacy events mediated by educational texts in general (and textbooks in particular), socio-political issues related to the teaching of English as a foreign language, and educational discourse in the context of teaching and learning Portuguese as a foreign language.

A Study of Expertise and its Implications for Materials Development

Ann Margaret Smith & Dawn Perkins, Post-Graduate Students at Lancaster University, UK

This article demonstrates the contribution that expertise studies can make to materials development by describing a research project conducted in 2005 by the Lancaster University Language Teaching Expertise Research Group (or LATEX), which explored expertise in textbook evaluation.

For a number of years, the LATEX Group has conducted small-scale research projects to investigate expertise in various areas of teaching. The group's decision to focus on textbook evaluation in this most recent study was influenced by a number of factors:

- The vast number of teaching materials available would seem to necessitate the need for evaluation skills.
- The importance placed on materials evaluation in the materials development literature and in some of the teacher training literature indicates that evaluation is an activity that many teachers may be involved in at some point in their careers.
- Empirical studies revealing what teachers and/or evaluators do when evaluating textbooks are rare.

In what follows, the project will be briefly described, as well as some of the findings from the research[1]. Subsequently, there will be a discussion of how these findings and the study in general help to inform materials development, taking us a step forward in matching materials development to classroom needs.

Description of the project

Participants

In designing the project, the research group decided to focus on teachers at different stages in their careers to discover what effect this variable might have on their evaluation styles. Three teachers with similar backgrounds (i.e., same first language, teaching in a similar context) who were involved with teaching similar groups of students at a neighbouring university were recruited: a novice with less than two years of full-time teaching experience, an intermediate with approximately six years of experience, and an experienced teacher with over ten years of experience. These participants will hereon be referred to as T1, T2, and T3 respectively.

The participants' experience was measured initially only in terms of years of teaching, and was then further investigated using a questionnaire to find out whether they had had any training in textbook evaluation. It was found that there was a correlation between length of service and training in evaluation. For instance, T3 had had training in materials evaluation and had worked as a curriculum coordinator, during which time he had been responsible for selecting materials for classroom use. But it should be noted that in terms of this project, it is impossible to say definitively whether T3 was an expert in evaluation since the researchers were unable to view the workings of his mind and instead relied on his account of what processes he went through when conducting the textbook evaluation. It was not the researchers' intentions to equate experience in teaching with expertise in evaluation, but amount of teaching experience seemed the most practical criteria with which to differentiate between the participants involved.

Procedure

The researchers selected a textbook for the evaluation study that was unknown to the teachers, but would have been suitable for use with their own classes – Just Right by Jeremy Harmer (2004)[2]. This was done to make sure that the participants were unfamiliar with the book so that they all started on an equal level and to ensure that the researchers were able to capture the participants' spontaneous reactions during the evaluation sessions.

During the audio- and video-taped data collection sessions, the teachers were asked to evaluate the textbook in relation to a given teaching context with which each was familiar while thinking aloud about the evaluation process. In using this research technique, it was possible to control for certain variables, including participants' first language, teaching context, and prior exposure to the textbook, thereby increasing the reliability of the study.

1. For a fuller description of this project, please see http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/groups/latex/latex.htm.
2. LATEX is indebted to Isabel Donnelly, a colleague who kindly recruited and vetted the participants for us in this respect.

Training

In order to help prepare the teachers for the think-aloud process to be used during the evaluation, training sessions were devised whereby the LATEX group offered a choice of three different problem-solving activities – a partially-completed jigsaw puzzle, an anagram, and the Tower of Hanoi puzzle – allowing the teachers to choose which activity they felt most comfortable in completing. All three chose the jigsaw puzzle. Other training activities, such as listening to or viewing a video tape of someone doing a think-aloud activity could have also been usefully employed during the training phase.

Data collection and analysis

The recordings of the evaluation sessions took place on two consecutive days, and the participants provided a wealth of lengthy and rich data. The three recordings were then professionally transcribed, checked with the videos, and then each of the researchers took responsibility for coding aspects of the data. The method of analysis that was adopted evolved from the observation of the data and, thus, could be said to be grounded. After the initial analysis, the findings were discussed with the group, and where necessary re-categorized and re-analyzed.

Findings – Likes and dislikes

The data collected from the study revealed some similarities and a number of differences in the textbook evaluation styles of the participants. In this article, the spotlight will be on the evaluators' likes and dislikes, which turned out to be a salient area of focus during the analysis stage of the project.

Novice teacher

T1 looked at many units of the student's book while trying to determine consistency within its layout. Of the three participants, this teacher seemed to be the least familiar with the commonalities of textbook layout and with the theoretical aspects of the textbook; in one instance she had to search for the meaning of functional language, which was a term mentioned in the student's book, before she could proceed with the evaluation session. This seemed to indicate that the practice of evaluation was to be a learning experience for T1 as she was able to work out the meaning of this particular linguistic term for herself.

For T1, the main concern was with survival in the classroom. For instance, she spent some amount of time during her evaluation in trying to decide which lesson would be 'appropriate' for the first session of a class and in searching for warmers. Her two main areas of consideration revolved around knowing where she was with the materials at hand, and in making sure the lesson ran as smoothly as possible. In reference to the first point, T1 put a premium on clear layout of the contents pages and of the units in the textbook and the teacher's book. In her evaluation of the activities and the sections of the textbook, her emphasis was also on possible problems they might have created in the classroom. For example, she considered units that approach a topic with a wide range of activities a plus because they free the teacher from having to look for extra material. She also said that having the answer key in the teacher's book would be preferable to having it in the student's book as it stops students from looking for answers.

Intermediate teacher

T2 looked through almost all of the units, making brief and superficial comments about each one, and gave an evaluation only at the researcher's request.

T2's likes and dislikes were still related to student behaviour – what effect the components of the book have on what students do in the classroom – although these were not viewed in terms of possible problems, but in terms of whether this behaviour could lead to learning or not. In particular, he liked activities that led to active practice in the classroom.

Whereas T1 looked to the textbook to provide her with all the activities she needed for the lessons she was planning during the evaluation session, T2 was interested in how he might incorporate other activities to work in conjunction with the materials provided in the textbook and was very specific in describing these extra activities. He was also concerned with how these activities and those provided within the student's book might work in an actual classroom situation. On a few occasions this evaluator also commented on the linguistic content of activities – language chunks and collocation – although he used paraphrase and circumlocution to describe some of these phenomena instead of using standard ELT terminology. His practice of commenting upon this content was something that the novice never did.

Experienced teacher

During his evaluation session, T3 considered the scenario very thoroughly. He looked at two units and their corresponding sections in the teacher's book in detail, then gave an overall evaluation.

In comparison with the other two evaluators, T3 was more flexible and his likes and dislikes were often less categorical. For instance, he was more flexible with his ideas about supplementation, voicing an interest in 'jumping off points' where he could incorporate outside materials or activities, which he described in a general way. In comparison to T1's search for supplementary

activities within the textbook package itself and T2's very specific description of supplementary activities, T3's ideas about these points were described in an abstract way during the evaluation session since he wasn't preparing a lesson, but evaluating a textbook.

