A Course in Language Teaching

Practice and theory

Penny Ur

TRAINEE BOOK

A Course in Language Teaching

CAMBRIDGE TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Series Editors: Marion Williams and Tony Wright

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Acknowledgements

To the trainer

This book accompanies the main book of *A Course in Language Teaching*. It provides the 'boxes' and necessary instructions for tasks for student teachers studying in a trainer-led course. Previously, trainers using *A Course in Language Teaching* as the basis for a course either had to photocopy tasks for the entire class as needed, or make all trainees buy the main book. The first option was tedious and expensive; the second was expensive for trainees, and also sometimes meant that they did not invest enough effort in doing some of the tasks, since suggested solutions were easily available.

All the tasks given in the main book are shown in this book, but without background information, bibliographies, notes or solutions. Note that occasionally the wording of these has been slightly altered in order to make them more suitable for the trainer-led course situation (see, for example, Module 3 Unit 2).

The absence of notes and solutions means that any assistance during performance of the tasks and feedback afterwards will have to be provided by you as necessary. Similarly, any background input will need to be supplied either by yourself or by the trainees' reading of the literature.

This book, therefore, cannot be used on its own. The main book of *A Course in Language Teaching* remains the best option for any teachers or teacher trainees who are working alone or who are participating in a course which does not provide for constant communication with a knowledgeable trainer. It may also be recommended as follow-up reading for trainees who have completed a course based on this book: it will enable them both to consolidate their previous learning and to enrich it through access to further information (the units they may not have studied) and bibliographical references.

Note that some of the boxes in the main book are not necessary for this one, and have therefore been omitted. However, the original numbering has been retained in order to preserve the correspondence between the two books; so you will occasionally find that a box number appears to be 'missing'.

To the trainee

In this book you will find all the task material, essential reading and worksheets that you need to complete a course based on the modules of *A Course in Language Teaching*. Your trainer will give you additional guidance and information to help you use the material effectively. But note that most of the personal learning and enjoyment that you get from it is likely to derive from your own critical reflections on the tasks and from sharing and discussion with other members of your group.

If you want access to further information on the tasks or topics for yourself, you may wish to refer occasionally to the main book. You will also find there more detailed annotated bibliographies for each module as a guide for further

Module 1: Presentations and explanations

Unit One: Effective presentation

Question If you have learned a foreign language in a course, can you recall a particular teacher presentation or explanation that facilitated your grasp of some aspect of this language? How did it help?

Group task **Peer-teaching**

One participant chooses a topic or item of information (not necessarily anything to do with language teaching) on which they are well informed and in which they are interested, but which others are likely to be relatively ignorant about. They prepare a presentation of not more than five minutes, and then give it.

As many participants as possible give such presentations.

For each presentation, pick out and discuss what was effective about it.

Unit Two: Examples of presentation procedures

Task **Criticizing presentations**

For each of the descriptions in Box 1.1, consider and/or discuss:

1. What was the aim of the presentation?
2. How successful do you think this presentation was, or would be, in getting students to attend to, perceive, understand and remember the target material?
3. How appropriate and effective would a similar procedure be for you, in your teaching situation (or in a teaching situation you are familiar with)?

BOX 1.1: DIFFERENT PRESENTATIONS

Presentation 1: Reading words

. . . But if the vocabulary of a child is still inaccessible, one can always begin him on the general Key Vocabulary, common to any child in any race, a set of words bound up with security that experiments, and later on their creative writing, show to be organically associated with the inner world: 'Mummy', 'Daddy', 'kiss', 'frightened', 'ghost'.

'Mohi, . . . what word do you want?'

'Jet!'

I smile and write it on a strong little card and give it to him.

'What is it again?'

'Jet!'

'You can bring it back in the morning. What do you want, Gay?'

Gay is the classic overdisciplined, bullied victim of the respectable mother.

'House,' she whispers. So I write that, too, and give it into her eager hand.

(from Sylvia Ashton-Warner Teacher, *Virago, 1980, pp. 35–6)*

Presentation 2: Learning a dialogue

The main objective at the beginning is to achieve a good working knowledge of the dialogue in the textbook, so that it can be altered or elaborated afterwards . . .

1. Read out the dialogue, utterance by utterance, and ask the students to repeat it in different formations, acting out the roles in the following ways:
   a) together in chorus;
   b) half of the class take one role and the other half take the other role;
   c) one student to another student;
   d) one student to the rest of the class . . .

(from Zoltan Dörnyei, 'Exploiting textbook dialogues dynamically',
Practical English Teaching 1986, **6**, 4,15–16)

Presentation 3: Accusations

It can happen to anyone who commutes – a traffic jam, a last minute phone call, a car that won't start – and you realise you are going to be late for a lesson . . . However, attack being the best form of defence, I recently found a way to turn my lateness to good account. A full ten minutes after the start of the lesson, I strode into the classroom and wrote on the board in huge letters

YOU'RE LATE!

Then I invited the students to yell at me with all the venom they could muster and we all laughed. So I wrote:

You're late **again**!

and:

<div align="center">

You're **always** late!

</div>

So we practised these forms. They seemed to get a real kick out of putting the stress in the right place . . . When we had savoured the pleasure of righteous indignation, I proposed that everyone should write down the accusations most commonly levelled at him (or her). A rich and varied selection poured out such as:

<div align="center">

You **always** eat my sweets!

You've lost the keys!

You haven't lost the keys **again**!

