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Editor's Message

Jo Appleton, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

Hi, Welcome to Spring & to the new issue of *Folio*, Vol 11.2.

The first thing I must do is apologise to **Patricia Lauria** for getting her country of residence wrong in the last edition of *Folio* 11.1. Please observe that Patricia is at the National University of Cordoba, **ARGENTINA**, and not Spain. I guess I was getting excited about the forthcoming MATSDA event in Cordoba, Spain in May!

I would also like to welcome **Chris Mares** as our regular columnist for Publishing Perspectives. Chris is Director at the English Centre at the University of Maine, USA and is an author of various ELT materials. Thanks for coming on board Chris and we look forward to your writing tips.

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

To kick off with, **Bev Davies** who is studying for the MA Materials Development for Language Teaching at Leeds Met and a visiting Scholar **Rubena St Louis** from Venezuela share an innovative lesson called 'Reasons to Write'.

Marc Heglesen in Japan tells us all about his experiences of PARSNIPS. **Dheram Premakumari** in India reports on the teaching and testing of speaking skills in an undergraduate ESL classroom. **Rosa-Maria Cives-Enriquez** in London gives us an interesting and different perspective in her article on developing E-Learning for organisational change, training and development. **Emma Dawson** in Nottingham as part of her doctoral research explores a New Pedagogy for the Teaching of World Englishes Literature.

Huda Al-Mansoob currently in Nottingham offers us

an insight into her own experiences of learning in the UK. **Chris Mares** in Maine offers some useful writing tips for us all, whilst **Peter Viney** in Dorset answers questions about writing and publishing using **Dorothy Zemach's** wonderfully humorous 'Author's Test'. **Peter** is also our 'Featured Writer' disclosing hot tips and insights into his world of writing. **Barry Bakin** in Los Angeles yet again brings us up to date with the latest computer perspectives and finally **Carrie Steenburgh** in New Jersey is back after her honeymoon to give us a low down on some popular ELT news websites.

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, a letter commenting on an article published in *Folio* or advertisement to place in *Folio*, please contact me, Jo Appleton at j.appleton@leedsmet.ac.uk

If on the other hand you would like us to review your ELT materials, please contact our regular reviewer **Carrie Steenburgh** at steenburgh@ucc.edu, or if you have a review of materials you would like published, please send it in. And publishers who want their books reviewed please send a copy to Carrie at Union County College, IIE, 12 West Jersey Street, Elizabeth, NJ, 07202, USA.

The deadline for the Autumn issue of *Folio* 12.1 is Wednesday 1st August.

If you are anywhere near Cordoba in May, then why not come along to the next MATSDA conference. Finally, don't forget to visit our website in between issues with news of forthcoming events - www.matsda.org.uk

Happy Reading

Jo

THE MATSDA/CETA CONFERENCE

May 11th & 12th, 2007

The Materials Development Association and the Cordoba Teachers' Association are holding a joint Conference to stimulate discussion about methodology and materials for language teaching.

TITLE: *English in ConTENT*

VENUE: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Arts Faculty, University of Córdoba
Plaza del Cardenal Salazar 3, 14003 Córdoba, Spain

THEME: *Engaging to Learn: Methodology and Materials for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)*

SPEAKERS: The speakers are being finalised but will include:

Brian Tomlinson

Hitomi Masuhara

Ivor Timmis

Javier Avila

Pilar Montijano

Raquel Criado Sánchez

PAPER PROPOSALS: Please send paper proposals as a 200-300 word abstract to *Javier Ávila ff1avlof@uco.es*

FEE: The Conference Fee will be 30 Euros

PAYMENT: Pay through the CETA website (www.infoceta.org) or on the day (if you've previously booked a place by contacting ff1avlof@uco.es)

Please indicate in the bank transfer your subscription to the conference through MATSDA

ACCOMMODATION: Accommodation can be booked through: susanacal@telefonica.net

GETTING TO CORDOBA: Fly to Madrid, Malaga or Seville and then take a train.

SEE YOU IN CORDOBA



Greetings from the Chair

Dave Allan, MATSDA Chairman, NILE, UK

Beginning this 'Letter from the Chair' on St. Patrick's Day, with the Italy v Ireland rugby match on the radio in the background, I am reminded that this year the MATSDA Committee and our regular MATSDA Conference 'attenders' have had to do without their biennial fix of Guinness and 'craic'. After many years of happily alternating between Dublin and Leeds for our annual January conference, MATSDA has broken with tradition and has decided to head for warmer climes. For the early part of 2007 MATSDA is taking its ideas and its speakers to Iberia instead of Hibernia. Two events there, one in Portugal and the other in Spain, are coming up on the conference calendar: the first is a MATSDA track at the 21st APPI Conference in Lisbon, 'Adjust Practice, Promote Innovation' which takes place from 3-5 May; the second is the MATSDA/CETA Conference 2007 in Cordoba, 'English in ConTENT', which is a joint conference held by the Cordoba Teachers' Association and MATSDA with the theme 'Engaging to learn: Methodology and Materials for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)'.

These two conferences are not the only events in which MATSDA is involved in what promises to be a very busy Spring. Brian Tomlinson will be leading a Symposium on the final day of IATEFL in Aberdeen, Sunday 22 April, which will focus on 'Creativity in Materials Development' with the help of Alan Maley and Hitomi Masuhara and what we hope will be a lot of very creative participants.

What has characterised MATSDA for me over the years that I have been involved with the association has been the wonderful combination of friendly informality and exciting, innovative professionalism that I have experienced both at MATSDA events and in the quality of the contributions to 'Folio', this issue's contents being no exception. I was reminded that my personal experience was matched by that of many others when I saw the feedback from the MATSDA Japan Conference which took place in October last

year. A common comment from a number of MATSDA Conference regulars was that they keep coming back because they can always rely on the quality of the sessions and the warmth of the atmosphere. Long may this continue!

2006 was a busy and positive year for us, with another materials writing workshop at the Marton Arms in the Yorkshire Dales, the development of the World Wide Readers Series and developments with the MATSDA website which we hope will soon allow us to publish innovative materials online, both for sampling and for sale. We are also exploring the idea of joint electronic publication with 'Humanising Language Teaching'.

MATSDA Membership has remained stable. While we don't want to become too big, we would like the stimulus of new members, both from countries already well represented and from new parts of the world. MATSDA has always been special in that it brings together teachers and trainers, authors and publishers, academics and IT 'anoraks' in one big family with worldwide connections, so if you're reading this but not a member, why don't you join us. If you are a member, do you have a colleague who would benefit from being a part of the Association?

Looking ahead to later in 2007 and 2008, we're exploring the possibility of a further event in South America, with the target Brazil this time. And in case you are experiencing withdrawal symptoms, we'll be back in Dublin at the Teachers' Club in Parnell Square in January 2008. We hope to see lots of you there, if not before then at one of our other events.

My very best wishes to you all for a peaceful, productive and professionally rewarding 2007.

Dave Allan

Chair, MATSDA

Writing for a reason: Gadgets & Gismos

Bev Davis & Rubena St Louis, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

Rationale & Brief Overview

The materials are designed for 16-19 year-old upper intermediate and above students. They could be studying mainstream academic courses in a college and be taking an additional course to improve their writing skills. They may be taking a full-time English course: this material could be used as the writing component.

It can be challenging to inspire such students to write enthusiastically so these materials integrate a genre approach (making a reasoned proposal) and process approach (collaborative writing and peer editing) by focussing on a real-life task: making a proposal on how to improve student facilities in a college. This could easily be adapted to any educational situation.

These are materials that aim at flexibility and will need to be taught over at least 2 sessions.

The unit opens with speaking materials on the theme of technology. It is a popular theme and students will definitely have an opinion. The activities allow students to review common structures for comparison that they may choose to use later in the writing materials. The activities also allow tutors an opportunity to extend the repertoire of structures the students are aware of. In short the speaking tasks activate ideas and linguistic knowledge for the writing task later in the unit

The writing activities start with a discovery activity allowing students to notice in detail what makes a successful report. Students then have the opportunity to put their ideas into practise with the real life task—making suggestions to improve their common area in the college. The materials take students through a discussion of options to propose to the College Principal. At this stage it would be useful to set researching options for self-study. These activities could be done after the speaking activities or if necessary in the next session.

In the following session, the materials take students through a collaborative writing activity to create this proposal where editing from peers is integrated into the process. Once these are completed students read all the proposals and vote for the best one. The unit finishes with a chance for students to review on how far they have personally come in the unit.

Writing For A Reason: Gadgets And Gizmos

Telling It Like It Is - Are You A Techno-head?

A: HOW KNOWLEDGEABLE ARE YOU?

How quickly can you name each item from 1 to 10?

1.



2.



3.



4.



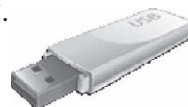
5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



- Which of these items do you have?
- Which do you want? Which of these items do you need?
- Why?

B: PRIORITISING

Rank the items in order of importance to you as a student

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

- Find a classmate and compare your choices.
- Discuss any differences you may have in the order of your ranking of the items. You may want to go back to the questions you thought about in activity A to explain the differences
- Be ready to explain to the class where the differences are in your priorities and why!

C: LISTEN CAREFULLY

As your classmates tell you about the differences in their personal priorities, note down:

- how many classmates have the same priorities as you
- are there any patterns in who has chosen what
- some of the structures and expressions classmates use to explain the differences

D. REAL LIFE TECHNOLOGY

Different businesses use technology in different ways. Do you agree?

Form groups of four. Each group must choose a different career from this list:

- An entrepreneur
- A mechanical engineer
- A research scientist
- A website developer

As a group, discuss and agree on the use of technology in your area. You will have to share this information with members of other groups later on.

As a / an _____, we use technology for :

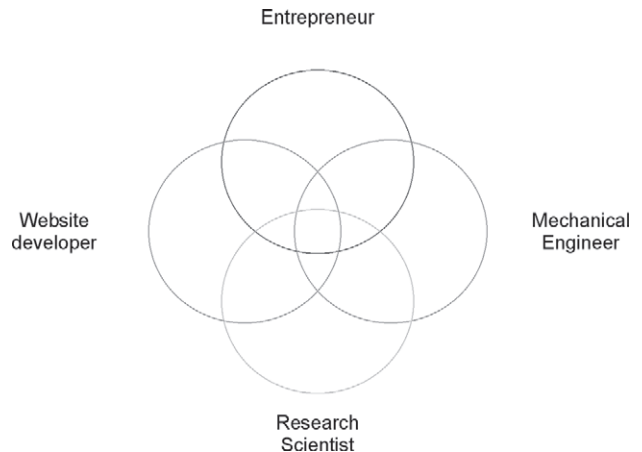
Form a new group made up of one member from each of the career groups. Your new group should have an

entrepreneur, a mechanical engineer, a research scientist and a web developer. How does each specialized area use technology? What similarities and differences are there from the career you talked about?

You might want to use this diagram to record your discussion.

Getting It Down On Paper

A: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES



We have been looking at similarities and differences so far. The structures we have been using can also be used to explain the advantages and disadvantages of products, situations, proposals, options ... what's important is how you present your ideas...

A company is considering upgrading its intranet. The Managing Director has asked the Technical support department for advice. In pairs, look at the reports she has received from two analysts. Both reports say the same thing but which do you think the boss will accept? Why?

A. Intranet upgrade

As you will be aware, recent system crashes have forced us to consider upgrading our intranet server. We have now considered several equivalent options and would like to propose using Novella Netware, ahead of Fixit and PCO, even though it is more expensive than the other options available. The following reasons need to be taken into account:

Novella has the most extensive technical support of the three options we examined. Fixit and PCO are much less reliable in terms of their support line. In addition, existing users of Fixit and PCO have reported that they have experienced many more problems than they expected with Fixit and PCO. Finally, Novella has greater potential for meeting our expansion needs than the other options.

We outline the upgrade budget below ...