T3 also weighed up the pros and cons of the textbook and was ready to accept that his personal preferences might not be those of other teachers or of students and was willing to accommodate these other people's needs and wants. His comments revealed his concern for the needs of less experienced teachers. Compared to the other two evaluators, T3 also commented on a much larger number of issues – both practical and theoretical – and the fact that he was able to take a personal stance on them confirmed his status as an experienced teacher. He was also the only evaluator that commented on the more technical aspects of textbook evaluation – he mentioned white space, for example – and referred to features of other textbooks he was familiar with when providing reasons for his likes and dislikes. On several occasions he also mentioned his concern for whether the book enabled students to become aware of the purpose of the activities. In reference to this point, his likes and dislikes were not usually determined by personal preference, but instead by what might be useful given the students' backgrounds and final aims. This was further evidence of the flexibility which characterized his evaluation style; even the most subjective aspects of T3's personal preferences were filtered through the students' points of view.

General impressions of the findings

This research seems to indicate that the more teaching experience an evaluator has, which presumably involves at least some experience in textbook evaluation, the more able he or she is to view a textbook with detachment, and to take account of other users' needs as well as his or her own.

This study revealed that T1 equated the textbook with a script for lessons and prioritized the teacher's need for survival when evaluating the book. In comparison, T2 focused on the student's needs, although it was their immediate needs of functioning in an English-speaking environment that were of greatest concern. These two participants were using what McGrath (2002) calls the 'impressionistic method' of evaluation, whereby they skimmed through the textbook components during the evaluation session, making sometimes superficial comments about their contents in reference to how they would use the textbook in their own classrooms. This differed significantly from the evaluation session of T3 who used what McGrath (2002) terms the 'in-depth method' of evaluation, during which the teacher focused on close analysis of a small section of the textbook to consider the theoretical and methodological underpinnings in its design. T3 also managed to consider how the textbook fitted into a long-term programme of preparation for academic study, as well as how other teachers might relate to it. These were points which seemed to indicate his expertise as an evaluator.

The methods of evaluation mentioned have proved helpful for classifying the evaluation styles of the participants in our study, but they also point to implications for research into materials development.

How the findings of the study inform materials development

There are a variety of checklists that have been published to aid teachers in textbook evaluation, for instance, Cunningsworth (1995) and Skierso (1991). These checklists probably do help teachers to evaluate materials 'systematically,' but there may be a danger that they might become unwieldy to use, or that they are not suitable for the novice teacher's needs, as we have seen (Ellis, 1997). This article will conclude by considering the benefits to materials developers and users of further empirical research – like the study conducted by the LATEX group – in helping teachers choose and use materials well.

With a small-scale study like the one discussed in this article there is necessarily limited generalizability in the results, but it is nonetheless worthwhile. This is because the LATEX study does indicate a general framework for empirical research into materials evaluation, which is to be encouraged among colleagues working in the ELT field. This study could be used by groups of teachers as a starting point for other, different areas of research. Alternatively, other researchers could conduct a predictive evaluation of a set of materials, as the LATEX group did, or follow up a term's teaching and evaluate materials retrospectively, as Ellis (1997) suggests. It is not necessary to evaluate a whole set of materials if resources and time are tight. Just looking at one aspect of a course – listening skills, or vocabulary development – or one task or activity, or one component can be illuminating, and if the findings are shared throughout the wider community, many individuals reap the benefits.

Materials development surely should follow best teaching practice, as well as encourage it. Empirical studies can help point to what teachers want in textbooks and what it is they do with textbooks in the classroom. If writers know this, they can make sure they flag up the aspects that teachers look for first when evaluating materials. Common teacher preferences can indicate to professional materials writers and publishers areas on which to focus within the conceptualization and design phases of materials development. Publishers could use this information to market their books to the right audience, highlighting the features that appeal to teachers in different

contexts. The book jacket 'blurb' does this to some extent, but much of it is so similar that it washes over the reader, or is not understood by some teachers (novices perhaps).

The emphasis in this research project on expertise is relevant, too, because materials designers need to identify clearly who it is that will use their materials, and what their needs are. The learners are probably uppermost in the minds of most materials writers, but the materials will be mediated through the teachers, who are far from being a homogeneous group. At different career stages teachers seek various things in the materials chosen for classroom use, and materials developers can only respond appropriately if these needs are identified. The LATEX study suggests that experienced teachers may be better able to see the bigger picture, and to be more flexible in the way they use resources than novice teachers, whose focus tends to be much narrower, more on the particular session with the specific class they have in front of them. Reflecting the findings of this project, it seems that materials, especially the teacher's book, could play an important function here, in guiding the novice teacher, and in being an essential part of continuing professional development, assuming almost a mentoring role.

Empirical studies, particularly those that explore teachers' perceptions, can thus help to move towards closing any gaps between professional materials design and classroom needs, and, subsequently, between theory and practice.

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Biography

Ann Margaret Smith and Dawn Perkins, both post-graduate students at Lancaster University, have been actively involved in several research projects conducted by the Linguistics Department's Language Teaching Expertise Research Group. Along with the project described here dealing with expertise in textbook evaluation, their own research studies, which focus on ELT for special needs students/teacher training, and expertise in textbook writing, reflect their continued interest in materials development.

Incorporating metacognitive strategy training into a language program

Josefina C. Santana, Pan-American University, Mexico

This article reports on the findings of a study carried out among high intermediate students of English at a Mexican university. The study was designed to measure the impact of Strategy (or Strategies)-Based instruction (SBI) on the communicative competence and the learning process of these students. The purpose of the study was to see if: a) strategic students are better learners; and b) students can be taught to be more strategic.

The findings indicated that, although SBI was not as successful as hoped in making the students independent learners, it did positively affect both their speaking skills and the results of their final written exams. Because of these findings, explicit metacognitive strategy training was systematically included in the language curriculum. This paper explains how and discusses some of the outcomes.

The context

The study was carried out in a university in Mexico. English is a graduation requirement and students must present one of the standardised tests (i.e., TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, FCE) and obtain a minimum number of points in order to graduate.

Entry-level students take a placement exam. If they have already presented one of the tests, and obtained at least 550 on TOEFL or its equivalent on one of the other tests, they are exempted from studying English. If they have not, they are required to study English, either at the University or elsewhere.

All students, regardless of where they study English, are required to take final English exams at the University, to accredit the semester and show that they are progressing. The students who study within the University English program are known as internal students, whereas those who study elsewhere are labelled external students.

In 2002, an SBI component was added to the curriculum in the hope that SBI would enable the students to become more strategic, to become more autonomous and more efficient, to be able to do well on any proficiency test, and to increase their communicative competence.

What is SBI?

Rubin (1987) explains that effective learning is not so much a question of aptitude, but of attitude. In other words, good language learners process language in an effective way, through the use of a variety of learning strategies. SBI posits that by teaching them these strategies, all students will become more effective.

In the words of Williams and Burden (1997):

> *'If we hold such a view, we then believe that we can help all learners to become better at language learning. We free ourselves from the concept of learners possessing a fixed amount of aptitude for language, and see everyone capable of succeeding, given appropriate teaching.' (Williams & Burden 1997:20)*

Strategy-Based Instruction has its roots in cognitive psychology. It works on two levels: explicit training in the use of strategies, and implicit use of strategies embedded throughout the curriculum. (Weaver & Cohen 1997):

> *'The underlying premise of the strategies-based approach is that students should be given the opportunity to understand not only what they can learn in the language classroom, but also how they can learn the language they are studying more effectively and efficiently.' (Weaver & Cohen 1997: v; italics in the original)*

Chamot (1987) defines learning strategies as:

> *'...techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information'. (Chamot 1987: 71)*

For the purposes of this study we used Oxford's typology (1990). She mentions six different types of strategies, divided into two major areas. Direct strategies involve the target language. These are memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. Memory strategies help students store and retrieve new information; cognitive strategies allow learners to understand new concepts; compensation strategies permit the students to function in the target language in spite of gaps in their learning.