</div>

<div align="right">

(from Alison Coulavin, 'Excuses, excuses', *Practical English Teaching*, 1983, **4**, 2, 31)

</div>

Presentation 4: Dramatic soliloquy

. . . I shall never forget Miss Nancy McCall, and the day she whipped a ruler off my desk, and pointing it towards her ample bosom, declaimed, 'Is this a dagger which I see before me?' And there we sat, eyes a goggle, hearts a-thumping, in electrified silence.

<div align="right">

(a letter from Anna Sotto in *The English Teachers' Journal* (Israel) 1986, 33)

</div>

Unit Three: Explanations and instructions

Task **Giving instructions**

Stage 1: Experience

If you are currently teaching, notice carefully how you yourself give instructions for a group- or pair-work activity in class, and note down immediately afterwards what you did, while the event is still fresh in your memory. Better, but not always feasible: ask other participants to observe you and take notes.

Alternatively, within a group: each participant chooses an activity and prepares instructions on how to do it. The activity may be: a game which you know how to play but others do not; a process (how to prepare a certain dish, how to mend or build something); or a classroom procedure. Two or three volunteer participants then actually give the instructions, and (if practical) the group goes on to start performing the activity.

Stage 2: Discussion

Can you think of ways in which the instructions in Stage 1 could have been made more effective?

Unit One: The function of practice

> **BOX 2.1: SKILL LEARNING**
>
> VERBALIZATION → AUTOMATIZATION → AUTONOMY
>
> | Teacher describes and demonstrates the skilled behaviour to be learned; learners perceive and understand. | Teacher suggests exercises; learners practise skill in order to acquire facility, automatize; teacher monitors. | Learners continue to use skill on their own, becoming more proficient and creative. |
> | --- | --- | --- |

Question Can you think of a skill – other than swimming or language – that you successfully learned through being taught it in some kind of course? And can you identify the stages defined in Box 2.1 in the process of that learning as you recall it?

Question Practice is the activity through which language skills and knowledge are consolidated and thoroughly mastered. As such, it is arguably the most important of all the stages of learning; hence the most important classroom activity of the teacher is to initiate and manage activities that provide students with opportunities for effective practice.
Do you agree with this statement (which expresses my own belief), or would you prefer to qualify it?

Unit Two: Characteristics of a good practice activity

Task **Defining effective language practice activities**

Stage 1: Selecting samples

Think of one or more examples of language practice of any kind which you have experienced either as teacher or as learner, and which you consider

were effective in helping the learners to remember, 'automatize', or increase their ease of use. Write down brief descriptions of them.

Stage 2: Analysis

Consider: what were the factors, or characteristics, that in your opinion made these activities effective? Note down, either on your own or in collaboration with other participants, at least two such characteristics – more if you can.

Stage 3: Discussion

Share and compare ideas with those of your trainer and other participants, and discuss.

Unit Three: Practice techniques

Task **Assessing practice activities**

For each scenario in Box 2.2, discuss:

1. What is the apparent goal of the practice activity?
2. How far is this goal achieved?
3. What are the factors that make it effective or ineffective?
4. If you could redesign the material or offer advice to the teacher, what would you suggest?

BOX 2.2: PRACTICE SCENARIOS

Scenario 1: Spelling
This is based on the game 'Hangman'. The teacher writes seven dashes on the board, and invites the students to guess what letters they represent. They start guessing letters:

Student 1: E.
Teacher: No. (writes E on the board, and a base-line indicating the foot of a gallows)
Student 2: A.
Teacher: Right. (fills in A on the second-to-last dash)
Student 3: S.
Teacher: No. (writes up S, draws in a vertical line in the gallows-drawing)

. . . And so on. After a minute or so of guessing, the class arrives at the word 'JOURNAL', which is written up in full on the board. It is then erased, and the teacher, or a student, thinks of another word, marks up the corresponding number of dashes, and the guessing process is repeated.

Scenario 2: Listening comprehension

The class listen to the following recorded text:

Ozone is a gas composed of molecules possessing three oxygen atoms each (as distinct from oxygen, which has two atoms per molecule). It exists in large quantities in one of the upper layers of the atmosphere, known as the stratosphere, between 20 and 50 kilometres above the surface of the earth.

The ozone layer filters out a large proportion of the sun's ultra-violet rays and thus protects us from the harmful effects of excessive exposure to such radiation.

The teacher then tells the students to open their books and answer the multiple-choice questions on a certain page. The multiple-choice questions are:

1. The passage is discussing the topic of
   a) radiation. b) oxygen. c) ozone. d) molecules.

2. Ozone molecules are different from oxygen molecules in that they
   a) have three atoms of oxygen.
   b) exist in large quantities.
   c) may have one or two atoms.
   d) have one atom of oxygen.

3. The stratosphere is
   a) above the atmosphere.
   b) below the atmosphere.
   c) more than 20 kilometres above the surface of the earth.
   d) more than 50 kilometres above the surface of the earth.

4. The ozone layer
   a) prevents some harmful radiation from reaching the earth.
   b) stops all ultra-violet rays from reaching the earth.
   c) protects us from the light of the sun.
   d) involves excessive exposure to ultra-violet rays.

When the students have finished, the teacher asks volunteers for their answers, accepting or correcting as appropriate.

Scenario 3: Grammar exercise

The teacher writes on the board a sentence that describes a present situation:

Tom is looking in all his pockets, but he cannot find his keys. (lose)

She asks the students to suggest a sentence in the present perfect that describes what has happened to produce this situation, using the verb in brackets at the end. A student volunteers:

Tom has lost his keys.

