

folio



Journal of the Materials Development Association

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From the Editor

Rod Bolitho, Norwich Institute for Language Education

I have to start with an apology for the late appearance of this issue, but I hope that the treats it contains will make up for the long delay.

The lead article is by MATSDA President Brian Tomlinson and it highlights six key principles for materials writers derived from the findings of second language acquisition research. Part 1 is in this issue and Part 2 will appear in the next one later in the year. The second part of Alan Maley's *Towards an Aesthetics of ELT* looks at some of the implications of his thinking for Materials Writing under four main headings: Matter, Methods, Manner and Outcomes. Sarah Clark reports on the design and delivery of an in-house training seminar on materials adaptation for teachers of EAP, while Sue Argent and Olwyn Alexander add to the EAP sub-theme with a discussion of ways of designing materials for lower level learners. Our publisher spot in this issue is a reflection by Olly Twist of Garnet on the rapid turnover of books in the field of ELT. The issue has three welcome contributions from overseas contexts: an account by Saida Irgasheva of an experiment with student-produced materials at a specialist language university in Uzbekistan, a sample lesson with commentary in English for Tour Guides from Sasan Baleghizadeh and Javed Elyasi, based in Tehran, and an experience report on the development of literature materials from Liliana Russo in Madrid.

There is also a welcome review by Jeremy Taylor on software for producing e-books.

The featured author in this issue is Phil Ball who has been working for some years in the Basque Region of Spain, producing CLIL materials and training teachers. His views are thought-provoking and well worth a read as professionals within and beyond ELT gradually come to terms with this new and interesting area of materials development, curriculum design and classroom practice.

I'm particularly pleased that *Folio* attracts contributions from established figures in the field, but also that we are able to provide a platform for first-time writers and also overseas professionals whose 'English voices' may not have been 'heard' publicly before. MATSDA membership, and with it *Folio* readership, is not as numerous as those involved in either the association or the journal would like, so please do spread the word, pass this issue around your colleagues and encourage them to join and to contribute. We still need more writers and also more reader reactions to the articles we publish.

Rod Bolitho

Principles and Procedures of Materials Development for Language Learning (Part 1)

Brian Tomlinson, MATSDA President

This article takes the position that language learning materials should ideally be driven by learning and teaching principles rather than developed ad hoc or in imitation of best selling coursebooks. It briefly reviews the literature which contributes positively towards the principled development of ELT materials and comments on its implications for materials writing. It then presents six principles of language acquisition which the author thinks should be given a lot more attention in materials development. It outlines and justifies each principle and then derives from it materials development principles and procedures which teachers and materials writers could apply to their actual development of materials.

Introduction

In recent years there have been a number of insightful publications which have concerned themselves with how authors typically write ELT materials (for example, Prowse 1998). As Tomlinson (2010) says, this literature reveals that many experienced authors rely on their intuitions about what 'works' and make frequent use of activities from their repertoire which seem to fit with their objectives. Very few authors seem to be actually guided by learning principles or considerations of coherence and many seem to make the assumption that clear presentation and active, relevant practice are sufficient to lead to acquisition.

My position is that materials should not be random recreations from repertoire nor crafty clones of previously successful materials. Instead they should be coherent and principled applications of:

- i) theories of language acquisition and development
- ii) principles of teaching
- iii) our current knowledge of how the target language is actually used
- iv) the results of systematic observation and evaluation of materials in use.

This is the position which drives this article. In it I will focus in particular on applications of theories of language acquisition.

Review of the Literature

In this section I will briefly review some of the literature which I think contributes positively towards the principled development of ELT materials.

In Hidalgo et al (1995) there are a number of writers from South-East Asia who articulate principled approaches to materials development reflecting how they think learners learn languages. Some of them propose frameworks and many list the principles which drive their materials. Tomlinson (1998: 5-22) proposes fifteen principles for materials development which derive from second language acquisition research and experience. Of these I would focus on the following six as those which should drive ELT materials development:

The materials should:

- Expose the learners to language in authentic use
- Help learners to pay attention to features of authentic input
- Provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes
- Provide opportunities for outcome feedback
- Achieve impact in the sense that they arouse and sustain the learners' curiosity and attention
- Stimulate intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement

A number of other writers outline principled approaches to developing ELT materials in Tomlinson (1998), as do many writers in Tomlinson (2003). McGrath (2002: 152-161) reviews the literature on principled approaches, frameworks and procedures for units for

materials development, as does Tomlinson (forthcoming 2010), and Tomlinson (2008) proposes ways of applying commonly agreed theories of language acquisition to materials development.

Proposals for Principled Approaches to the Development of ELT Materials

I believe that one of the things which materials writers need to do is to develop flexible frameworks to help them produce effective materials for target learners in principled and coherent ways. This is something I always do before embarking on a materials development project. My framework develops as I progress and it helps me to write quickly and effectively. But before such frameworks are developed the writers need to decide what principles should drive their procedures.

Here are the main principles of language acquisition which I follow when developing materials, and some of the principles for materials development which I derive from them. As you read them you might like to evaluate their validity and usefulness and to think of other principles of your own.

Principle of Language Acquisition 1

A pre-requisite for language acquisition is that the learners are exposed to a rich, meaningful and comprehensible input of language in use.

In order to acquire the ability to use the language effectively the learners need a lot of experience of the language being used in a variety of different ways for a variety of purposes. They need to be able to understand enough of this input to gain positive access to it and it needs to be meaningful to them (Krashen 1985). They also need to experience particular language items and features many times in meaningful and comprehensible input in order to eventually acquire them. Each encounter helps to elaborate and deepen awareness and to facilitate the development of hypotheses needed for eventual acquisition.

Principles of Materials Development

1. Make sure that the materials contain a lot of spoken and written texts which provide extensive experience of language in use. Ideally the exposure should be to language being used in order to achieve outcomes in a variety of text types and genres in relation to topics, themes, events, locations etc likely to be meaningful to the target learners.

2. Make sure that the language the learners are exposed to is authentic in the sense that it represents how the language is typically used. If the language is inauthentic because it has been written or reduced to exemplify a particular language feature then the learners will not acquire the ability to use the language typically or effectively.

Much has been written on the issue of authenticity and some experts consider that it is useful to focus attention on a feature of a language by removing distracting difficulties and complexities from sample texts. My position is that such contrived focus might be of some value as an additional aid to help the learner to focus on salient features but that prior and subsequent exposure to those features in authentic use is essential.

3. Make sure that the language input is contextualised. Language use is determined and interpreted in relation to its context of use. De-contextualised examples do not contain enough information about the user, the addressee(s), the relationships between the interactants, the setting, the intentions or the outcomes for them to be of value to the language learner. I can, for example, think of at least three different interpretations of, "Give him the keys. Let him drive it." But I do not know what it really means nor why the speaker has used the imperative until I know who is saying it, who they are saying it to, what the relationship between them is, where they are, what has happened before and what the objectives of the conversation are. Only extended samples of language in contextualised use can provide learners with the 'information' they need to develop awareness of how the target language is actually used.

4. Make sure that the learners are exposed to sufficient samples of language in authentic use to provide natural re-cycling of language items and features which might be useful for the learners to acquire.

Examples of Materials

I use what I call task-free activities to help me to apply Principle of Language Acquisition 1. This involves me at the beginning of every lesson reading a poem or story, or telling a joke or anecdote. There are no questions or tasks after the listening, just written copies of the text for those students who were engaged by it to take home, read and file away. The students are encouraged to ask me questions about the texts at any time and to return to read the texts they have collected many times. I also use extensive reading, extensive listening and extensive viewing to help to apply this principle and I use a text-driven approach to developing units of material in which an extensive text drives the skills and language activities of each unit.

Principle of Language Acquisition 2

In order for the learners to maximise their exposure to language in use they need to be engaged both affectively and cognitively in the language experience.

If the learners do not think and feel whilst experiencing the language they are unlikely to acquire any elements of it (Arnold 1999). Thinking whilst experiencing language in use helps to achieve the deep processing required for effective and durable learning and it helps learners to transfer high level skills such as predicting, connecting, interpreting and evaluating to second language use. If the learners do not feel any emotion whilst exposed to language in use they are unlikely to acquire anything from their experience. Feeling enjoyment, pleasure and happiness, feeling empathy, being amused, being excited and being stimulated are most likely to influence acquisition positively but feeling annoyance, anger, fear, opposition and sadness is more useful than feeling nothing at all. Ideally though the learner should be experiencing positive affect in the sense of being confident, motivated and willingly engaged even when experiencing 'negative' emotions. There is a substantial literature on the value of affective and cognitive engagement whilst engaged in responding to language in use, with much of it focusing on research into the role of emotion in language learning and use, or reporting research on cognitive engagement during language lessons.

Principles of Materials Development

1. Prioritise the potential for engagement by, for example, basing a unit on a text or a task which is likely to achieve affective and cognitive engagement rather than on a teaching point selected from a syllabus.
2. Make use of activities which get the learners to think about what they are reading or listening to and to respond to it personally.
3. Make use of activities which get learners to think and feel before during and after using the target language for communication.

Examples of Materials

I use a text-driven approach in which the starting point for developing each unit is a potentially engaging spoken or written text. I first of all devise readiness activities which help the learners to activate their minds prior to experiencing the text, I give the learners an holistic focus to think about when

experiencing the text and I invite them to articulate their personal responses to the text before going on to use it to stimulate their own language production. After producing their own text the learners often go back to investigate a feature of language use in the original text and revise their own text in relation to their discoveries.

Principle of Language Acquisition 3

Language learners who achieve positive affect are much more likely to achieve communicative competence than those who do not

Language learners need to be positive about the target language, about their learning environment, about their teachers, about their fellow learners and about their learning materials (Arnold 1999). They also need to achieve positive self-esteem and to feel that they are achieving something worthwhile. Above all they need to be emotionally involved in the learning process and to respond by laughing, getting angry, feeling sympathy, feeling happy, feeling sad etc. Positive emotions seem to be the most useful in relation to language acquisition but it is much better to feel angry than to feel nothing at all.

Principles of Materials Development

1. Make sure the texts and tasks are as interesting, relevant and enjoyable as possible so as to exert a positive influence on the learners' attitudes to the language and to the process of learning it.
2. Set achievable challenges which help to raise the learners' self-esteem when success is accomplished.
3. Stimulate emotive responses through the use of music, song, literature, art etc, through making use of controversial and provocative texts, through personalisation and through inviting learners to articulate their feelings about a text before asking them to analyse it.

Examples of Material

I offer the students choices of texts and of tasks and I consult the students about the topics they would like to read about and discuss. This is what we did on a national materials development project in Namibia and we then respected the students' requests for texts on such provocative topics as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and marital abuse.

(This paper is an adaptation of part of Tomlinson,

B. (2010) *Principles and procedures of materials development*. In N. Harwood (ed.) *Materials in ELT: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)

If you would like a fuller list of references relating to the themes of this article contact me at brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com

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Towards an Aesthetics of ELT (Part 2)

Alan Maley, Freelance, UK

How might it be done?

In this second part of the article, I shall explore some possible ways of implementing an aesthetically-oriented approach to teaching.

Many years ago, Colin Mortimer wrote this in an undated publication of CIEFL, Hyderabad, India:

It is sometimes salutary for those of us who write...materials for language learning purposes to try to regard the restrictions under which we work ... rather in the way that a poet would regard the narrow confines of sonnet form, or the composer the rigid constraints of fugue form – that is, more as a stimulus and challenge to creative endeavour than as a justification for trite work.

He went on,

...there are lessons that poets, dramatists and novelists can teach us about how to put words together which...will not only enhance the appeal of our materials , but will also contribute greatly to their learnability...

This is perhaps a fitting introduction to the ‘how’ of an aesthetic approach. Although his remarks were directed to materials writing only, the direction of his thoughts is clear.

I want to suggest that there are four main aspects of such an aesthetic approach. These would be its possible content (the Matter), the procedures it might deploy (the Methods), the psychological feel and atmosphere of how it is applied (the Manner), and the possible results (Outcomes).

The Matter:

Here I am referring to the inputs to the learning process. In an aesthetic approach, I would anticipate that there would be a far bigger proportion of the following types of artistic input:

- Visual images in the form of genuine art.

These might include classical ‘high’ art, as well as contemporary more exploratory forms, and images in general, including advertising images. An early attempt to draw on visual resources in an

imaginative way can be found in *The Mind’s Eye* (Maley and Duff 1980) More recently, these have been explored in greater range and depth in Jamie Keddie’s book *Images* (Keddie 2009). There are also useful collections of paintings paired with poems, which offer highly suggestive types of input. (Abse 1986, Benton 1990)

- Music of all kinds, not simply the use of pop songs.