B. Intranet problems

Do you remember we had all those problems with the intranet? Well, we have looked at three similar options and want to suggest Novella Netware not Fixit or PCO. Why? It's not as cheap as Fixit or PCO but it does have more technical support and it is more reliable. What worries me about Fixit and PCO is that other companies have had loads of problems with them. What is most important though is that Novella can cope with out possible company expansion better than the rest. The costs of the upgrade are ...

B: WHAT MAKES A GOOD REPORT?

Look at the reports again. With a partner, discuss the way in which the writer of each report presented the information they had.

Consider:

STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE

- How is each block of information presented?
- What advantages/disadvantages are there to this type of presentation?
- Notice the expressions used to present the comparisons.

CHOICE OF WORDS

- What type of language is used?
- What impression does use of language have on the reader?

TONE

- What level of familiarity comes across in the writing?
- How appropriate is this?

OVERALL

- Does this analysis support your initial view of the report?
- What advice would you give someone who has to write a report to his or her boss?

Make sure you contribute your ideas when you discuss this with the rest of your class.

C: FOR REAL

Your class is acting as the Student Council committee at present. What do you think are some of the issues you are dealing with?

You have just received this memo from the College Principal. Is this one of the issues you picked up on?

Memo

To: Student Council

From: the Principal

Common Area Facilities

We have just received a grant of £2000 to update the student common area.

How do you propose we spend it? Please send a proposal explaining the options you have considered and the advantages and disadvantages of each, underlining why you have chosen one option over the others. We are happy to consider any reasonable proposal including installing technology for student use. We will then consider your proposal at the College Development Committee on the 20th of this month.

Divide your class into groups of 4. Why not try working with classmates you don't usually work with?

Each group will be in charge of presenting a proposal for the common area. The class will then vote for the best proposal and this will be submitted to the college principal.

D: STAGE 1: (INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP WORK)

Brainstorm

Think for a moment about how you would personally like to see the money spent. Write down your ideas. You don't need to write complete sentences, a few words will do. Don't worry about spelling or grammar either! You can check those later.

Share your ideas with your group.

- Try to come up with as many options as possible.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options?
- Write brief notes...key words if possible.
- Choose four options and have each student do further research on one for the next class.
- Each student should get more information on his/her option.
- Write the advantages and disadvantages in complete sentence form.

Notes from our preliminary discussion

We considered these options:

We agreed that the best options were probably:

because

This is what everyone will do by next class:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Self-study: Individual Research

Use this space to write up notes on the option you have researched:

E: STAGE 2: (GROUP WORK)

Now that you've done your research, share your information with the rest of the group. Discuss all the options and then choose the best one to be presented to the principal. Remember, you must also give the other options and the reasons for choosing the winner.

1. Writing Up The Proposal.: Plan And Draft

Decide on a format to be used for presenting your proposal. Think about:

- The information you will need to give (how much will you write about each option?)
- The order in which you will present the information (what will you put in the introduction etc)
- The type of language you will use
- The tone you will use (who will read the proposal?)

Remember the sample reports you looked at earlier. These may help you.

Write up the draft. Make sure you do this on Microsoft word.

Once this is done, check your work and then print a draft copy. As a group read the printed document and check again:

- Look at the structure, especially the paragraphs
- Spelling and punctuation
- Grammar

2. Revise

When you are ready, print a copy for each of you in the group. Pair up with a student from another group. Ask that student to read your proposal. Read their proposal. Give each other feedback on the points from "what makes a good report" (section B)

3. Redraft

Go back to your group and discuss the suggestions for improving your writing. Make any changes you think are necessary. If you would like to, ask a different student to read your second version. Make sure you read theirs and offer any advice you think necessary too.

4. Proofread

Imagine you are the College Principal. Read your report. Notice any final changes you might have to make.

5. Submit

Hand one copy of your report in to your teacher for feedback in the next session. Display another copy of your proposal. Read all the other proposals and vote for the one you consider best. You may of course vote for your own.

Are you surprised at which proposal won? Think about rewriting it as self-study: this time your audience is the real student council in your institution.

F: REVIEW AND RECAP

Think about what you have achieved in this unit. What has been important for you? Did anything surprise you? What do you still need to practise? What will you personally concentrate on next in your writing?

Biographies

Bev Davies is currently studying on the MA in ELT and MD programme at Leeds Metropolitan University. She is based in Greater Manchester and teaches on both ESOL and academic support programmes for international students. Her main interests are developing materials for writing skills, for content-based instruction, and for learning outside the classroom – particularly in exploiting the rich heritage of the area.

Rubena St. Louis is a Senior lecturer at Simón Bolívar University in Caracas Venezuela where she teaches English for Science and Technology reading course and English for Computer Science. She has been writing materials for language department's reading courses for the last 6 years.

Notes from the Apocrypha

Marc Helgesen, Miyagi Gakuin Women's University

A few years ago, I was at a materials writer's conference in the UK. Some of us were discussing things we could and couldn't include in our textbooks. A British ELT author, someone older and wiser than I, said she had been told early on to "avoid PARSNIPS" in any textbook.

"Parsnips? Is there some kind of a vegetable rights thing that I don't know about?"

No, PARSNIPS stood for: Politics, Alcohol, Religion, Sex, Nudity, Israel, Pork, Smoking

I don't know if the Parsnips story is literally true or if it is something of a joke that reflects the conservatism that often come up in publishing.

Here are a couple stories that I know are literally true, because they happened to me or close friends:

In a project I was working on, we had a multi-cultural unit that included holidays around the world. Two that got edited out were "Christmas in Australia" and "Ramadan." Both got the boot because "you can't include religion in a textbook." Never mind that nearly every culture has holidays that are somehow connected to belief systems. The "Christmas in Australia" piece I had written was mostly about Santa Claus on Bondi Beach, a religious icon only to Surfies.

Ramadan being bounced was a shame. Most of us know next to nothing about Islam - this in a time we really should find out more. What little we do know is often based on partial knowledge. ("They don't eat during Ramadan. No wonder they are so crabby" -- not realizing Ramadan is actually a time of feasting. It is just those feasts happen at night). My co-authors and I thought it was a chance to inform and share something interesting. We lost. (When finally published, the book did include Bob Marley Day, a holiday in Jamaica

included. No mention of Rastafarian sacraments.)

A friend is a respected author. In a textbook project that was strongly informed by corpus linguistics, my friend's team wanted to include the word "smoking." But, of course, they weren't stupid. They included it in the context of talking about rules, in this case, "No smoking." But even that fell awry of the PC police: "No smoking" here, implies that smoking is OK somewhere else. So out it goes.

Of course, authors and publishers have to use common sense. And different publishers have different views. I've included most of the "parsnips" topics in commercially viable textbooks. My main point in writing this short piece is to share some stories most of us can enjoy.

But I do believe that, as publishing becomes more international and more commercial, there is a danger of being dominated by rules. That is so much easier than thinking.

This article appeared earlier in *Between the Keys*, a publication of the Japan Association for Language

Teaching Materials Writers SIG

I've written for several publishers and they all have good points. My main publisher is Longman Asia. I want to point out that I have not run into these problems there (which is ironic since it is one of the biggest, most commercial publishers).

Biography

Marc Helgesen is professor in the Dept. of Intercultural Studies at Miyagi Gakuin Women's University, Sendai Japan. He is an author of many books including the *English Firsthand* series which is Longman Asia's bestselling course.



Politics
Alcohol
Religion
Sex
Nudity
Israel
Pork
Smoking

Teaching and Testing Speaking Skills in the Undergraduate ESL Classroom: The Role of Role-Play

Premakumari Dheram, School of English Language Hyderabad, India

Introduction

In this article, I discuss my attempt at using the role-play to raise the undergraduate student's awareness of speaking. I include a brief discussion of the instruction and the informal assessment plan that follows it. The teaching plan has a two-fold purpose, monitor my instruction and help the students monitor their own progress in relation to the learning goals of the specific lesson and speech in general.

The Class

It is a heterogeneous class of 40 students in their late teens studying mathematics and physical sciences as part of a three-year undergraduate programme. General English is a compulsory subject in the first two years. I meet the class three hours per week for teaching speaking and writing skills. My colleague teaches them comprehension and grammar through a selection of prose and poetry texts. The class has varying levels of proficiency. Some of them are from rural and semi-urban areas and have moved to English medium for the first time after 12 years of schooling through L1. Although they have studied English as one of the subjects for 7 years, they have had very little training in speaking. Whereas the students from English medium schools, unlike their counterparts from L1 schools, are quite comfortable with English.

Owing to the unmanageably large number of the candidates, all our tests are reading and writing-based; listening and speaking receive very little attention. The class has to pass a two-hour pencil and paper test in which there are two compulsory questions on speaking for ten marks each in the end-semester examination. Two incomplete dialogues have to be completed.

The framework: Communicative language teaching and testing

Indeed, as Canale says "...shift in emphasis from language form to language use has placed new demands on language teaching, so too has it placed

new demands on language testing. Evaluation within a communicative approach must address, for example, ... new testing formats to permit and encourage creative, open-ended language use, new test administration procedures to emphasize interpersonal interaction in authentic situations and new scoring procedures" (1984: 79).

Unfortunately, the practical difficulties associated with communicative language testing have prevented it from becoming popular. Given the situation, classroom assessment is one of the means through which it is possible to raise the student's awareness of the various components of "interaction in authentic situations".

Learning Goals

At the end of the instruction, the class will be familiar with the interactive nature of speech. The teacher helps the student to understand that he/she needs to:

1. open an interaction
2. develop turns
3. take initiative
4. speak relevantly
5. respond to cues appropriately
6. be familiar with repair strategies
7. use topic-specific vocabulary
8. use a variety of structures,
9. close the interaction.

Instruction

Students role-play in pairs to grow familiar with speech in real life. I choose topics they are comfortable with and announce them just two minutes before they start to role-play. Sometimes, I give them brief passages to read and talk about. I make sure that they get just enough time to think about what they are going to say and not exactly how to say it. Though they protest initially, they soon begin to enjoy the challenging nature of the element of surprise. Especially, the more proficient ones and the risk takers make the activity delightful by choosing to say something unexpected.

I introduce them to the various features of a conversation with the help of interviews and dialogues from TV guides, film magazines, newspapers, and their prose selections. I find a few examples and ask the students to collect a few more. Soon, we develop a 'dialogue' bank and the students begin to appreciate the need for giving a close reading as a pre requisite to being on their own.

I help the class focus on two or three features (which are the learning goals) at a time by writing them on the blackboard before beginning the activity. This helps them consciously monitor their performance and make a constructive use of feedback. As a variation, sometimes, I ask different pairs to attend to different features in the same period. Each role play is followed by a quick discussion of how the features are realized through the conversation.

Learning Goals for Assessment

Two or three goals are assessed at a time so as to give adequate importance to each of them and also complete the job in one and a half hours. For the purpose of one informal assessment plan, for example, the following learning goals are identified,

1. Turn taking
2. Taking initiative, and
3. Topic-specific Lexical Resource

The Assessment

I divide the class into two groups and administer the test to one group at a time. While twenty of them stay in the classroom, the others come into the classroom in

pairs one after the other. This continues till all the ten pairs complete the task. Each pair gets 5 minutes. I give them a topic as soon as they come in. If I give them a passage to read and talk about, they get two minutes to read. The dialogue has to be for 3 minutes.

I write the list of the learning goals after the role play so as to make the role play as close an approximation of real life interaction as possible where the speakers are not, normally, unduly conscious of their performance. The students have grown to appreciate what Carroll calls the 'communicative effect' of their speech. After the first two tests they grow to be sensitive to and critical of their own speaking skills. They also learn to take the feedback, from their classmates and teacher most positively. In other words, they progress as second language learners.

The Assessment Plan: A sample

The class, in pairs, will enact the roles of a final year undergraduate student and a Television anchor. The anchor interviews the student.

I describe the task and write the following on the blackboard:

The Television Interview (LIVE, Not Recorded): 3 minutes.

Roles: 2

Meena - a final year undergraduate student, won the prestigious National Talent Award for higher studies

Television Anchor: Interviewing Meena on the local television channel.