The teacher approves this answer and writes up a second, similar sentence:

The Browns live in that house in the corner, but they are not there at the moment. (go away)

Another student volunteers the answer; this time it is wrong, and the teacher asks someone else, who produces a correct answer.

The teacher continues the same process with another four similar sentences.

Scenario 4: Vocabulary

Teacher: Who knows the meaning of the word *disappointment*? (Puzzled looks; a student hesitantly puts up his hand) Yes?

Student 1: Write a point?

Teacher: No . . . anyone else? (silence) Come on, think everybody, try again!

Student 2: Lose a point?

Teacher: No, it has nothing to do with points. Try again. It has something to do with feelings.

(After another few guesses, the last of which, after broad hints from the teacher, comes fairly near, the teacher finally gives the correct definition.)

Unit Four: Sequence and progression in practice

Task   **Thinking about the sequencing of practice activities**

Stage 1: Ordering

Rearrange the activities in Box 2.3 in the order in which you would do them in a lesson or series of lessons.

Stage 2: Improving

Suggest any alterations or additions you might make to any of the activities in the list to improve their effectiveness. You may, of course, decide that there is one (or more) that you would not use at all.

Next, note any aspects of the language topic that you think are inadequately covered or not covered at all during the practice series. Create or select from textbooks some further activities which would cover the inadequacies you have noted and/or enhance learning of the target language in any way. Decide at what stage you would insert them.

BOX 2.3: SEQUENCING PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

Activity 1
The teacher has written on the board a selection of random numbers, in figures. He or she points to a number; the students call out its name.

Activity 2
The teacher has prepared a duplicated list of telephone numbers – the list has at least as many numbers as there are students in the class. On each paper a different number has been marked with a cross; this indicates to the student who gets the paper which is 'his/her' number.
A student 'dials' a number by calling it out, and the student whose number has been 'dialled' answers, repeats the number and identifies him- or herself. Other students can then fill in the name opposite the appropriate number on their lists. The identified student then 'dials' someone else, and so on.

Activity 3
Pairs of students are allotted numbers from one to twenty, so that any one number is shared by two students. They then mix, and sit in a circle. One student in the centre of the circle calls out a number, and the two students who own that number try to change places. As soon as one of them gets up, the student in the centre tries to sit in the vacated place before it can be filled. If successful, he or she takes over the number of the displaced player who then becomes the caller.

Activity 4
The learners write down, as figures, a series of random numbers dictated by the teacher. The answers are then checked.

Module 3: Tests

Unit One: What are tests for?

Inquiry   **Reasons for testing**

Stage 1: Inquiry

Think about and write down the main reasons why you (would) test in the language classroom. Ask one or two experienced teachers what their main reasons are; and then ask some learners if they think being tested is helpful or important, and if so why. Note down the answers.

Stage 2: Critical reflection

BOX 3.1: REASONS FOR TESTING

Tests may be used as a means to:

1. give the teacher information about where the students are at the moment, to help decide what to teach next;
2. give the students information about what they know, so that they also have an awareness of what they need to learn or review;
3. assess for some purpose external to current teaching (a final grade for the course, selection);
4. motivate students to learn or review specific material;
5. get a noisy class to keep quiet and concentrate;
6. provide a clear indication that the class has reached a 'station' in learning, such as the end of a unit, thus contributing to a sense of structure in the course as a whole;
7. get students to make an effort (in doing the test itself), which is likely to lead to better results and a feeling of satisfaction;
8. give students tasks which themselves may actually provide useful review or practice, as well as testing;
9. provide students with a sense of achievement and progress in their learning.

Look at the list given in Box 3.1. These are the main reasons why I test in the classroom – not necessarily in order of importance. Consider, or discuss, the following questions about them.

1. How do the ideas in Box 3.1 compare with the results of your own inquiry and/or your own ideas?
2. Are there any ideas suggested by your respondents or yourself that are not mentioned here?
3. Are there any ideas here that you did not find or think of before?
4. Would you reject any of them as not significant, or irrelevant to your situation?

Stage 3: Reservations

As a by-product of your investigation and thinking up to now, you have probably come across some convincing reasons for *not* testing: the tension and negative feelings tests cause learners, for example, or the fact that they are very time-consuming. Note down all such reasons you can think of before moving on to the summary suggested in the next stage.

Stage 4: Summary

Which of your list of reasons for testing are, or would be, the most important for you personally? And how far are these offset by the disadvantages of testing you have just listed?

Unit Two: Basic concepts; the test experience

Experiment **Taking a test**

Stage 1: Preparation

Prepare for the test by learning (through your own reading, or through input from your trainer) the material you will be tested on. This consists of the following.

1. The theoretical concepts: validity, reliability, backwash (or washback).
2. The distinction between the following pairs of concepts:
   – achievement v. proficiency tests
   – diagnostic v. prognostic tests
   – discrete-point v. integrative tests
   – subjective v. objective tests.
3. The form of the following types of test items:
   – multiple-choice (including the concepts of 'stem', 'options', 'distractors')
   – cloze.

Stage 2: Doing the test

When you are ready, try doing the test in Box 3.2. You have twenty minutes. Your results will be expressed as a percentage; each of Questions 1–10 is worth ten marks. Question 11 is optional.

Stage 3: Checking

Your trainer will tell you the answers. Check, and give yourself a mark out of 100.

