

folio



Journal of the Materials Development Association

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# Editor's Message

*Carlos Islam, United Nations, USA*

**W**elcome to a special bumper edition of Folio. Hopefully, it will keep you occupied until the Spring 2005 issue due out in April.

You will notice that this issue introduces another regular column, Computer Perspectives. I would like to extend my appreciation to Barry Barkin for agreeing to write this column relating computer technology to materials development issues.

In September 2003 the Dillingen Academy with the cooperation of the British Council and MATSDA hosted a conference, New Approaches in ELT Materials Design and Development, in Bavaria, Germany. The event drew a lot of interest and produced thought provoking ideas, some of which have been written up for this bumper edition of Folio. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this section and to all our regular columnists.

We're aiming to publish Folio 10/1 in April 2005 and the deadline for contributions is 14th February 2005 as I like to receive mail on Valentines Day.

Please send your articles and correspondence to me at [islamc@un.org](mailto:islamc@un.org) or in the mail to Carlos Islam, English Language Coordinator, U.N. Language and Communications Programme, S-606, Secretariat Building, UN Headquarters, 405 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017. You can also call me at + 1 (212) 963 2985.

*Wishing you a successful and happy 2005.*

*Cheers,*

*Carlos*

## GREETINGS

# Greetings from the President

*Brian Tomlinson, MATSDA President, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK*

It's been another great year for MATSDA. It started with a very successful two day MATSDA Conference in Dublin. The topics were assessment and teaching English as an international language, and plenaries and workshops were given by Dave Allan, Mike McCarthy, Hitomi Masuhara, Luke Prodromou and Brian Tomlinson. The Conference was so well-attended and well-received that MATSDA have decided to hold their annual conference in Ireland every two years. Another popular event was the three day writing workshop on Materials for EAP, which was run by Hitomi Masuhara and Brian Tomlinson at the Marton Arms near Ingleton on the edges of the Yorkshire Dales. As at previous workshops, the participants really enjoyed eating, drinking, walking and producing innovative and excellent materials. Also, this year has seen the launch of MATSDA USA by Carlos Islam and Chris Mares at the Maine ESL Networking Conference (where Brian Tomlinson was giving the Keynote Talk) and a healthy increase in international individual and institutional membership (e.g. Bilkent University, Ankara). It's also seen a rise in the number of MA and PhD students requesting back copies of Folio to help them in their studies of materials development and of references to MATSDA in journal articles and reviews.

In 2001 a MATSDA Workshop was run at the Cow and Calf in Ilkley on Writing Extensive Readers. As a consequence of that workshop Brian Tomlinson and Alan Maley have just launched World Wide Readers on the web ([www.ebooksworld.de](http://www.ebooksworld.de)) and five of the participants from that workshop have had their books published in the first series. Let's hope that the 2005 MATSDA Workshop on Localising Language Learning Materials will have a similar successful outcome. Following tradition it will be held in an attractive pub in beautiful countryside (probably in Slaidburn in Lancashire in May). Consult the MATSDA website ([www.matsda.org.uk](http://www.matsda.org.uk)) in the near future for details of this Workshop. Details will also soon be appearing on this website of the next MATSDA Conference, which is likely to be held in Norwich in early summer 2005 to coincide with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of NILE. Other events to look forward to in 2005 include a MATSDA day at the joint SATEFL/BALEAP Conference in Edinburgh on April 16, a possible MATSDA Conference in Athens and the possible launch of MATSDA Australia.

*Have a great 2005 and keep developing.*

Brian Tomlinson ([B.Tomlinson@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:B.Tomlinson@leedsmet.ac.uk))

# WORLD WIDE READERS

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

*Edited by Brian Tomlinson and Alan Maley*

### The Books

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

### Objectives of World Wide Readers

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

### The Launch

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

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

### The Website

For free samples of the readers and for details of how to download the readers go from January 2005 to: [www.ebooksworld.de](http://www.ebooksworld.de)

*Brian Tomlinson and Alan Maley*

# The Dinner Conversation

Marc Helgesen, Miyagi Gakuin Women's University, Sendai, Japan

**Story type:** conversation (dialog) between middle-aged husband and wife.

**Level:** high-elementary to advanced

**Class time:** 15-30 minutes

**Preparation:** 5 minutes (make copies of the next page. You'll need one copy for every two students.).

write the innervoice of the opposite sex character. Later partners can see how realistic they think it is).

OR

- If the class is fairly evenly divided between men and women, have them work in mixed-sex pairs. They think of each *innervoice* exchange, then share it with their partner.

OR

- Even if the class is not evenly divided, have the pairs write just one *innervoice* part. At the end they share their *innervoice* part with another pair.

OR

- Have students notice if their *innervoice* is happening in English or in their native language (it is perfectly fine if it is happening in L1). They note what they (or the characters would say). Then they translate it into the other language (probably English). The try to notice if they are able to say the English with the same nuance that they can in L1. (Note: They may not be able to say their *innervoice* conversation with the same nuance – but even asking elementary and low intermediate levels to consider nuance is likely a more interesting and challenging that most classroom “dialog work.”

Learners work though the conversation, section-by-section. Each time they write their *innervoice* ideas in the balloons.

When they finish, have them join another group to compare what they wrote. You may want to invite them to act out their version in groups of four: the man, the woman and each character's *innervoice*.

(Option) Have them change groups several times and “recycle the task” (perform their *innervoice* version several times).

## Activity suggestions

1. Explain that we all have an *innervoice* (at least in our first language). Whenever we are talking to someone else, we are also talking to ourselves (Does this person understand me? Does s/he agree? etc.). Our *innervoice* is what we are thinking and saying to ourselves. Sometimes it is quite different than what we are saying aloud.
2. Set the context by explaining that a middle-age husband and wife are having dinner. Perhaps they have a bottle of wine.
3. Have students work in pairs. Each pair has one handout. They fold it so they can only see the first section ( ) of the conversation. Tell them that they will read the conversation, one section at a time. As they do, they should write the speakers' *innervoice* (i.e., they write what the characters are thinking) in the thought balloons). You might want to elicit examples from various students for the first one to be sure they understand what to do.

Options: (Note that this particular text involves the dynamic tension of a male/female conversation. For that reason, many of these options experiment with that. Other texts will deal with other dimensions of interaction.)

- Each pair can write the parts of both the man and the woman.

OR

- If the class is fairly evenly divided between men and women, have the students work in same-sex pairs. The men write the man's *innervoice* and the women write the woman's *innervoice*. At the end they join an opposite-sex pair and share what they wrote. (It can also be interesting to have students

## Acknowledgments:

The text is based on a story that made the rounds on the Internet.

I first learned about *innervoice* from Brian Tomlinson. One useful, easy-to-access introduction the theory and use of inner-voice is at <http://www.njcu.edu/cill/vol6/tomlinson.html>

My own *innervoice* page is at <http://www.mgu.ac.jp/~ic/helgesen2/paper2.htm>

# The Dinner Conversation

## *Worksheet*

Work with a partner. Cover the story with the bottom part of the paper. It is important to only look at one section at a time.

What is the woman's innervoice saying? What is the man's innervoice saying? With a partner, write the innervoice.

1

WOMAN: What would you do if I died?

Would you get married again?

MAN: No. Never. Definitely not!

2

WOMAN: Why not? Don't you like  
being married?

MAN: Of course I do.

WOMAN: Then why wouldn't you remarry?

3

MAN: Okay, I'd get married again.

WOMAN: You would?

(with a hurt look on her face)

MAN: Hmmmmmm.

4

WOMAN: Would you sleep with her  
in our bed?

MAN: Where else would we sleep?

5

WOMAN: Would you put away my  
pictures and put up hers?

MAN: If I was married to her,  
what else could I do?

6

WOMAN: And, would she use my golf clubs?

MAN: No, she's left-handed.

WOMAN: - - - silence - - -

MAN: Oops.

Now join another pair. Share your innervoice story. Listen to theirs.

# Speaking Test Materials: Let's give them something to talk about!

*Julie Norton, The University of Leicester, UK*

## Introduction

Previous articles in *Folio* (Rinvoluceri, 1999, Thornbury, 1999) have critically examined the topical content of ELT coursebooks and have raised questions about the types of topics that should be included to challenge and motivate students to participate in class. More generally, the cultural content of ELT coursebooks has been debated (Bell and Gower, 1998; Gray, 2000), and it is widely recognised that no teaching materials can achieve the perfect 'fit' and appeal to all learners and teachers globally (Maley, 1998). Reshaping and reinterpreting texts in the classroom are viewed as "a key element in the construction of new meanings and in the creation of the culture of the classroom" (Gray, 2000:275).

What about oral testing materials? Whilst teachers can adapt or omit the activities in coursebooks which they deem to be culturally inappropriate or irrelevant for their learners, examiners in speaking tests working under real-time constraints and with scripted interlocutor rubrics do not have this flexibility. Indeed, adapting materials in a testing situation could constitute a breach in examiner conduct and result in major problems for test standardisation. Candidates in speaking tests are thus placed in a position where they must either think of something to say about the chosen topic, or risk negative assessment of their oral ability in English. After all, a "will-not talk" candidate may easily be confused with a "cannot talk" candidate, as van Lier points out (1989: 501).

In light of the above comments, the title of a recent book on the validity of the oral proficiency interview as a measure of conversational ability in English, "The Art of Non-Conversation" (Johnson, 2001) may come as no surprise; and may possibly even raise a smile and may resonate particularly with oral examiners who have struggled to elicit a language sample suitable for assessment purposes from reticent candidates. More seriously, this pithy title could quite rightly set alarm bells ringing and provoke debate about the rigid frameworks imposed upon candidates in speaking tests, call into question the relevance of the topical content of these tests, and cause concern about the validity and reliability of the oral proficiency interview

as a test of spoken English. This position is ratified by Young and Milanovic's (1992: 421) research on the Cambridge Speaking Tests: 'The oral proficiency interviews that we have examined here bear very little resemblance to the collaborative management of talk by both parties that we believe to be the structure of non-testing situations.'

This article aims to investigate the topical content of speaking test materials, and to comment upon their cultural appropriateness. The article focusses on the performance of Japanese candidates in the following Cambridge Speaking Tests: First Certificate in English (FCE) for intermediate level learners; Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) for upper-intermediate level learners; and Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) for advanced level learners. Firstly, background information on the study is presented. The topics included in the Speaking Test materials are reviewed, then examples of topics which appear problematic for Japanese candidates of these tests are critically discussed with reference to the interview data. Some of the topics initiated by the candidates themselves during the Speaking Tests are then presented to examine to what extent these topics coincide with those prescribed in the actual test materials. Finally, implications for the development of oral testing materials are explored.

## Background to the Study

### Data Collection and Description

The Speaking Tests were recorded during examining sessions held in the United Kingdom in 1995-1996. The FCE data were videotaped by the test administrator, the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) during a piloting of the revised FCE Speaking Test. I audiotaped the CAE and CPE interviews. Ten FCE interviews, ten CAE interviews and seven CPE interviews are included in the data sample discussed here. Candidates were informed that the Speaking Tests were being recorded for research purposes. As an experienced oral examiner, I can verify that this did not appear to affect candidate performance in the tests. Data were transcribed according to the transcription conventions presented in Psathas (1995).

## Format, Tasks and Assessment in the Speaking Tests

At the time of data collection, two examiners and two candidates participated in the FCE and CAE interviews, but a single examiner and individual candidate was the common format for the CPE Speaking Tests (only one example of a paired CPE Speaking Test features in this data sample). It is worth noting that the CPE Speaking Test was revised in June 2003 and has now adopted a paired format in line with the other Speaking Tests.

Each Speaking Test consists of an Introduction, three separate tasks and a closing. The Introduction is a warm-up phase, which allows the examiner(s) to find out some personal information about the candidate(s), and is intended to help candidates relax. The information elicited during this stage can be used to select an examination pack appropriate to the candidates' interests. Many oral examiners, however, select the examination pack before meeting the candidates for ease of organisation, working through the packs in the sequential order in which they appear, and omitting packs which they dislike. After the Introduction, candidates are asked to comment upon photographs. This task is intended to give individual candidates the opportunity to take a long turn – candidates are allowed one minute to compare and contrast photographs on a particular theme. In this data sample, the tasks in the CPE Speaking Tests are thematically related, but not at FCE and CAE levels. In the FCE and CAE Speaking Tests, candidates are requested to perform a two-way collaborative task in the third stage of the test. CPE candidates perform similar ranking activities in this stage of the test. The final stage of each Speaking Test involves a Discussion between examiner(s) and candidate(s).