Indirect strategies support language learning. These are metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies enable the students to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning; affective strategies allow the students to regulate their attitudes toward learning; social strategies permit the learner to learn through involvement with others.

A complete strategy-based course involves training in the six different kinds of strategies, because an effective learner has recourse to a variety of these. It involves both implicit and explicit use of strategies, because students need to learn and to use new ones, but they also need to be able to evaluate these strategies to see how effective they are for the individual student, and for the task at hand. (Cohen 1998)

The study

The study involved 199 students at a higher intermediate level[1], divided into 12 groups and working with eight different teachers.

The students did not work with a textbook. The syllabus was based on the book they had used the previous semester and included: gerunds and infinitive verb forms, second conditional, all forms of future, all forms of past, reported statements and questions, reported commands and requests, passive voice in all tenses, modal auxiliaries for obligation and necessity, articles for geographical features, and participial adjectives.

To introduce each topic six authentic readings were used. These were taken from books, magazines, and the Internet. The texts were selected having in mind the grammar focus. For example, to introduce passive voice, we selected a scientific report on the Apollo 11 mission. This was taken from the NASA archives on the Internet. For a review of different forms of past and reported speech, we selected an extract from Bernal Díaz del Castillo's True History of the Conquest of Mexico.

Once we had the texts, the strategies derived from these naturally. Since our students had at least a vague notion of the history of Mexico, the use of background knowledge was the logical strategy to introduce in this case. In the story of Apollo 11, the strategy was: attend selectively. This strategy, which trains the students to focus on what they understand, was deemed appropriate for a text which included very technical terms.

The students were taught five explicit strategies throughout their course. They were also assigned class activities that involved the use of different strategies, and they were encouraged to work co-operatively with others- another learning strategy- on different assignments. On their partial exams, they were reminded and encouraged to use strategies such as predicting and summarising to help themselves on the listening and reading portions, and finally, on the written exams, they were encouraged to reflect on their use of strategies, and how helpful they found them.

The course was balanced by speaking, reading, listening, and investigation activities.

The methodology

The research methodology used was qualitative. There were no control groups, but for the purposes of comparison, the students were compared with level 5 students of previous semesters as well as students who were in level 6 during the study.

To gauge if SBI helped the students become more strategic, they completed Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) at the beginning of the course. This instrument measures the students' use of the six different kinds of strategies. As an exit measurement, the students answered Rubin's and Thompson's (1984) questionnaire which evaluates use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

To see if strategic students are better language learners, the students took an oral exam designed to measure their communicative competence[2]. This exam took into account six different aspects of communication: grammar, fluency, register, vocabulary, the ability to successfully communicate the idea, and the ability to hold a detailed conversation, as opposed to only responding to cues.

Finally, the scores on the students' final written exams were considered as an indicator of effective learning.

The findings

The first finding was that students did not become more strategic through training. Entry and exit questionnaires showed similar results in all cases.

The second finding was that strategy use, as reported by the students, did not seem to affect their results, either on oral or on written exams. The students who, based on the results of SILL, proved not to be strategic tended to do badly on both exams. However, the students whose results labelled them as strategic, sometimes did well on exams, and sometimes did not.

There was, nevertheless, an interesting corollary: on the oral exams, the level 5 students did better, overall, than their counterparts in level 6, although the latter had one semester more of English studies. The level 5 students averaged 4.5/6 on their oral interviews, while the level 6 students averaged 4/6.

At the same time, on the written exams, the results were also positive. The students who participated in the study were compared with level 5 external students[3] in the same period, level 5 internal students in the previous year, and level 5 external students in the previous year. 95.8% of the SBI students passed the final written exam, versus 87.7% of the external students, 89.7% of the internal students the previous year, and 94.8% of the external students the previous year.[4]

Another finding was that, although overall use of strategies did not appear to make a difference in exam results, there was a strong correlation between the use of metacognitive strategies and success on both oral and written exams.

1. Level 5 in the University English program. 2. Defined by Savignon as: '...the ability to convey meaning, to successfully combine a knowledge of linguistic and sociolinguistic rules in communicative interactions.' (Savignon, 1983: v)

From the results we concluded that although one semester of Strategy-Based Instruction was not enough to make a difference in the conscious use of strategies for language learning, it did positively impact language learning for our students, as measured by both oral and written tests.

We also concluded that the strategies that have the strongest positive influence on language learning are the metacognitive strategies, and therefore, these are the ones that should be emphasised in any strategy-training course.

The application

Considering that metacognitive strategies made the difference between effective and less effective students, we decided to incorporate more metacognitive strategy training into our classes at all levels.

Cohen (1998) mentions that for this kind of training to be effective, it must be incorporated into the language course itself. In his experience:

> *'...the most effective program would most likely be one of strategy-based instruction that is, explicit classroom instruction directed at learners regarding their language learning and language use strategies, and provided alongside instruction in the foreign language itself.' (Cohen 1998: 17-18; italics in the original).*

Anderson (2002) defines metacognition as 'the ability to think about your thinking'. Metacognitive strategies fall into four categories: planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating. Some examples of metacognitive strategies are setting goals, identifying genre, eliminating distractions, activating background knowledge, inferencing, summarizing, and a score of others.

For Anderson (2002), metacognition requires three essential elements; self-awareness, knowledge of how languages are learned, and planning and preparation for learning.

Metacognition requires that a student know his/her learning style or preference since not all learning strategies are equally effective for all learners. In our courses, we include a learning style questionnaire as one of the first class activities. This is done as pair work, with the students asking and answering their partners' questions. The results are scored, and a whole group discussion ensues. It is important to point out that there are no right or wrong answers in this activity; people are simply different.

Knowledge of how languages are learned is also a crucial element for Anderson. If the student does not understand that s/he must play an active role in the learning process, then no amount of training will help. To attend to this need, we include in our courses a reading on this subject. The reading is simpler or more complex, depending on the level, and the normal pre- and post-task activities are carried out. Again, the topic is discussed, with students discussing how this information matches what they previously thought about language learning.

To cover the planning/preparation stage, we do a goal setting[5] activity. Students are asked to specify how much time and energy they plan to devote to their language studies, and the outcome they expect. If there is a mismatch, the teacher points this out. However, other than this, the teacher does not intervene.

S/he asks the students about their goals, but abstains from commenting on them. This activity not only lets the students see how their input will directly affect the outcome, but it also offers some tips to help the students learn more effectively.

Other metacognitive strategies used in our courses (activating background knowledge, selective attention) have already been mentioned in this article. With a little time and planning, it is not difficult to find different opportunities to include strategy training throughout the course.

Chamot et al (1999) recommend a framework for strategies instruction that includes five steps:

- Preparation: the teacher selects a strategy that is appropriate for the planned activity.
- **Presentation**: the teacher explains what the strategy is and why it is useful. The teacher models the strategy.
- **Practice**: the teacher guides and gives feedback as students apply the new strategy.
- **Evaluation**: the students assess the effectiveness of the new strategy.
- **Expansion**: the strategy is applied to other activities, or in other classes.

When applying this model, it is important to select activities that are moderately challenging, and that can more effectively carried out with the strategy than without it.