Music can serve as an indirect as well as a direct stimulus to learning. Indeed it is a central component of innovative approaches such as *Suggestopedia*. The use of music as a way of establishing mental preparedness for learning, and for general well-being is well-attested. (Blair 1975, Rose 1985, Gardner 1990) The importance of music as a fundamental rhythmic form allied to language has also, of course, been greatly promoted through the work of Carolyn Graham (2007). Ben Russell (2009: 209-10) has also worked extensively on techniques for harnessing music to the learning of the language. This has included using musical extracts to stimulate the making of a connected story over the course of a term’s work.

- A wide range of non-referential, imaginative texts.

Such texts, typically with a high proportion of figurative language, would require personal, representational interpretation. This would be literature in its broadest sense, including stories both for telling and for reading. The seminal work of Andrew Wright is noteworthy in this context, (Wright 2008, Wright and Hill 2009) Reading materials would range from authentic graded readers to classics and everything in between. And poetry, including the exploration of the poetic in everyday language, would be a regular feature from the earliest stages.

There is now plenty of material for teachers to draw upon, including material for the writing of creative texts as well as for their consumption. (Maley and Duff 2007, Maley and Mukundan 2010 forthcoming, Spiro 2004, 2006). The power of creative writing to enhance self-esteem and motivation is now well-recognized and would find an important place in ‘aesthetically’ oriented materials.

Theatre and drama, in all its aspects: voice (Maley 2000), movement, scenery, etc. would play an important role. Drama is a uniquely powerful way of integrating all aspects of language (including non-verbal language) and of taking account of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1985) and sensory learning preferences. (Maley and Duff 2005, Wilson 2009)

- Moving images in the form of film, DVD and video.

These too would form an important part of the input. The work of Barry Tomalin has shown how this might be done. (Stempleski and Tomalin, 2001). The abundance of material available on the Internet makes access relatively easy even in less well-resourced contexts. Access to such resources can also be had outside the classroom, thus facilitating independent, autonomous exposure and learning.

- Student-made inputs.

These would form an integral part of the input: imaginative texts created by one group of students for use with another, in the form of artwork and storybooks, photographs taken in the community, student videos, websites of poems, haibun, jokes etc., blogs, both personal and group-oriented. Such materials have the advantage of relating more closely to the world of the students than do many published materials.

The imaginative use of living authors working with schools has been implemented in Portugal and beyond through the work of Fitch O'Connell and the British Council's BritLit project. (<http://www.teachingenglish.org/try/britlit>) The Children's Own Stories published by Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang are another excellent example of what can be done in publishing children's own work for use by their peers.

What emerges from this consideration of the inputs to learning in an aesthetic approach is that they are relatively independent of published materials in the accepted sense. Although it is possible to conceive of published course materials incorporating elements of art, music, literature, including drama, the moving image and student-made materials, this would require a major shift in publishers' perceptions of what materials should look like, and a move away from the cloning model currently deployed by many if not most major publishers. In the immediate term, it is far more likely that teachers would experiment with incorporating such inputs into their work with published course materials by addition, replacement or extension.

The Methods:

Here I am not referring to the concept of 'method' as a rigid set of procedures to be rigorously applied but rather to generic types of activity.

- Project work.

The engagement of students in projects, however modest, would be a major form of activity. (Fried-Booth, 2005, Burwood, Dunmore and Phillips, 1999). Importantly, projects place much of the responsibility for the process in the hands of the learners, and encourage or require them to work independently – and outside the classroom for much of the time.

- Ensemble work.

Here I am referring to the shared commitment to a production of some kind – from the 'orchestration' of a poem or text by small groups (as in Reader's Theatre) (Maley 1999), to rehearsed sketches, performed stories and even full-length plays. The degree of personal and linguistic investment by students in such work is widely attested, as are the benefits of the formation of a learning community, documented in great detail in Lutzker's recent volume (2007).

- Autonomous engagement.

Personal reflection, research, writing and reading (including massive quantities of Extensive Reading) would be an essential methodological tool. (Krashen, 2004, Day and Bamford 1998) The keeping of journals both for personal reflection and the recording of language has been shown to promote independent learning and a deeper engagement with the learning process. (Maley 2009) We know that most useful learning takes place outside the classroom, not in, so finding ways to enable learners to engage in this way becomes an essential ingredient. This kind of work would also be capitalizing on notions of 'deep processing'. (Craik and Lockhart. 1972)

- Multi-dimensional activities.

Activities involving not just language skills and thinking but also movement, physical engagement through the eyes, the nose, the taste buds, hearing and touch, and tapping into memory, visualization and dreams would form an important component. (Tomlinson 1998 : 265–278) Such activities, which draw on the visual, auditory and tactile channels, are a natural concomitant to the kinds of material inputs discussed in the previous section (The Matter)

- **Problem-solving.**

The aim would be to make much of the learning discovery-centred rather than telling-centred. This also links with the 'deep processing' idea mentioned above. (Fisher 2001, Unrau 2008) Such work could be focused on grammar (using concordance data, etc.), on vocabulary extension work (through the use of thesauruses, dictionaries of collocations, and concordances) and the use of computational programmes to discover colligational patterns (Hoey 2005), and on more general research activities such as web and library searches.

- **Playfulness.**

Activities would always be designed with a playful element, not simply because that makes them more enjoyable but also because play is a major factor in learning anything. (Carter 2004, Cook 2000, Crystal 1998, Nachmanovitch 1990) Language play, in the form of traditional L1 word games, the playful stretching of language rules in creative writing activities, and exposure to humour and jokes (Medgyes 2002) would all be key components of this aspect of the approach. But playfulness is a central characteristic of literary texts, of various public genres - such as advertisements, shop signs, newspaper headlines and book titles -, of drama activity, and of visual and musical expression, so it chimes perfectly with the kinds of input discussed above (The Matter)

The Manner

In describing below what I feel to be essential qualities of the way in which teachers demonstrate their artistry, I am aware of the dangers of seemingly naïve and 'woolly' self-indulgence. Yet, as those of us know who have the experience of entering other teachers' classrooms, the tone or atmosphere of the class is immediately palpable. There is a 'something in the air', even - or perhaps especially - if it is silence, which tells us about the quality of what is going on. For me, it is a central task for the teacher to create that enabling atmosphere, without which no enduring learning takes place.

- **Atmosphere and Flow.**

I referred earlier to Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) work on 'flow'. Flow experiences are characterized by a kind of timeless quality - where the participants are so absorbed in the activity of the moment that they lose all sense of the passage of time, of themselves, of anything outside it. They are lost in the action, just as we can become lost in a good book. In an aesthetic view of learning, it is the teacher's prime task to set up an atmosphere which facilitates flow. Clearly, just how this is done will

vary greatly from teacher to teacher and from class to class. (See Hadfield 1992, for a thoughtful and stimulating set of suggestions). The teacher's voice, body language and attitude will be one of the keys. Important too will be the spatial organization of the teaching / learning arena, and the way it is decorated and furnished. Background music may also contribute something to the establishment of a facilitative learning group. The evolution of class routines and rituals, for example always starting with a very short story or poem (Tomlinson 2010); or encouraging students to forge a network of class narratives unique to the group - a storied class (Wajnryb 2003)- can also be powerful stimuli for the growth of a learning community.

- **Openness, experiment and risk.**

Also key to the manner is the establishment of an attitude of openness: to the language, to the learning process itself, to others in the group and to oneself. (See below: The Outcomes) In such a psychological environment, there is encouragement of experimentation and risk-taking, in the confidence that there will be mutual support, whatever the outcome. Lutzker has insightfully compared the state of unknowingness of the clown with that of the teacher in this kind of classroom:

It is the clown's complete lack of knowledge of what will happen, coupled with his complete openness and receptivity to what is occurring on stage, which exemplifies that state of attentiveness upon which creative and fluid response in a classroom are also based. Lutzker. 2007:184.

This is similar to the state described by Underhill (2008),

Working with what comes requires continually learning my way into each present moment as it cascades in.

But it is important that learners too are acculturated to a context which encourages and supports risk-taking with good-humoured acceptance (though not indulgence) and the willingness to 'have a go'.

- **Choice.**

The opportunity to make choices also contributes to the overall quality of the learning. This is not to say that learners do just what they like, when they like. Choice implies responsibility and discipline but this is best established voluntarily, from within, rather than imposed from without. Students might decide on a particular project, and on how to go about it, on the understanding that the outcomes and consequences are their responsibility. The important thing is to offer choice whenever it is possible to do so: choice of texts, of activity-type and level, of

evaluation. Offering choice reinforces the learners' belief that they are actively involved in their own learning process.

- **Mutual trust and support.**

Errors or perceived lack of success are not tarred with the brush of blame. The manner in which the class operates ensures that people support each other, recognising that everyone needs other people at some time. The ecology of the class group, including the teacher is akin to a spider's web: touch it at any point and the whole structure vibrates. It is as important for teachers as well as learners to feel confident that they will be forgiven for occasional lapses, for the bad patches that we are all prone to at one time or another.

The Outcomes

It may be useful here to re-visit Widdowson's distinction between Objectives and Aims in relation to possible outcomes. (Widdowson 1993:6-7). 'By objectives I mean the pedagogic intentions of a particular course of study to be achieved within the period of that course and in principle measurable by some assessment device at the end of the course. By aims I mean the purposes to which learning will be put after the end of the course.' Objectives, then will be short-term, definable and measurable. Aims, by contrast, will be rather general and less easy to define, longer-term, and more difficult to measure. Given that the critique in Part 1 of this article focussed on objectives-centred teaching, it will come as no surprise that the kinds of materials and procedures I am recommending here will have outcomes which go beyond narrow objectives and which relate to more educational and psycho-social outcomes.

I have divided Outcomes into four main types. The first two - Material Outcomes and Pedagogical Outcomes - relate to Objectives. (Maley 2003).

Typically, Material outcomes refer to exercises, guided writing, essays and task products. In an aesthetic approach, I would suggest that these could be extended to include visual displays (posters, wall newspapers, etc.), individual and group websites, publishing of student creative writing, student journals and portfolios, student-made grammar and vocabulary reference materials, oral performances (orchestrated choral readings, reader's theatre, plays and skits, simulated chat shows, musical performances, etc.)

Pedagogical outcomes are normally framed in terms of 'objective' evidence of learning, such as test / examination results, marks for continuous assessment, the ability to tackle longer and more demanding reading texts, etc. Again, I would suggest that these outcomes could be extended to include: informal evidence of gains

in oral fluency (through, for example, conferencing), evidence of increased extensive reading fluency, the ability of students to manage their own learning, evidence of greater reflection on and awareness of their own learning process (for example, through journals), indications of greater meta-competence (the ability to talk about language and learning), and the ability to give and receive criticism and feedback. Such pedagogical outcomes are more difficult to evaluate, for sure, but all the more valuable for all that.

The second two types of outcomes relate to Aims. They by their nature more concerned with the overall education and personal development of the students, rather than the achievement of more immediate, narrowly-defined pedagogical objectives.

Educational outcomes would include, for example, increasing learners' awareness of other people and of cultural difference, encouraging critical thinking and questioning, promoting creative approaches to problem-solving and developing greater learner independence.

Psycho-social outcomes would focus on the degree of development of increased self-esteem (and consequent enhanced motivation), self-awareness, confidence, the ability to cooperate with others without loss of individuality, the building of group solidarity (Hadfield 1992), growth of responsibility, the building of positive attitudes toward learning and a critical appreciation of the place of the target language within the global community of languages.

Both educational and psycho-social outcomes relate to qualities that learners will find valuable long after the specific course of study is over. Clearly, they are less easy to assess in a cut and dried, qualitative manner. That is a potential weakness. However, an awareness of their importance can permeate the learning on a continuous basis, and can be built in to classroom activities in a formative manner, rather than made the subject of a final summative evaluation. That is their very real strength.

Concluding remarks

I am aware that what I am proposing here may sound fanciful and unworkable in a world governed by measurement, graded objectives and the like. However, I persist in the belief, based on over 45 years of experience, that it is the quality of the learning experience that ultimately counts, not the technicality. And that a texture of learning permeated by the art of its inputs and methods and by the artistry of its teachers is best calculated to offer that quality. With McRae, I contend that, 'In future years, the absence of imaginative content in language teaching will be considered to have marked a primitive stage of the discipline.' (McRae 1991: vii)

It can often seem futile to criticise the 'status quo' in the way I have been doing in this paper. After all, this is the way things are. What can we do about it? You cannot swim against the tide... I believe however that it is possible to do something to remedy the sad state of affairs in education which I have been critiquing. To accept things as they are, in the belief that they are immutable, should not be an option, and there are countless examples of cases where the apparently unchangeable has changed or been changed. The fall of the Berlin Wall is not a bad example! The success of Mahatma Gandhi in ending British rule in India is another. The emancipation of women (still unfinished) is another. The release of Nelson Mandela yet another. It is possible to raise awareness of the insane direction education (and society at large) is taking. And it is possible, in however small a way, to practice an aesthetic approach to what we do. We are not powerless. We can effect change.