Candidates in this study were assessed on the following scales: fluency; grammatical accuracy and range, pronunciation, task achievement (CAE only), interactive communication and vocabulary resource.

## The Topics

As may be expected, a limited number of “general interest” topics, similar to those identified in Reda's (2003: 260) exploration of a corpus of ELT coursebooks, feature in the Cambridge Speaking Tests included in this data sample. Unsurprisingly, these topics reflect those covered in examination preparatory coursebooks, and are presumably considered ‘safe’; that is, culturally inoffensive and accessible to candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds. The following topics feature in the speaking test materials included in this data sample:

Table 1: Topics in the FCE Speaking Tests

Eating out  
Jobs

Travel  
Leisure time  
School improvements  
Rooms  
Work environments  
Youth clubs  
Holidays  
Strange pictures  
Relationships

Table 2: Topics in the CAE Speaking Tests

Crowded places  
Feelings  
Festivals  
Funding worthy causes  
Weddings  
Women's jobs  
Work experience  
Protective clothing  
The seaside  
Social problems  
Service station facilities

Table 3: Topics in the CPE Speaking Tests

Freedom and responsibility  
Culture  
Tourism  
Education

As the above tables reflect, CPE candidates are expected to be able to discuss a range of more abstract and academic topics than candidates in lower level Speaking Tests.

## Problems for Japanese Candidates

### Youth Clubs

The topic of youth clubs causes problems for two female Japanese FCE candidates who seem slightly confused about the concept of the youth club presented in the photographs and have difficulty equating this with the type of clubs organised for young people in Japan. This leads to some “uncomfortable moments” (Erickson and Schultz 1982: 104; Lazaraton 1991: 24), as participants appear to operate with differing cultural assumptions of a youth club, and the examiner possibly interprets the candidates' reticence as unwillingness to participate fully in the test. The candidates are presented with photographs of various activities and facilities (including sports, games, a library, a café, a computer room, a disco) that can be incorporated into a new youth club, which is to be built by the local council. Candidates are then asked to choose the three most popular or useful facilities or activities for young people to include in the youth club. The candidates' reticence in this task may result from their unfamiliarity with the type of youth club which is depicted. Clubs for young people in Japan

are normally organised by schools and take place either before or after school. They usually focus on one activity, such as a sport or drawing, and it is compulsory for Japanese school children to attend at least one club activity. This concept of a youth club is not compatible with the photographs of the youth club presented in the examination materials, which incorporate many different activity types together. Neither candidate explains this to the examiner, however, and it becomes difficult for the candidates to respond to the examiner's prompts about how successful this type of club would be in Japan.

#### Example 1

- 375 E: But how/ how popular/ would a/ a youth centre/ like this/ be/ in Japan <do you think?>  
376 think?>  
378 H.M: Oh? / in Japan  
380 N.K: <Erm>  
382 E: Would it be popular with young people?  
384 N.K: <Yes/ I think> / there are (xxx) sports clubs/ is very popular  
386 H.M: <Yes/ I think so> uhm  
388 E: Uhm  
390 N.K: ... computer school is not popular/ but/ it's useful  
392 E: Uh-huh  
425 E: Okay/ and er/ what age range/ do you think/ it would be popular with/ what kind of age of young person/ would like to go to a youth club  
428 (3.0)  
430 H.M: <Erm>  
432 N.K: <I think/ erm/ maybe university> students  
434 H.M: Yes/ and high school/ and er so on/ yes  
436 E: Students/ what about younger teenagers/ what can younger teenagers do  
438 N.K: Younger teenagers have to study or (hhh) preparing enter high school  
440 E: But you can't study all the time  
442 N.K: (hhh)  
444 H.M: Yes of course/ uhm (FCE.3: L425-444)

The prevalent view in Japan is that final year junior high school and high school students must completely devote themselves to study. Candidate N.K's laugh (L442) may indicate her reluctance to contradict the examiner on this point, and accounts for the initial suggestions that older students could participate in this type of club. This is finally alluded to at the end of the test, but not before considerable fruitless questioning and the examiner's dismay at their lack of elaboration on a topic which is assumed to be within their experience.

#### Example 2

- 521 E: <Yeah> so: / it seems that only university students have a good time/ yeah  
523 H.M: [Yes (hhh)]

525 N.K: [Yes (hhh)]

527 E: ... the other ones study/ okay/ thank you/ that's the end of the test (FCE.3: L521-527)

The supposedly innocuous topic of youth clubs perhaps suggests how easily cultural bias can enter the speaking test materials.

#### Strange Pictures

The topic of 'strange pictures' in the two-way collaborative task does not appear to motivate two male Japanese FCE candidates in their early twenties to talk. Indeed, this topic leads to very stilted interaction, characterised by lengthy pauses. The two candidates are asked to talk about what the strange pictures may represent, and then to choose one picture each for their respective homes and decide where to put it. The nature of this task involves candidates closely scrutinising the pictures and this may have a detrimental effect upon the interaction, as eye contact is limited with candidates focussing on the pictures rather than each other. The lexical resources involved in this task also seem quite demanding, as the pictures present abstract and surreal images, such as Dali's time pieces.

#### Example 3

- 234 Y.Y: Strange (xxx) (5.0) I prefer this one/ because/ this is impossible (1.0) situation  
236 T.S: Ah yeah (hhh)  
238 (4.0)  
240 Y.Y: Yeah/ I also like this  
242 T.S: Chess  
244 Y.Y: Chess  
246 (7.0)  
248 T.S: Yeah I don't know how to play/ er/ there must be/ they must be poster or yes (FCE.4: L234-248).

Given the age of these candidates, this topic may well be beyond their personal experience: they are unlikely to have had to select art for their homes in real-life contexts. In addition, they may have limited experience of talking about art, because this is not a usual topic of daily conversation, and seems far more challenging than some of the other topics included in the FCE materials in this data sample, such as holidays and jobs (see Table 1 above). Indeed, this topic may well have been more appropriate for a CPE level Speaking Test.

#### Which Topics do Candidates Want to Talk About?

Unsurprisingly, candidates are more likely to develop the interaction when they are allowed to talk about themselves or about topics within their personal experience: topics that they know something about and on which they have views and opinions. Candidate R.M., for example, volunteers personal information about his part-time job in London during the Introduction stage

of the FCE Speaking Test:

**Example 4**

- 130 E: Wh- what do you do in your free-time  
132 R.M: Er/ I/ (coughs) I teach/ er/ I teach English  
people Japanese language  
134 E: Oh really  
136 R.M: Yeah/ three days/ a week  
138 E: Yes  
140 R.M: ... at the University of London (FCE.5: L130-140)

During these relatively rare moments in the Speaking Tests included in this data sample, we appear to get more 'conversation' and less 'interview'. The importance of such impromptu, spontaneous and natural contributions cannot be overlooked if the aim of a speaking test is to measure conversational ability in English, and it is clear that test developers need to build more opportunities into the test materials for this type of interaction to occur.

Candidate S.K. (CAE.1) produces more coherent and fluent discourse when she is allowed to discuss the familiar topic of Japanese festivals (Example 5), compared to her performance when discussing the photographs depicting 'Feelings' in the one minute extended turn (Example 6):

**Example 5**

- 486 S.K: Okay/ er/ in my prefecture/ there is a big festival/ er/ in the middle of August  
490 And/ er/ we call it (xxx)/ it last three days/ er/ nowadays/ it's becoming like  
491 a carnival/ because/ er/ it's very new one/ er/ it just started after World War Two/ and  
492 er/ people wearing Japanese traditional/ erm/ kind of clothes/ it's not kimono/ we  
493 call 'happi' (CAE.1: L486; L490-493).

**Example 6**

- 270 S.K: this: / okay/  
271 this one/ (hhh) er: / I don't know/ maybe (2.0) they are singing/ this is singing  
272 (1.0) or (2.0) or maybe it's admiring someone (hh) / but I don't know/ and er/ uhm  
273 (3.0) I think/ er: / maybe they are meeting someone/ very special person/ and/ er/ they  
274 wanted to meet some/ and they're now/ and finally they met/ and how can I say/ it's  
275 very/ er (1.0) er/ they are very/ glad/ not glad/ yeah glad/ yes I think so/ uhm (CAE.1: L270-275).

This suggests that allowing candidates to talk about familiar topics can help 'scaffold' their L2 ability, a view which is supported in the literature (Zuengler, 1993). This should certainly be taken into account in the development of speaking test materials to ensure

that fair and accurate testing procedures are adopted.

Table 4 presents some of the other topics initiated by Japanese candidates in this data sample:

**Table 4: Topics Initiated by Japanese Candidates in the Speaking Tests**

- Japanese culture and traditions
- The Hanshin earthquake
- Japanese musical instruments (the 'koto')
- The Japanese education system
- Japanese holidays ('Golden Week')
- Japanese traditional dress (Japanese 'socks' or 'tabi')
- Japanese literature ('The Tale of Gengi' – the first Japanese novel)
- Difficulties in learning English
- Japanese views on travel abroad
- The sensitivity of Japanese people

Japanese candidates evidently value the opportunity to discuss topics related to their daily lives in Japan. They enjoy informing the examiner about aspects of Japanese culture and traditions which they assume will be unfamiliar. They perceive a genuine communication gap when discussing these topics, because they feel they have to explain what 'tabi' are, or what you do with a 'koto'. This generates more discussion and greater participation from candidates, and this seems a more natural, far less 'painful' way to elicit a language sample suitable for assessment purposes compared to the nerve-racking, one-minute extended turn.

## Implications for the Development of Speaking Test Materials

The content of speaking test materials must be given serious consideration if we are to elicit a greater number of 'conversational' contributions from candidates. Young and Milanovic (1992), in their investigation of the Cambridge Speaking Tests, found that topics related to non-native speakers' personal experience of work were sustained longer than more general topics, such as 'learning' or 'having a good time'.

The Cambridge Speaking Tests allow time in the opening stage for the exchanging of names and general introductions. Lazaraton (1991: 117) claims that this is 'a crucial part of oral competence', and thus merits inclusion in the test format. The small talk initiated in the opening stage of the test can also be viewed as an attempt to offset the constraints of the testing procedure and create a more relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore, the examiner discovers personal information about the candidates which should perhaps influence the selection of a particular examination pack. According to Selinker and Douglas's Discourse Domain Model (1985: 199), second language learners acquire their language through different domains of discourse, which usually involve specific

content areas. If this is true, a candidate's performance may vary from one discourse domain to another and selecting a topic of interest to the candidate may scaffold their L2 ability. The importance of content selection is reinforced by Zuengler's study (1993: 423) which found that 'inequalities in content knowledge can lead to different patterns of active participation by interlocutors.' Although Zuengler's (1993: 423) research did not involve oral proficiency interviews, implications for oral testing can be inferred:

*'... when NNSs are engaged in talking about something that they know more about than their interlocutors, their greater content knowledge can override any limitations they may have in their oral proficiency, and enable them to be the talkers in the conversation. In so doing, these conversations may provide the best opportunity for learners to perform this aspect of what Young (1992) calls their "interactional competence".'*

## Conclusion

This article has examined the topical content of the Cambridge Speaking Tests and shown the importance of topic choices if individual candidates are to engage with the test materials and demonstrate their proficiency in English. Effective speaking test materials must crucially and minimally allow examiners to elicit a language sample suitable for assessment purposes. Speaking tests are likely to capture more accurate evidence of oral proficiency, and be more appealing for candidates if they allow opportunities for more personal exchange of information, and create 'genuine' communication gaps. Allowing candidates more responsibility to select topics which interest them could potentially offset the one-sided nature of the interview by reducing examiner control, and encouraging greater candidate participation. Whilst recognising the importance of test standardisation, it is incumbent upon test developers to explore new and innovative ways to create choice and flexibility in speaking test materials. This is in line with Tomlinson's (1996) and Maley's (1998) views on the importance of developing teaching materials which offer learners choices, and would seem a fruitful direction for future research into the development of speaking tests.