Performance Task - Scoring Rubric

	DEVELOPING	INTERMEDIATE	BEGINNING
TURN-TAKING	*Tries to develop turns fully. Introduces related ideas/ perspectives. Uses the cues to negotiate the turns.	Develops just adequately. Makes full use of the cues, adding to them occasionally.	Develops inadequately. Depends on the cues.
TAKING INITIATIVE	Tries to play a supportive role taking responsibility for the flow of the conversation.	Supports the other speaker occasionally. Does not appreciate the interactive nature of the conversation.	Withdrawn, Waits for the other speaker to speak.
TOPIC-SPECIFIC	Uses idiomatically, appropriately. Good range. Tries to use synonyms etc., while referring to what the other speaker says.	Mostly topic-specific. Resorts to circumlocution sometimes.	Limited range. Repeats what other speaker uses.

*For example, "Tell me about your family" may be understood as 'developing the turn adequately, while "I'm sure, our viewers are eager to know about your family. ...and if you are one of those family firsts to win this coveted award" is using the context to develop the turn imaginatively and fully.

The TV anchor is interested in her:

- Studies
- Family
- Sources of inspiration, and
- Any other

Conclusion

The assessment itemizes the various components of speech and contributes to the learner's meta-conscious awareness of his/her role in authentic communication and makes him/her less teacher-dependent. More importantly, it encourages the adult ESL learner to critically think about himself/herself as a speaker and not a second language user. Most ESL learners seem to identify speech with fluency and tend to think that their lack of command on grammar prevents them from being fluent in English.

However, this type of instruction and assessment, which involves activities like role play, demands a great deal of effort and time. Especially when the class is large, above 30, it may get out of hand for any number of reasons. Only one or two students perform at a time which means the rest of the group has to listen to them. Very few students respect the instruction to listen to their peers and learn from them. They begin talking among themselves saying that they are planning their own talk. Principals and other teachers may walk into the class only to tell them to be quiet.

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Biography

Dr. Premakumari Dheram is a Professor at the Centre for Materials Development, School of English Language Education, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, India. Before coming to this advanced teaching and research Institute in July, 2006, she was at Osmania University, Hyderabad, where she taught for 18 years on various undergraduate and postgraduate courses in English and guided doctoral research. She has an MATEFL from Reading University, M.Phil in ELT from CIEFL, and Ph.D in comparative literature from Osmania University. Most of her publications are in action research which includes developing and testing materials. She has published in journals including ELT Journal, English Teaching Professional, The English Teacher, and English Teaching Forum.

NEW SERVICE

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NEW SERVICE

Developing E-Learning for organisational change, training and development

Rosa-Maria Cives-Enriquez, London Probation Area, UK

It appears that many organisations are turning to e-learning as a way of embracing 21st century technological advancement and as a means of enhancing the learner experience, supporting C.P.D. (Continuing Professional Development) and maintaining a level of motivation in the workplace.

The following article aims to look at how e-learning can be a value-added tool to any organisation as long as certain criteria are adhered to and incorporated in the learning process, thus having an educational/motivational value for the learner in the long-term.

I will attempt to look at how to engage and motivate the e-learner to “stick” with the process as well as making reference to points that should be considered throughout the Evaluation Stage.

As one may have noticed by now, I as a trainer/educator am very much concerned with the learner experience, acquisition of skills and ultimately transferability (the application of these skills in the work-place).

An organisation who wants to reap the benefits of e-learning should be aware of the fact that if e-learning is to lead to **change** the following 3 issues need to be addressed, that is, Pedagogy, Evaluation and marketing.

As mentioned I will endeavour to briefly look at 2 of the above stages, namely Pedagogy and Evaluation in the workplace.

So, we may have e-learning available in the workplace but how is it going to attract busy employees who have a heavy workload and perhaps feel devalued and demotivated as a result of this?

In the first instance the model or package has to have a certain element of “stickiness” about it; by that I mean that the user must be drawn in, engaged and left satisfied.

This ensures that the user will want to use this learning intervention instead of another and like any good experience, leaves them “wanting more”, a repeat experience.

With so many bland web-sites on the market... what do we focus on?How do we get the users attention?.....Surely the way to capture some-one’s attention is through good, relevant content that is

pertinent to each learner’s learning style, experience and career need.

It is of utmost significance that the user has clear learning goals relevant to their individual needs and more importantly, any learner, needs to know how these learning goals are going to be achieved ;only can the Instructional designer achieve this if s/he understands the target audience and the relevance of the materials to their individual roles. This therefore means that “off the peg modules” rarely work because they are not bespoke and therefore not tailor-made/designed to meet the needs of the individual in question, which consequently means that their relevance is of minimal significance to the user’s role in the work-place.

Once some-one’s attention is captured, it is imperative that the content is up to date, retrievable at all times and accurate. Any inaccuracies will quickly demotivate any learner, as the message to the individual is one of clear dismissal of the learners needs and will make them feel that they are part of a procedural exercise which clearly they have very little or no control over.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, is the application stage which drives the motivation to use the new information.

The most important stage of the learning intervention design is to entice the user to **apply** what they have gained in knowledge to a real life situation.

So ...how do we excite our end-users/learners so that we do not end up with “SO WHAT?” information?

Exciting the end-user is about grabbing their attention through the careful and varied use of multimedia: text, graphics, sound animation and video.

In all fairness, as educators, the key is to strike the right balance between fun and education; often the one thing one forgets is that whilst it needs to be fun enough for the learner it should also be educative enough for the trainer and keep them motivated too! (See Tomlinson et al.2003 p 239-255)

The “fun element” would, in the long-term make the training more effective and ensures that the material is actually retained by learners rather than just completed.

As with every training or facilitative session, engaging the end user is best done through the use of interactivity; once their attention is grabbed, one needs to make sure that it's maintained.

I find that trying to introduce a simple interactive exercise every 2/3 screens to reinforce the learning point is effective as it stops people from getting "clicky-happy".

Sections should be more about discovery and less about being on the receiving end of the presentation.

Finally, designers often forget that interactivity needn't only be person/programme; it can be about person/person or person/expert.

What support mechanisms can be built in quickly and cheaply?

E-Learning is fundamentally an act of communication and the best communicators are those who constantly "play" to their audience, indicate "the point" of what they are saying, why they are saying it, and more or less subtly, why their audiences should listen and stopping them from saying "SO WHAT?" to themselves after being fed content as opposed to relevant material.

To help fend off the "SO WHAT?" question, perhaps one needs to see how many screens raise this question and change this.

Language is a powerful tool: Can the language be changed so that it is more dynamic, relevant, challenging, captivating, interesting? Is there a direct link to the users' aspirations (personal and/or professional)?

Fact giving and/or content-heavy materials (for example a module on "Inter-Agency work") can be turned into enlightening and motivational learning if it's telling the end user that an "awareness of partnership agencies and their roles will equip you with the necessary tools to make appropriate referrals. In making the appropriate referrals you will be aiding Person X to make small, achievable changes to their lives, thus increasing their self-confidence/efficacy, and helping them in their rehabilitation process".

All of a sudden the material does not appear to be so dry and there is a "wow" factor involved that keeps the person focussed because there is some benefit for them and the person that they are supervising.

So, a few well placed kicker boxes pointing out why people should take notice can make all the difference in the world to all-round motivation.

Another tool that has been employed for regulatory training in the Finance sector seems to work well and perhaps one that we can learn from is the Competency Development Tool (CDT).

"The CDT has the ability to match existing materials to

different learning preferences/styles.

The CDT essentially consists of 4 main elements:

- A series of question banks populated with the multiple choice questions covering each of the individual topics which make up the full study material for the relevant qualification;
- A series of case study exercises covering each relevant area of study;
- The full work-book study materials;
- A menu of topic areas enabling the user to dynamically construct the learning materials to suit their particular need at a particular time

These elements are delivered through a framework which dynamically creates learning and assessment materials related to the topics the user wants to study. Through menus, they select the relevant syllabus areas and then identify whether they want a Knowledge Test, Mock exam or Synoptic Exam which uses case study scenarios.

Questions that are developed, mirror the complexity, style and assessment weighting of the real examination.

A timer has been included for Mock Exams together with the ability to raise the pass threshold and reduce the time available to complete the assessment.

This helps create an element of pressure on the users and makes the CDT realistic."

This tool enables the user to best manage their study time and learning materials to suit their needs, giving them the level of Learner Autonomy that they desire. Once the test is complete they are provided with individual feed-back, that is, their score and test completion time. An opportunity is given to review correct/incorrect answers with a link to study materials. Feed-back can be printed and they have an opportunity to directly link back to the relevant sections of the study material for each question they answered incorrectly. (See. Fig.1- Competency Development Tool Model)

The above model is a holistic approach to learning and one that seems to be working well, due to its flexibility, functionality and approach.

I guess that the next step of the process is the Evaluative or Evaluation Stage but before we broach this subject I feel that one needs to address the following question:

What is evaluation?

Depending on the audience base this can mean many things to many people.

To some it means assessment, examination, certification, auditing, statistics, performance management, testing

or all of the above. Experts in the field are employed to evaluate social science research, education programme evaluation, organisational/policy/data analysis etc.....

In the context of organisational learning, I believe we take evaluation to mean the process determining the worth of a module, course or programme. (See Tomlinson et al.2003 pp 16-36)

We have very significant reasons to evaluate e-learning:

- Evaluation ensures e-learning programme quality;
- Evaluation helps us learn about its usefulness;
- Evaluation findings can convince others of the need for the programme;
- Evaluation, carried out well, builds professional credibility and integrity.

How are e-learning evaluation measures rated?

Rating evaluation measures would very much depend on who was doing the assessing. Would a line manager hold the same view as the person engaged in the assessment process?

This clearly demonstrates the challenge around e-learning evaluation as it depends very much on the person's focus; that is to say, which data are needed and how one plans to use the evaluation results.

Each measure has a distinct focus and could be of interest to different people for very different reasons. (See Fig.2- E-Learning Evaluation Measures.).

This article puts forward an outcomes based model that evaluates e-learning on 5 separate dimensions:

- Evaluating Design;
- Evaluating Usability;
- Evaluating Learning;
- Evaluating Efficiency;
- Evaluating Effectiveness.

Evaluating design is about assuring that the elements of instruction do in fact facilitate desired learning outcomes. An instructional designer should be able to confirm that the learning experience is right. That means being able to substantiate the integrity across the range of design elements such as problem analysis, needs assessment, learning objectives, instructional strategies, content organisation, media and learner interactions.

In the context of e-learning, **usability** is about simplicity and consistency. The e-learning environment, including interface, should be easy to use. It should also entail consistent terminology, symbols, navigation, menu,

help and media elements. Usability is best when it is transparent, a non-issue.

Kukulsha-Hulme (2004) provides a list of indicators that may be used to evaluate e-learning usability, reframed as questions.

- Is the site organised in a way that meets the learner needs and expectations?
- Are all learning elements integrated and easily accessible?
- Is the content clearly written?
- Is navigation simple?
- Is the learning site printer friendly?
- Does the site provide a "Help" section?
- Is technical support offered?
- Is the site regularly updated?

Evaluating learning is about finding out *what employees know now* that they *did not know before* they started the process, that is to say, have they acquired any skills knowledge?

Evaluating efficiency is really about cost-benefit analysis and has little to do with actual business impact or results. The standard efficiency data generated by Learning Management Systems (LMS) typically characterises avoidance of wasted time, money and effort.

Listed are some of the classic e-learning efficiency measures:

- E-Learning as a percentage of overall training;
- Training budget reduction;
- Cost reduction per employee (hour or day);
- Training budget per (course) offering;
- Enrolment, completion rates and scores;
- Time saved and increased access numbers.

Evaluating effectiveness is very much a strategic activity and should be scrutinised in the same way as any other large investment, in terms of costs and benefits. Measuring the extent to which learning changes on-the-job behaviours and improves productivity, is about evaluating its impact.