All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men (sic) to do nothing. (Edmund Burke)

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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.

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Tell all and sundry please.

Rob

Making EAP accessible for lower level learners¹

Olwyn Alexander and Sue Argent, UK

Introduction

Traditionally, students with a low level of English language proficiency have been denied the opportunity to learn English for Academic Purposes (EAP). A major challenge in teaching EAP to lower level students is to provide them with accessible material, which not only accurately reflects the target academic contexts in which students intend to function, but which can also be a rich resource for learning. Published EAP course books for low level learners do not currently meet this challenge. This article will examine how they fail and will describe, with examples, some of the approaches we used in writing the material for our current book for low level learners (*Access EAP: Foundation level*. Garnet Publishing, 2010).

The teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has become an established aim for a wide range of providers who are preparing international students for English-medium higher education. These students are typically adult (at least 16 years of age and often mature students). They may already be reasonably successful in their academic or professional careers. However, these students have traditionally been expected to reach a minimum level of competence in the language before being allowed onto EAP courses. This level is not clearly defined but tends to be set around IELTS 4 / 4.5 or B1 on the *Common European Framework for Reference*. Such students are usually required to study general English, even though the content and approach of such classes does not match their purpose for learning English: to study at an English medium institution.

Two influential figures in applied linguistics (Widdowson, 2009; Cook, 2009) have recently questioned some taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning approaches to language teaching for low level learners, especially those found in published course books. Some of these assumptions date from as far back as the Reform Movement of the late nineteenth century, which emphasised the importance of speaking for language learning. Analogies were drawn with language learning in pre-literate societies, with child language acquisition and with natural second language acquisition, i.e. in the absence of formal teaching (Cook, 2009: 147). These led to a belief that students in a classroom also learn best through the spoken language with writing used mainly

to reinforce the structures being taught. However, as Widdowson (2009:197) points out, there is no theory or empirical research to support this view. Further assumptions, based on analogies with first language (L1) and natural language acquisition were that only the target language should be spoken in the classroom and explicit grammar instruction should be avoided (Cook, 2009: 149). Students just needed to let language wash over them to acquire it.

As a consequence of these assumptions, some writers of materials for beginners consider that learners at this level need to be *infantilised*, i.e. to be reduced to the dependent state of little children in order to succeed (Cook, 2003). This teaching approach leads to a high degree of teacher dependence. However, learning a second language (L2) is not the same as acquiring a first language: L2 learners are typically older and hence more cognitively, socially and emotionally mature; they have acquired their L1 so they are already communicatively competent; and they are literate or are developing literacy. The ability to write and to use a second language transforms the structure of the brain and the way it is used to think (Luria, 1976; Petersen et al., 2000, cited in Cook, 2009: 150). Second language acquisition research has shown that bilingual speakers do not hold their languages in separate compartments but intimately connected in their minds. Even learners with a low level of L2 proficiency are developing bilinguals with the ability to code switch and to make comparisons between their languages. Research into task-based learning also suggests that L2 learners benefit from an explicit focus on form once they have completed the communicative aspects of a task.

A further taken for granted assumption concerns the type of syllabus that is appropriate in general English classes for low level learners. Typically, materials for this level continue to be based on a structural syllabus in which language structures are selected and graded according to their linguistic complexity (Breen, 1987; Graves, 2008). The learner is assumed to have responsibility for synthesising the language components into a usable system. Although the communicative notional/functional syllabus was introduced in the 1970s, low level learners were assumed to need a 'proportional syllabus' (Yalden, 1983, cited in Johnson, 2009: 320) in which a communicative orientation did not replace the structural one until a higher level. Johnson (2009: 330)

1. The ideas in this paper were originally presented at the University of St Andrews 2nd ELT Workshop: *The Challenge of Teaching EAP to Lower Level Students*. Feb. 20th 2010.

points out that a syllabus has to be multidimensional, including functions, topics, and structures etc., but there will be one particular parameter which determines the organisation around which the others will cluster. For lower level general English courses, this still tends to be structures, mainly because the specific communicative contexts in which the learners will have to operate are not easy to specify.

Finally, both Widdowson and Cook argue against the assumption that the native speaker should be the model of target performance or the main source of examples of language. L2 learners cannot attain native speaker competence by definition because they will never be monolingual speakers of their L2. Cook (2009: 155) suggests that they should be viewed as L2 users, developing multi-competence, rather than as poor imitators of native speakers. He calls for course books for this level to move away from a 'sanitized world of clean-living teenagers' (Cook, 2003: 278) to a more authentic focus on L2 users functioning in adult roles and interacting with other L2 users. Widdowson (2009: 208) argues that real *samples* of language use, such as those found in corpus-based dictionaries, may not be useful or relevant for learners unless they are also given information about how typical they are as *examples* of language use. He suggests that authentic language has to be made real and pedagogically useful for learners through intervention from the teacher or materials writer.

Low level general English courses which continue to prioritise speaking over writing, which infantilise learners and do not take advantage of their multi-competence, will fail to meet the needs of students preparing for university study. Although a number of EAP course books are beginning to become available for low-level learners, they have not moved away from the syllabus and approach of general English course books. They largely fail to deal with academic concepts or demonstrate the relevance to university studies of the tasks and activities they expect learners to engage in. The underlying syllabus still tends to be structural but the organisation of these books is driven by topics, such as technology; cities of the world; brain power; architecture; landscapes, energy, which are linked to academic disciplines in only a superficial way. The attempt to include a range of subjects results in a random collection of texts that does not mirror a university context, where texts and activities are related and sequenced in terms of their content. This random selection leads to incoherence in the development of understanding and linguistic repertoires. Texts are picked up briefly and then dropped, presumably for fear of boring students, and rarely exploited to the full for language. These books largely fail to identify and prioritize the key academic language that students need.

Furthermore, newspaper and magazine articles are usually chosen as texts but these are not the main

genres that students have to read at university. The audience and purpose of journalistic texts are very different from academic texts so the layout – single sentence paragraphs – and organization are inappropriate and the language is often difficult and culturally loaded. As with a general English approach, there is a need to find the human interest angle for every subject, which results in an unnecessary focus on people and their responses to the topic. Academic genres focus on concepts and the relationships between them, whereas journalistic treatments tend to ignore or gloss over academic concepts because the reader is not expected to be interested in them.

The syllabus, genres and texts, teaching approach, learning focus, lack of contextualization and weak linguistic analysis are all problematic in these early attempts to bring EAP to learners at lower levels of English proficiency. The solution is to allow relevance to drive the materials. The EAP context is well-researched and a syllabus can be based on notions, functions and genres that are relevant in this context (Feez, 1998). There is a whole range of exploitable genres besides textbooks, journal articles, lectures and presentations, e.g. guidance notes, application forms, university web pages emails to lecturers, one-to-one tutorials. The language skills can be integrated in purposeful ways through tasks which are authentic for university study. These tasks can include living and making friends at university as well as learning how to study there. The linguistic complexity of authentic texts has to be adapted to the level of understanding of the learners but the key features of a genre can be preserved. Learners can use these texts to build a basic repertoire of language for functions and genres which they can gradually expand. The materials should demonstrate that the language students are learning is high frequency and transferable to their academic disciplines. Intuitions about academic language can be checked using an online concordancer with an academic corpus such as the BNC (Davies) and a corpus based grammar such as Biber et al. (1999). L2 learners should be treated as multi-competent adults and their ability to analyze language should be exploited through explicit grammar instruction, either in their first or second language. Models of competent L2 users should be at least as common as those of native speakers in materials.

An example of a text adapted for EAP students with a low level of proficiency is outlined below. It forms part of a unit in a new course book, *Access EAP: Foundations*. The text is a simulated introduction to an academic article on computer-based learning, a topic easily accessible and relevant to a low level learner. The genre features of this type of text were established by inventing an academic context – a web-based journal.

Language Teacher Education and Computers,
volume 25 number 4 (2003).

A refereed electronic-journal for language educators.

<http://scholar.lib.gateway.edu/ejournals/TEC/v25n4/Liu.html>

The genre conventions were maintained by using the Create-A-Research-Space metaphor for the organisation of article introductions (Swales and Feak, 2004:244) and by including references to previous studies in the text.

The text itself was adapted using 'elaborative modification' (Long and Ross, 1993: 30) with 'fewer words and clauses per utterance, preference for canonical word order, retention of usually deleted optional constituents, overt marking of grammatical relations... more overt marking of semantic relations.' This was achieved by reducing the complexity of noun phrases but keeping the nominalised style; adding in simple reformulation sentences to clarify the complex nominalised sentences or provide orientation to the topic; expanding reduced relative clauses to full relative clauses, simplifying lexis where appropriate; adding in new material in a similar style to fit the tasks. For example, a highly nominalised sentence:

'Recent literature related to effectiveness of and satisfaction with on-line instruction focused on reasons to implement on-line instruction as a replacement for traditional face-to-face instruction and on comparing student achievement and attitudes toward this approach to delivery.'

was changed to two sentences, keeping some nominalisation and adding references:

'Recent studies (Forbes, 1998; Torres-Correa, 1999) have tried to evaluate the effectiveness of computer-based teaching and to assess student satisfaction with online courses.'

'They compare student achievement and student attitudes toward computer-based and classroom teaching.'

The relevance of this text was made explicit by exploring how it might be used as a source of ideas for an academic essay. It was exploited through a variety of tasks, ensuring that students really understood its academic features and could enjoy a sense of mastery over it.

There are high stakes for any student preparing to study through the medium of English in terms of both time and cost. It is important that they receive a preparation course which targets their needs as effectively as possible. Taken-for-granted assumptions about the type of course appropriate for EAP learners at low proficiency levels should be challenged so that the knowledge and ability of multi-competent L2 learners can be harnessed to make their learning more efficient and more motivating.

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Student-Produced Materials

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For the last ten years there has been a gap between the pressure from the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education to implement the Communicative Approach in English teaching in classrooms in Uzbekistan and the coursebooks that have out-of-date structure, style and content. This article outlines a procedure which provided an interesting senior student project and, at the same time, contributed to the creation of more appropriate teaching and learning materials.

Introduction

One of the successes in reforming EFL teaching in Uzbekistan has been achieved by developing a new institution for English language teacher training at the Uzbek State World Languages University (UWL): the Institute for English Language Teacher Education (IELTE). Ten local teachers in cooperation with foreign specialists developed a new curriculum that aimed to provide a strong foundation for teaching English. This new curriculum involved totally new courses like Integrated Skills, A Course in Language Teaching, ESP Methodology, Sociolinguistics, Testing and Language Assessment, etc., which were not taught in any English philology faculties/universities of the country. Even though the project attracted supplies of original course books from publishers like Oxford, Heinle & Heinle, and Thomson, there was still a great need for additional resources and ready-to-use materials.

How it started

In 2005, when the IELTE program had its first senior students, as a solution to the difficult situation with materials it was decided to change the structure and style of Qualification Papers into Senior Projects. After several staff meetings with two UCLA (University of California in Los Angeles) specialists, it was agreed that this project would help not only to fulfill somehow the need for practical materials to use in the classroom but also give an opportunity for the students to put into practice the knowledge gained in A Course in Language Teaching (Methodology), Teaching Practicum and Materials Design classes. With this in mind our staff started the project.

Stage 1 (October)

This first stage of the work was the most difficult. We

needed to work out carefully how to organise students' work so that they would not be discouraged at the very beginning of their experience of adapting and designing materials.

The teachers of the major (practical) courses met together to discuss how to organize the work and the topics from the course syllabi that lacked good supporting materials. By the end of the week, a list of 40-45 topics was prepared and presented to the students to choose from. After some research the students chose a topic and began to work with the assigned supervisors.

Stage 2 (October-March)

During this period of time the students were involved in gathering material, looking for sources, and working on their drafts. As a help they were provided with an IELTE students' and teachers' library and 2 hours of weekly extra consultations which actually turned out to be more like training sessions.

The papers were required to be 50-60 pages long, including Introduction, Glossary, and Bibliography and had to be in hard and electronic versions. The organisation of the paper was divided into three main parts:

1. Theoretical introduction to the topic
2. Students' book (includes 2-3 units with readings, appropriate skill-based and language-based tasks, comprehension and analytical questions on the texts and tests for the whole unit)
3. Teacher's book (includes tips how to use student's book, what each activity aims to do, how to adapt it, answer keys to the tasks and tests)

Stage 3 (April-May)

By the end of March the students began to submit the last drafts of their projects. Supervisors reviewed them in pairs and gave them back for final revision. At the end of May, the students started their presentations ('defence') of the papers. All the presentations (69 in total) were scheduled into 4 days, grouped by topic.