## References

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## Acknowledgements

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# Making computer assisted language learning (CALL) a regular part of the ESL curriculum moving from hesitancy to fluency

*Barry Bakin, Los Angeles Unified School District, USA*

Computers and computer-based technology have become increasingly common in the language classroom. The purpose of this column is to explore ways in which all ESL teachers can integrate the use of computers into their professional work including the development of original materials. The topics that will be covered include activities for one's own professional development and activities that students can do. It will be assumed that the readers of the column will have a minimal amount of previous knowledge and experience with using computers in general. Readers with more experience and awareness of computer techniques can skim the column for new information and skip the basic instructions as they see fit. Much has been written in various forums about the many uses of computers in language teaching. Some of those forums will be introduced in this column as resources for you to make use of as well. The growth of computer usage and sources of information for how to use computers has exploded in recent years so any attempt to cover every source of information is out-of-date almost as fast as it is printed! Readers of this column should consider it a springboard for further investigation and exploration.

The general framework that this column will follow will be to introduce or discuss at least one technique or resource that the individual instructor can use to improve his or her own skills, classroom practice, or teaching, or at least one activity or technique that can be used with or by students each issue.

One of the greatest obstacles facing instructors who would like to introduce the usage of computers into their classrooms is the lack of support from colleagues or their institution. This could be technical, material, or curricular support. You can expand your support system tremendously by joining one of the email discussion lists especially for ESL teachers. An email discussion list is simply a group of individuals who have expressed an interest in asking and answering questions about a particular topic using email. People who do not wish to participate by asking and answering questions can also join the list and simply view the questions and answers of others. The mechanism for joining an email discussion list is quite simple. The individual who wants to join sends an email message

to the email address of the list he or she wants to join. The email message does have to contain a specific message in a specific format because the message isn't read by a human. The message is an instruction 'read' by a computer. Sending the message in the appropriate format automatically 'enrolls' the sender on the list. Once enrolled, that person will receive all messages sent to the list in their own email inbox. While each list can be set up differently, they usually have some common features. One of the typical features is the option to get all messages sent to you individually (you would receive every single message as a separate message) or as a 'digest' (you receive all the messages bundled together as one message). Some people prefer the digest format because it cuts down on the total number of messages they receive in one day. Posting messages involves sending your question or answer to a specific email address. Your question will then be sent automatically to everyone else on the list. Some lists are 'moderated'. That means that before the message gets sent to everybody, it is read by a human who decides if the message is appropriate for the list. The reasons that a message would not be considered appropriate are many. They could include not being about the topic of the discussion list, being too long, including inappropriate language or advertising, or simply being a repetition of something already discussed. Having a moderator keeps the list on topic and prevents wasted time (you don't have to read messages that aren't appropriate, repetitious, too long, or even perhaps rude or angry!).

While there are many lists that would be appropriate for you to join, I would like to recommend that any instructor who wants to get support for their attempt to integrate and use computers in their language instruction or for their own professional development start with the TESLCA-L discussion list. This discussion list is a 'sub-list' of the TESL-L discussion list. The TESL-L discussion list deals with more general issues of teaching English and is also a valuable resource, but is not the focus of this column. With almost 5000 participants worldwide, the TESLCA-L discussion list is devoted to discussion about 'computer-assisted' learning. The list is very active meaning that if you submit a question to the list, you are virtually guaranteed a response of some sort within a day or two and often within a couple of

hours. The teachers who participate in the TESLCA-L discussion list represent the complete spectrum of the ESL/TESL universe with many supplementing their ESL knowledge with extensive technical knowledge. Many of the participants are recognized leaders and innovators in the field of computer-assisted language learning and have been using computers with their students for many years. Your questions will generate responses from teachers who work in many different contexts providing you with a wealth of experience from which to get advice. In the unlikely event that the participants cannot provide you with a direct response, you will get suggestions about other sources that might help you resolve your problem.

To subscribe to the TESLCA-L discussion list, you must first subscribe to the TESL-L list. This can actually be done at the same time in the same email message. As soon as you subscribe, you will be sent an email message with a complete list of instructions for turning on and off the reception of messages, what to do when you go on vacation and you don't want to get the messages for a short period of time, how to get the list in the 'digest' version and how to unsubscribe when necessary. To subscribe you will be sending an email message to the computer that controls the list. That computer is called a 'listserv'. Address your message to: [listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu](mailto:listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu) but don't write anything on the 'subject' line. The 'body' of your message will be: 'subscribe tesl-l your firstname lastname' (no quotation marks) and under that 'set tesl-l digest' (again no quotation marks) and then finally 'subscribe teslca-l your firstname lastname' (again no quotation marks) This series of instructions will subscribe you to the main TESL-L list which you will receive as a 'digest' (all of the messages for any one day will come at one time) and to the TESLCA-L list at the same time. You will get each of the TESLCA-L messages separately. If you want to get the TESLCA-L messages as a digest also, add one more line 'set teslca-l digest' (again without quotation marks). Remember to replace the 'firstname lastname' parts of the instructions with your own first and last name!

The above subscription message for a fictional teacher, Tom Smith, would look like this:

```
subscribe tesl-l Tom Smith
set tesl-l digest
subscribe teslca-l Tom Smith
```

Remember to send the email message to [listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu](mailto:listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu) leaving the subject line blank.

If you've done it correctly, you will receive a welcome email message and directions about managing the TESL-L and TESLCA-L lists in your email inbox in a few seconds! You will start to receive messages from other people on the discussion list shortly thereafter. It's always a good idea to read questions and answers for several days before attempting to post your own question. In fact, some lists have rules preventing new members from posting questions for a short period of time. This helps cut down on messages that are inappropriate or repetitive. Joining the TESLCA-L email discussion list will save you many hours of fruitless searching for technical help and frustrating attempts to solve problems all by yourself. Discussions on the list will also provide you with many ideas for integrating computers into your language teaching and suggestions for implementing those ideas with a minimum of difficulties. Joining TESLCA-L or another email discussion list is a great first step for ESL teachers who want to use computers for themselves or with their students.

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# Confessions of a listening scriptwriter: Towards a principled approach

*Chris Mares, University of Maine, USA*

All teachers have had the experience of picking up and then staring in bemused amazement at a textbook and asking themselves, “How could anyone have written this?” This experience can be even more disturbing if you yourself are the author. Believe me. I know. Fortunately this experience, on the few occasions it has happened to me, occurred at the proof reading stage when I was checking listening scripts and so there was ample opportunity to redress the horrors that I had inadvertently put to paper.

Confessions aside and conscience clear, my mission in this article is to offer practical suggestions to assist writers of listening scripts to approach their keyboard with a sense of principled purpose and quiet confidence.

First, let us accept that one main goal of listening materials is to facilitate the acquisition of language in our learners. In order to achieve this goal research tells us that the input must be comprehensible and engaging. Common sense also tells us that material must also model language usage, recycle language on a regular basis, and provide useful, high frequency structures and lexis, while also providing examples of useful discourse structures. It doesn't take much to realize that the writing of listening scripts is a complex undertaking.

Here then, are my thoughts on the process including pitfalls to beware of and principles to abide by, plus a smattering of common sense observations.

## Keep an eye on yourself

Whatever you are writing, monitor yourself. Don't force a script just so it can carry a particular example of the target language. If the script reads unnaturally to your ear, then it probably is unnatural and should be dealt with accordingly. You are not doing a service to learners by presenting language that would simply not be used or seems overly contrived. The use of the third eye is to keep you on track as much as possible. Ask yourself whether someone would actually say what you are claiming people say. And, if in doubt, ask a friend or colleague. If you are British and you are writing in

'American English', check with an informant to ensure that you are making natural language choices. This applies at the functional level, the register, level, the lexical level, and the syntactic level.

## Check those books out

Become familiar with the nature of spoken grammar. Look at the works of Mike McCarthy and Ron Carter. Read transcripts of authentic interactions to see how people actually interact in terms of turn taking, choice of syntax, lexis and tense. Look also at the rate of completion or non-completion of utterances, the way people finish each other's utterances or launch of on seemingly unrelated topics. Not that you should use these factors exclusively to drive your scripts but at least to get an understanding of the difference between the idealization of language use in terms of what we think people say and what people actually say.

## Get beyond your idiolect

Don't limit yourself to writing only as you yourself would speak. Like writers in other genres, materials writers need to be able to 'speak' as their characters. This involves being sensitive to the language of others. By observing the language of others, noting the expressions and lexis that others use it is possible for writers to get beyond their own voice. Keep a notebook. Record ways people 'do' things with language in terms of introducing topics, changing topics, showing enthusiasm, etc.. Note how registers change in different settings. Become a better informed about language.

## Provide a variety of listening experiences

If interest and engagement are factors we are striving for with our listening materials, then our learners need to hear more than simply dialogues. We can also model group interactions, interviews, speeches, presentations, and story telling. Less common experiences might include, talking aloud to oneself, something I do,

regularly, along the lines of, “Now what was it I was going to do, ah, yes, feed the dogs.” Also, we can model the inner voice which I would describe as the articulation of our inner feelings to ourselves. An example from my own life, would be this fear driven musing as I was on the brink of sleep, “I wonder if she was with him last night ... I hope not ... But what if she was?”

## Remember the fragments

Anyone who has been involved in the writing of ‘model dialogue’ scripts will be familiar with the perceived need, particularly among editors, for openers and closers and an artificially regimented notion of turn taking. However, if your focus is on developing listening skills, rather than ‘modeling’ (in the most contrived sense) for production then we can look more at fragments of discourse. In this way it becomes possible to eavesdrop and to phase in and out of interactions. On the listening end both of these approaches can add interest to scripts while on the writing end it is extremely liberating.

## Remember that someone has to listen to what you write

I often tell my students in writing classes that they need to imagine someone (me) actually reading their writing. And that someone (me) expects to find it interesting and involving, to get something from it, to learn, and possibly be entertained. It’s worth

remembering this as a writer of listening scripts. Humour is good, especially humour that exemplifies the universal features of the human condition, that anyone from any culture can recognize: the loser, the show-off, the stud, etc. Learners may not be able to always describe what’s funny but they can recognize it – and they will.

## Conclusion

Personally, I have gone through a metamorphosis as a writer of listening scripts. I began by having to write forced dialogues that supported the PPP paradigm. Now, thank goodness, we are moving into a more enlightened era and it is possible to focus more on skills building as well as other aspects of language not previously described in more traditional approaches. For me this has been both liberating and inspiring. It does mean, though, that writers need to stay alert and informed, they need to hone their ear, take notes, observe, and remain ever questioning. And if you find yourself saying of your own script, “No. Nobody would ever say that,” then, rather than thinking you have failed, consider that you are in the process of doing your job well.

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# Writing a Publishing Proposal

*Dorothy E. Zemach, Cambridge University Press, USA*

This article will first discuss circumstances in which you would prepare a publishing proposal and then give advice on how to prepare one.

There are basically two cases in which you would write a proposal to a publisher: 1) You have an idea for a textbook you'd like to have published; 2) A publisher has asked you to submit a proposal (in the lingo, they've 'solicited' a proposal from you).

If you have thought up the idea for the book on your own, then you will need to look around at various publishers to see where you'd like to send it. The easiest ways to do this is to sit down with a lot of publishers' catalogs or to browse the exhibitions area of a major ELT conference. You want to find a publisher with books somewhat similar to what you'd like to write (so you know they'd like your book too), and yet not too similar (because then they wouldn't need your book). It is not a good strategy to blindly send your proposal out to every publisher whose address you can find. Not only is it a waste of time, paper, and postage, but if you send an obviously inappropriate proposal to a publisher, they might remember your name; and then what will they think when you have an appropriate proposal to send them?

You should definitely send your proposal to a real person. Take the time to find out the name of the person responsible for receiving manuscript inquiries; usually, this information can be easily found at a publisher's website, but if for some reason it cannot, then call the publisher and ask for the appropriate name. No publisher wants your manuscript getting lost or going to the wrong person any more than you do.