BOX 3.2: TEST ON TESTING

1. What is a 'valid' test?
2. What is a 'reliable' test?
3. What is 'backwash'?
4. What is the difference between an 'achievement' and a 'proficiency' test?
5. What is the difference between a 'diagnostic' and a 'prognostic' test?
6. Can you give an example of a 'discrete-point' test?
7. Can you give an example of an 'integrative' test?
8. Are Questions 1–7 above examples of 'objective' or 'subjective' test items? Why?
9. Give examples of:
   a) a multiple-choice item
   b) an extract from a cloze test.
10. Within the multiple-choice item you have given, can you identify:
    a) the stem?
    b) the options?
    c) the distractors?
11. (Optional) How have you felt about doing this test?

Stage 4: Reflection and discussion

Reflecting on the test experience you have just had, and perhaps on other test experiences, discuss the following questions.

1. (If you did optional Question 11, look at your answer.) How did you feel about being tested? You may have felt: irritated, unpleasantly stressed, acceptably or even pleasantly tense, indifferent. Any other reactions or comments?
2. Did the fact that you knew you were going to be tested make any difference to how well you learned the material in advance?
3. Would you have preferred not to sum up your overall result (so much out of 100)? Or do you feel it important to get some kind of (numerical?) assessment after a test?
4. Would you have preferred someone else to check your answers?

Stage 5: Implications for teaching

You have just experienced a test from the point of view of a testee, and discussed that experience. Returning now to the role of teacher, go through your answers to each of the questions above and think about how they might affect the way you would, or should, test in the classroom.

Unit Three: Types of test elicitation techniques

Task **Critical study of elicitation techniques**

Try discussing the following questions with regard to the set of elicitation techniques shown in Box 3.3.

1. What will the elicitation technique tell me about the testee's knowledge? In other words, for what type of knowledge might it be a valid test?
2. How easy is it to compose?
3. How easy is it to administer?
4. How easy is it to mark?

BOX 3.3: ELICITATION TECHNIQUES

  1. Questions and answers. Simple questions, very often following reading, or as part of an interview; may require short or long answers:

   What is the (family) relationship between David Copperfield and Mr Murdstone?

  2. True/false. A statement is given which is to be marked true or false. This may also be given as a question, in which case the answer is *yes* or *no*.

   Addis Ababa is the capital of Egypt.
   Is Addis Ababa the capital of Egypt?

  3. Multiple choice. The question consists of a stem and a number of options (usually four), from which the testee has to select the right one.

   A person who writes books is called

   a) a booker.   b) an editor.   c) an author.   d) a publisher.

  4. Gap-filling and completion. The testee has to complete a sentence by filling a gap or adding something. A gap may or may not be signalled by a blank or dash; the word to be inserted may or may not be given or hinted at.

   They (go) to Australia in 1980.

Or

  They _____ to Australia in 1980. (go)

Or

  A _____ is someone who writes books.

Or

  I've seen that film. (never)

5. **Matching.** The testee is faced with two groups of words, phrases or sentences; each item in the first group has to be linked to a different item in the second.

> large   small
> unhappy many
> a lot   big
> little   sad

6. **Dictation.** The tester dictates a passage or set of words; the testee writes them down.

7. **Cloze.** Words are omitted from a passage at regular intervals (for example, every seventh word). Usually the first two or three lines are given with no gaps.

> The family are all fine, though Leo had a bad bout of flu last week. He spent most of it lying on the sofa watching _____ when he wasn't sleeping!
> His exams _____ in two weeks, so he is _____ about missing school, but has managed to _____ quite a lot in spite _____ feeling ill.

8. **Transformation.** A sentence is given; the testee has to change it according to some given instruction.
   Put into the past tense:
   I go to school by bus.

9. **Rewriting.** A sentence is given; the testee rewrites it, incorporating a given change of expression, but preserving the basic meaning.

> He came to the meeting in spite of his illness.
> Although . . .

10. **Translation.** The testee is asked to translate expressions, sentences or entire passages to or from the target language.

11. **Essay.** The testee is given a topic, such as 'Childhood memories', and asked to write an essay of a specific length.

12. **Monologue.** The testee is given a topic or question and asked to speak about it for a minute or two.

Unit Four: Designing a test

Task **Designing a test**

Stage 1: Preparation

Prepare your test. It is a good idea to list in writing all the material that you want your test to cover: you can then refer back to the list during and after the test-writing to see if you have included all you intended.

You may find it helpful at this stage to refer to the guidelines listed in Box 3.4.

BOX 3.4: GUIDELINES FOR TEST PREPARATION

Validity. Check that your items really do test what they are meant to!

Clarity. Make sure the instructions for each item are clear. They should usually include a sample item and solution.

'Do-ability'. The test should be quite do-able: not too difficult, with no trick questions. Ask other participants to read through it and answer the questions before finalizing.

Marking. Decide exactly how you will assess each section of the test, and how much weighting (percentage of the total grade) you will give it. Make the marking system as simple as you can, and inform the testees what it is: write in the number of points allotted after the instructions for each question.

Interest. Try to go for interesting content and tasks, in order to make the test more motivating for the learners.

Heterogeneity. The test should be such that lower-level students can feel that they are able to do a substantial part of the test, while the higher-level ones have a chance to show what they know. So include both easy and difficult items, and make one or more of the difficult ones optional. (See Module 21: *Large heterogeneous classes* for more discussion of materials for heterogeneous classes.)

Stage 2: Performance

If possible, administer your test to a class of learners; if not, ask other participants to try doing it themselves.

Stage 3: Feedback

Look at how your test was done, and ask the testees how they felt about it. You might find it helpful to base your questions on the criteria in the guidelines in Box 3.4.