Day 1 ELT methodology; Teaching Applied Linguistics

Day 2 Teaching UK and USA Literature; Teaching the History of UK and USA

Day 3 Teaching Skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking); Teaching Integrated Skills

Day 4 Teaching Grammar; Teaching Vocabulary

The works were evaluated according to the following marking scheme which summarised all organisation of the work.

Punctuality	Paper	Presentation	Total
<i>(submitting drafts on time, attending consultations and meetings with a supervisor)</i>	<i>(written paper with an electronic version)</i>	<i>(Oral defence)</i>	
20%	60%	20%	100%

Evaluating the results of the project

Of course, not all the projects were perfect in terms of content and/or design. Some lacked balance in tasks and skills. Moreover, by giving a choice to students, we faced problems with the repetition of topics and a higher number of projects for courses like Vocabulary and Literature. However, the teachers of the different courses were able to find very good practical materials for use in their classrooms. In some projects and tasks the critical and creative skills used by the students were outstanding. Even though the main goal was to overcome the problem with materials, and also to help new IELTS PRESET program students acquire materials development skills, there were some more unexpected outcomes both for students and their supervisors (teachers). This project did develop the students' writing skills, research skills, and creative and critical thinking skills as well as improving their English proficiency as all the projects were written exclusively in English. At the same time it also helped supervisors develop their skills in adapting and selecting materials and provided them with a number of interesting supplementary materials.

Future Steps

Now, when we as teachers use one or other of the practical ideas, activities, tests etc., from the students' projects, we think that more teachers from other English departments could benefit from these materials as well. For this reason this year we are working on

selecting the best students' projects or units from their projects and putting them together as a collection of teaching materials to be shared with teachers in other departments. An example of a student-produced unit of material is included here as an appendix.

We hope they might also serve as supplementary sources to be used in different formats (e.g. as OHP slides) or to be adapted to new lessons and teaching contexts, and as starting points for the development of new coursebooks in the future.

Appendix: Student-Produced Material

Topic: Appearance

Unit 2: Clothes

Students' Book

Vocabulary

Brainstorming

Write as many words connected with clothes as you can.



Do you know words denoting men's and ladies' clothes or clothes that are always used in plural? Look at the words below and fill in the table. See *Table 1 overleaf*.

Speaking

Find someone who...

Which of the items from the table above do you like to wear? Fill in the gap below with names of some of those clothes. Walk around the class and interview other groupmates. You will meet the words from vocabulary activity above.

has the same color of as you;

has the same number of as you;

likes to wear as you;

has the same tastes in clothes as you.

Name of clothes	CATEGORIES				
	Worn by men	Worn by women	Worn by men & women	Always singular	Always plural
belt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
mittens					
pants					
blouse					
costume					
sneakers					
slippers					
briefs					
cape					
nightgown					
dress					
boots					
pyjamas					
cardigan					
swimming trunks					

Table 1

Discuss...

Read these comments of different people. Which of these comments is close to your tastes in clothes? What do you think about these people’s job, gender and age.

“I like to create a different look, so I try to spend a lot of time shopping in clothing stores”

“I like to wear casual clothes like jeans, T-shirts. I feel more confident in such clothes.”

“I hate spending time choosing clothes. I just put on anything I can find.”

“I prefer not to draw attention to myself so I wear pretty conventional clothes.”

Share your own opinions about the following questions with your partner.

1. Do you wear clothes that tell something about you?
2. Can you identify some facts about a person by looking at their clothes?

3. Do you follow latest fashions or do you avoid them? Explain why.
4. Do you think people should be allowed to wear what they like?
5. How do you feel about grown-up people who follow teenage fashion? Is it good/bad?
6. Would you wear something uncomfortable just because it is fashionable? Why/Why not?
7. Can the way you dress affect your mood? If yes, how?
8. Are your tastes in clothes expensive/cheap? How do you choose what to buy?
9. What do you think is a reasonable amount of money to spend on: suit (dress) or shoes

Listening

Can you name the traditional clothes of the following countries?

- Japan _____
- Korea _____
- India _____
- Russian _____
- Mexico _____
- Saudi Arabia _____

Fill in the gaps while listening to the teacher's reading.

Russian Sarafan

The Russian sarafan is an a-line (1) _____ dress, worn over a rubakha, or shirt. While it is not definitively (2) _____ whether or not it is period, some research opines that it is (3) _____ from the feryaz, an over garment with long, vestigial (4) _____ and slits to put the arms through. It is theorized that the sleeves eventually went away and the resulting sleeveless (5) _____ became the sarafan.

Materials that can be used for this garment are linen, brocade, or wool. You can use (6) _____, but it is a little flimsy and does not give the (7) _____, static silhouette so prized by period Russians.

Reading

Guess...

- The Scottish traditional skirt is called:

- The Mexican traditional hat is called:

- The Indian traditional dress is called:

- The Russian traditional dress is called:

- The Japanese traditional dress is called:

- The Arab square head cloth is called:

Uzbek The Khan Atlas

Answer the following questions.

Do you know what the "The Khan Atlas" is?

Why do you think it is called this way?

Reading 1

There is a legend about the appearance of the The Khan Atlas. Read the beginning of the legend and try to guess the end. Share your guesses in groups. Then listen to your teacher read the end of the legend. Are your guesses close to the original version?

"Khan Atlas", when translated from Uzbek, means "King satin" ("khan"-king, "atlas"-a type of satin). Long ago one of the rulers of Margilan who had four wives decided to marry for the fifth time. He fell in love with a young beautiful daughter of an artist. The artist got upset with the khan's intention and asked him to change his mind. The khan promised to give up only in case the artist would produce something more beautiful than his daughter till the next morning. All the night the artist was in despair. He spent this time without food, dreamless, not saying a single word..."

Reading 2

Here is a text that introduces what The Khan Atlas is and how it is manufactured.

The multi-coloured silk cloth known as The Khan Atlas or "king of the satins" is unique to Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan. It is created from a resist-dyeing and weaving technique (sometimes called ikat) involving many steps. Traditionally, women raised silkworms in their homes, feeding them mulberry leaves. The women also performed the delicate and tedious work of unwinding the silk cocoons. Once the thread was prepared for weaving, it would be taken to dyers who specialized in different colours. And since each dyer had to be paid, the more colours used, the more valuable the final product became. The patterns woven into the silk were extremely varied, as were the colour combinations: saffron and burgundy; pale pink, yellow and blue; magenta, teal, and purple.

Today, synthetic dyes are used and the weaving is done by machines in factories, although in Fergana Valley area it is still

possible to find limited quantities of hand-woven silk. However, the colors and designs used in modern *The Khan Atlas* are primitive compared to the sophisticated pallets and patterns of the past.

Comprehension check: Answer the following questions.

- What technique is used for creating the cloth?
- What are 2 of women's work in preparing *The Khan Atlas*?
- What differences can you find in producing *The Khan Atlas* today and in the past?

Which sentences have the same meaning as the sentences from the reading?

1. *The Khan Atlas is unique to Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan.*
 - a. *The Khan Atlas is the only one of its kind in Uzbekistan.*
 - b. *The Khan Atlas is famous in Uzbekistan.*
2. *The women also performed the tedious work of unwinding the silk cocoons.*
 - a. *The women also performed the busy work of unwinding the silk cocoons.*
 - b. *The women also performed the slow-moving work of unwinding the silk cocoons.*
3. *The colors and designs used in the modern Khan Atlas are primitive compared to the sophisticated pallets and patterns of the past.*
 - a. *The colors and designs used in the modern Khan Atlas are simple compared to the sophisticated pallets and patterns of the past.*
 - b. *The colors and designs used in the modern Khan Atlas are new compared to the sophisticated pallets and patterns of the past.*

Match the two parts of the words from the text.

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. resist | a. coloured |
| 2. hand | b. dyeing |
| 3. multi | c. worms |
| 4. silk | d. woven |

Writing

Five minute writing storms...

Choose one topic from the list suggested below and write a short essay. Share with the whole class when it's done.

- the most beautiful person I know*
- the most beautiful traditional clothing*
- my favorite item of clothing*
- our traditional dress*
- the most peculiar dress I ever saw*

All Four Skills

Check Your Imagination...

You are going to listen to two different songs. One of them is in Japanese another one is in English. As soon as the Uzbek song starts, begin writing your story with a phrase "He turned and looked at her..." As the music finishes, stop writing.

Do the same with the song in English.

After you finish, compare your writing with your partner's.

- Are your stories different?
- Are the associations that came to your mind while listening close to your partner's? If yes, is it because of the music you hear?

Share with the whole class how music influenced you, and read the story you liked to your groupmates.

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Materials Development: an experience in Madrid

Liliana Russo, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Madrid

Introduction

We may ask ourselves why is it that we need to develop materials when the big publishing companies give us everything ready-made. But it so happens that sometimes that is not enough or not exactly what we need for a certain class, and so we have to start developing our own materials. This is an experience report on materials development carried out in the Comunidad de Madrid in the area of British Literature (BritLit).

“The aim of BritLit is to help teachers from around the world to exploit English literature in the ELT classroom as a language tool. Here you can find a range of materials based around the works of various authors. Each BritLit resource kit contains a range of materials to help students understand the context of the literature as well as the language and the works themselves.” (<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/resources/BritLit>)

Within each BritLit kit, you can find a short story and pre-reading activities that will lead you towards the analysis of the text. The goal is to prepare the reader to enjoy the story, to help the reader predict the outcome and to engage with the text while guessing

what is going to take place next! Then there are while-reading activities and after-

reading activities. The reader will be led from one part to the other and teachers will have all the materials at their fingertips. As they are kits, this means that the different parts can be taken in the order the teacher wants or the teacher can choose what to include or what to leave out.

There are several Training Centres attached to the Comunidad de Madrid that offer courses for teachers, and I was given the opportunity of training a group of primary school teachers on how to use BritLit materials and how to develop further materials for their own use in their classrooms. The course was held weekly during the school term.

Background

There has been a change in recent years as to the number of hours of English language being taught in the Comunidad de Madrid. While some schools retain their 3 hours a week, there are others where a third of the timetable is taught in English. This has nothing to do with the school being public or private; in fact, many private centres are bilingual by immersion (half the timetable in Spanish and half in English). So it happens that there are a lot of “bilingual” primary schools in the public sector but not enough materials to work with and the teachers have to provide them themselves. Many of the teachers are very willing to do so but the problem is that their workload has increased a lot so we thought that if we taught them how to prepare these materials and then they could share them it would be useful to everyone.

The Training Course

I started by giving them a brief outline on how BritLit works. Then we examined a resource kit. The teachers were divided into groups so that they could choose different materials to examine and to create and, in this way, have more variety. After examining a kit, they had to choose which parts they wanted to use in their classes and I watched those classes giving feedback to them. And next came the moment to choose the material and to develop the resources they wanted to use. At this point they had to consider the possibility of including cross-curricular topics.

As all of them are teaching in different levels of primary, we managed to have four different kits with a different approach in each of them according to the needs the teachers had. I asked them to start with a story and the stories chosen were: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Giraffes Can Dance*, *The House Of The Seven Gables* and *Out You Go!*

An added benefit was the requirement for the teachers to prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the rest of the group. In some cases, they hadn't worked with PowerPoint at all, so it was a challenge in more ways than one. As soon as the teachers had chosen their

story, they had to start preparing the materials they wanted to use and try them out on us in our weekly class. In this way they could see what worked and they could discard the materials that we considered were not appropriate. At the same time they started testing what they were doing with their students so they could also change their “creations”.

In the end we had the four kits, at different levels, (The House of the Seven Gables was thought to be appropriate for the third cycle of primary) and the rest could be used in the first or second level because the teachers prepared materials that could be used in both, taking into account the fact that in some schools they had more hours of English and thus the level of the students is higher. They decided to add extra materials that could be adapted to the different levels.

As their trainer I am very proud of their work and I am convinced that they will continue developing more materials in the future. I also wanted to establish the base for sharing materials because in this way, it would be easier all around and we could devote more time to creating other materials that could be necessary or start to develop new levels for the last years of primary education.