There are many methods for measuring behaviour change and impact available for consideration; these range from Foxon's (1994) Stages of Transfer to the very quantitative Return on Investment (ROI) models. In the context of improving performance, the "effectiveness" dimension is clearly an important one.

However, each evaluation dimension is valid in its

own right. In fact one could say that they complement each other. One could argue that quality design is a pre-requisite for achieving e-learning effectiveness. It would be difficult to imagine significant learning gains without high usability ratings. As mentioned earlier, it all depends on whom needs the data and for what purpose; as Figure 3(Dimension Type and Customers) suggests, the correspondence between evaluation dimension type and customer type, that is, Senior Managers, Line Managers, Training/HR Managers, Learners and /or Designers. I would hazard a guess that the instructional designer would be concerned with all five dimensions (Effectiveness, Efficiency, Usability, Learning Gain, Design) they are all directly relevant to their role whilst the learner may be very much concerned with the usability, availability, learning outcomes and direct benefits to their current role. According to Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001) the central challenge for organisations these days is how to convert learning-consistently, efficiently and effectively into improved performance.

The authors add that "systematic evaluation of training serves as a sort of on-the-job training approach that is aimed at "teaching" managers in the organisation how to leverage performance and business results from learning".

This would suggest that we need to pay much closer attention to the goal of improving employee performance and have strategies in place to facilitate the shift from a "training-based" towards a "high impact" "value-based" learning service.

My many years experience as a lecturer and consultant trainer has taught me that any material bearing any pedagogical value should always be evaluated (pre and post learning) to assess the learning gain, in this case, resulting from an e-learning programme.

The marketing process should "kick in" in its final stages after the e-learning package has been piloted, that is to say, "tried and tested" and does what it says on the packaging, however, the reality of it all is very different, in that very few organisations can afford to lend such a project the time and resources it deserves.

It seems that the biggest priority for organisational learning is to align it with business strategy, but to attain this goal, a shift is required in the approach corporations take to train their staff.

This shift quite clearly involves:

- Predicting learners' needs;
- Selecting the most useful content and
- Delivering this as informal and workflow learning.

As we have seen from the article, the CDT model primarily, appears to be an effective test tool, but on examination it fulfils other purposes, and that is where the value lies.

It allows the learner to work at his/her own pace, it functions as a diagnostic tool to identify knowledge gaps (needs analysis) as well as bridging gaps when requirements change.

As mentioned earlier there may be various individuals involved in the above process (i.e. e-learning provision), but surely, as Trainers/Facilitators working for Organisations who are undergoing change, it is our responsibility to ensure that individual Learner's needs are met and that Programme/Material integrity is not compromised due to time and resource limitations.

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Biography

Rosa is currently employed by the London Probation service as a Trainer and NVQ Assessor. She is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and the Chartered Management Institute. She has delivered training to corporate clients as a Consultant Trainer (Language and Intercultural Awareness training, Assessment, Pre/ Post-Evaluation etc.....) as well as being employed as a full-time Lecturer. Her last Senior Lectureship post was at the University of Westminster where she delivered Spanish and French to graduate students, as well as some of the Applied Linguistic and Area Studies modules on their Degree in Modern Languages. She contributed a chapter to Brian Tomlinson's book on Materials Development- 'Motivating Adult L2 Learners of Spanish'. She has a real passion for education, training and development and is fortunate enough to have been given the opportunity to continue doing the above in her current role.

Teaching Kenya to England An Overview of a New Pedagogy for the Teaching of World Englishes Literature

Emma Dawson, University of Nottingham, UK

Overview of the pedagogy

As part of doctoral research I have created pedagogy for the reading of World Englishes literary texts®. Such texts may be described as written in English by an author of non-western heritage with English as a second or other language, writing from a non-western environment. The pedagogy has been created in response to the English National Curriculum Key Stage 3 objective of teaching: fiction by major writers from different cultures and traditions in the subject area of English.

The crux of the theory behind the pedagogy is the belief in four universal emotions: happiness, sadness, fear and anger. These emotions are used as a vehicle for exploring the World Englishes text. (See Turner 2000 pgs 68 & 69 for more detail on universal/primary emotion types.)

The pedagogy, which I shall refer to as 'Emotion Tracking Pedagogy' is grounded in an apparatus which is built around a World Englishes short story.

The apparatus consists of four phases:

1. Emotion Tracking phase
2. Language & Emotion phase
3. Cultural Exploration phase
4. Discussion & Task phase

The following will attempt to briefly outline each phase using examples from a recently created apparatus. This particular apparatus uses a short story entitled Kamau's *Finish* by a Kenyan writer, Muthoni Muchemi. Both title and author do not appear on the actual apparatus as it interferes with the reading experience and also the engagement with the text, according to the pedagogy.

Emotion Tracking Phase.

The Emotion Tracking phase focuses the reader on the emotions that are prevalent in that first encounter with the text. In order to capture these initial emotions, the text is divided into chunks; it is imperative that the reader does NOT turn to the following chunk without

having written in the emotion(s) experienced in reaction to the chunk of text at hand (even if the response is 'I have nothing to say'). This process inherently helps to document the reading process and how content schemata, specifically emotion plays an important role at this stage, in the story-reading experience. Chunking text in this way may attract opposition as it may be argued that the natural reading flow is disturbed and the reader feels pressure to complete what feels like an 'exercise'. However, with careful choice of material (and the short story is key to this choice), it is evident that natural suspense and curiosity on the part of the reader to know how the story will end, prevails over any feelings of disturbance and/or 'exercise'.

Here is an example taken from the aforementioned apparatus. The first chunk of text had this question/prompt: What kind of emotion(s) do you feel here, how would you describe it/them ?

This is the second chunk of text below with the second prompt:

Three runners from each team stand at attention. Mr. Juma calls for silence.

"Good luck," says Chris in a hoarse voice.

"Same to you," I whisper as we crouch down in starting position.

"On your marks!"

Daudi is in the farthest lane. His lips are moving in silent prayer. Kip calls him *mkiha*, the last carriage of a train. Of course, Kip sees himself as the engine, the one that always gets to its destination first.

I look past Daudi. No sign of Baba, only other parents jostling to get a better view of their sons at the starting line.

Mami said I was selfish to need Baba here today, but I so want to prove to him and Mami that I can be a winner. If he comes just this once, I'll never ask him again.

"Get set!"

How do you feel at this point?

The objective of the Emotion Tracking phase is to elicit what may be termed as 'instinctive' emotional responses to a text in its initial reading/listening. Such feelings should not be underestimated as they often carry essential clues to how the text may be understood as a whole, as subconsciously, in terms of both content and formal schemata the text is already being interpreted at this stage.

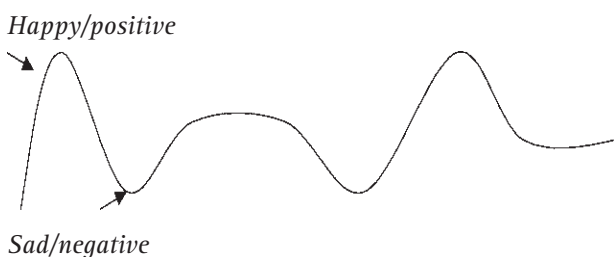
The following stages of the design of E.T.P move towards a more detailed analysis of language performing in a representational (see McRae 1991:3) capacity: the second phase is 'Language and Emotion'. Following this, the apparatus moves to the (Cultural) Exploration phase whereby the cultural aspect of the text is explored and finally the Discussion & Task phase where the reader engages in 'creative' activities that move beyond the skill of reading, promoting further engagement in cultural aspects highlighted in the preceding phase (Exploration) as well as developing cross-curricular opportunities in History, Geography, Religious Education, Citizenship. Practically, this final phase offers a choice for the broadening of skills from creative writing or poetry writing through to exploration of I.T resources, music and clothes and other activities.

Language and Emotion.

This phase of the pedagogy is a set of questions which helps the pupil to consider why and how they felt as they did whilst following the text through. The first question in this phase always asks the pupil to look back on the (emotional) responses written down in the first phase (Emotion Tracking). The pupils explore the language used in the different chunks of text to see if this is linked in any way to the feelings they experienced whilst reading. In order to focus on this element, the pupils are asked to 'plot' the feelings that they noted down for the different chunks of text. Two of the four 'universal' emotions are used here to plot the emotion experience: happiness & sadness.

Here, again is an example from the apparatus:

If your feeling was happy or positive then draw the line going up. If you felt sad then the line will dip down.



Draw your own line here:

The other two universal emotions fear and anger are explored through a different activity, however the objective remains the same; to explore the relationship between the emotions noted down and the actual language used in the chunk of text. Subsequently, the apparatus moves further in considering the linguistic aspect of this phase 'Language and Emotion' and this is done by taking a piece of the text and looking at it in detail vis-à-vis emotion experienced and language present. This is then extended by focusing on a different piece of the text and exploring the senses (sight, touch, hearing, taste, smell). This is conducted through group work. Again, the objective here is to highlight the relationship of the experience of the text with direct appeal to you, the reader and your senses and how this is achieved through language. It is at this point that literary devices may be mentioned such as imagery, alliteration or onomatopoeia. The following activity taken from this phase demonstrates how 'onomatopoeia' is presented.

Now get into a group of 4 or 5. We're going to make this part of the text come alive through SOUND only. Read through and circle any words that add SOUND to the piece.

He's in a cluster, but I know Kip always goes for the flashy sprint finish. I have to catch up with him now if I'm to have a chance. Concentration, concentration, concentration now begins.

Amid all the crowd noises, I think I hear Baba yell, "Run, son!"

A new energy tingles from my feet, up along my legs, loosens my hips, and expands my chest. I tear past Chris, who is panting like a horse. *Uganga* magic is with me!

The cluster is breaking up. Kip is racing ahead. My heart hammers in my ribs. I open my mouth wider to take in more air. I'm catching up. I'm in the dispersing cluster. I overtake one, two, three boys.

I'm flying, my feet almost slapping my bottom, half a step behind Kip.

Now decide who will make each sound – share them out. Somebody in the group will read the piece of text and each person must come in with their sound in the right place....

Have a go....

When a word sounds like its meaning we call this 'onomatopoeia'.

Look back over the text and write down a couple of words that sound like the words' meanings.

Cultural Exploration phase

The text provides a cultural backdrop for the apparatus to explore and it does exactly that at this phase - the Cultural Exploration phase. In continuation of the previous phase (Language and Emotion) the Cultural Exploration phase begins 'linguistically' in that it probes the culture/geography/history of the text by turning to 'linguistic' clues embedded in the text itself.

Again, another example from the apparatus:

In which country do you think this short story is set?
Can you get any clues from the first paragraph?

What tells you where the story may be set?

"WOOPYAY, PLEASE WITH SUGARCANE JUICE," I SILENTLY pray. "Let me be one of the lucky ones today." Although Kenyatta Primary Academy in Nairobi has almost four hundred students, not many parents have showed up for Sports Day. I don't care about other parents so long as Baba is there for me.

While the headmistress screeches something or other on the squeaky microphone, I scan the group standing on the other side of the track. Baba is not among them. He's tall and big like Meja Rhino the champion wrestler, so you can't miss him.

Once one of these aspects has been introduced then the Cultural Exploration phase goes on to explore this fact further. This may be done through I.T resources, film or cultural markers such as language, music, dance, food. Images such as maps may also be used to encourage learning about the culture/country presented.

In the apparatus we are focussing on here, the cultural marker of 'language' is used in order to explore the text culturally.

One of the languages spoken in Kenya is Swahili, we're going to listen and learn a song in Swahili called 'Jambo' - Jambo means hello!

Follow the words on the left in Swahili, try and sing along - you can see what these words mean in the translation on the right.

The song is only in Swahili - NO English!

Jambo

Jambo, Jambo Bwana	Hello, Hello Sir,
Habari gani?	How are you?
Mzuri sana.	Very well.
Wageni, mwaka-ribishwa,	Foreigners, you are welcome
Kenya yetu,	In our Kenya,
Hakuna Matata	here is no problem.