Can you send your proposal to more than one publisher at a time? Opinions vary on this, but I would say yes. If someone later contacts you and expresses interest, at that point it's good manners to mention you've submitted it to other places as well; and of course if you wind up signing a contract with one publisher you must withdraw your proposal from any other publishers you've sent it to. A publisher can take two to four months to evaluate your proposal, so if you send it to three publishers in turn before the fourth one expresses interest, you've already lost a year.

The second case, a solicited proposal, is slightly more hopeful than the first. This means a publisher has decided that there is potentially a market for a certain type of textbook, and now they're looking to

find someone who can write it. You can assume some amount of market research has been done that supports the proposal, and the publisher is prepared to devote development time, money, and staff to the project. It's not a guarantee that you will get a contract, but it is a definite indication of interest in the project, and in you personally as well.

Publishers may solicit proposals for the same book from several authors or author teams at the same time. You can (and should) ask if you are the only person from whom a proposal has been solicited, and a publisher may elect to tell you how many people are submitting proposals, but you cannot ask who your competition is.

Solicited proposals can also be broken down into two categories: those that come with specific briefs and those that don't.

A 'writing brief' is a document that describes the publisher's vision of what the book will be like. It will probably describe the intended markets, age of the learners, length of the book, general approach, and sometimes such details as unit length or specific techniques or topics to be used or avoided. This information is the result of the publisher's research and reflects what they think their markets would find useful. Your job as an author is to show how you would turn in the information in the brief into actual book pages. It is certainly possible to deviate from the brief if you can provide a good reason. As an example, I once co-wrote an academic writing book for a publisher whose brief asked for three review units. However, since we spiraled material throughout the book, we didn't think review units were necessary, and instead used the pages for photocopyable peer review sheets. Since we could assure the publisher that we had taken care of the need for review, the change was approved.

If a publisher gives you only a general idea of what they're looking for (i.e., 'a low-level reading book' or 'a secondary conversation course'), then they are interested in your interpretation of what that book or course should look like. You have more creative leeway here, in exchange for less guidance. It is more likely in this case that the publisher is going to look at proposals from more than one author.

In either case, publishers may or may not pay for a solicited proposal. If they offer a fee, it is considered

an advance against royalties; that is, if the proposal is accepted, then the amount you receive will be subtracted from your first royalty check. If your proposal is not accepted, then you keep the fee—and they keep your proposal. Solicited proposals generally belong to the publisher, especially if a fee was involved. The reasoning is that they have provided the market research and some guidance (and often some editing and revision), and also that they don't want to alert other publishers as to what kind of project they're considering developing. Some solicited proposals (though not all) come with a contract that details how much money will be paid and who retains rights over the material.

Whether your proposal is solicited or not, and whether you are sent a writing brief or not, you will need to prepare the same sort of material for your proposal. Most publishers have proposal guidelines on their websites; if for some reason your intended publisher does not have guidelines posted, you could safely use those for any other publisher, as they don't differ much, or follow the guidelines below.

For any proposal, you should include:

- a rationale that explains what is it you want to write, and why you think it's unique and important. This doesn't need to be more than a page and should be straightforward and clear. You don't need to 'talk down' to editors—they're in the same field you are—but this is not the place for jargon and long lists of references.
- the intended market, including target countries, types of schools, and age levels. You might want to indicate whether the book is intended for experienced or inexperienced teachers or both.
- a discussion of the competition. You should include bibliographic information and an analysis of the books that people are currently buying because your book is not available. This is an important section of the proposal: It is your chance to show that you understand your intended market (certainly the publishers will know if you've left out a top seller for that market), and that you understand both why the competition is currently successful and where there is room for improvement. I like to analyze each book from the competition in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and then point out how my proposed book would have similar strengths and overcome the weaknesses. You might need to spend some time going through publishers' catalogs, reading textbooks, and talking to teachers to get some of this information, but it will be time well spent.
- a table of contents, as detailed as possible. The more complete a syllabus you can show, the easier it will be for someone to evaluate your proposal.

Which structures do you intend to cover, and in what order? What topics will each unit feature? Will there be a functional syllabus as well? Which reading strategies will you teach?

- a list of components, such as student book, teacher's guide, audio CDs, workbook, CD-ROM, testing packet, etc. At the proposal stage, it's usually best to just list what the student book would need in order to function properly. Some additional components are added after a book has proven that it is popular.
- a resume of your education, teaching experience, and publications (including articles). This doesn't need to be a full CV; you just want to show what you know and what types of materials you could write. This should definitely be a page or less, and usually just a couple of bulleted paragraphs is fine.
- two or three sample chapters. Even if you have completed the manuscript, don't send more than three chapters. The chapters should be 'typical' ones and need not be in sequence.

The sample chapters that you submit are crucial; more than anything else, this is what editors will study while evaluating your proposal. You should therefore prepare them as much as possible to look like published pages. If there will be artwork on the page, put in boxes to show where it will go and how large it will be. One common mistake some authors make is to try to cram too much material onto a single page (perhaps a holdover from trying to keep classroom worksheet material from running onto a second page). Look through some similar textbooks from the same publisher and get a feel for how much text and how much art is on one page (note that this can vary according to the intended market, so make sure you are inspecting books for the same audience). If the unit title will be larger than the reading text, enlarge the font of the unit title. Again, you can look at published textbooks to get an idea of how many different fonts are used on a page (generally not more than two) and how many different sizes are used.

For any artwork required, you will need to provide a detailed description, something like 'Photo: two young men talking, one Caucasian, one Korean. They are in their early 20's and are standing at a bus stop.' Some editors like these descriptions written on the page (inside the box or circle or whatever you've provided to indicate the size and position of the art), and others prefer to have the art numbered and described in a separate document (so the page itself would just indicate 'artwork: 01', and a separate document would provide details). I don't think it's cheating to ask an editor which style she prefers. If you can't easily do that, then print out your pages both ways and choose the style that looks best to you. You want to help the editor to see what your page would look like in the

actual book. I've sometimes included artwork in a proposal because I could (i.e., my co-author had some appropriate digital photos, or I badgered an artist friend into drawing some sketches), but this is by no means necessary, and is only helpful if the artwork is quite close to what you want.

When your materials are ready, send them off. Many publishers will accept proposals sent electronically as attachments, but you should check with the publisher's website or call someone before you assume that this is OK. To consider a proposal properly takes some time, so you should be prepared to wait two to four months. If you haven't heard anything after four months, it's all right to send a follow-up letter asking if they are going to review the proposal and if so, when that might be. You might be asked to submit a round of revisions in response to an editor's feedback; this indicates that at least they feel there is hope for the project.

If your proposal is turned down, it's not necessarily the end of the road. Accept your rejection gracefully, hold on to any feedback that you receive for future reference, and express your interest in sending a proposal in the future or working on other projects the publisher feels are appropriate for you. I submitted three proposals (two solicited and one sort of hinted at) for Macmillan that were rejected before securing a contract for a book. For both the author and the

publisher, it's a question of matching the right people to the right project, and just as a publisher wants the best author possible for their books, you want to be writing a book you're qualified to write and which will be successful. Sometimes proposals are rejected because there doesn't seem to be enough interest in the markets to justify the cost of publishing the book; it might be a brilliant book, but if it can't cover its own expenses, it won't be published.

If your proposal is accepted, then it's time to negotiate the contract and start writing. In the April 2004 volume of Folio, both Ivor Timmis and Chris Mares wrote excellent articles from the author's point of view about dealing with editors and revisions. In my next column, I will write about the same topic from my experience as first an author and then an editor.

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The ideas for this article come from Dorothy's years of experience as an author and now an editor.

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## The British Universities/MATSDA Postgraduate Research Conference Perspectives on Materials Development 2005

Saturday 7th May, 2005, 10am – 4pm

*School of Languages, Headingley Campus, Leeds Metropolitan University*

We invite post-graduate students and researchers from British, EU and overseas universities to submit abstracts for 55-minute oral presentations related to research that informs materials development for language learning. We see this as an opportunity to put forward and exchange ideas on the interface between learning/teaching and materials development. We welcome contributions from both first time and experienced presenters and are happy to consider presentations on research in progress.

**Deadline for the receipt of abstracts: Tuesday 12 April, 2005**

**Enquiries, Reservations and Applications - please contact:**

Helen Crossley, School of Languages, Leslie Silver International Faculty, Leeds Metropolitan University,  
Macaulay Hall, Headingley Campus, Leeds LS6 3QS

Tel: 0113 283 7440. Fax: 0113 274 5966. Email: [H.Crossley@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:H.Crossley@leedsmet.ac.uk)

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# Education With Impact – Developing Lessons for Language and Global Issues

## Education With Photojournalism Sites

*Greg Goodmacher*

### Pedagogical Reasons for Using Photojournalistic Websites

The field of photojournalism excels in creating websites that often touch, sometimes upset, and always stimulate the minds and hearts of viewers and readers. Teachers and materials designers must keep in mind that “at the heart of all thought and meaning and action is emotion” (Brown, 2000: 63). Students are affective beings with inquisitive minds. The works of professional photojournalists are often so moving that the images facilitate emotional and cognitive understandings of local and global issues much more effectively than the words of most teachers and the texts and visuals found in most schoolbooks. Powerful visuals produce strong intellectual and affective impact. As Tomlinson states, “Materials should achieve impact. Impact is achieved when materials have a noticeable impact on learners... when the learner’s curiosity, interest and attention are attracted” (1998:7).

Photojournalism sites allow students and teachers to see what is happening around the world on a daily basis. Many of my students are much more interested in current events than past events. New photographs and videos of compelling issues and events are added to many photojournalistic web sites daily. For example, during the recent war in Iraq, most of the major news organizations with web sites uploaded photographs that had just been taken by their photographers in hospitals, military conference rooms, and in the midst of action in battles. In contrast, due to lengthy production times most textbooks on current events show images that were created at the earliest one year ago. This is an important point because numerous students are relatively unfamiliar with internationally significant events and world leaders from just a few years ago.

Many of the sites show images and topics that may be considered too graphic or controversial for inclusion in textbooks written for a global audience. On the other hand, photojournalism sites are often vivid and realistic. An aspect of the job of a photojournalist is to bear witness to and to record controversial events. The disturbing photographs of abuse of prisoners in

Iraq would most likely not be accepted for publication in a textbook. However, these important photographs can be used in thought provoking lessons. Major publishing companies do not want to offend any of their markets, so they provide non-controversial topics and texts and images. In an evaluation of materials produced by major British publishers, reviewers found that “the topic content of many of the units, in many of the courses, is distinctly trivial for adult learners” (Tomlinson et al, 2001:87).

The sheer amount of photographs visible on photojournalism web sites is much greater than what can be displayed in any textbook. Due to financial and space limitations, textbooks may have only a few images per topic or chapter. In contrast, some photojournalism sites may have hundreds of accessible photographs as well as links to other such sites. The great variety of images allows teachers to find the most suitable images that match the content to be taught, the interests of the students, and the maturity level of the students.

Additionally, the quality of photography is of much higher caliber and thus has more impact than those in most textbooks. In addition, with the use of LCDS, (portable projectors that can be connected to computers) teachers can project these profound and stimulating images onto a large screen. As we all know, the impact of an exciting video on a television screen is considerably less than the impact of the same images shown on a large movie screen. The relationship of image size and affective impact applies to small pictures in a textbook as compared to images shown on a large screen or computer monitor.

Both teachers and students can access and analyze news texts and photographs of current events from a variety of cultural perspectives. For example, images, headlines, and articles uploaded on the Aljazeera web site may differ significantly from those shown by CNN, even when they cover the same topic. In such situations, teachers can introduce students to how language is used to express differing realities of one event. Helping students understand the connections between language use, media bias, and culture is a very important part of developing their critical thinking

skills. Moreover, foreign language students mainly experience the culture that they are studying through the statements and behavior of their instructors and the class materials and syllabus. The Internet becomes a resource for cultural studies (Warschauer and Meskill, C. 2000).

The authenticity of photojournalism sites is extremely motivating for many students, and many teachers and students value the use of authentic materials. Julian Edge succinctly wrote: "Authentic materials bring the means of learning and the purpose of learning close together, and this establishes once again a direct link with the world outside the classroom" (1993:47). Even manipulated images are useful as they offer opportunities to study and understand how language and media are used to influence others.