Cohen (1998) says:

> *'Although it may seem that in-class strategy training takes valuable time away from teaching the language content, teachers who have used this approach have reported that their students become more efficient in completing classroom tasks, take more responsibility for self-directing their learning outside of class, and gain more confidence in their ability to learn and use the target language.' (Cohen 1998: 83)*

This describes very well what we have been experiencing for the past four years.

3. These are the ones who study English outside of the University. 4. It must be noted that internal and external students take the same exam. The exams and the material covered were similar, though not identical, from one year to the following. 5. See appendix for an example.

Conclusions

For our students, explicit metacognitive strategy training has been successful. We have made an effort to incorporate specific metacognitive strategies throughout the course and throughout the different levels. Our students are not all stellar performers, but, especially in the areas of listening and reading comprehension, we have noticed significant gains in both grades and in confidence.

SBI is not central to one methodology or teaching approach; it can enhance almost any. One caveat: it involves a concerted team effort from all the teachers working on the same program. As we saw in our study, one semester, or one short course does not make much of a difference. What make a difference are all teachers, through all levels of the program, giving the students the same message: You can take control of your learning.

Appendix:

Goal setting activity

PLANNING MY LEARNING

PROJECT NAME:

TO PASS THIS COURSE WITH _____ SCORE

Select the activities you think will help you to do this and how often you think you should do them.

WHAT I WILL DO	HOW OFTEN
Ask the teacher questions when I don't understand	
Do exercises from English Learning Websites	
Do homework	
Listen to music in English	
Make a personal dictionary	
Pay attention in class	
Read in English outside of the English class	
Speak in English only to the teacher	
Speak in English when I am working with my partners	
Speak only English in class	
Take notes during the class	
Try to get the words to songs in English	
Use the new vocabulary	
Use the learning strategies my teacher gives me	
Use the Learning Points from my book	
Watch TV in English	
Write extra sentences with the new vocabulary	
OTHERS	

This is my plan for this semester in English class. I think that if I do this I will be able to pass this course with _____ score.

Date:_____

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Biography

Josefina C. Santana M.Ed. lives and works in Guadalajara, Mexico. She has been involved in English Language Teaching, teacher training, materials development, and course administration for over twenty years. After 18 years at a private language institute, she moved to Universidad Panamericana, a small, private university, where she took charge of a materials development project. At present, she is head of the Language Centre at that same University.

A collaborative project in ESP materials development

Patricia Lauría, National University of Cordoba, Spain

The purpose of this article is to describe a case study on collaborative ESP materials development which was coordinated for sixteen different academic units of the University of Cordoba, Argentina. In the first stage of the process, materials were developed for the following areas: Dentistry; Geography; Psychology; Arts and Humanities; Law; Chemistry; Mathematics and Physics; Management and Accounting; and Engineering. In the second stage, materials were designed for the fields of Medicine; Nursing; Kinesiology and Physiotherapy; Nutrition; Architecture; Industrial Design; and Speech Therapy

The case study will be described both as a process and as a product. From the process viewpoint, the description will highlight the steps taken to build the teams of materials designers and to provide adequate training in materials development. Also, it will focus on the work done to coordinate teams which were dissimilar in terms of their composition and area of expertise. From the product standpoint, on the other hand, the present article aims at showing to what extent the materials developed for sixteen different academic fields share characteristics which mirror some of Tomlinson's (1998) principles for materials development based on the latest research on second language acquisition (SLA).

Context

The project involved the preparation of material for ESP reading comprehension courses in different areas. Each one is a 65 hour annual skills-based course, which takes students who have completed more than 50% of their university studies and who need English to read material in the academic field they are majoring in. This implies that, even though their knowledge of the L2 may be rudimentary, in some cases nearly inexistent students have enough background knowledge to activate and employ in the comprehension of academic texts taken from their fields of specialization. The aim of these courses is the development of higher-level and lower-level reading comprehension processes in order to attain efficient reading comprehension of texts taken from a certain area. It is important to point out that, being these courses mono-skill, the classes are delivered in L1, Spanish in this case.

Each academic field needed a course book including authentic texts taken from the typical genre(s), accompanied by tasks designed with the purpose of enabling students to acquire the necessary reading strategies to develop into autonomous readers.

The project, started in September 2004, was commissioned by the School of Languages of the State University of Cordoba, which is the University division in charge of designing, delivering, administering and evaluating these ESP courses in the different schools of the university.

An evaluation process was carried out on the materials that were being used in the different areas in order to gauge their suitability. The materials consisted of individually produced task-sheets based on texts whose source was, in most cases, not clearly acknowledged , making it impossible to establish whether the texts were authentic or not. Other deficiencies found in the materials were:

- Lack of systematic coverage of the syllabus for the courses. The general syllabus is a content-based mixed type of syllabus built around the following issues: reading strategy development, focus on form in the text, automatic vocabulary recognition and cohesion-building elements. The absence of sensible sequencing of content led to frequent overlapping, as well as omission of important items of the syllabus.
- A "testing", rather than a teaching, approach to the focus on language: relying on students' prior knowledge and asking students test-like questions. The materials seemed to have been conceived for class use exclusively, where the teacher could answer the questions posed. The materials lacked explanations for extra reference or home use.
- Absence of clear, overt organization of the content.
- Lack of explicit strategy training.
- Lack of clear communication of objectives.
- Lack of variety both in the type of texts chosen and in the tasks designed on the basis of them.
- Clear evidence that text selection in many cases

had been done on the basis of the concept of TALO (the Text As a Linguistic Object) and not on TAVI (the Text As a Vehicle of Information) This crucial distinction that marks an important development in ESP (Johns and Davies: 1983) had evidently not been taken into consideration in the selection of texts and the design of tasks of the materials under analysis. Some of the texts seemed to have been included to illustrate syntactic structures and there were few tasks encouraging realistic information transfer, application of the information and/ or extension.

- Lack of clear layout and student-friendly design: no space for exercise completion, arbitrary use of font types and unclear rubrics.

Theoretical background

'Good materials do not teach: they encourage learners to learn' (Hutchinson & Waters 1987:107)

The theoretical background that informed the materials preparation work was Tomlinson's (1998) materials development principles grounded on the latest SLA research. Eight of the twelve principles served as the basis for this work, being the ones considered relevant to materials developed for an ESP reading comprehension course. An analysis of the extent to which the materials prepared for this project mirror those principles will be presented in this section, which will, in this way, focus on the product of this materials development project, namely sixteen ESP coursebooks built on the basis of the axioms outlined.

In the first place, the principle 'materials should achieve impact' (Tomlinson: 1998) was realized by attempting to ensure novelty, variety, an appealing presentation and appealing content. Novelty was a key criterion for the search for texts, which had to be up-dated and provide some new information as far as possible (this is embodied in the concept of TAVI, which has just been referred to). The need for variety was realized in different aspects: type, genre, source and length of texts as well as in kind of tasks, and overall organization of the material.