Unit Five: Test administration

Task   **Thinking about test administration**

Let us assume that you are going to administer and mark a formal written test (whether or not you have written it yourself) in the course of your teaching programme. How will you prepare for, present and give feedback on it? Have in mind a teaching situation you are familiar with – your own class, if you are teaching, or the kind of class you expect to be teaching in due course – and a particular kind of test (preferably a specific one you have administered or taken yourself).

   You may find it convenient to use the questions in Box 3.5 as a basis for thinking or discussion.

BOX 3.5: QUESTIONS ON TEST ADMINISTRATION

Before the test
– How far in advance do you announce the test?
– How much do you tell the class about what is going to be in it, and about the criteria for marking?
– How much information do you need to give them about the time, place, any limitations or rules?
– Do you give them any 'tips' about how best to cope with the test format?
– Do you expect them to prepare at home, or do you give them some class time for preparation?

Giving the test
– How important is it for you yourself to administer the test?
– Assuming that you do, what do you say before giving out the test papers?
– Do you add anything when the papers have been distributed but students have not yet started work?
– During the test, are you absolutely passive or are you interacting with the students in any way?

After the test
– How long does it take you to mark and return the papers?
– Do you then go through them in class?
– Do you demand any follow-up work on the part of the students?

Module 4: Teaching pronunciation

Unit One: What does teaching pronunciation involve?

BOX 4.1: THE PHONEMIC ALPHABET

Vowels		Consonants	
Symbol	Examples	Symbol	Examples
/ɑː/	_arm_ _part_	/b/	_bed_ a_b_out
/æ/	_apple_ bl_a_ck	/d/	_do_ si_d_e
/aɪ/	_eyes_ dr_i_ve	/f/	_fill_ sa_f_e
/aʊ/	_out_ n_ow_	/g/	_good_ bi_g_
/e/	_end_ p_e_n	/h/	_hat_ be_h_ind
/eɪ/	_eigh_t d_ay_	/j/	_yes_ _y_ou
/eə/	_air_ we_ar_	/k/	_c_at wee_k_
/ɪ/	_i_t s_i_t	/l/	_l_ose a_ll_ow
/iː/	_ea_t s_ee_	/m/	_m_e la_m_p
/ɪə/	_ear_ n_ear_	/n/	_n_o a_n_y
/ɒ/	_opp_osite st_o_p	/p/	_p_ut sto_p_
/əʊ/	_o_pen ph_o_ne	/r/	_r_un a_r_ound
/ɔː/	_a_lways m_ore_	/s/	_s_oon u_s_
/ɔɪ/	_boy_ j_oi_n	/t/	_t_alk las_t_
/ʊ/	w_ou_ld st_oo_d	/v/	_v_ery li_v_e
/uː/	_you_ ch_oo_se	/w/	_w_in s_w_im
/ʊə/	_sure_ t_ou_rist	/z/	_z_oo love_s_
/ɜː/	_ear_ly b_ir_d	/ʃ/	_sh_ip pu_sh_
/ʌ/	_u_p l_u_ck	/ʒ/	mea_s_ure u_s_ual
/ə/	_a_go doct_or_	/ŋ/	si_ng_ hopi_ng_
		/tʃ/	_ch_eap cat_ch_
		/θ/	_th_in ba_th_
		/ð/	_th_en o_th_er
		/dʒ/	_J_une a_g_e

(based on Martin Hewings, _Pronunciation Tasks_, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. vi)

Task **Transcribing sounds**

Take a dictionary that includes phonetic transcriptions, and check through its phonetic alphabet, some of whose symbols may be different from those suggested in Box 4.1. Look at a few words and their corresponding phonetic representations: make sure you can follow and understand the

transcriptions. Now choose ten words at random out of a book, and try transcribing them into phonetic script. If you have used your dictionary's phonetic alphabet, look up the word in the dictionary to check. If you have used the alphabet suggested above, then compare your version with that of another participant.

Note that this is quite difficult to do the first time – it takes a good deal of practice and learning to be able to transcribe quickly and accurately.

Task **Recognizing rhythm and stress**

In pairs: one participant dictates a short sentence, both participants write it down, capitalizing the stressed syllables. Then again, with the other participant dictating. And again, two or three times. Compare your results.

Task **Recognizing intonation patterns**

Listen to a brief recording – one lasting not more than a minute or so – of a speaker of the language you teach (from a listening-comprehension cassette, for example). Write down a sentence from the recording, using conventional spelling, and put in indications of rising and falling intonation and stress. If you are working in a group, compare results with each other.

Question Can you think of examples in any languages you know of sounds affecting one another in the stream of speech, or of stress and intonation actually changing the way sounds are articulated?

Unit Two: Listening to accents

Inquiry **Identifying elements of foreign pronunciation**

Stage 1: Preparing materials

Using audio cassettes, prepare recordings, two to three minutes in length, of foreign accents.The recordings should consist of short interviews with speakers who are not very proficient in the target language.

Stage 2: Analysis

Listen to the recordings and try to analyse what it is about the accents which makes them 'foreign'. You may find it helpful to use the worksheet shown in Box 4.2.

Stage 3: Pooling and comparing

In small groups, listen to each recording, and try to identify the errors and how and why you think these occur.

BOX 4.2: WORKSHEET: RECORDINGS OF FOREIGN PRONUNCIATION

Speaker's mother tongue: _____

Words/phrases mispronounced	*Define or describe the mistake*

Stage 4: Drawing conclusions

Discuss your findings, and draw conclusions. Questions that can usefully be investigated here are the following.