The importance of learning styles has deservedly received a lot of emphasis in ELT literature. As a result, we know that there are many kinds of learners. However, most textbooks seem to "favor analytic learners who like to focus their conscious attention on discrete learning points" (Tomlinson et al, 2001:83). Teachers can easily use the images on web sites in a variety of ways that will stimulate learners with differing learning styles. Visual learners will benefit greatly from increased exposure to visual images. Students who learn when affectively touched will benefit from the emotionally touching nature of photojournalism. As Spolsky states, "Learning is best when the learning opportunity matches the learner's preference" (1989:111).

## Photojournalistic Images and Lessons for Language and Global Issues-based Content

At this point, I would like to give some examples and make suggestions for the pedagogic use of photojournalism sites to teach language and global issues-based content. With a few suggestions and examples, teachers will be able to create exercises that will expand the limits of student's world knowledge and recharge their enthusiasm for learning to communicate.

### A Multi-Skills Lesson

Students responded with great interest to the following lesson which integrated conversation, writing, grammar, computer skills, and exposure to global issues. The source of affectively engaging images for this lesson is [www.auroraphotos.com/col\\_SocialIssues.shtml](http://www.auroraphotos.com/col_SocialIssues.shtml). This site is outstanding in both affective impact and pedagogical usefulness. It exhibits a wide range of photo documentaries: a family all infected with AIDS, cyber sex, Alzheimer's disease, women in Afghanistan,

children laborers, among many others. The lesson started with students in a computer lab viewing the site from individual computers. Each student communicated with a partner in another location using NetMeeting, a program which allows people to have conversations through the computers, chat, and send documents back and forth. The partners were allowed time to look freely at various photo documentaries, ask questions, and discuss their reactions. The grammar and writing practice required describing and using superlatives. The teacher provided them with vocabulary such as the following: disturbing, hopeful, fascinating, depressing, shocking, educational, moving, etc. Each pair had to decide which picture was the most shocking or most touching, etc. Then as pairs they had to write sentences using the superlative forms of the provided vocabulary and describe the pictures well enough for the teacher to understand which pictures they had chosen as "the most educational" or "most touching", etc. Working collaboratively, the students sent Word documents back and forth to each other as they proofread and edited their work. At the end of the assignment, each pair e-mailed the final document to the teacher.

## Conversation Practice

A simpler conversation task that also involves description is to have students sit next to each other in pairs of A and B. The teacher projects a very interesting photograph, chosen on the basis of impact, topic to be taught, and vocabulary it might elicit, onto a large screen. A student can see it and must describe the image to B students who keep their eyes closed, listen, ask questions, and try to imagine the image. After a suitable time period, B students open their eyes and look at the image, comparing it with their visualizations. Then B students and A students change roles and work with another picture. One of many good sites for this purpose is the United Nations Photo site at <http://www.un.org/av/photo/subjects/index.html>.

## Listening and Summarizing Lessons

CNN <http://www.cnn.com> and The New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/> and many of the other major news sites have slide shows and short videos of recent and newsworthy events which are perfect for listening skills development. These can be used in various ways. One way is to assign students to look at the slides or videos and listen to the audio text. The visuals help aid comprehension even if the audio is difficult to understand. Students can write a summary of the information in their own words after they have listened as often as they feel sufficient. This points out an advantage of having students working individually on their own computers; students are in

control of how often they would like to hear a text. An oral summarizing lesson can be developed by the teacher locating two different slide shows or videos and dividing the students into pairs. Each partner becomes responsible for orally summarizing the slide show while the other partner watches it with the sound turned off. Teachers can also create comprehension and response exercises to match the videos and slide shows.

## Reading Development

Some photo documentaries are accompanied by text, which is often as stimulating as the photographs. The photographs help aid comprehension. An excellent resource for such reading texts is *The Photojournalist's Coffee House*, which can be accessed at <<http://www.intac.com/~jdeck/index3.html>>. Among the various covered topics are homelessness, teen pregnancy, and refugees. Some of the texts were written by the subjects of the documentaries. Teachers can easily create comprehension or response activities for these just as if they were stories found in a textbook.

### Photo Documentaries and Writing Practice

After viewing a selection of photo documentaries regarding people who are approximately the same age as the students, the students are assigned to write in a diary, for a week or so, as if they were that person. Students must attempt to imagine the daily life and feelings of that person. While developing various writing skills, such an exercise could possibly lead to increased sympathy with and curiosity about people such as refugees, child soldiers, victims of natural catastrophes, etc. The photo documentaries could also be used for comparison and contrast essays. Students would come to a deeper understanding of how their life styles differ from many in the world, but they would also come to an understanding of the basic needs that unify all of us.

## Various Other Teaching Suggestions

Creative teachers can use photojournalistic materials in numerous ways to develop knowledge of global issues and language skills. Students can pretend to be photojournalists interviewing some of the people in the images. Teachers can teach new vocabulary with images. The images can be used to create schema before working with other texts. The sites can be excellent resources for students to use for research purposes and presentations. Students can work on developing solutions to some of the problems that they have studied. The list of how to use these resources is as long as the imagination of the teachers and students. One last suggestion is to ask your students what they would like to do with the sites. The author of this

article would be glad to receive any of your ideas if you would share them with him at [gregory@gipac.shinshu-u.ac.jp](mailto:gregory@gipac.shinshu-u.ac.jp) or [ggoodmacher@hotmail.com](mailto:ggoodmacher@hotmail.com).

## A List of Useful Web Sites and URLs

Auroraphotos: [http://www.auroraphotos.com/col\\_SocialIssues.shtml](http://www.auroraphotos.com/col_SocialIssues.shtml)

Aljazeera Homepage: <http://english.aljazeera.net/Channels/>

American Photojournalist: <http://www.americanphotojournalist.com/>

Behind the Viewfinder, A Year In the Life of Photojournalism: <http://www.digitalstoryteller.com/YITL/about.html>

CNN Homepage: <http://www.cnn.com/>

The Photojournalist's Coffee House: <http://www.intac.com/~jdeck/index3.html>

The New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/>

United Nations Photo: <http://www.un.org/av/photo/subjects/index.html>

Please be sure to contact the webmasters for permission if you wish to copy and use the images. Webmasters will often grant permission for their sites to be used for educational purposes within a classroom. Auroraphotos and the United Nations gave the author permission to use images from their sites for classroom use.

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# The Rubrics: Reloaded

## Raising options for how we frame learning tasks

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### Introduction

The language learning materials created over the years have reflected changes in methodology, learning theory, new paradigms shifts, and perhaps reassessments of the same. They have also undergone changes in packaging, becoming multi-skill and multi-level 'coursebook' series, even into so-called 'global' coursebooks (see Tomlinson for definitions). More immediately obvious changes are, not to some small extent, physical innovations due to technological advances and tastes in publishing and global developments in the market for and marketing of materials. It would be interesting to compare the revisions over time to editions of prominent, long-running texts.

One item within materials that has remained fairly untouched and constant, however, is the entry point into tasks (or activities, or exercises, etc.), namely the written instructions, hereafter referred to as 'rubrics'. If we can say that rubrics have a methodology (and I think we can) then there have been few substantial 'innovations' in how the activities are presented via the rubric. However, users of materials must deal with more and more information at this 'direction' stage as a result of methodological changes to materials (cf. communicative approach, learner-centered classroom) and above-mentioned aesthetic changes. Where once we may have had a monochromatically presented number and a didactic written instruction, in addition to the latter we may now be treated to an array of visual cues such as representative icons, colours and shades, font variations, headings, and directions to a plethora of relevant and/or supplementary pages such as dialogue transcripts, 'Student A'-'Student B', cultural explanations, grammar tables and the like elsewhere in a textbook. These are now 'standards' and we may yet be seeing the next permutation in the physical presentation of textbooks such as the *bonsai-ed In English* (Viney & Viney) or 'split' editions.

Changes can also be identified in the degrees of cognitive and linguistic complexity in rubrics. A simple analysis will often reveal multiple tasks within one rubric ('Listen .... Write .... Discuss ...'), conditions and contexts for learners to consider ('Imagine you are in New York...', 'What would you do if...'), and metalanguage. In the case of more learner-centered materials, rubrics may require an investment from the

learners based merely on a rubric. In many respects, rubrics have taken on a 'life' of their own (Bayne 2002a).

This paper would like to raise the issue of alternatives and considerations in 'presenting' rubrics, in effect to reload the rubrics. To this end we could consider a number of options:

- reorganise the methodology of rubrics in language teaching materials.
- remove rubrics from language teaching materials
- relocate rubrics in language teaching materials.
- reconsider the users of rubrics.
- reskill teachers and students in use of rubrics.
- rephrase rubrics in order to make them learner-friendly.
- reduce the rubrics, either gradually over the progression of the book, or for specific activities within units, for example.

A full discussion of all of these options, many of them inter-related, would require far more space than is available here. This paper, therefore, will take up only the removal of rubrics from learner materials as it represents most obviously the concept of reloading rubrics and is of a clear interest to the author (Bayne 2003a; Bayne 2003b). Associated problems will be raised in the process.

### Definition & Caveat

The 'rubric' in ELT materials has previously defined as:

*those graphically-represented directions, written directions and instructional examples in the target language which are addressed to learners in materials with the aim to organise and focus the classroom and learners for learning purposes via specific learning tasks.*

(Bayne 2002a)

A variety and combination of elements found within

them, for example, a rubric may contain:

- an explicit, single-step or a multi-step and multi-skill written instruction/direction written (usually) in imperative form
- directions on how to organise learners (in pairs, groups etc.)
- contextualizing information and conditions
- questions essential to the successful completion of the actual task
- examples or models, with or without reference to them
- distinguishing design, graphics and layout manipulations (size, style or type of font, colour, shading or 'white space', numbering or lettering)
- titles denoting skill or topic focus
- directional graphics and icons (a 'pairwork' icon, for example)
- references to other pages or activities in the text

(Bayne 2002b)

In this sense the rubric can be considered as 'broad', comprising of the wide range of these features, such as this example:


### Speaking: Paraphrasing and Discussion

Work in small groups. Read the quotes. What does each one mean? Match each one to its paraphrase. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each one? Report your findings to the class.

[followed by sets of quotes and paraphrases.]

(Jamall & Wade 2000, p. 56)

Rubrics could be 'narrow' in the sense that it is primarily a 'written instruction' directing the user in how and what to do, as in the following:

A  Listen and practice.

(followed by a short dialogue on tape)

(Richards, Hull & Proctor 2001, p. 2)

This leads us to a caveat of sorts. Some features of the 'broad' rubric will need to remain to define limits of tasks and to visually distinguish between them. These may be headings in distinct font, for example. The content of the heading, however, would require deeper consideration: should it express a topical focus or a linguistic focus? Furthermore, as textbooks contain 'task chains', the final links often are encapsulated in an autonomous rubric that has no physical representation such as a dialogue or table, for example. These forms of rubrics may need to be retained, but again we could

question whether there might not be another way to present them. Options for reloading rubrics that will not be discussed in this paper have relevance to this caveat.

## Removal of Rubrics

Removal refers to rubrics *in learner materials*. It must be stressed that removal is *not rejection*, and the instructions, at least as suggestions, need to be available to teachers in some form.

### Teacher's Book

Most coursebooks from major publishers have a Teacher's Book (TB) for further suggestions on conducting lessons, additional activities and for supplementary materials, often photocopyable. In some cases an annotated Student Book may be reproduced within the TB. Smaller scale publishers may forego TBs, however, and 'one-off' textbooks may be self-contained in this respect. Rubrics removed from Student Books can be included in the TB. On-going research conducted by the author suggests that there is no agreement among materials writers and publishers on who the rubrics are actually for, but there is a strong opinion that rubrics are directed explicitly or implicitly at teachers (Bayne 2002b). This is supported by a previous examination of teachers' in-class treatment of rubrics that shows teachers take on the role of 'interpreter' of the rubrics (and thus materials writer's) intent a vast majority of the time in the classroom (Bayne 1995). The same research indicated that degrees of modification (see Maley for options) are undertaken by teachers to deal with ability issues and possibly time restraints.