The second axiom selected, 'materials should help learners feel at ease' (Ibid.) constituted the rationale for the overall teaching (rather than testing) approach present in each unit of each coursebook. Materials developers were instructed not to design tasks which asked questions that students were in no position to answer. The maxim "do not ask them, **tell** them" was respected at all points. Materials were developed both for in-class and out-of-class use: therefore, questions that could be answered only with the help of a teacher were not to be included. It is from this point of view that the reading materials can be considered student-friendly, exemplifying a teaching, rather than testing, approach to reading comprehension. Some extra elements which contribute to this approach are the simplicity of the explanations included in every unit for later reference and self-access, the clarity and conciseness of the rubrics for every task and the avoidance of elaborate meta-language. Being these courses delivered in Spanish, all the explanations, rubrics and tasks of the coursebooks are also in the L1, for the sake of clarity and because it would be actually time-consuming and ineffective to include rubrics and explanations in L2, even if they could be considered an added source of input. As stated in the description of the context to the project, the aim of these courses is the development of higher-level and lower-level reading comprehension processes to achieve efficient comprehension. The aim is not to develop the ability to translate texts taken from a certain genre. Therefore, the objective of every unit of work is enabling the students to build an adequate meaning representation of the text, what Grabe and Stoller (2002:25) call 'a text-model of reading comprehension'. This text-model can only be built and expressed in the L1, being this a mono-skill course. In this sense, explanations and rubrics in the L1 contribute towards ensuring and checking that a suitable interpretation is arrived at in the time available.

The third principle chosen, that 'materials should help learners to develop confidence' (Tomlinson:1998) is closely related to the previous one , and is reflected in the type of texts selected and the kind of tasks thought out in order to help readers process those texts and develop the necessary strategies and skills.

In the fourth place, the principle that materials 'should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful' (Tomlinson: 1998) has seen its realization in the clear design of every worksheet and the emphasis on the explicit outlining of objectives at the beginning of each unit of work. This reader-friendly statement of unit goals and objectives is related to enabling students see the point of doing each task presented and also to being able to assess at the end of each unit how far the objectives have been attained. Every unit contains a self-assessment task which encourages students to think back on the unit of work and the objectives set at the beginning and analyze their progress in those terms.

The fifth principle 'materials should expose the learners to language in authentic use' (Tomlinson:1998) is especially relevant for the text selection process done in each of the areas on the basis of the TALO 'versus.' TAVI distinction mentioned in the description of the context to this case study.

The focus on form summarized in the sixth principle 'the learners' attention should be drawn to linguistic features of the input' (Tomlinson:1998) has been attained by a combination of awareness-raising techniques which are applied with a view to promoting noticing of important forms in the input. The focusing on form employed was of the reactive (and not proactive) kind, which implies

that problematic forms that appear in the input are the ones focused on (Doughty & Williams: 1998). Clearly related to the teaching-based approach chosen for this materials development project, every time that an element or elements of the text needs to be focused on, the corresponding section of the text is transcribed before the actual form-focused task is implemented. In this way, it is ensured that the presentation of the original authentic text is kept intact. Underlining, bold type or italics constitute tools used only in the portion of text transcribed in the form-focused tasks in order to promote noticing.

The seventh principle taken into consideration is 'materials should take into account that learners differ in affective attitudes' (Tomlinson: 1998). This is realized though variety of text and task types as well as in the provision of optional activities which offer motivated students a choice. There are optional tasks in every unit, with the purpose of providing flexibility and catering for the mixed-ability nature of the groups in this context. In some of the coursebooks, apart from choices offered in every unit, signaled visually by an icon (such as a house to indicate an assignment or piece of homework), an extra chapter has been prepared with a set of optional tasks, both for individual and pair work. The rationale for this extra chapter is found in the need to provide teachers with activities for early finishers, so that this aspect of the mixed-ability environment does not constrain the pace of the class to that of the faster students. An added rationale is the importance of choice in the development of autonomous readers: giving student's responsibility over which related tasks can be done in order to consolidate a certain reading strategy is seen as an essential component of the materials developed for the project.

The final principle selected as theoretical underpinning of the project is the one related to brain-based learning: 'materials should maximize learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement which stimulates both right and left brain activities' (Tomlinson:1998). The careful choice of intellectually challenging texts and the design of thinking tasks to accompany each text, as well as the clear layout of each unit and the importance of consistently unambiguous rubrics for each task are the elements that can be considered to foster intellectual involvement. Aesthetic involvement is promoted by the neat layout of each task sheet, in which extra care has been given to the design and layout, the use of icons signaling the type of task for clarity of reference the provision of enough writing space. Emotional involvement is catered for by the provision of choice and by the sections where readers are asked to assess their progress in terms of the objectives outlined. This self-assessment element is seen to promote readers' commitment to the aim of learning to become autonomous readers.

The materials development project as process

After focusing on the product of this materials development project by highlighting the main principles embodied in the finished materials, a process view will be adopted. In this section I attempt to describe the measures taken in order to ensure that a group of teachers could work in a coordinated fashion as materials developers to produce what has been described in the previous section.

This materials development project involved the following steps, which characterized each of the two stages mentioned in the introduction.

1. Group building. One of the main difficulties found in the initial phase of the project was related to the management of change within a group: convincing teachers of the need to produce new materials was the main obstacle. This barrier was partly overcome by inviting an "outsider" into every group. That is to say, teachers who had been working in one particular area for some time formed a materials development team and an extra member was added to each team. This extra member was another teacher who was invited to join in because of both professional skills and personal qualities. Through the building of new groups the target to get teachers to produce materials which contained innovations in terms of both design and content could be reached. Another step towards persuading members of the teams that more up-dated texts together with varied and challenging tasks were needed and that the approach to material design should be re-evaluated was taken by presenting the project as an invitation to grow professionally. This materials development project was presented as an open door to teacher development.

2. Training in materials development. This step involved delivering a training workshop to the twenty one ESP teachers involved in the first stage of the project (a few months later, when the second phase was started, a workshop of the same characteristics was given to some of the fourteen teachers involved in the second phase - those who were new to the materials development process that had started in 2004). Apart from the workshop, the materials writers were given a reading assignment to complete in a few weeks. A selection from Tomlinson, B. (1998), Dudley Evans, T. & St John (1998), Hutchinson & Waters (1987), Jordan, R.R. (1997), Nuttall, C. (1996) and Grellet, F. (1981) was given for the teachers to read and reflect upon. The reading was discussed in meetings held three weeks after the workshop. In these meetings, which were organized according to area, important issues regarding texts selection in particular and materials writing in general were discussed. Teachers were provided with a checklist for on-going revision of the materials development work (see Appendix I). The text

selection process was begun after these meetings and a deadline for a meeting to analyze the bank of texts collected was set.

3. Text selection. This stage involved the collection of authentic and up-dated texts selected on the following criteria: texts had to be considered as vehicles of information (TAVI approach to text selection), with a focus on the content of the texts, the newness of the subjects discussed or the originality of their approach to the topic presented. Another important criterion was to take into consideration the variety of sources, of text types and genres, and of text-length. This text bank provided a start in the materials development process from carrier content to real content. That is to say, after collecting all these texts, team members would analyze their carrier content and decide which text was suitable for which real content. This process is one of the possible starting points of the process for preparing new materials, according to Dudley Evans & St. John (1998:177). The other possible starting point is a gap in material for a specific objective which leads to the search for suitable carrier content. This movement from real content to carrier content is exemplified in the fifth step of this collaborative project.

4. Completing a matrix with the different contents to be taught (see example from the Mathematics and Physics area in the Appendix II). The fourth step involved team members together with the pedagogic coordinator in completing a grid and deciding on text and task selection and possible gradation of the content (gradation could only be tentative at this stage, to provide some flexibility in the next steps of the process). The completion of this matrix was seen as an essential component of the planning stage which was carried out in order to ensure a neat progression of topics and no overlap or omission.

5. Further text selection. After the analysis and planning done in step 4, extra texts were needed in some cases. This happened when some items of the syllabus had no carrier content through which to be realized. In view of this, a second text selection process was undertaken. However, this time the process moved from real content to carrier content.