1. (If only one type of accent was recorded) What seem to be the most common errors?
2. (If there were different accents) Were there foreign-sounding pronunciations that were common to most or all of the speakers, and can you make some generalizations about the kinds of errors?
3. Which errors do you think are the most important to try to correct?
4. Are there any you would not bother to try to correct? Why not?
5. With regard to the errors you want to correct: how would you explain these to the learner?
6. What further ideas do you have for getting learners to improve their pronunciation of the items you have found? (Some suggestions may be found in Box 4.4 below.)

Unit Three: Improving learners' pronunciation

Inquiry   Ask a group of learners whether they want to achieve a 'perfect' native accent or not. If they say no, find out whether this is only because they think it is impossible, or because they genuinely do not see it as a desirable objective.

Question 1   Consider some foreign language learners with whom you are familiar – preferably your own students – whose mother tongue you also know. Can you identify instances of mistakes in sound formation and why they make them?

Question 2   Listen to some not-very-advanced learners speaking the foreign language – or if you did the previous unit, listen again to a recording. Can you identify three or four instances of inappropriate stress or intonation?

Question 3   Choose an error that seems to you particularly widespread and persistent. How might you test learners to find out if they really perceive the difference between their version and the correct one?

BOX 4.3: PARTS OF THE MOUTH
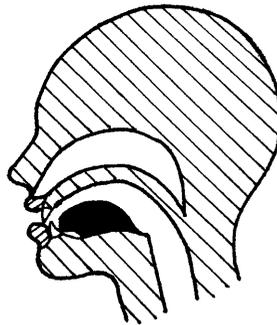
Question 4   Again, choose a typical learner error you are familiar with. How would you explain to the learner what he or she is doing wrong and how to put it right?

BOX 4.4: IDEAS FOR IMPROVING LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION

- imitation of teacher or recorded model of sounds, words and sentences
- recording of learner speech, contrasted with native model
- systematic explanation and instruction (including details of the structure and movement of parts of the mouth – see Box 4.3)
- imitation drills: repetition of sounds, words and sentences – choral repetition of drills
- varied repetition of drills (varied speed, volume, mood)
- learning and performing dialogues (as with drills, using choral work, and varied speed, volume, mood)
- learning by heart of sentences, rhymes, jingles
- jazz chants (see Graham, 1978)
- tongue twisters
- self-correction through listening to recordings of own speech

---

Follow-up task Design some activities of your own in your target language that you feel might give useful practice, perhaps using some of the ideas shown in Box 4.4 as a basis. Then pool ideas with other participants; together you should be able to amass a useful 'battery' of activities.

If you have time, try some of them out with students.

Unit Four: Further topics for discussion

Task **Group discussion**

Look at the questions suggested in Box 4.5, and discuss them with other participants.

Before beginning to work on the questions, decide:

– Are there any you wish to omit?
– Are there any others you wish to add?
– Do you wish to change the order?

BOX 4.5: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION ON THE TEACHING OF PRONUNCIATION

1. Does pronunciation need to be deliberately taught? Won't it just be 'picked up'? If it does need to be deliberately taught, then should this be in the shape of specific pronunciation exercises, or casually, in the course of other oral activities?
2. What accent of the target language should serve as a model? (For English, for example, should you use British? American? Other? Local accent?) Is it permissible to present mixed accents (e.g. a teacher who has a 'mid-Atlantic' i.e. a mixed British and American accent)?
3. Can/Should the non-native teacher serve as a model for target language pronunciation?
4. What difference does the learner's age make in learning pronunciation?
5. How important is it to teach intonation, rhythm and stress?

Unit Five: Pronunciation and spelling

Question 1   **Either:**
If your target language uses the same alphabet as the mother tongue of your students, which are the letters which will be pronounced very differently from their native versions? Which will be pronounced only slightly differently? Are there any which are exactly the same?
Or:
If your target language uses a different alphabet, can you divide it into letters whose sounds have close parallel symbols in the learners' mother tongue (for example, Greek *delta* and English *d*) and those which do not?

Question 2   Can you suggest four or five rules about letter-combinations and their pronunciation in the language you teach that you think it would be important for students to master in the early stages of learning to speak and read?

Task **Planning and using activities**

Choose three activities for teaching, raising awareness or practising pronunciation–spelling correspondence in the target language: these can be from Box 4.6, or from other sources, or original ideas of your own. Plan actual texts (words, sentences, passages) which you might use in these activities.

If feasible, try using them with a learner in a one-to-one lesson.

BOX 4.6: PRONUNCIATION–SPELLING CORRESPONDENCE: SOME TEACHING IDEAS

– **Dictation:** of random lists of words, of words that have similar spelling problems, of complete sentences, of half-sentences to be completed.
– **Reading aloud:** of syllables, words, phrases, sentences.
– **Discrimination (1):** prepare a set of 'minimal pairs' – pairs of words which differ from each other in one sound–letter combination (such as *dip–deep* in English). Either ask learners to read them aloud, taking care to discriminate, or read them aloud yourself, and ask students to write them down.
– **Discrimination (2):** provide a list of words that are spelt the same in the learners' mother tongue and in the target language: read aloud, or ask learners to, and discuss the differences in pronunciation (and meaning!).
– **Prediction (1):** provide a set of letter combinations, which are parts of words the learners know. How would the learners expect them to be pronounced? Then reveal the full word.
– **Prediction (2):** dictate a set of words in the target language the learners do not know yet, but whose spelling accords with rules. Can they spell them? (Then reveal meanings.)

Module 5: Teaching vocabulary

Unit One: What is vocabulary and what needs to be taught?

Question 1   Can you think of five or six examples of vocabulary items, in any language you know, that consist of more than one word?

What needs to be taught?