Discussion & Task

This phase is primarily a bank of resources for creativity built around the literature and culture/country presented through the short story. The tasks offered are creative in that they do not dictate wholly what should be achieved in this section, rather as the pupil has experienced the apparatus so they will produce what they are inspired to produce.

Tasks in this phase may be individual or group tasks. They range from class projects and discussion of ideas to individual creative writing tasks and projects.

Concluding remarks

I am aiming to have produced four 'Teaching Packs' by the end of the PhD. I will have tested only two of them but the remaining two packs will follow the same model as the 'tested' packs.

The packs will cover short stories of Indian origin, Kenyan origin, South African origin and Chinese origin. Each pack contains one photocopiable apparatus (text and tasks), one copy of 'Teacher's Notes', one CD audio version of the short story and any materials such as maps, film clips etc..

NOTE: At present the pedagogy has been tested in a L1 context, however, it is possible that future research could be carried out on how this pedagogy may be applied to a L2 context.

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Biography

Emma Dawson is nearing the end of her PhD at the University of Nottingham. The doctoral research has tested a new theory for the teaching of literature from different cultures and traditions at Year 8 in a selection of secondary schools in England. The research has also offered a definition of World Englishes literature and an outline of an established as well as emerging World Englishes literature canon. The PhD has yielded several papers for publication as well as workshops taken to university programs such as the P.G.C.E./BEd. Emma is waiting to hear on the possibility to publish the new theory proposed for reading multicultural literature. Emma has taught in various teaching contexts including a post of two years in the Gulf state of Qatar. Her most recent post is at Staffordshire University, training teachers of Skills For Life in the subject areas of Literacy and ESOL.

How Obtaining an M.A and PhD Degrees in Stylistics help me to be a Scholar rather than a Parrot!?

Huda Al-Mansoob, IbbUniversity, Yemen

When I came to the UK for my post-graduate studies, I was like other Arabic international students carrying a zero background in all forms of stylistic, from the mainstream to the cognitive level. My journey of learning was not easy, yet full of objective learning and discoveries I could never have anticipated. The aim of this paper is to present an answer to the question formed as the title of this paper, based on my personal learning experience. Also, this paper attempts to provide a brief comparison between my background knowledge of learning through the traditional study of the English literature I received during my PA degree, and my current knowledge of how English literature can be alternatively taught through the development in stylistic analysis.

My PA Degree through the Traditional Learning of the English Literature

Guerin et al (1966: 1) recount a story which was told to ridicule the type of analysis that dominated the study of literature until the 1930s:

A professor of English in one of our great Eastern universities, so the story goes, entered the classroom one day and announced that the poem under consideration for that hour was to be Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress." He then proceeded to discuss Marvell's politics, religion, and career. He described Marvell's character, mentioned that he was respected by friend and foe alike married, and speculated that on whether he was married. At this point the bell rang. The professor closed his sheaf of notes, looked up, smiling, and concluded, "Damn' fine poem, men. 'Damn' fine."

In this approach, the art of literary text is of a minor importance as literature is essentially biography, history or moral values. In fact, this approach of learning is still the dominant and the most approved way of teaching in most of the Arab region. The level

of teaching English literature, which I received during my PA study has different objectives and orientation, which characterise the study of literature as being weak and outdated. It is basically based on the following features:

- a. The role of students is by and large limited to being passive recipients of information delivered to them through the perspective of their teachers.
- b. Lecturers either copy or summarise the comments of literary critics into hand-outs as a main source for their teaching, avoiding in their teaching any interaction between linguistic and literature.
- c. Students are given different literary texts every year, however, the main requirements of understanding these texts remain the same, which include writing something about plot, theme, characters and the biographical information about the author.
- d. Lecturers engage heavily their students in memorizing their hand-outs, and require them to reproduce them from their memories on exam papers.

The Outcomes of Such Traditional & Outdated Method of Teaching the English Literature

- a. Being receptive to learning strategies rather than interactive creates an atmosphere of depression and frustration in class as there is only one meaning in the text which can be given by their lecturers. If a student is absent or for any reason misses out the meaning from his/her teacher, then he/she has to ask other classmate for that 'only' meaning. I spent four years doing my PA degree without even having stepped into the library, and not even bothered to ask where the location of the library!
- b. Relying on memorising course materials is a major pitfall for it determines unwisely and unfairly the level of students and assesses their performance according to their ability of remembering the

content of the course line by line rather than their knowledge of the course. The one who tops in class is the one who has the highest capacity of remembering word by word. This demotivating method of learning unquestionably kills the students' cognitive abilities such as inferencing and analysing or even guessing. A very well-known example which is still taught until today, is that when teaching John Milton's famous poem *On his Blindness*, every student should know, as an essential part of understanding the poem, that the poet became blind at the age of forty four. The student, then, has to learn the moral lesson from such an experience. Sadly, though I received my PA a few years ago, all I can right now remember from that poem is the pitiful and desperate image of the poet, as he became blind at a young age, that my teacher pictured in our minds; neither the art nor the language of the poem was considered important.

- c. Students are taught English literature in a way that is a far cry from any linguistics involvement. Accordingly, students are not encouraged to use their own skills of creativity to study course materials and express their point of views.
- d. Treating literature as biography or history narrow the students' chances of understanding the concepts of perception and appreciation.

Why Cognitive/Stylistic Analysis was the Target of my Research?

The definition of my M.A studies in stylistic analysis which revolves around the idea that the language of the text is the main source of insight in approaching a better and objective study of literature was to me a shock to the system, and it took some time to adapt to these new methods of learning. I used to have two Arabic friends in my class, Salwa from Saudi Arabia and Mona from Oman. We were all in a state of shock and amusement insomuch that one day my friend Salwa said to me humorously 'what is going on, Huda? I think if I take this method of learning and teach it home, I will be certainly shot dead!!!'

Although I was so fascinated with my M.A study which was a combination of stylistic courses from the mainstream to the cognitive level, it was very necessary to know a historical background of stylistic but not to focus on before embarking upon any further research. This is because as every trend in stylistics was totally new to me, so it was very difficult to figure out which area of stylistics will place my PhD project in a clear theoretical framework and also serve the best for my academic career later on. Hence, investigating the background and origins of stylistics were my starting point, fully aware that to write down the theories and

ancestry of stylistics is a huge investigation and quite a challenging task.

My survey begins from how stylistics has been initially defined in view of various attempts to understand the concepts of 'style', then it moves on to the definitions of the new trends of the sub-division of stylistics and ends in the definition of the cognitive models. My motivation behind my PhD research basically arose from my interest in the cognitive poetic analysis, which also has been called cognitive stylistic or cognitive rhetoric analysis, for it systematically accounts for the relationship drawn between the structure of literary texts and the produced effect that these texts may perceive. Also, for the fact that the cognitive approach to text processing endorses the idea that the interpretation of a text is not a fixed fact in the sense that there is no guarantee that every individual reader will derive the same interpretation on reading the text.

Why Selecting the Literary Texts for Analysis was of critical importance to Me?

On the other hand, the style of the modern American short story writer Raymond Carver struck my attention from the first reading. After several thorough readings of Carver's stories, I realised that their language, structure, style and their potential for influencing readers like me would offer a great challenge to apply my new way of learning through taking several selected stories for analysis. More importantly, when I read the critical analysis carried out by critics (such as Saltzman 1988, Campbell 1992 and Runyon 1992, among many others), I found out that each has come up with a different interpretation and in most cases they leave the interpretation with an open ending only readers have to complete. Consequently, this becomes a major motive to me to enter the world of Carver realizing that my mental representation of each story would be based on my own judgment and on the way I approach the events of the stories.

Conclusion

If you are a research student and coming from a similar background to me, then if you have to keep in mind two important issues before conducting any research. The first of which is that do not jump to chose a particular theory or field to be the target of your PhD research until you make sure of the following points:

- a. Do not try to copy other students because other students may come to the learning environment with a different background than yours.
- b. Do not feel shy to say 'no' to your supervisor if

he/she is trying to advise you for a particular theory for your research from his/her own point of view, and you are not quite sure of its suitability for your own research. Discover your need by bridging the gap between your previous knowledge and your current knowledge.

The second of which is to select literary texts that are effective in two ways:

- a. Texts that are rich in linguistic and pragmatic choices as these types of texts will open up a variety of stimulating ideas for you to analyse.
- b. Texts that are marked by an element of ambiguity as this will help you to build up your own meaning of the texts and free you completely from the chain of the old methods of learning.

The teaching system is old-fashioned pedagogy in your country and is crying for help! Your duty is to go back and repay your nation as being a scholar rather than a transmitter or parrot of knowledge.

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Biography

Huda Al-Mansoob is a lecturer at Ibb University, Yemen. She recently obtained her M.A and PhD in Stylistics analysis from Nottingham University. She currently lives in the UK publishing some elements of her PhD thesis, and doing further research in stylistics, in particular in developing stylistic analysis for the work of Raymond Carver.

Language Learner Literature Writers Group

Hi,

This is Rob Waring. Please consider joining the all new *Language Learner Literature Writers Group*. We'll discuss issues related to the writing of graded readers and other Language Learner Literature.

This is a place to ask questions about the writing of graded readers, ask if a title has already been published, suggest ideas for readers, ask about markets, availability, simplification issues, gradings etc. Note this is a group independent of any particular publisher.

If you have written or wish to write graded readers or other LLL, please consider joining.

At the moment (till the spammers find us) we'll be an open group.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LLL_writers

Tell all and sundry please.

Rob

Tips for Writers

Chris Mares, The University of Maine, USA

The Basics - tips for writers

However creative and talented a writer is, writing well is never easy. Forgetting the basics, on the other hand, is easy, especially when working under pressure as many writers do. I know, unfortunately, what it means to lose track of the writing goals and produce material, that either doesn't work as intended or has lost its spark and interest. I don't want this experience to happen to you but it could so I offer the following tips for people starting out in the world of materials writing.

So what are the basics?

The wonderful thing is that the basics really are basic in that it's not the understanding them that's the problem. Remembering them and keeping to them, however, especially as deadlines loom or the head begins to loll over the keyboard, is a different matter. So here they are, the ones that I have learned over the years: make reasonable commitments, keep to deadlines, allocate regular time for writing, stay focused, remember that students and teachers have to use material and that they want and need it to work, don't take feedback personally, take breaks, keep up with the research and the competition, meet other writers, go to conferences. And, finally, look after yourself.

Deadlines

Never commit yourself to a deadline you won't be able to keep. Writing is a professional occupation and your reputation as a writer will be partly shaped by your ability to keep deadlines. There is no point in committing yourself to a timeline you can't keep just to get a contract. Your editor will not be impressed. It will come back to haunt you in ways you don't even want to think about. It takes a long time for doors to open but they can be closed very quickly.

Work schedule

If you don't have time to write, don't. If you have a full time job and you are intending to write, be realistic about how much time you are prepared to spend on writing. I mean the number of hours per week and then particular time slots per day. Unless you are single and without family or friends, others will always be affected by the amount of time you spend writing. Make sure you understand that sacrifices will have to be made in order to write. You could end up losing

a partner or a spouse or precious time with young children. Think about it. Are you ready for that? Block out times to write and stick to them. Writing is a discipline. You can't leave a book til the last minute. You must chip away at it.

Don't take feedback personally

Your material isn't you. It is something you have created and sometimes it may or will need to be rewritten because it doesn't work or isn't as good as it could be. Don't pull it defensively to your chest. Let people look at it and encourage feedback. Remember that honest feedback whether positive or negative is better than bland praise.

Never lose sight of the goal

Before you start to write, review the goal of your writing task. What is it the students need to learn or do? How have you set up the activities? Are the instructions and material transparent to both the teacher and students? Will the material be engaging? Will the activities be doable? Like a pilot before take off, it's necessary to get out the clip board before every flight and check off.