6. Material design work. The sixth step involved the actual design of the reading tasks aimed at developing effective reading comprehension strategies. Each worksheet contained one or more texts together with pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading or closing (application of the information) tasks. After designing the tasks, everything was proofread, making sure that rubrics were consistently clear in order to prevent time off task, (i.e. students trying to work out what to do). In this way, time on task and effectiveness of teaching would be enhanced. The layout was revised and improved.

7. Revision and editing. Drafts were subjected to revision as many times as it was felt to be necessary. In some cases, this step involved several instances of material revision with the editor correcting errors of different sorts and suggesting alternatives to some tasks which were unclear, unchallenging or repetitive. It was always the material designers' responsibility to change the tasks according to the suggestions made. In other cases, with more creative and highly skilled teams, the revision process involved a simple proofreading of texts, rubrics and tasks.

8. Final steps: trial and revision in the light of classroom use (still in progress). The materials developed during the final months of 2004 and the first two months of 2005 (stage one of the project, as described in the introduction) were tried in the classroom during 2005. The revision process is under way. The final revision of some of the materials has been done with the help of subject area specialists, to check certain interpretation issues considered to be unclear in the light of classroom use.

The second phase of the project (materials for Medicine; Nursing; Kinesiology and Physiotherapy; Nutrition; Architecture; Industrial Design; and Speech Therapy) is at present at step 7, that is to say that the materials are being revised and edited. The finished coursebooks will be available for the first semester of 2006.

Conclusion

> *'Materials can always be improved. Do what you can and try it out. Use what you learn from this experience to revise and expand the materials' (Hutchinson & Waters 1987:126)*

It has been the aim of this article to show how a group of ESP teachers have been coordinated to work collaboratively on a materials development project which has resulted in ESP reading coursebooks for sixteen different academic units of the State University of Cordoba, Argentina. The description of this case study has highlighted some of the elements of the process which I consider to be essential for the success of team work in materials development. In the first place, I would like to mention the work done in terms of the formation of new teams; in the case of existing teams this was carried out by means of the inclusion of one or more new members. In the second place, I would like to refer to the importance of the various roles played by the coordinator of the materials development work as group manager, facilitator, trainer, consultant and editor.

The article has provided both a process and a product–oriented description of this materials development project. The principles on which the project was grounded constitute a sound foundation for any materials development project in ESP, considering the actual state of SLA research. Further research

may prove one or more of these axioms to be false or ineffective. But in the meantime, they can be employed as the basis for the development of good quality materials.

APPENDIX 1

Checklist for ESP materials development

1. Does every unit present real, authentic language? Have texts been chosen for their value in relation to students' needs?
2. Does the coursebook offer the full range of language that the readers of that subject specialist need? Think in terms of: content (topic types), style (academic, journalistic), text types and genres.
3. Have the texts been taken from a variety of sources? Are the sources clearly stated?
4. Are there texts of different lengths? Remember that texts of different lengths are usually read differently.
5. Are the texts updated? If carrier content is out-of-date, is there provision for learners to deal with carrier content realistically and with real content in a purposeful manner?
6. Is there enough non-verbal information (to be exploited realistically)?
7. Is there any additional material (extra texts)?
8. Are rubrics unambiguous, simple, to the point and well written?
9. Does each task-sheet have a clear purpose and connection to learners' reality?
10. Does the course book provide sufficient learning support? Is it reliable in the sense of being consistent and of having a recognizable pattern?
11. Does it stimulate thinking? Is the carrier content at the appropriate conceptual level i.e. neither trivial nor distractingly high?
12. Is every unit challenging enough, yet achievable?
13. Is it grounded on students' experience & knowledge?
14. Does every unit of work also provide some new ideas & information?
15. Does the course book show a sense of progression?
16. Is the application of carrier content realistic? In other words, does the exploitation made of every text match how the input would be used outside the learning situation, i.e. in real life?
17. How far can the course book be used for self study? Is it complete and self explanatory (explanations in L1, examples and answer keys)?
18. Is the layout clear?
19. Does the course book look appealing? (Do YOU feel like reading it or a t least like browsing through its pages?)
20. Does the book have an overt organization? (Through informative contents pages and an index, e.g. grid of objectives, skills, language, activity and topic).
21. Is there a balance between strategy training and language development?

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Biography

Patricia Lauría holds a Bachelor's degree in EFL and Literature from the University of Cordoba, Argentina. She currently holds a tenure in the Methods chair at the School of Languages of Cordoba State University. She is also Pedagogic Coordinator of the ESP courses run in 16 different schools of National University of Cordoba. She has conducted seminars on classroom management and other aspects of EFL and ESP at various Teacher Training colleges in Argentina. She is especially interested in teacher development, ESP and materials development.

APPENDIX II

Grid of contents for the ESP reading course in the Mathematics and Physics area:

	LANGUAGE ITEMS	READING STRATEGIES	TEXT TYPE	DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS	COHESION & COHERENCE	TEXTS(*)
1.	• Frases sustantivas • Pre-modific./ post-modificadores • Sufijos: algunas terminaciones sustantivos	• Predicción a partir de lo visual/ planificación de lectura. • Lectura global (Skimming) • (Scanning)	Expositivo: tabla de contenidos; plan de estudios			• "Ads: Computers" • Course Descriptions • A processor. • Floppy disk. • Mathematics • Table of contents
2.	• Modo Imperativo. • Caso genitivo	• Predicción a partir de lo visual • Skimming • Scanning	Instrucciones varias	Instrucción para el lector	Conectores: in other words, such that, such as, nexos secuenciales	• Math Exercises. • Sending a fax. • An Experiment.
3.	• Verbo TO BE • Presente Simple: Voz Activa y Pasiva. • Sufijos de verbos más comunes • ING: diversas funciones	• Predicción del tema/ Activar conocimiento previo • Predicción a partir de lo visual • Skimming. • Inferencia	Expositivo	Definición. Clasificación	Referencia contextual Nexos: and - or- but – because :	• Telescopes • How a camera works. • Linear equation • Skewness and Kurtosis • Matrices
4.	• Comparación de Adjetivos. • Sufijos (adjetivos)/ prefijos. • Forma ING	• Predicción del tema/ Activar conoc. previo • Skimming • Scanning • Inferencia	Expositivo	Definición. Descripción.	• Nexo: if / • Referencia contextual	• Astronomy [Andromeda] and other • The Eagle Nebula 's Extragalactic Twin. • History of maths
5.	• Construcción especial comparativa. • Preposiciones • Forma ING	• Activar conocim. previo • Skimming • Scanning • Diferenciar Ideas principales y secundarias	Expositivo		• Nexos:causa, ejemplo, contraste, efecto. • Referencia contextual • Stachastic Processses • Linear differential	• Divide and Conquer (prep.). • Elements of resonance.
6.	• Pasado Simple (Voz Activa y Pasiva) • Past Perfect • Phrasal Verbs: • Preposiciones	• Predicción a partir de lo visual. • Skimming • Ideas principales y secundarias	Expositivo Informativo	Clasificación Relatos de hechos pasados	Nexos: Sequence- because- also-.	• A Hubble Makeover (prep.) • Quantum Mechanics. • Who was Hubble? • Chernobyl. • History of Maths
7.	• Verbos Modales: Must-Might-Should-Could • Conditional sentences • Present Perfect	• Predicción a partir de lo visual. • Lectura global. • Ideas principales y secundarias	Expositivo		Nexos: So - While- although- such as/ If/ as long as/ unless	• Database programs • Revistas • Trust and Future of Research • Dust Disks • Piano Keys

Notes: (*) The names of the texts given here are not the real titles but only indicative of which text of the text bank is being referred to. It should be remembered that this grid shows materials development work in progress (step 4), and as such it contains elements which only the materials designers understand and which they may alter as part of the materials design process.