1. Form: pronunciation and spelling
2. Grammar
3. Collocation
4. Aspects of meaning (1): denotation, connotation, appropriateness
5. Aspects of meaning (2): meaning relationships
6. Word formation

Question 2   Can you think of five or six examples of items in the language you teach whose grammatical characteristics are not obviously covered by a regular grammatical rule, and which you would therefore need to teach when you teach the item?

Question 3   Think of three or four typical collocations in the language you teach, and try translating them into another language. Do the collocations translate exactly? If not, what kinds of learning/teaching problems might this lead to, and what might you do about it?

Question 4   How would you present the meanings of the words *swim*, *fame*, *childish*, *political*, *impertinence*, *kid*, *guy* and *bastard*? For which would you mention their connotations? And their appropriate contexts?

Question 5   In any language you know, find at least one more example for each of the following main categories of meaning relationships.

– Synonyms: items that mean the same, or nearly the same; for example, *bright*, *clever*, *smart* may serve as synonyms of *intelligent*.
– Antonyms: items that mean the opposite; *rich* is an antonym of *poor*.
– Hyponyms: items that serve as specific examples of a general concept; *dog*, *lion*, *mouse* are hyponyms of *animal*.

- Co-hyponyms or co-ordinates: other items that are the 'same kind of thing'; *red*, *blue*, *green* and *brown* are co-ordinates.
- Superordinates: general concepts that 'cover' specific items: *animal* is the superordinate of *dog*, *lion*, *mouse*.
- Translation: words or expressions in the learners' mother tongue that are (more or less) equivalent in meaning to the item being taught.

Question 6   What prefixes and suffixes in the language you teach would you consider it useful for learners to know?

How does a language you know combine words to make longer vocabulary items? Can you give examples?

Unit Two: Presenting new vocabulary

Task   **Exploring different ways of presenting new vocabulary**

Stage 1: Ideas for presenting specific items

Select an item from the vocabulary taught in a foreign language textbook you know. Think how the meaning of this item would best be presented to learners who are encountering it for the first time, discuss with other participants and note down some ideas.

BOX 5.1: WAYS OF PRESENTING THE MEANING OF NEW ITEMS

- concise definition (as in a dictionary; often a superordinate with qualifications: for example, a cat is an animal which . . .)
- detailed description (of appearance, qualities . . .)
- examples (hyponyms)
- illustration (picture, object)
- demonstration (acting, mime)
- context (story or sentence in which the item occurs)
- synonyms
- opposite(s) (antonyms)
- translation
- associated ideas, collocations

Stage 2: Studying further techniques

Putting your practical suggestions aside for the moment, study a list of different techniques of presenting the meaning of new vocabulary. In a group, this list may be compiled by a brainstorm among participants, or derived from Box 5.1; or a combination of the two.

Stage 3: Application and comparison

Identify which one or more of the techniques were used in your own idea(s) for presentation. If you are in a group: were there any techniques which tended to be more 'popular', others which were barely used? On second thoughts: would you / could you have used other techniques to supplement your original idea for presentation?

Stage 4: Discussion

On the basis of the information gathered in Stage 3, or your own reflection, discuss orally or in writing generalizations that can be made about the usefulness of the different techniques. Specific questions to consider appear in Box 5.2.

BOX 5.2: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION: VOCABULARY PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES

1. Some techniques are more popular than others. What are they, and can you account for their popularity?
2. Are there techniques that are particularly appropriate for the presentation of certain types of words?
3. Are there techniques which are likely to be more, or less, appropriate for particular learner populations (young/adult, beginner/advanced, different background cultures)?
4. Do you, as an individual, find that you prefer some kinds of techniques and tend to avoid others? Which? And why?

Unit Three: Remembering vocabulary

Task **Group experiment: memorizing words**

Take three minutes to memorize list A, and see how many you remember afterwards; then do the same with B. Were there differences? Can you account for them?

BOX 5.3: WORD-LEARNING EXPERIMENT

A	B
WHO	ARM
DOT	LEG
ASH	PEG
LAR	PIG
SEX	TON
OCT	FOX
FOR	DOG
AWE	CAT
ION	MAN
CAN	BOY
OWN	SON
DIG	MUM
OBI	DAD
HUT	BAD
THE	SAD

Questions   1. Were there any particular words that most people seemed to remember better? Can you account for this?
2. What strategies did people use or invent to help themselves remember?
3. Was there any significance in the placing of an item in a list? Were words from the beginning – or end – more easily remembered?

Unit Four: Ideas for vocabulary work in the classroom

Group task   **Sharing ideas**

Stage 1: Preparation

Each participant prepares a vocabulary activity which they think is effective.

Stage 2: Presentation

The activities are presented to the group. This is best done by actually performing them, the presenter role-playing the teacher and the others the students.

Stage 3: Discussion

What was the main objective of the activity (awareness-raising / presentation of new vocabulary / review and practice)? What particular aspects of vocabulary did the activity focus on? How effective was it, and why? How interesting/enjoyable was it? For what sort of class, or situation, is it appropriate? Were there any unusual or original aspects of it which you would like to discuss?

Unit Five: Testing vocabulary

Task **Looking at vocabulary-testing techniques**

For each example in Box 5.5, define for yourself what aspects of the item(s) are being tested, and – just as important – what is **not** being tested! You may wish to refer back to Unit One for a summary of various aspects of vocabulary items that need to be taught and therefore, in the present context, tested. Add any further remarks you wish on the advantages or disadvantages of the technique, and how, or whether, you would use it.