Variety is key

Writing to a template is useful in that the writer can focus on creating for the template rather than beginning anew with every unit. However, a limited repertoire of activities, if recycled in every unit in the same way can become boring and have negative effects on student motivation. The activity, "Find Someone Who ..." works, it can be interesting, useful, and fun, but every class?

Give it a break

It is easy to get lost in the process of writing, either when it is going very well, or, conversely, when it isn't. Whichever the case, becoming overly absorbed in the process for extended periods of time can lead to a loss of perspective on the material you are writing. Quite simply you may no longer see what you are writing as someone else might see it. A 'can't see the wood for the trees' type situation. A bonus tip here comes from Hemingway who said that a good time to stop or break is when the process is going well. Come back later, if it's still going well, it is easy to pick up and carry on. If you stop when it isn't going well, getting back into it can be even harder.

All activities must work

You may think an activity works, but this is not always the case. When you test your own tasks or activities after writing them, go through every stage thoroughly – as someone else! Don't be satisfied with the knowledge that 'these types of task always work'. As every teacher knows, especially at lower levels, unraveling tangles or finding that more than one correct answer will be acceptable, can take an unnecessarily long time to explain. Remember those moments? We've all had them. Teachers and students believe their material will be safe and the writer's responsibility is to make sure that it is. To do that requires diligence.

Clarity

Clarity and simplicity are vital, especially in instructions. Make sure the level of language in the instructions is appropriate for the level of students. A step by step procedure, clearly numbered or bulleted will help. Always try to picture a student reading and processing your instructions or dialogues, or texts. Ask yourself if your work is as clear and natural and useful as it could be. If it isn't, change it.

Language in context

Sometimes model dialogues must show case particular lexical items, grammatical structures, or functions. Make sure the exponents are exemplified in a natural context. If it doesn't sound right, it probably isn't. Don't just make characters say what you need them to say to satisfy the syllabus requirements, make sure the environment is natural. All students need good models. They need exposure to language as it is used contextually, and in this way students will learn to use it appropriately. Presenting language as it is not used is not helpful and must be avoided.

Remember, others have to use your material

For many authors the target teachers of their material will very often be speakers of other languages. This means that there needs to be a degree of safety. Make the material watertight for users.

Keep up with the research and the competition, meet other writers, go to conferences.

Writers need to know what's going on in the field in terms of research findings and possible applications. What are the burning questions? What do we know from language acquisition studies or discourse analysis that we can practically and usefully build into materials. Being critically aware of material competing for the same

market share is also important. What are other writers doing? What works? What doesn't? How are users reacting? Talking with publishers and other teachers is also a good way to get a snapshot of preferences or the parameters in which materials have to be used.

Keep a notebook

Write down what people say to each other. Be language sensitive. If people greet each other with one saying, "Hey, how's it going?" and the other responds almost simultaneously with "What's up?" but neither responds to either question, write it down, you need to know how language actually works and then make decisions about what you include and model. A good screenplay is good because the language seems authentic. A screenwriter needs to have a good ear for language and so does a materials writer.

Stay informed

Think about your target audience. Who is using material? What are they interested in? What do they like? Young adults in Japan or Latin America have their own tastes, values, and expectations. If you are writing for a particular audience find at least one informant to guide you in the selection of topics that you might use.

Look after yourself

Sounds obvious but it's important. Writing materials can be a long hard slog. You need stamina. You need to have the strength to do it when you don't want to. Eat well, rest, take breaks, have a day off. Chip away at it and it will get done. And remember you're doing it because you chose to do it and you want to do it and you are probably good at it. So, give yourself a pat on the back sometimes.

Conclusion

Writing material for use in educational contexts is a worthwhile endeavor and it is worth doing well. It takes effort and sacrifice and whether or not it's rewarding financially, there is nothing quite like the first feel and smell of a new book with your own name as (co)author.

Biography

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

Author Test

by Dorothy Zeemach. Answered by Peter Viney, Dorset, UK

So... you're thinking of writing a book! How nice. But are you sure you have what it takes? This simple diagnostic can let you know. Each prompt is something an editor might say to you. Circle the response that is closest to your own. If you pass the test, an editor will be in touch with you shortly. Please don't call us, though, we'll call you.

1. We're thinking of launching a new low-level series of writing books.
 - a. Sure! How much will I get?
 - b. I have one already finished. It doesn't need any changes because I already used it with my class. How soon can you start selling it?
 - c. Could we schedule a phone call sometime soon? I have a few ideas about writing I'd like to discuss with you.

(C) though (A) should come up quite swiftly in the scheduled phone call, but realistically it's "How much might I get IF it actually happens." Because most projects never get off the ground.

2. Thanks for sending the first chapter. However, I didn't see the listening scripts. Could you send those as well?
 - a. I can't write the listening scripts until the art is in place. It might also be better to have the actors just look at the art and then speak naturally, rather than using something scripted. We don't want it to sound too "ESL."
 - b. Oh, it doesn't really matter what goes there. I'm sure whatever you do will be fine.
 - c. Actually, I haven't written them yet. I wanted to make sure the exercise types were OK first, and that the topics were all right. If those things look OK, I'll go ahead and write scripts and send them to you. Is by this Monday OK with you?

None of this would apply. I wouldn't submit anything with "important bits to follow" because it would have to be integrated in my mind.

3. Unfortunately, we won't be able to use the photo of your sister in Unit 12. Its resolution isn't high enough.
 - a. You have to use that photo, or the entire unit falls apart.

- b. No problem—I have LOTS of other photos of my sister. I'm attaching all of them to this email.
- c. Oh, that's a shame. Well, as long as you can find another photo of a woman in a city stepping out of a taxi, that's OK.

We spend more time on art than other authors we know, and the resolution would be high enough if I'd taken it. We don't use many library photos. We prefer to commission photos with very detailed art briefs, or use ones I've taken myself. It would be close to (C), but it would actually be "OK, I'll research a photo of a woman stepping out of a taxi on Hulton-Getty myself." and I'd clip a low-res download into the manuscript and list the Hulton-Getty prices for different resolutions. Once a commissioned photo for a recent book was dark and gloomy because it was raining hard when it was taken in London. I took my son and a friend of my daughter's down to the beach at Poole and retook the scene on a bright sunny day with them as models to replace it. (IN English Starter page 24). It's not perfect, and has a few shadows a professional photographer would reject, but it's a more interesting setting than a gloomy street.

4. Exercise 3 in Unit 7 isn't working.
 - a. The hell it isn't.
 - b. Really? OK, let me know how you fix it.
 - c. What isn't working - is it the exercise type or the content? If the level or the vocabulary is a problem, I'd like to revise it. But if you'd like a different type of exercise or different content, I have some other ideas we could discuss.

I'd think (A), but I've been doing this job too long to expect to get away with it, so I'd swallow hard, force a smile, and say (C).

5. The pp. 66-67 spread comes in at 2,500 words, but we briefed you to write no more than 600 for this feature. Could you re-work it?
 - a. Everything in there is essential. Just have the designer use a smaller font.
 - b. OK, just cut the last 2000 words, I guess.
 - c. Oh, sorry. 600? OK, I'll re-work it.

That can only be (C). But if it was an article for a magazine, it would be worth trying, 'Yes ... why don't

you publish it in four parts? I'll give you a discount and only charge for three ...'

6. Did you finish Chapter 9 yet? Remember, you were going to send it to me on Monday, so I'm just checking to see how things are going.
 - a. Oh, you wouldn't BELIEVE the week I've been having! First, my plantar fasciitis flared up. So painful! I couldn't go to my aerobics class all week, I can barely hobble around, it's just awful. Then my in-laws came, and while they're lovely people, they never help out around the house, so you can imagine all the extra work! I was going to work on Chapter 9 on Thursday, after I finished grading my stacks of papers! (oh, my!) but then the dog ate something funny and got sick and we had to rush him to the vet. I brought my notes for the chapter to the vet, but someone else's cat sat on them and, well, anyway, I'll have to start again! Unless my fibromyalgia acts up again!!
 - b. I sent that on Monday. I guess your email wasn't working correctly or something. Just in case, I'll send it again next week.
 - c. I'm really sorry. I got tied up with other things at work. But I'm mostly done and should be able to send it to you by Thursday morning your time. I hope that's OK.

In the hypothetical event it would be (C), but in my experience it would usually be me asking the editor why it hadn't been commented on as agreed. Then asking again a week later. And again a week after that. They'd reply that they were far too busy to edit it because they'd been tied up on management appraisals followed by a three day course on "How to keep your authors happy."

7. Unfortunately, feedback from our Turkish and Middle Eastern markets is indicating that the reading in Chapter 3, "Prostitution: A Great Business Model," isn't really appropriate. I think we'll need to replace that with something that doesn't mention selling one's body or pimping.
 - a. Big publishers are so racist, homophobic, sexist, and backwards that I cannot believe it. No wonder all coursebooks look the same—you're afraid to use fresh, interesting material. I used that reading with dozens of classes and all my students loved it. If you want me to trot out another tired topic like hobbies or directions or ordering in a restaurant, I'm just going to take my book to a different publisher, and then you'll be sorry when it makes a million bucks.
 - b. OK, just change "body" to another noun and "pimping" to another verb. I think the rest of the article will still work.

- c. Oh, too bad - I liked the structure of that article. However, I have another article that might work as well, an interview with the president of a small organic food company that has had great success. I'm sending you the article, and if you think it works, let me know and I'll redo the exercises to fit it.

(C) - I've seen this too often not to self-edit in advance.

But another answer is:

"When you commissioned the book for your ESP list as 'An English Manual for Sex Trade Operatives in Northern Europe' you failed to mention that your marketing department would subsequently try to sell it to high schools in Turkey, and primary schools in Greece as a general English course. I am sorry to hear that you've never had a distributor in the Netherlands or Germany, but this should have been mentioned at the outset. If I'd had your highly optimistic marketing intention made clear to me at the beginning of the project, I wouldn't have spent so long researching the retro Victorian photographs (royalty free) for the unit on Flagellation (Chapter 4) nor would I have agreed to pay the Estate of D.H. Lawrence £100 for the short but pithy extract from Lady Chatterley's Lover on page 169. I agree that the change of title to 'Ups and Downs: English for Manual Sex Trade Operatives The World Over' has created potential problems in selling it into Faith Schools. I am flattered by the proposed cover blurb 'A novel and exciting way of teaching imperative forms' but think it unfair as well as potentially actionable to link it to the TPR (Total Physical Response) methodology.

While we're on the topic of your marketing department, please thank your marketing director for the list of countries where he thought the original plan for the book was "right on the spot" but this could be read as a list of countries which are highly unlikely ever to pay royalties, as most are centres for book piracy. I would add that the G!!! in parentheses after "right on the spot" is hardly the sort of vulgar comment one expects from a senior representative of such an old and distinguished publishing house. Writing "Gettit?" in red ink in the margin was hardly necessary either."

8. We've had a lot of requests from the markets to add a grammar presentation box to each unit. Do you think you could do that?
 - a. Well, excuse me, but the research shows that grammar boxes are worthless.
 - b. Sure, go ahead.
 - c. I'm not really sure that will work best with the units as they are. Could we maybe put the grammar boxes in the review units, at the back of the book, or in the teacher's edition?

(C), but I'd add "I could clip them in from the many

examples I already have on file ... it won't take long."

9. The pilots reported having difficulty with the open-ended test questions. Students didn't know what to do, and teachers had trouble with the grading. Could we go with some more standard formats, such as multiple choice, matching, tick the boxes?

a. Oh, don't even get me started on standardized testing! That's what's wrong with 90% of English classes out there. See, this course is teaching students to actually think. And if teachers don't know how to teach, that's really not my problem.

b. That sounds fine. But please send the revised tests to me when they're done so I can look them over.

c. OK. I'll rework the material and send it back to you. It will probably take me about a week.

(A) would run through my mind, but age and wisdom should make it (C). However as these are certainly going to be free photocopiable tests that I'll never see a penny for, (B) is the choice. I couldn't have done that ten years ago, but I'm less of a control freak now.