This is what one of the teachers had to say about the course:

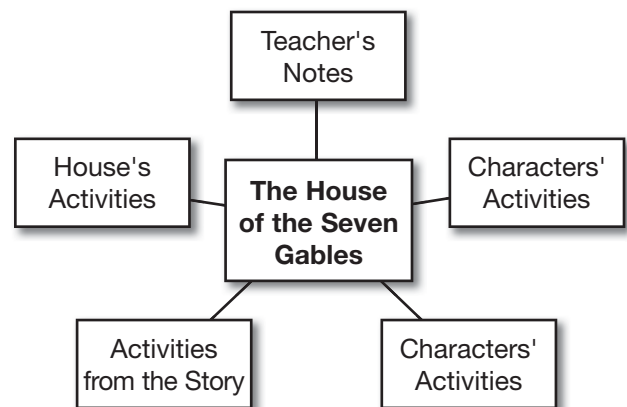
“Taking part in this course helped me in several ways. First of all, it broadened my mind in the sense that I had the opportunity to see what is going on in the field of educational resources outside of my own classroom. Taking into account the scarce resources for bilingual teaching at our disposal, this type of courses helps me save time in the preparation of engaging materials. Creating effective materials for my students will increase their interest and ability to learn. I also benefited from exchanging safe relevant web sites. Finally, I found it helpful to divide our class into groups based on student age levels; this made the activities more applicable.” (Eva Paramio Serrano, C.E.I.P. García Lorca, Alcalá de Henares)

As another teacher said...

“At the very beginning I didn’t know what BritLit was, but it had something to do with literature in the class, and as I have always loved that subject, I decided to do the course. I had looked at BritLit in the internet and found the kits, I didn’t really know how to use them, but there were lots of interesting activities for few stories that I could use in my 1st. grade class (6 years old students). During the course we learnt how to work with the kits and put them in practice. I decided to work with my students on the “Walking through the jungle”

kit, under Liliana’s supervision, who gave me lots of useful classroom management ideas. I could prove that my students not only love storytelling but they do really like working about the story they have been told!! The most interesting and useful part of the course was the creation of our own kit about the story we chose. It was a way of working in groups and putting together several ideas that generally we don’t share in our schools, maybe because of the fear of “stolen ideas” or because we haven’t found anybody to work with in a relaxing way. The results of this work were some very interesting PowerPoints with the main ideas of our kits that can be very easily used and the intention of continuing working and collaborating in every proposition we can have.” (Noelia Martínez Cárdena (Class 1º C), C.E.I.P Espartales, Alcalá de Henares, Madrid)

These are extracts from two samples of the kits these teachers developed.



The Very Hungry Caterpillar

General Objectives

- To revise days of the week, numbers, colours and food.
- To introduce new vocabulary related to the story.
- To read, view and understand the story.
- To listen and follow instructions in order to make caterpillars with different materials and techniques.
- To learn about the life-cycle of a butterfly.
- To review the story by playing a board game.
- To participate actively in theatre play.
- To sequence the story.
- To be able to tell the story to younger students at school.

General Activities

- Story book
- DVD
- Flashcards
- Puppet
- Sequencing story
- Bookmarks
- Egg carton caterpillar
- Play
- Concertina book

First Cycle Activities

- Jigsaw
- Game
- My own very hungry caterpillar colouring book

Second Cycle Activities

- Butterfly's life cycle
- Mini book
- My own very hungry caterpillar
- Game
- Project

This is part of a wider experience and it shows that we can all find ways of creating our own materials at some point in the school year and that we do not need to depend all the time on text books. It is also a very good opportunity to start introducing literature in the classroom and to begin to demystify it. Literature can be used as a starting point in our teaching and we should not neglect in our quest for content. We can use literary works as a starting point in our teaching and thus enrich our students' learning by providing variety.

Liliana Russo has been teaching English as a foreign language for more than 25 years. Nowadays she teaches children from the ages of 3 to University level. At University, she teaches different modules on a Master's Course for Alcalá University (Materials development /Reading and writing). She also teaches at Universidad Pontificia de Comillas where she is in charge of methodology on the Master's Course.

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Encouraging others to adapt material: Designing and implementing a workshop for materials adaptation

Sarah Clark, Nottingham Trent International College

It is generally accepted that the majority of educational institutes choose to use a coursebook for teaching (McGrath 2006). Coursebooks are utilised as they provide a basis and direction for teaching, enabling teachers and learners alike to see course progression (Woodward 2001). However, mass produced material is just that, mass produced, never totally appropriate for a given context. Coursebooks tend to be created to fit as wide an audience as possible. This implies for coursebooks to be relevant to a set of learners they will need to be adapted to increase the appropriacy and promote opportunities for learning for the individuals within a group.

Herein lies a problem; most teachers have minimal preparation time and are often stretched to the limit, without having the added burden of adapting a coursebook. There are also the added issues of what, how and how much to adapt.

It was this conundrum, as well as an interest in teacher development, which prompted me to offer a workshop on materials adaption at my college.

Context

I work for a private college affiliated with a local university in Nottingham. The college's objective is to prepare overseas students academically and linguistically for university courses. The college offers three main programmes; Graduate Diploma (preparation for entry to a Master's), Diploma (for entering the second year of a BA) and Foundation (for entry to a BA). Students who, for linguistic reasons, are unable to enter their chosen programme are accepted onto a Pre-Sessional English Programme (PSE). PSE is designed to work on students' language skills (for example; scanning, skimming and guessing words in context).

PSE is rapidly expanding and will soon become the college's fourth mainstream programme. Consequently, a larger number of PSE tutors are required. Tutors who teach on PSE are more familiar with teaching English for Academic Purposes, Academic Study Skills or have

just begun teaching. The majority of tutors work on a freelance basis and are often new to the college. Therefore, the requirements of the PSE programme and PSE students are new to them. In addition the coursebooks chosen to teach PSE with are very challenging for the students, in terms of the language level and skills necessary to work with them.

Therefore the coursebooks need adapting. In order to support tutors it was decided to offer a workshop on adapting the PSE coursebooks.

Planning and design

Before deciding on the topic a poster was displayed in the sessional tutors' staff room, requesting them to write down their perceived areas of weakness. The poster was backed up by an e-mail. In addition I spoke to the tutors to gauge their interest in a workshop. The intention of this was to involve the teachers in the planning, so they would feel it was not imposed and would hence be more willing to invest time and attend (Knight 2000).

As the workshop was intended to be in-service the wishes of the institute were also addressed. Meetings were held with the PSE co-ordinator, in which results from observations, as well as students' comments were discussed. The information collected enabled me to tailor the workshop to the unique needs of the institute and the teachers (Cunningsworth 1995).

I was asked to produce a proposal before being able to implement it. Despite my initial resistance to having to write a proposal, it revealed itself as being valuable, enabling me to gather my thoughts and clarify for myself exactly what I wished to achieve through the workshop. I was able to use the initial plans in my proposal to direct my background research on materials adaptation as I could see where the gaps in my own knowledge were.

Through my research into designing and implementing workshops I was able to ascertain that not only did there need to be a balance between theory and practice (Knight 2000) but also that the workshop ought to be

appropriate and have a clear purpose, as adults need to see the relevance of what they are doing (Richards and Farrell 2005).

Besides being relevant for the participants, to be successful the workshop should be practical and I ensured that my plan allowed for teachers' contributions to the content (Knight 2000). In addition I was able to see that due to the nature of the intended participants it was important to ensure that the approach and delivery did not exclude any individuals (Knight 2000): the workshop addressed the requirements of newly trained EFL tutors and those with more experience, although not necessarily in the PSE course.

From my general reading I also ascertained that it is not advisable to launch straight into adapting the set coursebooks, but rather to look at approaches to adapting material first. As with teaching a lesson it is important to activate the schemata of the participants (Harmer 2001) in the initial stages.

As the participants were heterogeneous, in terms of experience, qualifications and teaching styles it was important to include more than one approach to material adaptation, using Cunningsworth's model (1995) as a starting point. Then the approaches found in Ur (1996) and Harmer (2001) were considered, giving them the opportunity to decide which style best suited them. Cunningsworth begins the adaption process by considering the intention of an activity, before looking at how the objectives are achieved (i.e. the types of exercises, if they controlled or open and if enough practice is included) and finally reflecting on the suitability of an activity's content and topic. In contrast Ur initially looks at content and text suitability before considering the activities and the style in which the activity is to be taught (i.e. teacher-led, student-led or collaborative). Harmer's starting point is whether or not a coursebook activity is to be used. He then considers how material can be altered or replaced.

To best guide the workshop participants and provide informed answers (Richards and Farrell 2005) it was essential to find out more precisely what was meant by adaptation. With this in mind I created a set of trainer resources which I referred to throughout the workshop.

Due to the content of the workshop I thought it important for the participants to have a pack which they kept for future reference (Head and Taylor 1997).

In addition to drawing on general information regarding material adaptation, I looked at what I had produced the previous term, how I had tailored the coursebooks to different PSE groups and how this was related to the theory I had just read. Some of these insights were included in the trainer's resources, with notes relating to theory and the teacher's pack. Through

reading it also became evident that I should conclude the workshop with an evaluation (Knight 2000), which allowed the participants time for reflection (Richards and Farrell 2005) and highlighted areas for my own professional development.

Rationale

I decided to focus on adapting material for reading and writing as these are areas in which numerous tutors had expressed difficulties. The institute has recently introduced new reading and writing coursebooks *Real Reading 2* (Driscoll 2008) *Real Writing 3* (Gower 2008) and *Real Writing 4* (Haines 2008), which are new to the market, so even experienced tutors are unfamiliar with the layout and content. Thus, the workshop was appropriate to a wider audience and was directly relevant to them through the use of suitable resources (Richards and Farrell 2005).

As the PSE syllabus is based on teaching from coursebooks, a lot of class time is spent using the book. Each chapter tends to follow the same format which renders learning and teaching from it monotonous (Woodward 2001), unless interspersed with varied teaching activities. PSE students have 20 hours of teaching per week; therefore the lessons need to be as varied as possible, so that student interest and hence participation and progress are increased.

There are currently three different Pre-Sessional English (PSE) levels: Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate. However, within these levels there are students of varying abilities, which indicates that the given coursebooks are not always of the appropriate level for certain individuals within the groups. Hence the need to be able to adapt material, not only with the intention of making it varied, but also to meet the students' needs, in terms of their ability and PSE course outcomes. Observations of PSE tutors both from the previous and current term, as well as student comment, suggested that numerous teachers were teaching directly from the coursebook, with little regard for student needs or level.

Offering a workshop on adapting material covered the need for more student-centred teaching and at the same time promoted standardisation of teaching across the PSE course (Knight 2000), because after the workshop tutors would have a greater awareness of students' needs and how material can be adapted to incorporate them. As the workshop would generate ideas and give examples, hopefully the majority of tutors would be encouraged to vary their teaching. This would mean that all tutors were starting from the same point, which satisfies the needs of the institute and students. It would also lead to enhanced teaching through the inclusion of a variety of activities appealing to different learning preferences and the creation of a more interactive classroom and eventually augment

the institute's reputation (Knight 2000).

The workshop was intended to suggest ways of using the coursebook as a tool rather than to dominate teaching (Woodward 2001), although a coursebook can provide the backbone (Sheldon 1998). It also helped teachers become more confident in being critical of published materials (Ur 1996), so they could exploit them to the benefit of their students.

From a teaching point of view, teaching the same group from the same book for 8 hours a week and keeping students motivated can be challenging. Teachers need to have a variety of easy-to-prepare, adaptable teaching activities which they can use to make lessons stimulating. Thus the workshop aimed to address issues important for institutional and individual development (Richards and Farrell 2005). Moreover, the workshop offered the opportunity to generate material, (Knight, 2000) as well as practical classroom ideas which can be applied instantly (Richards and Farrell 2005).

Having participated in a workshop, teachers may feel supported and thus more willing to give their non-paid time to the institute. A supportive atmosphere fosters a more collegial working environment and thus improves team work, which is vital as the college grows (Richards and Farrell 2005). In addition, it made the teachers feel valued as individuals (Knight 2000).

The Workshop

Prior to delivering the workshop the date, time, location and agenda were e-mailed out to participants. The workshop took place on 18th May from 3-4pm in the institute, as the final part of the teacher induction programme for summer term 2009. Thirteen teachers attended. In the first stage of the workshop the participants thought about what material adaptation was and reasons for adapting material. Then three different methods in approaching material adaptation were considered. In stage two participants worked in pairs brainstorming activities which could be used for adapting material. These ideas were then fed back to the group, with examples being shown where possible and related back to the theory from stage one.

In the final stage the participants were put into small groups and given copies from the books used for teaching and asked to adapt the material to suit the given scenario card. These were then presented and the ideas summarised on the whiteboard, under the headings of writing and reading. Activities which require minimal preparation were then highlighted. Participants were then able to note down the information in their teachers' packs. Finally, the participants filled in an evaluation form.