PUBLISHING PERSPECTIVES

Building bridges to improve textbooks

Anthony Haynes, The Professional and Higher Partnership, UK

Last October I attended a conference on textbooks organised by IARTEM (*www.iartem.no*) in Caen. The conference affected me greatly. It reminded me of the importance of textbooks – something easy to forget, working in England where they enjoy low esteem. It reminded me that there was a good deal of academic expertise available on textbooks – something that, having published Brian Tomlinson's *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* (Continuum, 2003) I was well aware of. And it made me aware that, because of the gulf between academic and commercial worlds, not all of this expertise has been fully utilised.

It occurred to me that what was needed was a bridge between academia and business and that, as someone with a foot in both camps – I was Publishing Director at the Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd and Visiting Professor at Beijing Normal University – I was well placed to try to construct it. I decided to put my money where my mouth is, so I quit my job at Continuum and with my wife, Karen, founded The Professional and Higher Partnership *(www.professionalandhigher.com)*.

Though our services cover academic and professional publishing in general, our main focus is textbooks. We bridge the gap between academia and industry in many ways: we provide training for authors and publishers; we undertake and disseminate research; we represent authors as literary agents; and we help publishers to commission and develop textbooks. Most of our services are innovative in some ways but it is our work with publishers that is most original.

Imagine a publisher with a market-leading textbook. The subject is neither here nor there – let us say it is in Social Theory. It is time to produce a new edition. What does the publisher do? It will consults experts in Social Theory to see how the content should be adapted to the latest trends and research findings. It consults lecturers in Social Theory who use the book and finds out from them what changes in pedagogy and assessment in Social Theory need to be accommodated. It compares the book to other Social Theory texts and looks at reviews that the current edition received in Social Theory periodicals. In short, it finds out a lot about what the world of Social Theory thinks about the book.

The publisher does not, then, need our business or any other to help it to consult the subject community. Put to one side, them, disciplinary issues. What about generic ones? What about those issues that one might look at by virtue of the book being a textbook, regardless of its subject? What about, for example, its language and style? Its text design and use of illustration? Its cognitive structure? Its pedagogical features (learning objectives, questions and exercises, and so on)? Its suitability for different types of learner (including learners whose first langauge is not English)?

Ideas on some of these questions may emerge as a by-product of the publisher's subject-based research. Some lecturers, for example, might well mention problems that their students have when using the book. But the coverage of these issues will be less thorough that the coverage of subject-based issues – and markedly less systematic. Yet a good deal of the expertise that exists within academia is precisely generic. Work by researchers such as Jaan Mikk – author of *Textbook: Research and Writing* (Peter Lang, 2000) – and Alan Peacock and Ailee Cleghorn – editors of *Missing the Meaning* (Palgrave, 2004) – is not limited in application to particular disciplines. This is where the need for the bridge comes in.

We've started to build such bridges in a number of places. For example, one publisher planning to develop a new list asked us to research the books published in that field by competing publishers. By systematically looking at a selection of the above issues we were able to identify generic weaknesses in existing texts, including the market leaders. In particularly we discovered that textbooks in the subject tended to cater very poorly for certain styles of learning.

Another publisher asked us to look at one of its leading textbooks with a fresh (non-subject specific) pair of eyes in order to make recommendations for the next edition. By focusing on generic issues we could see immediately that there were opportunities for improving visual aspects of the text and, again, for catering for a wider variety of learning styles.

From our commerical projects and our research, certain key themes are beginning to emerge. In particular, it seems that, left to their own devices, textbook authors will tend to cater well for only a narrow range of learning styles (the author's own preferred styles, we presume). Also common are weaknesses in the use of illustrations and diagrams. These are often confusingly (sometimes just inaccurately) drawn, poorly placed, and insecurely linked to the text. Perhaps because of disjuncts within publishing teams, the pedagogical

value use of visual material is often surprisingly low.

As a result of our work, we are issuing a challenge to any publisher: ask us to look at your most prestigious, highest-earning, textbook – the one that you consider to be state-of-the-art – and we will show you how to improve it!

The fun of building bridges between academia and business and between generic and subject-specific perspectives is that it offers at last a structured means to *apply* academic knowledge about generic textbook features, whilst enabling the publishers to improve their products in refreshing ways. Those who stand to gain most are,we are glad to say, the students who use those resources. The only people who stand to lose are those publishers who remain content with the imperfections of their products.

Biography

Anthony Haynes is Partner of The Professional and Higher Partnership and Visiting Professor at Beijing Normal University. He can be contacted at

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Students write dialogues and see them "performed" online!

(Create an animated film at www.dfilm.com)

Barry Bakin, Los Angeles Unified School District, USA.

Teachers often struggle to find authentic tasks that truly inspire their students to write in English. The animated film creator found at *www.dfilm.com* is a fun and easy-to-use web-based template for making animated cartoon "movies" that generates tremendous enthusiasm for writing at almost all levels of ESL. Once at the website, students choose characters, similar to the way one would choose characters when playing a video game at an arcade, and pick one of four basic speaking situations. They also select a "scene" and "background" for the conversation. An ample number of scenes and backgrounds not only provide visual variety, they also serve as prompts for the conversations to be created. Choosing a "beach" background at night leads to a very different conversation than choosing the "beach" scene against a "sunny day" background. (See illustration 1) The choice of characters themselves also heavily influences the conversations. There are numerous male, female, animal and fantasy characters from which to choose. Students really have fun mixing and matching the characters with backgrounds and settings and creating conversations that fit the scene.

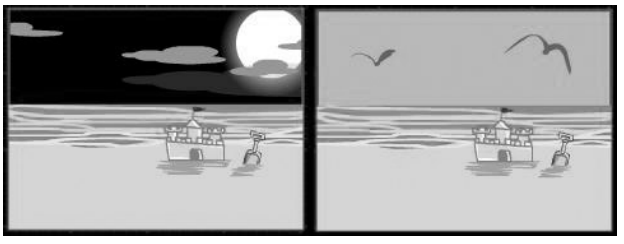


Illustration 1

After setting the scene, students fill-in the template with their own original conversations, add music and titles, review and correct their work, and "submit" their animated movie directly to the website. A unique URL (link to a website) for their movie is then emailed to both the student and the teacher. Clicking on the link allows viewing of the completed movie (with musical soundtrack). Students clap and cheer each other's productions when they're played for the entire class in large screen format (using an LCD projector). The final movies are stored on the website. To view a couple of actual student-created animated films (with some grammatical and language errors preserved for authenticity), visit *http://mm.dfilm.com/mm2s/mm_route.php?id=2684003 and http://mm.dfilm.com/mm2s/mm_route.php?id=2661228*. These two movies were created by students in an intermediate low level class. Students in beginning levels would use the same process but create dialogues appropriate to their level of language ability. High intermediate and advanced students can create movies with more complex dialogue and multiple scenes.