A removal of rubrics to a Teacher's Book could provide many options for one activity not possible in current texts where one is the norm. This would still satisfy the needs of novice teachers, possible non-native speaker teachers, and cater to the reality that teachers do become tired, need substitutions and are generally human. At the opposite end of the experience and energy scale, teachers can ignore and innovate as they see fit without 'interference' from a pre-determined rubric. A survey of strategies learner used to follow rubrics in the classroom raised the possibility that while learners draw on a teacher's treatment of rubrics to the greatest degree, confusion can arise as learners 'cross-reference' with an in-textbook rubric (Bayne 1998). This is particularly true where teacher adapt and innovate.

Based on anecdotal evidence, one problem with the removal of rubrics to a Teacher's Book is that 'teachers don't read Teachers Books' or even necessarily buy them. Another problem is when there is no TB.

The rationale as outlined above holds for the following options, a Supplement Insert (SI) and On-line Sites.

## Supplement Insert

There is a precedent for separate Supplement Inserts (SI) as answer keys, dialogue scripts, tests, and possibly photocopyable materials. In the local context, Japan, separate supplements have been provided that explain methodology and guidance in Japanese (cf. Tsuda 2001). A Supplementary Insert would be an autonomous publication, potentially brief, that would include either 'one-off' rubrics that would traditionally frame the task in a Student Book, or it could offer a limited set of options for tasks. An SI would not be of the dimensions or depth of what is currently recognised as a Teacher's Book.

A question may arise as to who receives it and how. The SI would need to be available to bookshops to include with each purchased text (this is currently the case where CDs are stored separately and included at the time of purchase). Direct orders to the publisher or book supplier, usually bulk orders, could be given this option, or a certain number of SI could be supplied with the order. The SI would be inclusive in the cost of the textbook (fees for replacements are another issue). An SI would require an additional printing step and item which translates into more costs. However, an SI would be easy to up date as new ideas and post-piloting feedback on the textbook comes in.

One problem with both removal of rubrics to a Teacher's Book or Supplement Insert is that, as items remote from the Student Book, they can be misplaced and generally go astray. While this can and does happen to any item, it would have more repercussions in the classroom than perhaps a lost audio source. These repercussions may not necessarily be negative ones as research cited above suggests teachers interpret and innovate tasks as part of their classroom roles.

## On-line Site

Precedents for on-line support of textbook series and even individual textbooks also exist. More and more 'flagship' coursebook series have learner-access sites, testing materials and supplementary materials accessible via the Internet. Potential purchasers can also view a range of products on-line at publishers' home-pages. It has been suggested that the World Wide Web also be used for piloting of materials (Donovan p. 188). The possibilities for on-line access is endless, however. This option for rubrics could see the material writer's original rubric, with possible variations. It would also allow the original author and publisher to add and update. There could also be links that allow teacher's using the textbook to suggest their own rubrics and for teachers to access and view these. All of these possibilities would be available to learners for self-study. Materials writers could even create a separate link solely for this self-access purpose, thus the same textbook and tasks could be used in teacher-fronted

classrooms and for remote learning. On-line access could address the issue of 'lost' Supplementary Inserts and Teacher's Book by providing a downloadable version. A new problem could be access to computers and the Internet.

## Photocopyable materials

Teachers (or others in the decision-making process) may opt for students to have immediate access to and possession of rubrics. They may wish to encourage self-study, they may need to ensure uniformity between different classes, or they may need to conform to course aims based around a textbook. A class may also be shared by different teachers. Teachers may have their own designs for rubrics for in-class purposes. Or teachers may simply feel a textbook (or rather a class of students) with no rubrics goes too far beyond the pale. Students may request rubrics for the same reason. All of the above removal options should be photocopyable and at no cost. In the case of Supplement Inserts, they should be an optional extra in any case, and students could be directed to on-line sites to make their own copies in a form that is convenient for them. Teachers may feel it is easier to provide rubrics themselves, however, from whatever source.

## Conclusion

The preemptive nature of materials in general (and potential responses) has been noted (cf. Allwright 1981; Maley 1998; Edge & Wharton 1998), however the rubric is very rarely cited for its role. This article mentioned that rubrics have taken on 'a life of their own' and to some extent that is unavoidable (a rubric is a materials writer's statement of intent for a task and reflects the overall methodology that drives the materials). It is a life, however, that has a central bearing on life in the classroom. Despite the best intentions of materials writers it seems classroom participants are more and more being plugged into 'the system' of a text or coursebook with the rubrics as the commands. As autonomy becomes a desirable feature of the language classroom, both in what teachers wish to foster in and expect of our students, and demand for themselves, we must address the paradox of using remotely-developed materials in classrooms. One related issue would be questioning the need for rubrics as they currently exist.

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rubrics, intercultural communication and, more recently, academic writing.

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# Police Materials and Teacher Development Project Estonia 2003

*Robert A. Buckmaster, Peacekeeping English Project in Estonia*

## Background

This project was run as part of the Peacekeeping English Project which is managed by the British Council in 24 central and eastern European countries for the British Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office. North Region consists of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and the Police Materials project was initiated and led by PEP Estonia. The principle partners on the Police Materials project were police training institutions in North Region countries.

The project was designed to simultaneously produce materials for the teachers in the partner institutions and to improve their material development skills. There were two participants from each country.

The materials produced were for serving police officers who would have to co-operate with national, international and multinational law enforcement institutions.

The course was led by myself (PEP Consultant in Estonia) with the support of Roma Valiukiene, the PEP consultant from Lithuania. One of the two participants from Poland was the new PEP consultant, Jake McClure acting as a member of the writing team rather than as a consultant.

The course was specially designed to cope with issues that have been raised about short INSET courses, which are now discussed briefly below.

## Training Issues

Lamb (1995) argues that

*'Teachers attending short INSET courses are usually exposed to a great deal of new information and ideas. While this can be exciting at the time, the after-effects may be less salutary.....very few of the ideas presented in the course were taken up in the way anticipated by the tutors, mainly due to the mediating effects of the participants' own beliefs about teaching and learning.'*

Tomlinson (1987) similarly warns of the dangers of such short courses:

*'My growing fears that short in-service courses are potentially dangerous have been reinforced by meetings and correspondence with ex-participants of such courses who feel guilty and inadequate because they have not been able to do what their courses inspired them to try.'*

Both are concerned with the consequences of training which result from contextual conflicts (where context is taken to include teacher's previous training and current beliefs as well as the professional, institutional and national situation). Trainers often come in and train without a full knowledge of a teacher's local context and the teacher is left to integrate the lessons learned during the training as best they can, or reject them. Both Roma and myself work with these teachers in their contexts and so we have some understanding of their situation.

McGrath (2003) notes that materials design courses

*'can address issues which teachers feel to be of immediate relevance while at the same time bringing into focus a whole range of other issues, e.g. theories of language and learning, needs analysis, classroom management, methodology.'* (p20)

We focused on the materials writing process and encouraged teachers to 'reconceptualise' their teaching from the work done on the course with materials. Thus materials development was the key into the other facets of teaching.

McGrath goes on to warn that this:

*'remains....an idle exercise unless there is a practical application in the form of carry-over from training context to teaching context.'* (p20)

He cites Breen et al (1989) recommending creating

*'a training loop involving the trailing of the materials produced and subsequent reporting back.'* (p20)

This was also part of the project plan as will be seen below.

The Project Event: Length and Venue

The course was initially envisaged as a two-week event with a week of writing followed by a week of review and rewriting. This was shortened to a week because of the costs of the venue and the difficulty in releasing participants for so long. The venue was a villa in Haapsalu, a small seaside town in north-west Estonia.

Normal coursebook projects have timespans that run into years but this project, aimed at a set of photocopiable materials, was based on the experiences of Brian Tomlinson in running short, intensive materials writing courses (Tomlinson, 1995, 1998, 2001).

However, there are certain significant differences between Tomlinson's experiences and this course. While Tomlinson suggests working with large diverse groups of teachers, school principals and Ministry of Education officials in one national context, we were working with a small number of teachers from four different countries, each with their own particular teaching situation and needs. This meant that the lessons from Tomlinson were not directly applicable and many things had to be learnt during the course itself.

## Project Aims

The teacher development aims of the project as stated in the project plan were to move to 'an end state of where the participants' professional behaviour regarding materials development, teaching, professional development, co-operation, learning styles etc has been significantly enhanced.'

There were several 'layers' to the course, though these were not hierarchical but entwined in the whole process. The two main layers were the development of learning materials and the development of the participants' skills in creating appropriate learning materials and supporting teacher's notes. In addition we hoped to develop their capability to work effectively as a materials writing team. and their ability to reflect on teaching processes and methodological choices. We also wanted to foster impartial peer-review work and contribute to their peers' professional development.

## The 10-P Model.

A 10-P model was developed to encapsulate the various stages of the project in a memorable way. These stages are:

1. Purpose
2. Planning
3. Process
4. (Principled) 'Plagiarism'
5. Peer-Review

6. Product
7. Production
8. Promulgation
9. (Further) Peer-Review of Practice
10. Professional Development

This section will expand on the P's in relation to this project.

## Purpose

The purpose of the event is made plain in the objectives:

To develop a set of photocopiable materials for serving police officers who need to engage with individuals and organisations outside their own countries to further international co-operation.

To develop teachers' ability to produce language teaching materials for a specific audience and to encourage reflection on their own teaching beliefs and behaviours through a constructive dialogue on the materials writing process with their peers and the course consultants.

There was a clear need in each country for materials to be addressed towards serving officers who need to interact with their counterparts in other institutions. A writing brief was developed from the needs of officers surveyed in Estonia and this formed the basis of the materials writing content of the course.

These aims and the writing brief were shared with the participants in a briefing document before the course. Included with this document were a number of articles on materials development, principally, Tomlinson (1995) and Tomlinson (2000)

The next stage took place at the beginning of the writing event itself.

## Planning

On the first day of the course in Haapsalu there was a session on team roles and one on concepts of materials development based on the introduction in Tomlinson (1998). These sessions were to provide a reference point on group processes and on materials development for discussion during the week.

These sessions were followed by an extensive planning meeting which involved discussion and agreement on the scope and topics of materials, the look of the materials and the working arrangements and ways of reviewing materials and the writing process.

## Process

This is the actual agreed day-to-day production of materials. We agreed to work in four pairs who would each try to produce two text-based 'worksheets' with

teacher's notes per day though most pairs managed one 'worksheet' each day. Each pair would change daily so that everyone would have the opportunity to work with four other partners from different countries and institutions. The previous norm for these teachers has been to develop their own materials individually so this co-operative working was a clear innovation for them.

The agreed writing process was for the writing pairs to have 30 minutes to brainstorm activities for material, then search through books for further ideas and revise their ideas before presenting to the whole group for feedback within an hour. After this collective critique, the pairs would write their materials. Units were displayed for 'post-it' feedback at the end of the day before final revision.

During feedback at the end of the first day Jake McClure suggested adding a stage before the group critique where each pair would send one person to another table to give and receive comments on initial thoughts. This was tried on the subsequent days and found to be a useful activity.

## **(Principled) 'Plagiarism'**

This, perhaps disturbing, term refers to the use of published materials for ideas and to the construction of texts from multiple sources to avoid copyright issues.

Rather than use texts and worry about obtaining copyright later we felt that actually writing original texts was a useful (though difficult) skill in itself and worth practising. Original texts were constructed from several sources so that the teachers had ownership of original texts. The new texts were written with a particular slant, for example a human rights text questioned the concept of human rights, which would engage the students rather than be a neutral text that everyone would agree on.

I had pre-written several texts so that for the first two days there were enough materials to work on and the participants could concentrate on exploiting the text. Later in the week they had to create their own texts and then exploit them.

A large selection of newspaper and magazine articles and web stories and books were provided as source materials and there was a comprehensive collection of methodology and ESP books to draw on for ideas for text exploitation.

## **Peer-Review**

This is the process of peer review, which happened informally throughout the materials production process and more formally at an end-of-day review of the materials, the production process and the team processes.

An initial review of ideas was held after an hour on the first day. The feedback I gave was quite 'direct' as we only had a short time to try out new ideas and approaches. Most ideas focussed on the language – grammar and vocabulary – in the text and not on the attitudes and opinions etc of students in response to the texts, contrary to the ideas we had discussed and agreed on the first day.