Reflection

I feel that, in general, the workshop was successful as the content chiefly came from the participants (Head and Taylor 1997) and I avoided imposing my opinions on them (Allwright 1981). Overall, designing and implementing the workshop has been a positive experience for me. I gained a lot from encouraging others and enjoyed the energy the workshop created. The workshop appeared to motivate teachers and supply them with practical, easily accessible and quick-to-design lesson ideas and useful websites.

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English for Tour Guides: A sample lesson through photos and advertisements

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Introduction

Materials are indispensable components of all language teaching programs. These materials take different forms depending on teaching and learning contexts and constraints. They might be printed materials, non-print materials or a third type, consisting of both. Moreover, materials can be examined according to their authenticity, i.e. whether they are authentic or created materials. It should be added that both created and authentic materials have some benefits and drawbacks in language classes, but reviewing the literature confirms that authenticity has always been a major concern for materials designers in language pedagogy. The following are some of the advantages of authentic materials (Phillips and Shettlesworth, 1978; Clark, 1989; Peacock, 1997):

- They have positive effects on learner motivation.
- They provide authentic cultural information about the target culture.
- They provide exposure to real language.
- They relate more closely to learner needs.
- They support a more creative approach to teaching.

However, when the issue of authenticity is raised, it is important to make a distinction between text authenticity and task authenticity. The widely accepted definition among the majority of ELT professionals regarding authentic texts is that they are samples of spoken and written language which have not been produced for language teaching purposes (Nunan, 1999). In other words, authentic materials are created to fulfil a social purpose in the language community. Therefore, according to this definition, novels, poems, newspaper and magazine articles, recipes, postcards, e-mails, advertisements, and travel brochures are instances of authentic materials. The idea of using authentic materials was born as a reaction to the use of simplified materials, which expose learners to contrived and, at times, distorted samples of language. Another equally important concept is the issue of authenticity

of tasks, i.e. the extent to which learners are required to do things that they would do in a real-life situation. Thus, there should always be a balance between text and task authenticity. Having learners read a poem and then answer a number of multiple-choice reading comprehension questions is a typical scenario in which this imbalance can be obviously seen.

What follows is an ESP lesson designed to feature authentic materials through using real advertisements and photos. Before examining the lesson, it would be a good idea to review some of the purposes of instructional materials in ESP.

Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) suggest that for teachers of an ESP course, materials serve the following functions:

- As a source of language
- As a language support
- For motivation and stimulation
- For reference

The role of advertisements and photos in EFL/ESL classrooms

Today the consumer society frequently makes use of advertisements. Ads are everywhere. If you look in any direction, you will see different types of ads on TV, radio, in newspapers and magazines, on buses and trains. But what place is there for this ubiquitous phenomenon in English language teaching? Picken (1999) argues that advertisements can be used to teach grammar, to introduce specific vocabulary, for skill practice, as a stimulus for writing and for speaking practice, etc. In short, it can be claimed that advertisements have some unique qualities and features which make them perfect for practising different skills in language class. Some of these features will be explained concisely below.

According to Lutcavage (1992), the language of ads is up to date and authentic. Similarly, Davis (1997)

considers ads as valuable sources of information about different cultures as they contain different cultural values. Davis (1997) further mentions that ads provide a visual context and this is a facilitative factor for teaching language. Ads are short, so they are appropriate for the time constraints of all language teaching programmes. Kelen (1991) also emphasises that ads are creative tools which make learning more enjoyable and motivate language learners. Regarding benefits of pictures and photos in language classes, Hill (1990) contends that instructional materials which make use of pictures and photos bring “the language of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom” (p.1). Pictures bring not only images of reality but can also function as a fun element in the class. Sometimes it is surprising how pictures may change a lesson, even if only employed sporadically. Hill (1990) lists several advantages of pictures in the language classroom:

- They are cheap (often free).
- They are personal (teacher-selected).
- They are easily kept and can be used for a variety of activities.
- They come in a variety of styles and formats.
- After learners are shown pictures, they become motivated and wonder what comes next.

We will now turn our attention to the ESP material itself, which is for a business lesson about tourism and hospitality.

Lesson 1: Tourism

Level: Intermediate
 Target age: 18 +
 Time needed: 90 minutes

A. Warm-up

Look at this picture. Having thought about it, work in groups and try to answer the questions that follow.



1. What do you see in the above picture? Have you seen it before? Where do you find this? (hotel, airport, hospital, restaurant, etc.)
2. What does ‘TIC’ stand for? Have you ever heard of Tourism Information Center?

3. What information do you think tourists/visitors might want during their trip?

B. Vocabulary

Tourists and visitors might visit many tourist attractions in their tour. They have many needs during their trip, such as: somewhere to eat, somewhere to stay, somewhere to see art, somewhere for the children etc.

Look at the pictures and repeat these words after your teacher and then provide a sentence example for each word, then put the tourist destinations in the correct columns (see Figure 1 on the opposite page). You can put some in more than one column. Ask your teacher for help if necessary.

Art gallery, beach, café, campsite, castle, hotel, lake, mountains, museum, palace, park, restaurant, swimming, pool, theme park, wine bar



C. Speaking

Work in pairs. Act out a conversation based on the following ad information. Suppose you’ve gone to visit your friend’s house in another city. You ask for his idea about visiting different places in town, and he recommends visiting the Portobello Market (See Figure 2 on next page).

Here’s a list of questions for your dialogue:

1. What kind of market do you want to go to? / What kind of market is it?

Somewhere to stay	Somewhere to eat	Somewhere to relax	Somewhere for the children	Somewhere to see art	Somewhere to see historical things

Figure 1



Portobello Market

Portobello Road & Portobello Green, W 11
Open: Saturdays 8am–5pm, some stalls are open all week
www.portobelloroad.co.uk

- beautiful street market in Notting Hill
- many small, unusual shops in the area of Portobello Road
- lots of cheap and second-hand clothes
- great food stalls that are brilliant for fruit and vegetables, bread and cheeses

buses: 7, 23, 52, 70
tube: Ladbroke Grove, Notting Hill Gate

Figure 2

2. Where is it?
3. Is the market open every day? / When is it open?
4. How can you get there?
5. Can you find out more about the market? / Do you have further information about the market?

Work in pairs. Act out a conversation based on the following ad information (*figure 3 to the left*). Suppose you are on your vacation and you have decided to eat out with your cousin. He knows the town well and suggests going to a specific restaurant.

Here's a list of questions for your dialogue:

1. What is the restaurant called? / What's the name of the restaurant?
2. Is it a Thai restaurant?
3. Is the restaurant open on Monday? / What are the opening times for the restaurant on Monday?
4. Does the restaurant have a lunch special?
5. Does the restaurant have special offers for dinner?

You have just got to New York and you are going to book a room at a hotel. Act out a conversation based on the following phrases.

Key Phrases at the Hotel:

卍 **Hong Bin Ku** 卍

RESTAURANT
 • AUTHENTIC CHINESE FOOD •
 fully licensed • air-conditioned
 Open Sun–Thu 11am–11pm, Fri + Sat 11am–1am

LUNCH SPECIAL
 Over 100 different foods to choose from
 Including daily specials • From £3.80
 Between 11am & 3pm • 7 days a week
 Free soup and dessert with every main dish after 7pm
 Please call for groups of 10 people and over.

17 Wardour Street
 London W1F 6PU
 Tel: 020 734 3586

20 Rupert Street
 London W1D 6DR
 Tel: 020 437 8899

Figure 3

Customer

- Do you have any rooms, please?
- How much is it a night? How much is a single / double room?
- Can I make a reservation, please?
- Two single rooms (with bathrooms), please?
- What time is breakfast?
- Where is the lift / restaurant / swimming pool... ?

Receptionist

- Can I help you?
- Would you like a single or a double room?
- With or without a bathroom?
- How many nights would you like to stay?
- What's your name / address / phone number / nationality?
- Can I see your passport, please?

D. Reading comprehension



Valley View Camping Ground

Many seasoned tourists find they don't like staying in hotels, and that they prefer to avoid large cities. Does this description fit you? If the answer is yes, The Mountain View Camping Ground is for you. Our camping grounds overlook the spectacular Hampson Valley. We rent tents, bungalows and roulettes. If DIY is your style bring your own tents or roulettes. All guests enjoy access to cooking facilities, bathrooms with bathing facilities, and a playground for the children.

Our panoramic setting offers a wide variety of recreation activities as well as inspiring views of the mountains. Chisom, a quaint summer-resort village, is just 10 minutes by car. Take advantage of the many entertainment, shopping and relaxation opportunities

including fitness centers, laundry/valet services, solariums and much more. Have lunch in one of the many restaurants and savor the tasty local cuisine. Mountain View Camping Ground offers fun, relaxation and opportunities for all types of outdoor activities. Call us today to find out how we can make your next holiday perfect.

Key Vocabulary:

- bathing facilities* - a place to take a shower or a bath and wash
- bungalow* - a small, detached type of accommodation
- camping grounds* - area where people can use their tents, roulettes, etc. to camp
- cuisine* - style of cooking
- DIY* - do it yourself
- fitness centers* - a place to get in shape
- laundry/valet* - a shop which will clean your clothes
- quaint* - charming
- recreation* - free time activity
- roulette* - a camper
- seasoned tourist* - a tourist who has travelled a lot
- tasty* - very good food
- tent* - a portable enclosure made of cloth in which people can sleep
- to avoid* - to try to not do something
- to fit someone* - to be appropriate for someone
- to overlook* - to have a view of
- to savor* - to enjoy greatly

Comprehension questions

1. What type of tourist is described at the beginning of the reading?
A first time tourist / An old tourist / A tourist who has travelled a lot
2. The camping grounds overlook?
A tall mountain / An area between mountains / A city centre
3. What type of accommodation can you not bring with you?
A roulette / A tent / A bungalow

4. Who cooks dinner?

The guests / The chef at the camping ground restaurant / Doesn't say

5. What does Valley View offer besides the inspiring views?

Laundry/valet services / A fitness centre / Recreation activities

6. Where can tourists try the local cuisine?

At Valley View Camping Ground / In Chisom / In a bungalow

E. Writing

Having stayed at a Hotel in Tehran for a week, you decided to write a letter of complaint to the hotel manager about the problems you had during your stay.

Here is a list of problems which might arise:

- *Sorry, there are no clean towels in my room.*
- *The hot water is not running.*
- *My room is too noisy. Can I get another one?*
- *The air conditioning is too loud. Can you turn it off at night?*
- *I spilt some coffee on the carpet. Can someone come and tidy it up? Thanks.*
- *The light is not working. Can you send someone to fix it?*

You could begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter to make a complaint about the problems that I had during my stay at your hotel...

The post-lesson evaluation

The lesson described above was tried out in a 90-minute class and the feedback obtained from the participants was quite promising. The learners were group of prospective tour guides who had registered for a general English course at a private language school in Tehran. The textbook they were studying was *Interchange: Third Edition* (Book 2). The classroom teacher, a friend of the first author, had expressed concern about dissatisfaction of his students with the textbook they were studying inasmuch as it was not in line with the goals of their future career as tour guides. This prompted the authors to prepare a sample lesson for this specific group of learners, trial it with them and see how they would respond.

The class consisted of 9 adult EFL learners with an

average age of 27. Their English proficiency was at the level of intermediate and they were hoping that by improving their English, they would get a chance of finding a job as a tour guide.

The first author attended the class as an observer while the sample lesson was being taught. At the end of the class, the first author asked the learners to spend a few minutes of their time with him for an interview. The learners unanimously were of the opinion that the lesson had been a useful one. They said that the lesson had met their expectation as future tour guides in that the materials used had been relevant to their needs. For example, Babak, one of the participants aged 25, said, "Today I felt that I am in a foreign country and speaking with a group of tourists."

The part that the majority of students mostly enjoyed was the speaking section when they were engaged in a pair work activity talking about the Portobello Market. The writing activity was the second task the learners expressed satisfaction with.

There are two points which need a bit of further reflection. The first one is the activity which follows the reading material. It should be admitted that this is a case where there is a mismatch, perhaps a conflict, between text and task authenticity. The text is an authentic one but the given task, a set of multiple questions, is far from authentic. It should be noted, however, that the use of multiple-choice items in Iran is a well-established long-rooted tradition, which both teachers and students are pleased with. While these items do not elicit a real-life response from learners, they were well-functioning in the context they were used.

The second point is concerned with the vocabulary list which follows the reading text. This is another kind of reading support widely practiced in Iran and popular with many Iranian students. Again it might in conflict with the trend in the related literature, which urges teachers to arm learners with appropriate reading strategies. Nevertheless, it may not be very successful with Iranian students, the majority of whom are still vocabulary-dependent readers and do not feel secure before reading if they are not pre-taught the key unknown words.