The Basic Steps for Creating An Animated Movie at *www.dfilm.com*

1. Once at the website, click on the "dfilm moviemaker" link. (See illustration 2) At the next page, click on "START."

Illustration 2

2. Choose a scene and background. (See illustration 3) by clicking on the desired image and clicking "next."

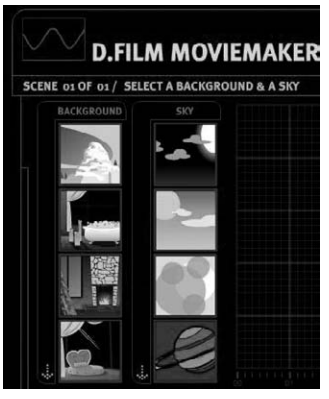
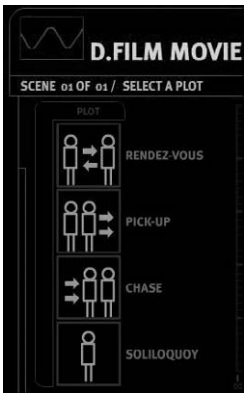


Illustration 3

3. Choose a type of interaction. This is called the "plot."(See illustration 4) In addition to a soliloquy, there is a plot in which the two characters



arrive separately in the scene and leave separately, one in which the characters arrive separately and leave together, and a plot where one character chases the other around the scene. Choosing a different plot will change the dialogue. Click "next."

Illustration 4

4. Choose the characters. Some of the different characters are shown in illustration 5. Click "next."

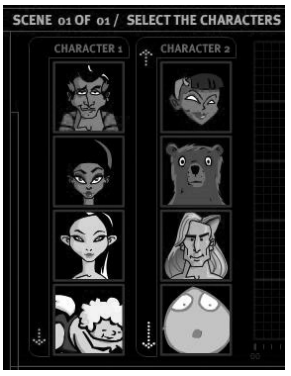


Illustration 5

5. Fill in the dialogue in the appropriate spaces. There must be a minimum of two utterances. Click "next." (See illustration 6)

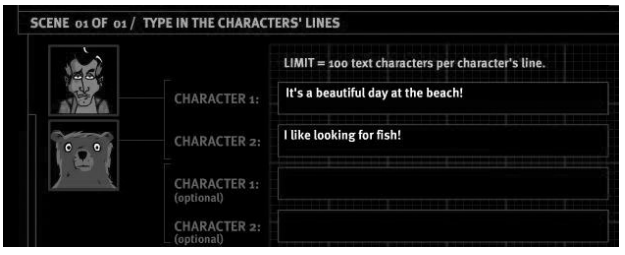


Illustration 6

6. Choose the musical accompaniment. There are several types of rhythms and styles. Click on each one to hear a preview of the soundtrack. After a soundtrack is chosen, additional scenes can be added (start over at step 2) or the movie can be completed by adding a title sequence.

7. Select a title "motif" from one of the four options. Insert the title and your name as the "director" and click on "preview and send movie." (See illustration 7)

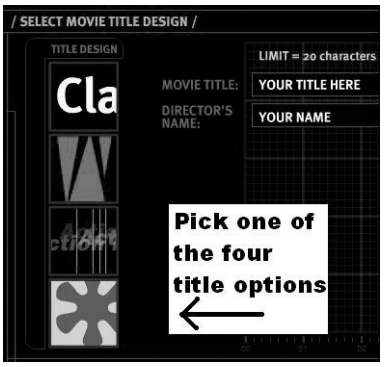


Illustration 7

8. Type your email address and the email address of another person who you would like to view the movie. (Students should send the movie to their teacher) (See illustration 8)

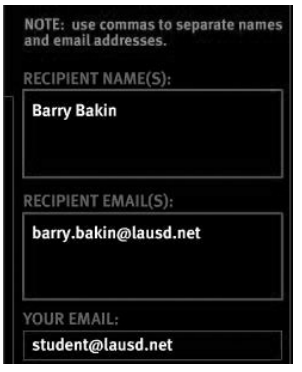


Illustration 8

7. Use the "back" button to go back and make any changes or click "send" to finish the process.

If everything was filled in correctly, an email will be sent to the person who created the movie and to the recipient that was listed in step 8. The message will include a link to the movie. Make sure your computer speakers are turned on and click on the link to view the movie!

Biography

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.

SPOTLIGHT ON A MATERIALS WRITER

Featured Writer:

Philip Prowse

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

In 1970 in Alexandria in Egypt. I was working in an in-service training centre when John Milne came out from the UK to run a course. John was just starting the Heinemann Guided Readers Series. He saw some of the materials I had been writing to try and make the Longman Bridge Series reader The Grand Babylon Hotel by Arnold Bennett culturally and linguistically accessible to Egyptian secondary school students (no small task!). To my great surprise he asked me if I fancied writing a reader. I did.

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

Most proud of two really. Inspiration, the four level secondary course which Judy Garton-Sprenger and I have just written, and the Cambridge English Readers series. Inspiration because it's exciting to create materials with real cross-curricular content. It's also been a challenge to match the content and activities with the growing teenage mind and personality as they make the difficult journey from age 12 to 16. And the CER series because it shows that it's possible to write great contemporary fiction reflecting current issues which is easily accessible to learners.

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

My co-authors. I've been writing with Judy for many years now and have learnt so much from her intellectual rigour and flair for language. Writing with both Barbara Sinclair and Ian McGrath also taught me a great deal about learner autonomy and the needs of the adult learner. The authors of the skills series I've edited showed me how fresh classroom material can be turned into coursebooks, and the CER authors continue to amaze me with their ability to create true language learner literature.

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

Without a doubt: grammar. Despite having an MA in Applied Linguistics and a fine collection of pedagogic grammars I still find grammar a slippery fish to catch! Carter and McCarthy's new Cambridge Grammar of English is a great help, as, in quite a different way, is Michael Swan's new Grammar in the Oxford Introductions to Language Study series. But I still struggle.

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

That's much harder. Persistence, probably, and a willingness to take risks.

6. What is your pet peeve concerning ELT materials?

The way in which as a community ELT is in a state of denial about its roots. There is an unthinking acceptance of the idea that our practice is governed by theory handed down by SLA researchers and universities. Nothing could be further from the truth. ELT is and always has been classroom-based. Richard Smith's monumental TEFL Foundations of ELT 1936 to 1961 makes this abundantly clear. This 5 volume set clocks in at 2632 pages and £575, but for a digested read check out Ron White's brilliant review of it in ELTJ Vol 61/1 Jan 2007.

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

The funniest in the sense of the most amusing has to be Talk English, a book of quite surreal sketches published by Heinemann in the 70s and written by Tom Jupp, John Milne and Piers Plowright (who went on to produce The Archers). Sadly it's out of print.

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

Quality is everything. Don't skimp on all the classroom visits and observation, the interviews with teachers and students and all the preparatory research before writing starts. And just because it was possible to produce the last book in 12 months don't assume it can be done equally well next time round in 9 months.

Biography

Philip taught and trained teachers for the British Council in Egypt, Portugal, Greece and Poland. He then became Principal of Bell College, Saffron Walden and has been a full-time writer and trainer since 1994. He is co-author, with Judy Garton-Sprenger, of Inspiration (Macmillan) and of a number of other coursebooks at primary, secondary and adult levels. Philip has edited two skills series and written a number of graded readers. He is the Series Editor for Cambridge English Readers and Reviews Editor of English Language Teaching Journal.

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Steve O'Sullivan
MATSDA Web Coordinator

Burrows, Rob

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ISSN 1357 406X