This over-concentration on the formal language aspects of texts is quite common among these teachers, as they have tended to see the text as something to be decoded. It is interesting to note that by the end of the week there were no instances of grammar focus on any of the worksheets, though of course the texts could be exploited in this way by teachers.

The subsequent afternoon peer review consisted of adding post-it comments to the displayed materials and then discussing these comments.

A constant theme through the formal and informal feedback was on how the materials would be taught and if they would be effective. At one stage two of the writing teams suggested an activity where the students would role-play a conversation between a police officer's computer and stapler. When asked to actually attempt this during feedback they very sportingly did and found it difficult, strange and of dubious value.

An additional element in this end of day review was feedback and changes to the process of materials development and discussion about group processes. The participants were given time to collect their thoughts on paper then asked to share them with the group.

## **Product**

During the course I spent evenings polishing the materials – correcting typos and ensuring a uniform design – in an effort to have the materials ready for teachers to take away with them.

## **Production**

Each participant received the materials in electronic format on CD-ROM and in a paper version. The materials are also available from the Military English web site.

The materials are 'copyright-free' and may be used by any of the participants and their institutions. The actual physical reproduction of the materials, whether as single worksheets or as part of a course book, is entirely up to the participants and institutions.

## **Promulgation**

This stage refers to the dissemination of the materials

to a wider audience, both inside the partner institutions and wider throughout the project.

The materials are available to all on the Military English web site and project managers throughout the project will publicise the materials in countries outside the North region.

## (Further) Peer Review of Practice

There will be further stages of peer review as the materials are taken up and used by others.

On the final day of the course the participants, led by Roma Valiukiene, prepared a materials evaluation sheet to be used by themselves and others. This was planned around these key questions of whether the materials are being used, do they work and do they need to be changed/developed/ abandoned?

## Professional Development

This, the 'final' stage of the model is the ultimate aim of the project. The questions of whether the teachers' materials development processes and their teaching have changed formed the basis of a discussion on the final day. The participants, with Roma facilitating, produced a self-assessment sheet to be completed in a year's time to evaluate any changes in the teachers' materials development and teaching. These forms will be shared with other members of the writing team and will provide input into a possible follow on course in 2004.

## Conclusion

The course and materials were highly rated by participants. Tomlinson (1987) produced a set of criteria for the effectiveness of in-service courses and the course met these. The course objectives were specific, limited and behavioural and the content of the course was limited and had a specific focus. The course made use of the experience and expertise of the participants and it was experiential. Follow-up monitoring and support are planned.

It remains to be seen though whether the materials will be used and will prove to be effective or if

the participants' materials production processes and teaching change as a result of the course. This makes the follow-up activities by the PEP consultants in each of the region's countries on a day to day basis essential but also suggests the need for an (as yet unbudgeted) follow-up course.

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The materials can be viewed at <http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/militaryenglish>

*Robert Buckmaster has been an English language teacher for over ten years, and is currently working for the Peacekeeping English Project in Estonia. He worked for many years in Warsaw in Poland, and has also worked in Latvia, Romania, and Uzbekistan and in Scotland at the University of Edinburgh.*

FOR MEMBERSHIP AND *FOLIO* SUBSCRIPTIONS PLEASE CONTACT

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*Featured Writer:*

## Steven Gershon

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

In a vision that came to me while searching for that which would offer salvation from the evil lure of shoddy materials. Bathed in incandescent light was a frail, poorly-clad, earnest young marketing rep, holding aloft a gleaming, four-color, USP-filled spread, beckoning, 'come hither, and the glorious fruits of ELT publishing shall be yours'...

OK, the truth... About 12 or 13 years ago I was teaching at a university in Tokyo using the textbook the department chair had unilaterally chosen, all the while supplementing with handouts of my own. Eventually, I got the naïve idea that I could write a textbook as good as the one I was being forced to use. So my good buddy and colleague Chris Mares and I started scribbling notes. We found out what goes into a proposal, cobbled together a sample unit, and took it to one of the publishers at a JALT conference. They were polite and (mildly) encouraging. Millions of hours, thousands of faxes, two different publishers, and countless drafts later we were finally given a contract to write Online for Heinemann (now Macmillan).

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

Forget about 'least'- my publishers would kill me if I included one of their titles in that category. As for 'most', I'll cheat and mention two, but for different reasons.

My first project Online is the one I feel most affection for. However, aside from teary-eyed tenderness, I also feel a fierce pride about it because of the effort, energy, perseverance and commitment it took to see the whole process through. From the time we started tinkering to the time Online 1 was finally published, we were at it non-stop for nearly five years--much of that time before we even had a contract. It really was a case of believing in the pedagogic merit of our ideas and refusing to give up until they reached fruition. Moreover, in that project Chris and I did all the writing on the students books, workbooks and teachers books for all three levels, and I'll tell you, juggling the writing of Teachers Book 1 with the simultaneous drafting of Students Book 2, all the while staring deadlines in the face and holding down a full-time teaching job was no mean feat for a couple of novices like us!

The other project I'm particularly proud of is the listening course Sound Bytes, not so much in relation to the process, as it was commissioned by the publisher

(Longman) and therefore not so tortuous, but actually as an ELT product. I honestly think Sound Bytes is a damn good listening course. It is pedagogically sturdy with a coherent, well-balanced unit structure, includes interesting topics, and offers a good variety of doable tasks and realistic texts. It also contains some nifty features like the Professor who presents mini-lectures directly to the students, the Listening Tips that focus on bottom-up strategies, and the Radio Review units, which recycle language and strategies in a cool talk show format. And most crucially, it's flexible, fun and easy to teach. I have, in fact, used Sound Bytes quite a bit myself (though I normally cringe at the prospect of using my own textbooks!) and every time I use it I end up thinking, 'Yep, good stuff, we can feel alright about this one.'

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

I'll cheat again and give you two 'whos' and two 'whats'...

Who 1 & 2: I'm not sure about 'greatest influence,' but David Williamson and Steve Maginn have had a positive impact on my approach to the whole writing process. They've both been very hands-on in the development of two courses (English Upgrade and Gear Up) we've written for Macmillan, brainstorming ideas with us, helping to focus and shape our sometimes ill-formed notions, and giving us lots of room to run with our more promising ones. Most of all, through their involvement, they have continually validated and deepened my natural inclination to work very collaboratively. It is this 'team spirit' that I have come to appreciate in all my writing projects.

What 1: The nearly 25 years I've been teaching English in all kinds of settings--junior high schools, inner city high schools, commercial language schools, colleges, universities and graduate schools. This depth of classroom experience has given me a well-honed built-in crap detector, which I employ (mostly to good effect) when I write materials.

What 2: All the presentations (10-15 per year) I do at Asia regional conferences and book fairs. Knowing I'll have to present my materials to a group of qualified, experienced, sometimes jaded teachers who have already used a ton of course books, helps me to approach the activities, dialogs, rubrics, whatever I write, with more focus. Just when I'm stuck on draft n, and I've come to that 'the hell with it, it's good enough' point, I

take a breath and admonish myself, 'OK Stevie, imagine you have to present this book at the next big conference, and this is the only unit you can use to demonstrate the amazing features you've packed into it. Will it fly as it is? Right, now get to work on the next draft!'

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

OK, here's a free heads-up for my next editor...

a) I don't work quickly. I take my time to mull over a unit, tinker with activities, refine scripts, try to fit the pieces together. This has repercussions for writing schedules, phases of a project and editorial angst. But hey, that's what good co-authors are for.

b) I tend to overwrite, thinking that just one more line of dialog, one more exponent in the grammar box, one more prompt in the pair-work, one more question in the survey, will somehow make it all... better. After all the books I've written I should know by now how much can fit on a page. But hey, that's what good editors are for.

c) I tend to write units that are fairly tight. I like strings of activities that build on each other and lead somewhere. This can have a negative impact on the materials' appeal for teachers who have a more flexible, skip-around, pick-and-choose kind of approach. But hey, that's what good marketing reps are for.

d) I sometimes overshoot the level. In my desire to make the material as interesting, engaging and robust as possible, I may just plain lose track of what elementary level students can be expected to cope with. This usually gets fixed at second draft stage. But if not, hey, that's what good teachers are for.

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

OK, here's my CV for my next publisher...

a) A perfectionist bent. I'm kind of anal-retentive about wanting to get things right and not stopping until I really am satisfied that a syllabus, an activity, a set of target items, a script, a rubric, is the best it can be. Chris, my co-author since we began writing, refers to me as the 'Niggle-meister'. It fits.

b) An undersized ego. Brutal editors, anonymous in-house readers, talented co-authors and honest colleagues tend to deflate a bulging ego pretty quickly. I don't get too attached to material I'm writing just because it's mine. This means I take feedback (both positive and negative) quite phlegmatically. I'm willing to do what it takes to make the material better, even if that means admitting that the first draft is total crap.

c) A good ear for natural sounding language. I think all (OK, most!) of the dialogs and listening scripts I write sound like someone could have actually said it.

d) A personal touch. I believe that all content must at some point involve the students in focusing on their

own (and each other's) experiences, opinions and preferences. All of our materials personalize the topics with surveys, questionnaires and quizzes that seem to successfully engage students, make them think and get them talking.

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

Like Marc Helgesen said in his interview... white bread. Or to quote Bruce Springsteen, '57 channels and nothing on'. When you go to any ELT book fair, you see many materials that look so similar and basically do the same things. One wonders why half of them got published in the first place. I know this is the necessary business side of ELT publishing, and I shouldn't complain as I am part of the process. Actually, I'm not really complaining, but I do think that the push to keep adding titles to the catalogue list tends to squeeze profit margins to such an extent that the publishers too often go for the conservative, bland, easy sell.

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

I've heard some funny stories about bizarre 'out-takes' that got past the editor and ended up in the published material, but I've never seen them, so maybe they're in the realm of urban myth. I've also seen (and heard) some hilarious, mostly unprintable, spoof titles of the major course books (including my own) on the market. I think that's what bored marketing reps do in the off-season. Now, if this question were about ELT conferences, I'd have plenty of great stories for you...

8. *What have been the biggest changes in ELT materials during your time in the field?*

When I entered the ELT field a little more than 20 years ago, the notional functional syllabus was being presented as 'the way forward'. Its proponents were providing teachers with lots of new, interesting materials to choose from and providing MA students like myself with lots of fodder for thesis work. Of course, the functional syllabus, or at least some variation of it, is still around in classrooms all over the world, as is the traditional grammar-based syllabus. However, more recent developments in ELT are the corpus-based approaches, work done on spoken grammar, a focus on lexis and language chunking, an increased emphasis on learner autonomy and individual learning strategies, and the recognition of the value of structured planning time for the performance of oral tasks.

Though I'm not sure what kind of effect these changes are having on ELT materials world-wide, I imagine that their impact will grow. However, for the most part they tend to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary, and cyclic rather than linear. I suppose that's because learning a foreign language is such a complex individual process, we still don't really know exactly how people do it. Sure, bit by bit researchers are putting the pieces together, but for materials writers who have to produce stuff that works in the

harsh reality of large classes, mixed levels, severe time constraints, and overworked, underpaid teachers, we still need to rely a lot on good ol'fashioned instinct and guesswork.

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

Gotta cheat again and give you more than one...

a) Think global, act local. International ELT blockbusters do occasionally sprout (and we all know which ones they are), but in general I think publishers deliver the most effective, valuable goods when they really focus on the local population of students and teachers.

b) Keep providing all that great support and service to the teachers who use your materials. This includes the Teachers Resource Books packed with photocopiable activities and tests, the web sites with supplementary content, the author conducted user sessions, the peripatetic workshops, the e-newsletters... all that stuff makes it easier for the teacher to get the most out of the materials—and that's good for everyone.

Oh, and this silly little gripe...

c) Increasing the size of the photo on page 31, which squeezes the hell out of the space needed for the actual

activity, may get a few more teachers to flip through the book at the display booth, but it isn't going to make it a more effective learning tool for the students.

Sorry, just had to throw that one in.