In sum, the overall evaluation of the proposed lesson indicates that it was a successful one. This is evidenced by the learners' positive attitude toward it and their insistence on being exposed to this type of materials in the coming sessions of their course. The two points for further reflection mentioned above are also on the authors' minds: thinking of innovative ways to change the mindset of the students regarding alternative ways to assess reading comprehension other than multiple-choice format and equipping them with the right reading strategies in order not to be so new-word-bound while reading.

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Where do all the books go?

Olly Twist, Garnet Publishing

1988. It was a rainy day in West Wales; a normal day with no idea in my head that fate was about to pass me on like a baton in a relay and that six weeks later, I would arrive in Istanbul with my TEFL certificate, ready to begin a new career in EFL, or English for Losers as my fledgling chalk-face colleagues dubbed it.

The very first day showed just how many surprises there were to be in store. The owner of the language school was in jail, and the teachers were threatening a strike, not because of money but because of a book. As I recall, my late eighties certificate course did not include too much about critical thinking, or materials evaluation. I guess until that day, I had taken it for granted that the last thing I would have to worry about was 'the book'.

However, alongside Streamline and 'Red' and 'Blue' Cambridge, there was another preferred course book which was a real eye-opener. "Circle the red car" ... a fairly normal instruction, but the picture was in black and white. Followed by: "Tapescript 11. Listen to these people talking about toasting"... silence... "Tapescript 12 ..."

I thus found out for the first time that books could be bad – in a whole range of ways.

Over the years, such design, methodology (how transferable a context is *toasting?*) and editing mishaps have kept me amused and alert. Now, after two decades of teaching, managing and training, I find myself representing a publisher. In a way, I am again an intermediary, this time transferring information between the author and the end user, and it certainly is interesting because I get to see the full picture from everybody's viewpoint.

Working for an independent publisher is also rather a privileged position, as I don't have to and am not expected to, adopt a hard-sell attitude; no sharp suits or pivot tables, just a sharing of what's new with the academic community, finding out what is needed, and showing what may be of help. This is also an acknowledgement that the book should really sell itself. Either the publisher or the author should have already identified the need for the product and importantly the extent of it. Good marketing can increase the scope but there has to be some empirical evidence that a gap in the market exists, and also that there will be some longevity to the demand. Many factors can shorten the

sales lifetime of a title, from a dated photo to a new Minister of Education, but unfortunately most of them are beyond the author's control.

So where do all the books go? Why is it that some flare brightly then disappear, whilst others seem to spawn generations of revisions and reincarnations? Thinking of how to create a profitable return from the writer's endeavours, perhaps the logical starting point is the cover. It's a sad reality but if it is not designed well, a cover can deny significant adoptions to great content. An ill-conceived cover may elicit the wrong expectations and assumptions and lead to a poor launch. So should authors have a say in the design? I think they should certainly have the chance to be involved in the selection process and be able to voice their opinion; we have certainly listened and changed a couple.

Once inside the covers, the potential customer always asks three questions, and stays to ask many more if the answers are right. Level, (is it right for my students?), hours, (is it right for my course?), and price, (is it right for our budget?). The price of course is always subject to variations of scale and geography, but level and hours lead to an inevitable grey area – the colour that comes out of the pot when you mix CEF, IELTS and the various commercial exam suites, not to mention pre (or is it lower?) intermediate etc.

Imaginative teachers can obviously manipulate materials to make the levels dip up or down significantly, as can the origin of the students in terms of their ability to deal with them. But just as important is the level of the teachers and the assumed knowledge assigned to them. The value of clear rubrics and clearly stated aims cannot be underestimated; the confidence of teachers and the confidence of the students in them should not founder on exercises whose methods are harder to understand than the language they contain. Despite being a native speaker I have often found myself struggling to understand exactly what an exercise requires a student to do.

This assumption that the teacher will obviously understand is not unrelated to one facet of the argument between using self-generated and published materials. The writer's context begins in a personal mind space, and transferring a bundle of photocopied papers and rubrics to someone else, and assuming they will work for that third person is no guarantee of success.

Many universities are thus moving towards published materials again, and if one took a green economic perspective, it's not a bad move once labour hours (increasingly commercially monitored to the detriment of research), ink and paper usage are factored in. Students, even if they don't ever open it, will always feel more respected if they have a book, and vindicated if they have something other than photocopied papers to show the sacrificing mum and dad.

A book really is a weight of knowledge, and having taught for ten years and dipped into teacher's books for ten hours in the same period, one fundamental change in viewpoint I have as a result of working with authors and publishers is the value of the teacher's book. I never appreciated as a British TEFLer just how many non-native teachers there were out there, without our common shared experiences and schemata, and in need of more than just tapescripts and answers.

Perversely, our teacher's books are so heavy I travel with only one copy, but it is worth its weight in gold, especially when written by the coursebook author. Even at a recent IATEFL conference, it was interesting and reassuring to hear so many times the question, "Is there a Teacher's Book?" It is a sensible question when someone with no faculty or discipline background is going to teach, for example, a group of banking students.

Talking of banking, *English for Banking in Higher Education Studies* was pulled off our stand at IATEFL. 'Do you have English for Baking?' was the next rather hopeful but earnest request. Getting specific inevitably invites a spiral of diminishing returns; English for Engineers can quickly whittle down to electrical, or mechanical, or even air-conditioning, which was a request received at Frankfurt Book Fair. This can create typical Catch 22 dilemmas for authors, but of some consolation, I am sure most publishers' reps will point to a rival's list if a missing title can be found there.

Every marketing trip seems to unearth some new kind of problem that can diminish the returns for an author. The simple notion of 'write a book and sell

it' can mutate into all kinds of variations which I hadn't considered until I started 'travelling in books'. The first depressing scenario is of course for the book to be bought and then photocopied, and sometimes commercially and illegally reprinted. A colleague once told me how a copy of his publisher's new dictionary appeared on the streets within days, not only cheaper but actually in a better quality format.

Another variation is for the required sections to be extracted and compiled into a manual of other publishers' 'greatest hits' and then sold; not a UK experience but certainly European. Perhaps even more ignominious a fate I came across is for a book to be bought and then, as it is used, to have the studied pages torn out to lighten the load in the student's bag! Greener-minded students may of course buy the book and then sell it on to someone in the next year group, something which can incidentally be discouraged by requiring answers to be written into the student's book. To end this rather depressing catalogue on a lighter note, I was told that at one university the students loved their new course book so much that they no longer felt the need to attend lectures, so attendance fell by 70%!

If there is a plus side to all this, then the author has only to think of the immense loyalty that a title can generate. Teachers will invariably take their recommendations with them as they move between institutions, and once an adoption is made, it is generally at least three years before a change is considered. This comes back to the earlier point I made, that a good book will market itself in the end. Furthermore, even when the book is no more, the royalties will still come in, ironically from the photocopying union. Writer's revenge at last!

Olly Twist has been a teacher and teacher trainer for 22 years, working in Azerbaijan, Mexico, Portugal, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. Since 2004 he has been the Academic Representative for Garnet Education, travelling extensively, and as he says, proudly championing his authors.

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DeskTopAuthor – a review of software for producing multimedia e.books

Jeremy Taylor, Freelance, Czech Republic

Many authors are curious about the possibility of writing and editing their own books and then selling them directly to the public, rather than via a publisher and distributor. Companies like Amazon with their Kindle and the Sony e.book reader have shown that people are willing to read books in digital form, but both the Kindle and Sony e.book reader are pretty limited in their multimedia capacities. That's fine if you just want to read a Jeffery Archer novel, but the software that I have been using for the past year allows the author to do so much more than deliver text.

I first saw DeskTopAuthor (DTA) being demonstrated at the London Book Fair and knew that it had huge potential. DTA basics can be learnt in a few hours

and the finished product offers a lot more than a standard e.book. In addition to text, you can add photographs, flash, sound files, video and quizzes. The book has attractive page-turning software, simulating the turning of real pages and runs via small piece of software, the dnl reader, similar to acrobat reader – and is also free.

Books produced with DTA can be given away for free – or you can turn it into a 'try-before-you-buy' book, allowing the reader to view a certain number of pages before being asked to pay for it. The DRM (Digital Rights Management) technology used in the book has been around for about six years and their code has never been broken. This means that if someone who



Figure 1

has paid for your book forwards it to a friend. The friend can read the first part but will have to pay to unlock the rest of the book. For schools, this could be interesting as the school would only need to buy one copy and the computer can be accessed by every pupil in the school.

So what does the DTA interface look like? *Figure 1 (on the previous page)* shows some work in progress and the layout will be familiar to anyone who has used Photoshop™ or similar software. Frequently used tools such as add pages, copy pages, insert image, insert text, appear on the left. On the right hand side you can see the image browser, allowing you to click and drag photos into your book from a chosen folder.

Across the top are the buttons for the more major changes – for example the properties button brings up

a wide variety of options which can be seen in *figure 2 (below)*. Most of the defaults are fine though you may like to play around with them to see what different effects you can achieve.

One problem that some people have is with the uploading of multimedia. The software can't cope with mp3s but it can use flash (which is more compact anyway). You'll need to convert your mp3s to flash - .swf (small web format) files. (I use the mp3 to SWF converter sold at www.hootech.com.) Once you have your flash files, click on the 'add multimedia' button which will bring up the dialogue box shown in *figure 3 (opposite page)*. You then have the choice of embedding your files inside the book (which is fine if they are not too big) or you can provide links to a website so that the files can be streamed. (I confess I

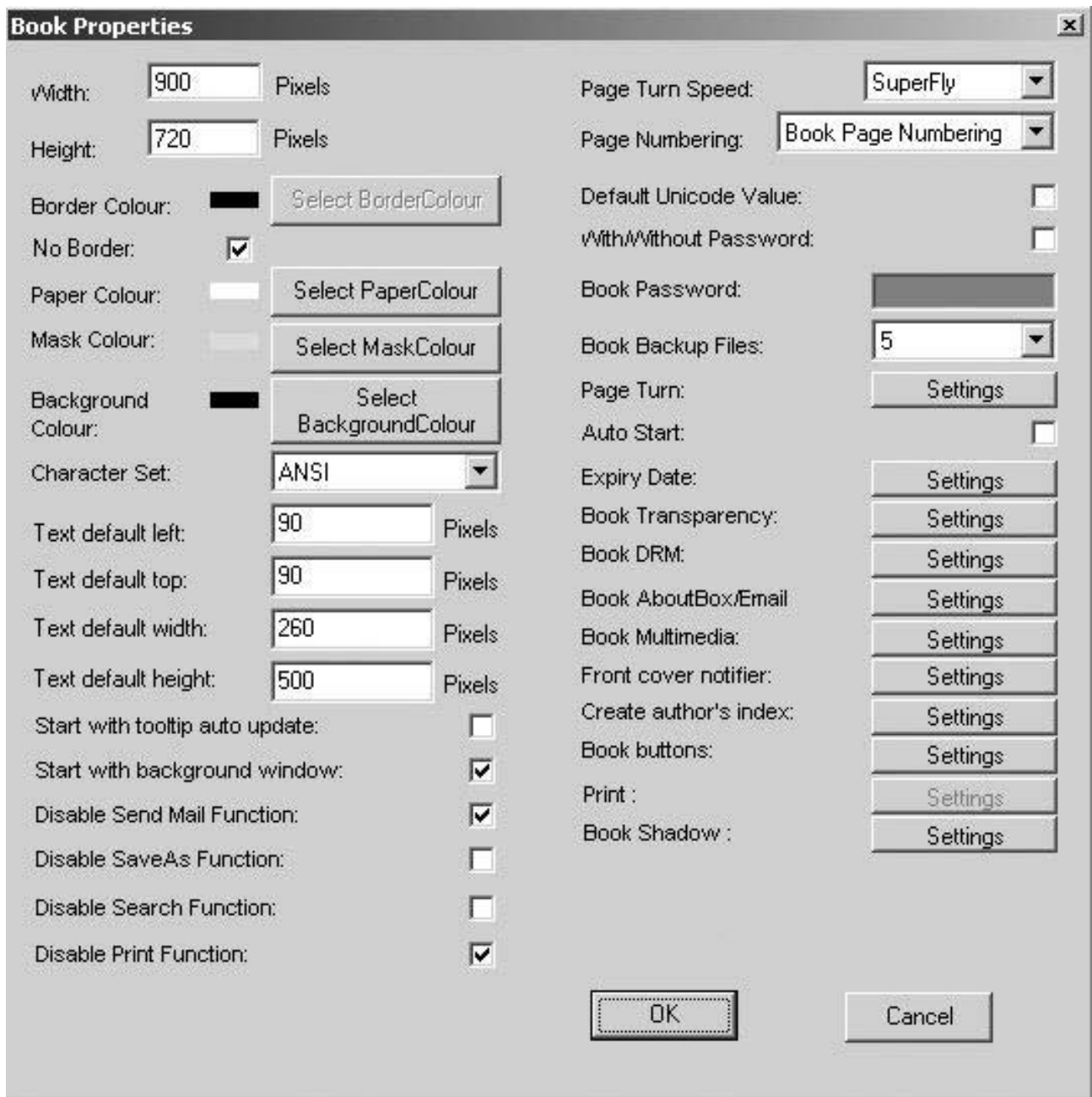


Figure 2

haven't tried this yet). You then need to show your reader that there is a file to be heard or seen. The easiest way is to add a small image, such as a set of headphones, then right click on the image and click on 'change link'. Scroll down and you have a wide variety of options – including 'play multimedia'.