10. You'll be pleased to know that first pass pages have come back from the designer. I think they're looking pretty good!

a. Please send me 25 copies, bound, so I can use them with my fall class. I'll look for typos while I teach.

b. I hope you got that photo of my sister in there. I already told her we were going to use it.

c. Oh, good news! Thanks for letting me know. And let me know if you need any changes from me.

I'd go into my "standard reply" file and press (C). It starts out "Dear _____. Thanks for letting me know about _____. I hope I'd remember to fill in the blanks.

11. Your book is finished! Congratulations! We hope to launch it at several conferences this year.

a. I'll go to Brazil, Tahiti, and Thailand. I'm bringing my wife, small children, and dog, too, so please book a double suite. And please arrange a meeting with the general manager to discuss my

next books.

b. Great. Please send the royalty check as soon as possible. I really need the money.

c. Wonderful! Thank you so much for all your hard work. I'm really pleased with the way the book came out. By the way, I have some free time this summer and fall, so I'd be available for conference presentations. Just let me know.

(C)

On promotions, I've done far fewer in recent years, but did enough in the past. People often speak about them as if they're free jaunts or "jollies". They're not (for authors at least). They're extremely hard work with the advantage being that you learn a great deal about the ELT situation in different countries. Normally, you get the chance to eat in good restaurants chosen by locals, but opportunities for "tourism" are limited or non-existent. I did most of my travelling when I had young children, and never wanted to add days at either end. I chose to make the maximum use of the time, by attending other lectures and speaking to teachers on the publisher's stand. If a place took my fancy, I'd visit it later with the family and do the tourist bit then at my own expense. I've even flown to Paris, arrived at 12, got in a car to the venue, checked the video equipment, spoken from 2 to 3, got in a car and been on the 5 pm flight home without either hot food or the French language passing my lips in France. "Going to Paris on Saturday" is not necessarily fun.

Biography

Peter Viney is the co-author of the Streamline English series. Peter and Karen Viney have co-authored many series for OUP, including Grapevine, Main Street, Handshake and their latest series In English. They were pioneering ELT video authors and have written thirteen video series for OUP including A Weekend Away, A Week By The Sea, Mystery Tour, Grapevine Video, Only in America and English Channel. English Channel III – Double Identity won the IVCA Silver Award for video. They have adapted the Academy Award® winning Wallace & Gromit animations for ELT; A Grand Day Out, The Wrong Trousers and A Close Shave. Peter also wrote Survival English and Basic Survival, which are now in their third editions (Macmillan). Peter was co-series editor of the Storylines series of graded readers, and has written many ELT readers and reading development materials. He lives in Poole, Dorset.

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Virtual Writing Environments for ESL Students

Barry Bakin, Los Angeles Unified School District, USA

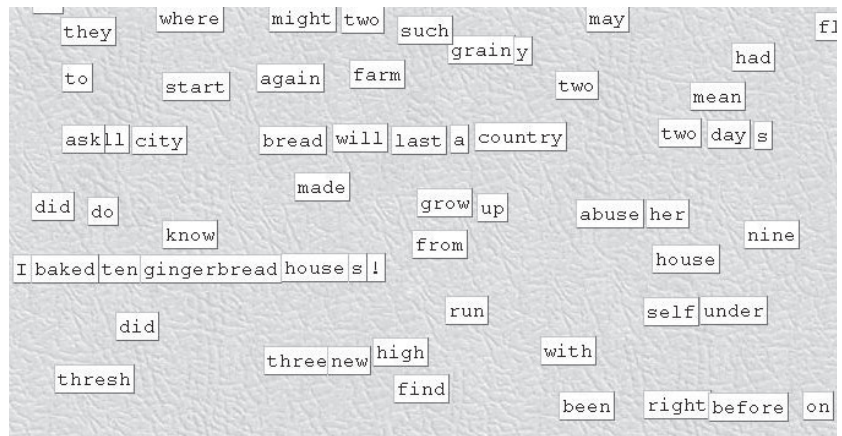
In a previous column, a website where students are motivated to practice writing in English by creating animated movies was discussed (<http://www.dfilm.com>). In this column, several more web sites that provide writing environments that are highly engaging will be introduced. Like [dfilm.com](http://www.dfilm.com), these web sites were not designed with ESL students in mind, but provide a writing platform and context that is usable by all levels of students.

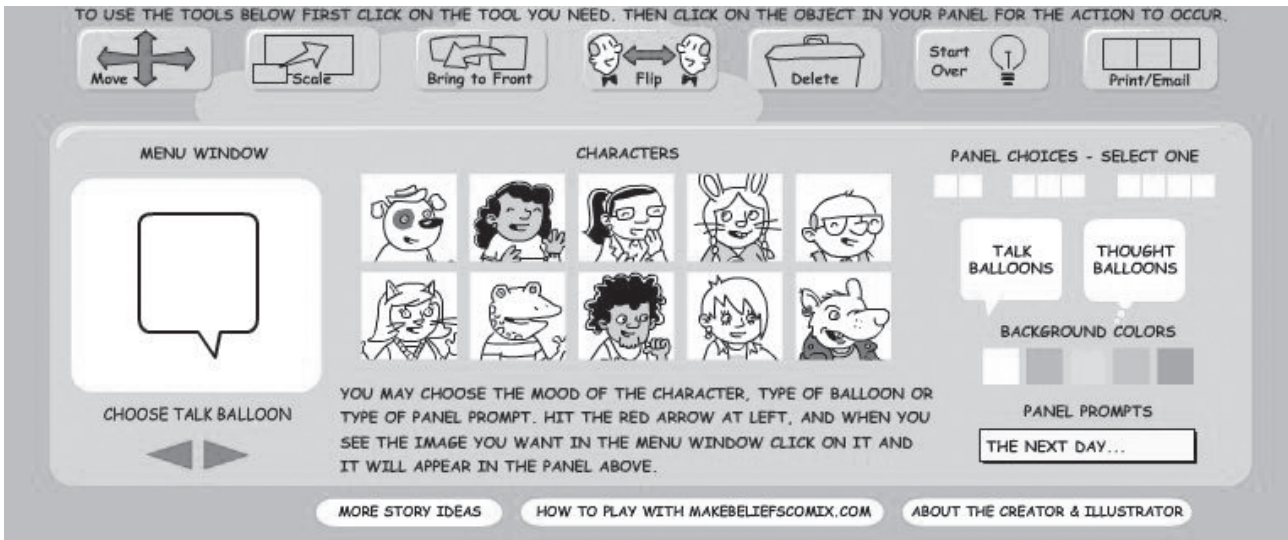
At <http://isnoop.net/toys/magwords.php> students can rearrange words on the face of a virtual refrigerator door to create simple sentences. Like the refrigerator magnet games that one can buy for one's own kitchen you are limited to the words that "come in the box" so part of the challenge is creating sentences that make sense with a limited word bank. The other drawback for language teachers is the capitalization issue. There are no capital letters at all other than the word "I" so it's not a perfect game for language learners. Finally, there is also a bit of an unknown element for teachers who work with non-adults. The refrigerator "door" appears as the last user left it. It's possible that the last user could have left an inappropriate message posted. Fortunately, the basic word bank doesn't include obviously vulgar or obscene words so the risk is minimized. Teachers who work with non-adults could simply take a quick look at the website before assigning it to the students.

Teachers who work with lower level learners might find the magnetic alphabet games at <http://lunchtimers.com/games/> to be more appropriate. Look for the section titled "Just Letters" and choose the game with the fewest players. Students can drag the individual letters to form words and if they work quickly sentences as well. Since the web site is open to all and interactive, other players in the room could "steal" letters for their

own constructions. Like the refrigerator magnet web site, this room is a live, interactive environment so inappropriate words could appear. Teachers who work with non-adults should exercise their judgment when assigning this site.

For the most advanced learners who want a challenge, "Someone keeps stealing my letters" at <http://web.okaygo.co.uk/apps/letters/flashcom/index2.htm> is a similar site based on movable magnetic letters, but there is definitely a more competitive atmosphere in the interaction. Players active at this site appear to go out of their way to steal letters from sentences and words being constructed so it's a constant struggle to





Students use the tools to create a comic strip.



The final product!

complete a word, phrase or sentence. The competitive nature of this site might be very appealing to some learners. The same cautions about live/interactive web sites that were mentioned previously apply. (If the above mentioned URL is too much to type, another way to find the site is to Google "Someone keeps stealing my letters." It will bring up the site as the first listing.)

Finally, there is a website where students can create 2, 3 or 4 panel comic strips incorporating their own dialogue. At <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com> students choose characters and insert their own text. Using some easy-to-learn tools, students select characters, insert "speech balloons," and when finished, can choose to print or email the finished comic to themselves, a friend or the teacher. The finished comics are not saved so students need to print out any

comics they want to keep.

Get students to express themselves in English in fun and interactive ways using these and other web sites. Don't forget to experiment with them yourselves first before assigning them to your students.

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.

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Review of English Language Learning Internet News Websites

Carrie Steenburgh

About ten years ago, some of my computer savvy students would ask me for good English language learning websites. At that time, Dave's ESL Café was the website my colleagues and I in the United States knew. Nowadays, we're inundated with choices. A student typing 'ESL websites' in a search engine could easily become overwhelmed. There are thousands of sites that are either available for a fee or are supported by advertisements. While many of these sites may be helpful for students and teachers, it would be quite an undertaking to review them all. Instead, this review focuses on three websites affiliated with major broadcasting corporations: the BBC, the Voice of America and CNN. All of these sites are meant for English language learners containing authentic readings and audio on current events, are free from advertisements and are available free of charge.

Learning English (affiliated with the BBC)

URL	http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/ http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/ (home page)
Content	International and British News
Languages	British/International English
Level	High Intermediate - Advance
Activities	Extensive Listening and Reading Practice, Vocabulary builder
Updated	Three times a week
Teacher Resources	Yes
Audio Hardware	RealAudio and RealMedia

The BBC Learning English website was first launched in April 1996 and contains information for both students and teachers. Learning English presents materials in the following categories; News English, Business English, Watch and Listen, Grammar and Vocabulary, Communicate, Quizzes, The Flatmates, Webcast and For Teachers.

The News English section presents two main categories, one of which is the "Words in the News" which presents short BBC texts accompanied by audio. Students can

listen, read or do both simultaneously. Within the texts, ten words and expressions are highlighted in bold, and are defined at the end of the report. Three new stories are published weekly, to insure a steady variety of materials.

The other news category, "News about Britain", contains a longer report focusing on some issue connected with British culture. This too has an article, audio, and list of defined words. The language used in both sections is authentic, with no attempt to simplify it in any way, other than providing definitions at the end. Because of the brevity of the reports and the supplied definitions, my upper intermediate students were very comfortable with these materials.

In terms of content, the BBC has, by far, the most information packed within its site. However, its design makes it very easy to navigate and access that information. Within the "News English" section, students can easily access archived stories going back to 2001 or link to the other Learning English sections which are distinctly marked to the left of the news content. Some teachers will also enjoy the feature of a detailed lesson plan that is offered with the Wednesday report.

Voice of America: Special English

URL	www.voanews.com/specialenglish/index.cfm
Content	World News and Information on American Culture and History
Languages	American/International English
Level	Intermediate
Activities	Extensive Listening and Reading Practice
Updated	Daily
Teacher Resources	None
Audio Hardware	RealAudio, MP 3

Voice of America has been broadcasting Special English reports daily since 1959 with the goal of communicating with people who are not native English speakers. Special English uses a core vocabulary of 1500 words, active sentences, no idioms and reports are read at a much slower pace than normal.

Each half hour broadcast starts with world news and is followed by a short four to five minute feature about development, agriculture, health, education, economics,

news events and American idioms. The final feature, depending on the day, is an in-depth fifteen minute story, which could be about life in the United States, news about science and space, American history, popular culture, influential Americans and short stories.

Students choose a report of interest and click on the link which will bring them to the text of the report. They can either read it, listen to it (RealAudio or MP 3) or do both simultaneously. The interface is very easy to navigate and links to articles and audio are easy to locate and operate.