10. *Imagine you have been posted to a desert island with VSO or the Peace Corps, which one ELT book would you take with you to help teach the local population? There is a solar-powered photocopier, video and tape-recorder. Could you please justify your choice in a sentence or so?*

I'm tempted to be PC and go with something like Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching (Canagarajah; OUP), just to remind myself to leave my NS ideological baggage on the plane when I arrive. But that probably won't help me much on that first Monday morning facing a new class of fifty. So, let's assume that choice doesn't count. In that case, I'd go with The ESL Miscellany (Clark, Moran and Burrows; Pro Lingua), a veritable one-stop shopping mall of grammatical structures, semantic sets, topics, situations, functions, customs, maps, signs, symbols, abbreviations, you name it. The hours and hours of thinking time I'll save with that book, will be so much better spent underwater, exploring the reefs that no doubt fringe the island.

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## “Matching Your Materials To Your Students”

Friday, June 10th – Sunday, June 12th, 2005

The Hark to Bounty Inn, Slaidburn, Clitheroe, Lancashire [www.harktobounty.co.uk](http://www.harktobounty.co.uk)

Enjoy a weekend, exploring the theme of localising materials to suit your students in the old Court Room, visiting the stunning Forest of Bowland and dining from an extensive menu at this traditional old English country inn situated in the village of Slaidburn in the Forest of Bowland, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is also a stone's throw from Settle and the Yorkshire Dales and a short drive from the Lake District.

### Facilitators

**Brian Tomlinson** (President of MATSDA, Reader in Language Learning and Teaching at Leeds Metropolitan University, Editor of Materials Development in Language Teaching, CUP and Developing Materials for Language Teaching, Continuum, co-author of Use Your English, Asahi Press, of Developing Language Course Materials, RELC and of Discover English, Heinemann)

**Hitomi Masuhara** (Secretary of MATSDA, Coordinator of Lesser-Taught Languages in Leeds Metropolitan University, contributor to Materials Development in Language Teaching, CUP and Developing Materials for Language Teaching, Continuum and co-author of Use Your English, Asahi Press and of Developing Language Course Materials, RELC)

### Programme

The programme will include demonstrations of materials in use by the facilitators, as well as sessions in which the participants will produce, for their own use or for publication, global materials designed to be localised and/or localised materials for their own institutions. It is also intended that participants will be helped to write journal articles relating to the materials they produce.

**Workshop Fee** £85 for MATSDA members; £115 for non-members

**Accommodation** £30 - 70 for bed and breakfast per day (See the Inn website for details)

**To Book** Contact Hitomi Masuhara, MATSDA Secretary tel: 0113 283 3189; fax: 274 5966 [H.Masuhara@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:H.Masuhara@leedsmet.ac.uk)

**To Join MATSDA** Contact Jo Appleton, MATSDA Membership Secretary tel: 0113 283 7400; fax: 274 5966 [J.Appleton@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:J.Appleton@leedsmet.ac.uk)

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# Reviews

*Carrie Steenburgh, The University of Maine, USA*

## Just Right: Intermediate UK Version

AUTHOR: Jeremy Harmer

PUBLISHERS: London: Marshall Cavendish Ltd, 2004

ISBN NO: 0-462-00719-7 (Just Right Intermediate Student's Book)  
0-462-00721-9 (Just Right Intermediate Student's Book Audio CD)  
0-462-00720-0 (Just Right Intermediate Student's Book cassettes)  
0-462-00716-2 (Just Right Intermediate Teacher's Book)  
0-462-00717-0 (Just Right Intermediate Workbook)  
0-462-00722-7 (Just Right Intermediate Workbook Audio CD)  
0-462-00723-5 (Just Right Intermediate Workbook cassettes)

Jeremy Harmer, a noted ELT author and trainer, has once again put his language teaching experience and knowledge into print with the comprehensive Just Right: Intermediate series. This well-balanced integrated skills series is comprised of 14 engaging units that covers many popular student interests (i.e. Shopping, Holidays, Technology, the Arts, and Football). Each unit focuses on promoting English language skills. This includes grammar, vocabulary, functional language, pronunciation, dictionary use and reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Packed with information and activities, this course book and accompanying materials will provide hours of instruction and learning for both teachers and students.

As with any learning, students need to be engaged and interested in the course material. Recognizing this as well as the need for schema building, Harmer provides multiple opportunities for students to activate their prior knowledge while interacting with a diverse range of activities. Each unit develops language skills with a variety of intriguing activities. Students practice listening and speaking through interviews, debates, games, radio commercials, sports commentary, and news broadcasts. To practice reading and writing, students are exposed to newspaper/magazine articles, questionnaires, excerpts from novels, letters, invitations, text messages, notes and biographies. The workbook and teacher's book provides additional skill activities to reinforce language learning. I particularly

liked the unit on sports where students listen to a football commentary (Student's Book) and then Harmer suggest taping a televised football match and having students supply their own commentary to it (Teacher's Book). Ardent football fans would surely enjoy the opportunity to call their own game.

The language section of each unit is intermixed with the skills and provides the conventional cloze, matching, identification of parts of speech, and sentence completion exercises that characterizes many grammar texts. Yet, many of these grammar activities are divorced from the unit topic making the flow of the unit a bit disjointed. However, the other sections on vocabulary and pronunciation sensitize students to how language is authentically used. Students learn collocations and how to identify them in real situations and focus on pitch, rhythm and varieties of English accents. Vocabulary is reinforced through functional language exercises such as asking for and giving recommendations, making promises, giving opinions and showing concern. Harmer includes a wonderful selection on asking for technical help which students will find particularly helpful if they are in a school or business situation with less than perfect computers!

Just Right: Intermediate Student Book successfully covers a lot of language learning within a small amount of space (150 pages.) Its major drawback is the layout of the text. The pages often seem too crowded with activities, information and illustrations. Although instructors might appreciate the wealth of activities, I've had some learners complain about the lack of space for notes and written answers and an overwhelming feeling when looking at the text.

For inexperienced instructors, the Just Right: Intermediate Teacher's Book is a solid resource. The introduction serves as a mini primer on methods and approaches to teaching EFL. Harmer carefully explains the linguistic and pedagogical principles that inform the Student's Book and provides methodological explanations for certain classroom issues. This section sensitizes teachers to correction methods, affective factors, extensive and intensive reading skills and strategies and the importance of choosing activities that are of high interest to the class. Of course, as Harmer himself acknowledges, teachers should learn how to use or adapt the coursebook so that it fits their specific classroom context.

The Just Right: Intermediate Workbook is another

handy resource for the less experienced teacher. It provides additional exercises for learners to practice what they have learned in the course book. Unlike the Student's Book, the layout is much more user friendly, with ample space to respond to answers. One section that is particularly useful is the "Thinking about Learning and Language". This provides an opportunity for learners to reflect on their own learning strategies, information that will be helpful to them as they continue their language studies after the coursebook is completed.

## Just Series American English version

AUTHOR: Jeremy Harmer

PUBLISHER: Marshall Cavendish Ltd, 2004

ISBN No: 0-462-00724-3 (Just Reading and Writing)  
0-462-00727-8 (Just Listening and Speaking)  
0-462-00726-X (Just Grammar)  
0-462-00725-1 (Just Vocabulary)

If you've ever been stuck coming up with a lesson plan or activity for your adult EFL/ESL class, the Just Series (Intermediate) is for you. Jeremy Harmer has created a text set that can be used independently or as an integrated course to help develop English language skills. Choose between Just Reading and Writing, Just Listening and Speaking, Just Grammar, Just Vocabulary, or select them all!

The Just Reading and Writing text contains fourteen units in an easy to understand format. Individual readings are presented on the left hand side followed by various exercises on the right that are perfect for teaching intensive reading skills. Each unit contains three reading selections of various type and length. For example in Unit One, you can find a questionnaire on personality, a short essay of Eugene Onegin and fictionalized student performance reports. The reading selections often serve as models for the writing activities. For instance after being exposed to letters, reports or invitations, students then attempt a similarly structured writing activity. Some units do contain specific advice for composition skills on text coherence, paragraph construction and revision. Although the reading selections and follow up questions are a terrific resource, I would suggest supplementing the writing portions to involve more expressive writing. For instance, in Unit 9 there is a reading selection on body language. Four short reading comprehension questions follow, asking for students to respond in writing. To incorporate more expressive writing, I would suggest that students interview each other to compare nonverbal gestures across culture (in an ESL setting) or they could conduct a survey to find the

most common nonverbal gestures in their culture (in an EFL setting.) Based on this information, students could write a report expressing their findings. Similar activities would complement this text.

The Just Listening and Speaking text is divided into two distinct parts (A and B) and could be a wonderful introduction to follow up authentic activities. Part A contains 20 listening sections with activities that are both extensive and intensive. Students are exposed to songs, travel announcements, news reports and other specially designed EFL scripts. To sensitize students to listening to authentic English, I would recommend the teacher supplement these units with additional activities. For instance, once students are comfortable listening to radio commercials (Listening 4), the teacher or students could bring in taped examples of English language radio commercials from their local station. Another great section has students listening to a song (Listening 6). Students and the teacher could then bring their favorite English song to class for additional practice, a sure attention getter. Additionally, I would encourage front loading for most of the units to initiate students into the topic. Although some of the units start with schema-building exercises, most do not, which may cause some difficulty for students to immediately engage with the material.

Whereas supplemental materials would strengthen Part A, Part B stands well on its own. There are ten speaking sections that are quite engaging and help students practice functional language. It too incorporates listening practice. For instance, a unit (Speaking 4) opens with an illustration of a house on a dark and dreary night. Students are asked to label certain portions of the house. Then they must listen to someone describing a similar picture and draw what they hear. Additional aural/oral exercises reinforce the language. Harmer uses a lot of visuals as speaking prompts to help draw students into the text. An audio-script, answer key and CD are included.

Just Vocabulary is packed with useful words, expressions and much more. Each unit (of thirteen) also works on pronunciation, functional language, dictionary use and listening skills. Although vocabulary is often presented with the help of illustrations and photos, some students could have a difficult time guessing at the meaning of some words as a textual context is usually missing. For example, Unit 5 starts with an introduction to types of homes. An array of descriptive adjectives is presented asking students to identify antonyms. A student who hasn't learned 'cramped' might not automatically match it to 'spacious' and the illustration of houses (palace, camper, tent, trailer home, houseboat) might not set off any bells regarding roominess. However, with a teacher's guidance, this type of word list could be used effectively. The follow up activities for these lists draw students' attention to how these words are actually applied and sometimes

changed in real use. The exercise for 'cramped' and 'spacious' has students listing the advantage and disadvantages of the described housing. Exercises focus on collocations, antonyms, prefixes and how a word can have positive, negative, weak or strong connotations. Each unit is comprised of three sections that build upon each other reinforcing the vocabulary and language. Students learn to think of vocabulary not just as single items but how they work together to form language.

For instructors who are trying to diminish the use of dictionaries in the classroom, I would offer a warning. There is a heavy reliance on having students use dictionaries to determine meaning, which could be appropriate for self-study. Some of these exercises, particularly the ones focused solely on dictionary work, are good practice in how to effectively read and use an English only dictionary. Students may learn to appreciate the full utility of a dictionary as a language resource. For those instructors hesitant to make dictionaries such a focus, I would advise them to encourage students to negotiate meaning between each other or ask the teacher to present it in context.

Just Grammar, the last of the series to be reviewed in this column, lives up to its name. Fourteen units are divided into three sections and focus on one area of grammar (ie relative clauses). The first section presents one aspect of the structure followed by practice. The second section examines another aspect with practice following. The final section is mixed practice of both aspects. The set up follows the conventional grammar textbook tradition that prescriptively states the rules and presents controlled practice in a fairly decontextualized manner.

That being said, this text could be a useful supplement for some students who are comfortable following this type of grammar instruction. I could see instructors best using this in a course where classroom time is spent discussing the grammar rules inductively, with contextualized, student driven examples and using Just Grammar as a workbook for homework. There's plenty of space for students to write answers in the book and then check them against the answer key in the back. Fun illustrations and colorful pictures prompt conversation or writing using the target grammar structure.

Overall, the Just series is a nicely packaged set of materials for teachers and students of American English. My feeling is that inexperienced teachers might get the most benefit from using this set but should be encouraged to supplement it with expressive and authentic activities. The Just series contains the same materials that are in the Just Right Intermediate UK version with modifications for place names, spellings and some vocabulary (flat versus apartment) so there's no need to buy both sets if you're willing to adapt it accordingly.

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

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

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