While creating your book, it is a good idea to test it regularly by clicking on the brown box at the top which says 'package'. DTA will turn your book into the finished product which you can try out and then go back and change to make it (even) better.

Once you have completed your book and added the DRM you are ready to start giving it away – or selling it. <http://www.sharewarebooks.com> is a useful website where you can upload your books for free and people can then download them, try them out and, perhaps, buy them. There are currently around 80,000 downloads a week from the site – though how many of these turn into sales, is anyone's guess.

An alternative way of selling the book is via activation keys. You can buy these from the makers of DTA – the price starts at \$2 and goes down to \$1.10 if you buy a lot of them. You could then sell these at any price you choose, allowing you to vary the price according to the market.

While I am generally in favour of DTA, there are a few drawbacks. In some places the tutorials are not very logical and things like book transparency, uploading multimedia will probably take a while to get used to.

Another drawback is that the software only works on PCs, not Macs. The books that you produce with the software can (allegedly) be read on Macs, though Mac friends that have tried it out were 'not very complimentary' about the dnl reader for Mac users.

So who is DTA for? It is for enterprising authors who want to have a go at producing, and perhaps selling, their own books with incorporated multimedia. It could also be for publishers who want to package a course into one book – no more CD ROM or DVD as the whole package can be brought (and bought) together. People are still finding new ways to sell their digital products and it won't be easy for newspapers and magazines to convince people to pay for content that they have had for free for years. Is DTA the answer? Only time will tell.

A trial version of the DTA software can be downloaded for free – though you will be limited to books of 2 pages! This is a great way to find out if you like DTA and whether it works for what you want to do with it. You can download it from:

<http://www.desktopauthor.com/>

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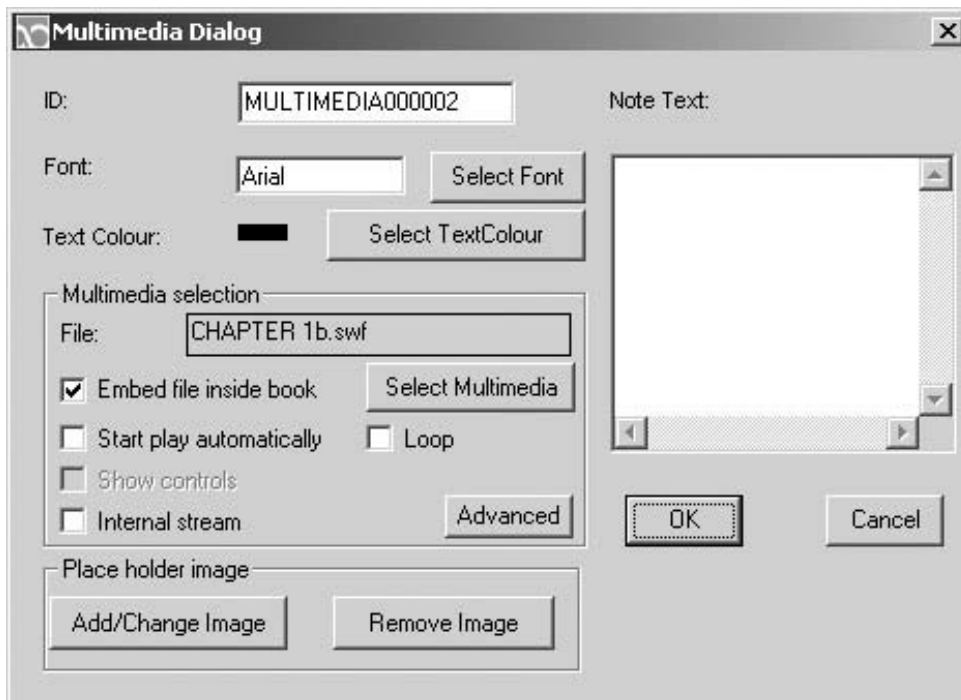


Figure 3

Featured Writer:

Phil Ball

1. *Phil, you have a background in English teaching and a Masters Degree in Applied Linguistics, but you have written Geography and History textbooks for the Basque Country. What got you started in these areas and in materials writing?*

It goes way back to 1995, around the same time as the invention of the CLIL acronym. I was asked to run a four-year experimental project for the Basque Govt based on the introduction of content-based didactic units, but for the English syllabus. It was my first real experience of producing materials for immediate use by teachers and students, and was something of a baptism of fire. I dabbled in various subject areas, but I found that the social science stuff was the most malleable. More than that, it seemed to lend itself naturally to communicative contexts, and was rich in textual variety and discourse. I also understood it – as opposed to the science!



After that, I was signed up by the people I still work for, the Basque-medium schools here, because they were moving into secondary with their multilingual project, and had decided to require their 15-16 year-olds to study the official social science programme in English. That was back in 2001. About ten textbooks later, I'm still revising and trying to improve them, but I've also written adjunct courses for the English curriculum here whose material is based on the linguistic and procedural demands of the social science. It's revolutionary stuff, but I'm still not sure if it really works.

2. *What, for you, are the main issues to be addressed in writing CLIL materials?*

The final sentence of the previous answer is a clue. The ELT world seems to me to have reached a point of saturation, in terms of materials production and creativity. CLIL is giving ELT an obvious chance to save itself from drowning, but the problem with the CLIL world itself is its own reluctance to be prescriptive, allowing anything through. Not a single textbook published by the big ELT players will now appear without some reference to CLIL-based activities in its support resources, yet by and large it's not CLIL, not as I understand it

anyway. And yet there are various people within the CLIL movement who are happy to see this happen because they think that it brings them into the mainstream. It's actually the opposite. It's a dangerous dilution of the paradigm, and it threatens to convert it into a circus.

The wonderful thing about educational materials – and I've only discovered this by accidentally falling into the world of writing – is that they are the only concrete manifestation of an 'approach', or an ideology, whatever you want to call it. You can't have educational reforms without materials writers, and you can't have a new paradigm without them either. However, for me, CLIL is a methodological revolution, as opposed to an ideological one. You can't define CLIL in terms of beliefs (although some people are desperately trying), but you can say why you think it's a good way of learning. So I think that CLIL authors have to be able to say, 'Look – this is an example of a CLIL activity, and this is why it works'. Hardly anyone does. But if we do, then we enable people to make more reasoned choices about their adoption of CLIL, and the changes that it will ring in their systems. But we have to present CLIL as a practical method, with identifiable parameters. Some in the CLIL camp prefer to sell it as a philosophy of good practice, which will solve your problems overnight, boost your economy and save your marriage. The only way to solve this split in the CLIL camp is to become more prescriptive, although it ruffles some people's feathers.

The other problem is the English language/subject materials divide, often referred to as 'weak' and 'strong' CLIL respectively. CLIL is basically a scholastic movement, born out of a time-squeezed curriculum and a changing, rather utilitarian view of English. It works best as subject content, with subject-based objectives. As soon as you drag it into the language curriculum, you come up against a whole host of problems, the chief one being that language teaching is based on the assessment of language. Of course we need more 'content' in language teaching, but CLIL isn't an add-on, a bit of thematic decoration. You have to be able to include it in your assessment objectives, but it's not easy. We're working on it here. I don't know if

anyone else is!

3. *How have you tackled the training of teachers to use CLIL materials successfully?*

Good materials are the best trainers. However, some teachers take to CLIL like ducks to the proverbial whereas others find its twin demands problematic and often rebel. With the former, you try to keep them self-aware, and encourage them to expand on your materials, to consider them as exponentials, as activity types. Teachers often fail to see this, because they don't have the time. We've broken down CLIL materials into four broad activity types here, and it's proved to be a powerful tool. We've been prescriptive!

With the more reluctant types, you try to start from where they are, not from what you want them to be. CLIL teachers come from all walks of life, and can be beginners or be on the point of retirement. Also, on our project they are often obliged by their schools to come on board, so it's not easy. We try to write 'teacher-proof' materials in these situations, and although that sounds patronising, it's a response to reality. Many teachers in Spain are poorly trained, if at all. Also, you can't expect a teacher with 30 years' experience of one method to suddenly take to yours with open arms. So 'training' is a flexible word. What we do is to write materials whose guides are written like scripts. We encourage the weaker or more reluctant teachers to follow the script until they feel more confident. It usually works. Sometimes it doesn't. Confidence is a huge thing in teaching. CLIL exposes teachers to many unusual and complex situations. If their confidence goes, it can be a terrible thing.

4. *Which of your materials are you most and least proud of, and why?*

I suppose I look back most fondly on the early stuff, because I hadn't a clue what I was doing. Also, the resources for materials writers have multiplied in such astonishing ways that now you can sometimes lose that basic creative spark that once arose from an empty screen and cold necessity.

'Least proud' is a slightly leading question. I've produced some rubbish, of course, but it's been such an organic process that there's nothing I'm particularly ashamed of! I had a tendency, in the early days, to make activities too elaborate, and they look rather clumsy now. Now it's a case of 'less is more'. It's a good slogan for an author.

5. *Who or what has influenced you most in your approach to materials writing?*

It might sound selfish, but nobody really. I'm a musician and I'd say the same if you asked me the question regarding that field, but you obviously

grow up noticing and liking things. I always liked the left-field approach of Mario Rinvolucri, and I suppose I've unconsciously tried to import some of his spirit into the creation of subject-teaching materials, but the subject world has its own rules, and you have to respect them. Language authors have more freedom.

My main motive when writing is much more basic. At school I was always appalled by the dullness and unnecessary difficulty of educational materials. My own kids use mine at school now (that's an uncomfortable experience) and so I'm determined to make it interesting for them if I can, to make it a bit less like an obstacle course. It's fantastic when you go to a school and you see the kids enjoying your materials. There's nothing better actually.

6. *What do you see as your Achilles heel as a materials writer?*

I'm a bit sensitive to criticism. I'm getting better at hiding it, but negative feedback still grates. This can be problematic, because feedback is crucial. But sometimes I can't understand why a teacher doesn't see things in the same way as I do.

7. *What is your main strength?*

Clarity, I think. I'm a stickler for making an activity immediately comprehensible, but I mean the 'how', not the 'what'. It's the number one principle for me, because so many students do the work defectively not because they are weak but because they didn't know what to do, or the instructions confused them. As a writer it takes a long time to get this under control, because there are so many variables that condition clarity. It's not just about the way you write the instructions.

8. *What part does piloting play in the development of a successful textbook series?*

Not as much as some would have you believe, but that's because digital publishing has taken some of the pressure off authors, and it's much easier and cheaper to correct mistakes than it used to be. In a sense, the first year of a textbook is often its real piloting phase, because it's easier to see the weaknesses come out over a longer period. I'm sceptical of short phases of piloting, and anyway, your books have to be judged across a wide range of schools, which is rarely the case with ELT piloting, for instance.

9. *What advice would you give to someone starting out in CLIL materials writing today?*

Nobody has laid down the law as yet, and so the field is open to all-comers. What I would say is that although ELT has produced a mass of often wonderful stuff, its application to the subject-

teaching world must be treated with caution. You can't just throw 40 years of liberal practice at subject teachers, and expect them to understand and appreciate it. Get into schools, see what subject teachers do well, and take it from there.

10. *What would you most like publishers of CLIL materials to pay attention to?*

That in the end, they must lay down the laws. It is their responsibility to oversee the tricky balance that conceptual content and discourse type demands. At the moment, the major publishers are all over the place, and seem unsure of how to adopt this new baby. But they hold the purse-strings, and must therefore ensure that the CLIL baby does not become the new orphan of the educational world.

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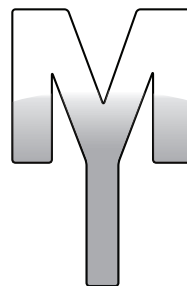
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