As an independent learning tool, this site has ample listening and reading opportunities for students. It provides a great deal of potentially comprehensible input and extensive listening and reading opportunities. Learners also have a wide variety of articles to choose from and will generally be able to find something relevant to their own interests and experiences.

There are no language practice exercises related to the articles for those looking for more structured activities. However, the site does have a link to “Games with Words” which allows students to test themselves on VOA words through games and quizzes. These are discrete tests, such as multiple choice, matching or fill in the blank and there are no integrative activities.

Although the articles are presented in simplified English, for students who want to learn idiomatic expressions, the site does feature a program called “Words and Their Stories” which is broadcast every Sunday. This program is a five minute feature about American English words and expressions. I know my adult ELL students enjoy this feature for reading about the origin and meaning of expressions such as ‘in the red’, ‘feel the pinch’ and ‘baloney’ to name just a few.

Whereas some CALL sites have teacher resources (lesson plans, extension activities or ideas for professional development), this site does not.

Literacy Works (affiliated with CNN)

URL	<i>http://literacyworks.org/learningresources/4_networked_indiv/lr_networked_indiv_home.html http://literacynet.org/cnnsf/archives.html (archived stories)</i>
Content	<i>International and American News</i>
Languages	<i>American/International English</i>
Level	<i>High Intermediate - Advance</i>
Activities	<i>Extensive Listening and Reading Practice, Comprehension and Vocabulary Multiple Choice Questions</i>
Updated	<i>Not clear</i>
Teacher Resources	<i>Yes - General Lesson Plan</i>
Audio Hardware	<i>RealAudio and RealMedia</i>

The San Francisco bureau of CNN has partnered with the Western/Pacific Literacy Network to provide this language learning resource. Each module contains a general interest news article that students can read, listen to or watch, along with practice exercises to test comprehension and acquisition.

As opposed to the Voice of America Special English site, this site presents authentic news article in standard American English. Reports are generally between three to five minutes in length and no attempts are made to simplify the texts, either in the writing or through the broadcaster’s pace and pronunciation.

Once again, as an independent learning tool, students can select a story of interest and click on the title. This will bring them to a page with the choice of seeing the complete article, an abridged version or just the outline. Once they make their choice, students are presented with the text of the article occupying the main screen and discrete exercises (vocabulary, multiple choice, sequencing, conclusion) linked to the left of the article. Students can also choose to watch many of the reports with RealMedia or listen to it with RealAudio which are both available to download for free from the site.

Although as a language teacher I’m drawn towards integrative activities, students often enjoy the immediate satisfaction of discrete exercises which test vocabulary and comprehension. To this end, the website is effective. Students have immediate feedback when they answer a question and can monitor their own knowledge of vocabulary. There is one integrative activity titled “Your Turn” which allows students to produce written commentary on the report but there is no online instructor that will comment on the writing. When I field tested this and the BBC site in my language classroom, 18 of my 25 students preferred this one because of these discrete testing activities.

The site does have an “Instructor Resource” section, which details a general lesson plan that can be adapted to fit a chosen article. The outline section also provides a good model to discuss how to outline stories for reading and writing. Each story is also followed by links to other websites that contain information mentioned in the report. This can be a good opportunity for students to practice fact checking skills. In addition, for some of the more dated articles, students could ‘update’ them to make them more relevant to the present day.

Biography

Carrie Steenburgh is an ESL instructor at Union County College in New Jersey, USA. As well as teacher training and general ESL teaching, Carrie has been the director of a private English language school in Boston, where she specialised in developing curricula for executive English language programs. She was also an examiner for the Cambridge ESOL examinations.

Featured Writer:

Peter Viney

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

I first taught English in summer holidays from university from 1967 on, and my first full-time job was at Anglo-Continental (ACSE) in Bournemouth in 1971. ACSE always relied mainly on home-produced material and had a Research & Development Department. We used to do a weekly sketch revue for students (to an audience of 400) and I met Karen, my wife and co-writer while doing the shows. In the summer of 1971, our basic team was Colin Granger, Guy Wellman, Karen and me. All became material writers. I started writing original sketches with Karen when I took over producing the shows after Colin left in September 1971, so Karen and I have been writing together that long.

I wrote several internal courses for ACSE, then I met Bernie Hartley, and we started what became Streamline. It had been used with 2000 students before we ever approached a publisher. I started writing full-time in 1980.

Karen and I resumed writing together for our first video, *A Weekend Away*, in 1984.

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

The most?

I'd find it hard to draw a line between the main contenders. *Streamline Departure* because it has been such a major course and it was the biggest thrill to hold in my hand for the first time. People remember the humour, but in retrospect the 'Everyday Conversation' sections were attempts to stress the importance of formulas and fixed expressions, or lexical chunks if you want to sound up to date.

Karen and I have done thirteen video series, and *Only in America* stands out, partly for the cast, including a young, just-graduated Edward Norton, and partly because we refined our approach to Video Activity Books.

Handshake was our most innovative book, basing the syllabus on communication skills, and we're both very proud of that ten years on.

But for most writers, the most recent is the best, and if I could only choose one it would be the IN English series, where the format and attention to illustration finally achieved what we'd been aiming at for years – *Grapevine Two* is very close to it in our minds.

It's great when teachers approach you at talks and say 'I learned English from your book, and I enjoyed the lessons so much I became an English teacher.' It always used to be *Streamline* they meant, but increasingly it's *Grapevine*.

The least?



I wouldn't put my name on anything I was ashamed of, but the first Mary Glasgow version of *Survival English* was badly illustrated and the writing was strictly divided between the two authors, rather than shared. I got the chance to totally re-write it working on my own for Heinemann in 1994, replacing 80% of it, then again more recently I did another major rewrite for Macmillan. I'm proud of the book as it is now (with nothing of the original left), but the 1978 Mary Glasgow version would be my least favourite of my books.

Streamline Destinations was a salutary lesson too. We kept strictly to the single page unit format, when really we should have changed format for the third level (as

I later did in the fourth, *Streamline Directions*). As a result the pages were too cramped. I have fond memories of writing it though. Bernie and I rented our first office very cheaply. No one else would rent it because it belonged to a condom distributor, whose name was writ large over the door. We reasoned that as we never had any visitors we could live with the shame of walking in there on a daily basis. Then halfway through writing it, we moved to a tiny triangular office next to a dressmaker with a parrot which talked all day. At that point we were

still writing well together (in spite of the parrot), in retrospect for the last time. It's not true that the parrot influenced our methodology on repetition work.

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

Other ELT writers, definitely. I have the greatest respect for ELT writers and have argued that popular coursebooks are far more influential than the collected works of (e.g.) Krashen. So a few ...

Colin Granger, for introducing me to the idea that humour was essential. My first day at ACSE consisted of watching Colin teach.

Alan McInnes, the DoS at ACSE, who stressed the need for a step-by-step foolproof teacher's book.

Louis Alexander for meticulous attention to structural progression from simple to complex.

Robert O'Neill for the pairing of situation with content, and for being an inspiring speaker, writer and teacher.

The late Bernie Hartley who had defined and refined a micro-skills approach to teacher-training better than anyone I've seen. He used to say, 'there's no magic to this – anyone can learn to apply the techniques.' He was wrong though, because he definitely had the magic as well.

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

I thought of a few (which I decided to keep quiet about),

then asked Karen. I was surprised at the answer, but she has been writing with me for a long time. She reckoned over - attention to minor structural detail, and flogging a dead horse (continuing to argue the point with editors rather than just getting on with something different). Then she added eternal optimism; my faith that publishers will do their job and promote effectively. It's an Achilles Heel because it's so often been proved wrong.

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

Contextualization. We spend more time choosing the context that anything else, trying to get something striking and / or original whenever we can. At this point in my life, I could sit down right now and dash you off a five page unit on used to in a morning, with long coffee breaks, while listening to music, and it would work (and not look much different from a dozen other textbook units on the same topic!). But we never work like that. The unit on used to in IN English took us about a week with both of us working full time. That's how much stuff we rejected. And we researched all the pictures ourselves.

In the last twenty years we've worked as much on video as on textbooks, and with video, finding the context and the story for the short humorous vignette takes days. Then actually writing the script at that point is relatively easy. We always act out dialogues between us.

When Grapevine was first published the blurb described us as having 'the common touch' whatever that is. I think they meant that we use all sorts of popular media for ideas, and don't make the assumption that students are would-be Radio Four listeners, desperate to listen to five or six minute monologues. A journalist friend of mine said we must be the only people he knows who buy both The Guardian AND The Daily Mail on a regular basis. Here's a tip. We rarely use authentic extracts, but if we see a news story that's interesting, we check for it in every newspaper for that day. Inevitably, the serious press will have too many long words and hard structures. The tabloid press will have far too much current slang. Nine times out of ten, the Daily Mail extract will be the most useful.

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

This crosses into question 8. It's the prevalence of the "one size fits all" mentality. I'm over six foot tall, and Karen's five foot, so we've never found a one size fits all garment that fits either of us. A few years ago, I was talking to a Director of Studies in Europe who discussed the great variety of courses her school ran; early teenagers boosting their school lessons, housewives, retirees, job seekers, business people, exam preparation, first year university students, technical courses, travel and tourism etc. I asked her which textbooks she had selected. Her answer was just one (one size fits all). They used the same series for every class because teachers found it more convenient. I asked if that one course was more suited to the more academic groups, and she said that it was. The less academic groups didn't have the English nor the confidence to complain. The more academic groups did. The tendency to "one size fits all" has got worse. It suits publishers.

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

I have quite a collection of ELT textbooks and some of the funniest moments from the past are used in the current talk that Karen and I are doing, *English As A Funny Language: A Short History of ELT Dialogue*. I won't spoil it by revealing them.

Favourite ELT book title: *The Secret Key To the Mastery of The (sic) English (seen in Greece)*. The subtitle "In only 8 hours!" improves it.

Most embarrassing thing? One of our books went out to readers. The editor thought that our two pages of illustration notes for one page of text was not necessary, so decided not to include it. How readers made any sense of page one of a beginner's book without illustration notes is beyond me. But bravely they tried to comment on four short lines of text. Then in the grammar section, the same nameless editor decided to change "possessive adjective" to "possessive pronoun" several times without telling us. When challenged, s/he said "but 'my' is a possessive pronoun." Not one reader commented on it.

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

Tempting! ELT Publishing has changed so that there's a huge gap between the UK four big publishers and the rest. Go back to when I started writing, and there were ten or twelve reasonable sized publishers. It's become harder to innovate and harder to take risks. There isn't the authors' training ground of writing for smaller publishers in the same way.

Then the way things are researched (with each publisher asking much the same group of people to pilot materials) leads to everyone reaching the same conclusions. In my experience, editors are aware of the problems of piloting, but no one knows what to do about it. In short, the people who will give an articulate pilot report are an elite, and it's near impossible to pilot to a broad enough base of teachers.

As a result, we've seen twenty years of publishers competing to clone the same successful textbook. My feeling is that the next Headway in terms of massive global success won't be a clone of Headway. But everyone still keeps trying.

Biography

Peter Viney is the co-author of the Streamline English series. Peter and Karen Viney have co-authored many series for OUP, including Grapevine, Main Street, Handshake and their latest series In English. They were pioneering ELT video authors and have written thirteen video series for OUP including A Weekend Away, A Week By The Sea, Mystery Tour, Grapevine Video, Only in America and English Channel. English Channel III - Double Identity won the IVCA Silver Award for video. They have adapted the Academy Award® winning Wallace & Gromit animations for ELT; A Grand Day Out, The Wrong Trousers and A Close Shave. Peter also wrote Survival English and Basic Survival, which are now in their third editions (Macmillan). Peter was co-series editor of the Storylines series of graded readers, and has written many ELT readers and reading development materials. He lives in Poole, Dorset.

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It is anticipated that a selection of papers from the conference will be published by the Materials Development Association in their Journal, Folio.

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