BOX 5.5: VOCABULARY-TESTING TECHNIQUES

Example 1
Choose the letter of the item which is the nearest in meaning to the word in italics:

He was *reluctant* to answer.

a) unprepared   b) unwilling   c) refusing   d) slow

Example 2
Choose the letter of the definition which comes closest in meaning to the word *elated*.

a) ready and willing   b) tense and excited
c) tending to talk a lot   d) in high spirits

Example 3
Draw lines connecting the pairs of opposites.

A	B
brave	awake
female	expensive
cheap	succeed
asleep	cowardly
fail	male

Example 4
Which of the prefixes in Column A can combine with which of the words in Column B? Write out the complete words.

A	B
over	human
trans	national
super	flow
dis	form
inter	infect

Example 5
Underline the odd one out: goat, horse, cow, spider, sheep, dog, cat.

Example 6
For each of the following words, write a sentence that makes its meaning clear.

1. wealth   2. laughter   3. decision   4. brilliant

Example 7
(The teacher dictates the words from Example 6, the students write them down.)

Example 8
(The teacher dictates the mother-tongue equivalents of the words in Example 6, the students write down the target-language versions.)

Example 9
Fill in the gaps:

In the seventeenth _____ Spanish ships sailed _____ to Central and

_____ America to fetch gold for the Spanish _____ . The ships were

often attacked by _____ , who infested the 'Spanish Main' (the sea

_____ north-east of Central and South America).

<div align="right">(adapted from The Cambridge English Course 2 Student's Book
Michael Swan and Catherine Walter, 1985)</div>

Example 10
Complete the passage using the words from the list:

   area, century, pirates, government, regularly, South

In the seventeenth _____ Spanish ships sailed _____ to Central and

_____ America to fetch gold for the Spanish _____ . The ships were

often attacked by _____ , who infested the 'Spanish Main' (the sea

_____ north-east of Central and South America).

Example 11
(Students are given sentences in the mother tongue to translate into the target language; or vice versa.)

Example 12
Finish the following sentences:

1. I feel <u>depressed</u> when . . .
2. I never have an <u>appetite</u> when . . .
3. It was a great <u>relief</u> when . . .

Module 6: Teaching grammar

Unit One: What is grammar?

Question 1   Can you formulate a definition of 'grammar'? Compare your definition with a dictionary's.

Question 2   Think of two languages you know. Can you suggest an example of a structure that exists in one but not in the other? How difficult is the structure to learn for the speaker of the other language?

Question 3   Choose a structure in your own native language. How would you explain its meaning to learners? How would you get them to understand when this particular structure would be used rather than others with slightly different meanings?

Unit Two: The place of grammar teaching

> **BOX 6.1: OPINIONS ABOUT THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR**
>
> **Extract 1**
> The important point is that the study of grammar as such is neither necessary nor sufficient for learning to use a language.
>
> > (from L. Newmark, 'How not to interfere with language learning' in Brumfit, C.J. and Johnson, K. (eds.) *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press, 1979, p.165)
>
> **Extract 2**
> The student's craving for explicit formulization of generalizations can usually be met better by textbooks and grammars that he reads outside class than by discussion in class. (*ibid*.)
>
> **Extract 3**
> The language teacher's view of what constitutes knowledge of a language is . . . a knowledge of the syntactic structure of sentences . . . The assumption

that the language teacher appears to make is that once this basis is provided, then the learner will have no difficulty in dealing with the actual use of language . . .

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that this assumption is of very doubtful validity indeed.

<div align="right">(from H.G. Widdowson, 'Directions in the teaching of discourse' in Brumfit, C. J. and Johnson, K. (eds.) The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 49–50)</div>

Extract 4

The evidence seems to show beyond doubt that though it is by communicative use in real 'speech acts' that the new language 'sticks' in the learner's mind, insight into pattern is an equal partner with communicative use in what language teachers now see as the dual process of acquisition/learning. Grammar, approached as a voyage of discovery into the patterns of language rather than the learning of prescriptive rules, is no longer a bogey word.

<div align="right">(from Eric Hawkins, Awareness of Language: An Introduction, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 150–1)</div>

Task **Critical reading**

Read the extracts in Box 6.1, and discuss your reactions.

Unit Three: Grammatical terms

Question Look at a text in a coursebook you know and try to find two or more examples of each of the sentence components listed below.

The **sentence** is a set of words standing on their own as a sense unit, its conclusion marked by a full stop or equivalent (question mark, exclamation mark). In many languages sentences begin with a capital letter, and include a verb.

The **clause** is a kind of mini-sentence: a set of words which make a sense unit, but may not be concluded by a full stop. A sentence may have two or more clauses (*She left because it was late and she was tired.*) or only one (*She was tired.*).

The **phrase** is a shorter unit within the clause, of one or more words, but fulfilling the same sort of function as a single word. A verb phrase, for example, functions the same way as a single-word verb, a noun phrase like a one-word noun or pronoun: *was going*, *a long table*.

The **word** is the minimum normally separable form: in writing, it appears as a stretch of letters with a space either side.

The **morpheme** is a bit of a word which can be perceived as a distinct component: within the word *passed*, for example, are the two morphemes *pass*, and *-ed*. A word may consist of a single morpheme (*book*).

Question Using a sentence from a coursebook you know, find at least one of each of these categories: subject, verb, object, complement and adverbial.

Parts of speech

The main parts of speech are:

– nouns (such as *horse*, *Syria*)
– verbs (such as *swim*, *remain*)
– adjectives (such as *black*, *serious*)
– adverbs (such as *quickly*, *perhaps*)
– pronouns (such as *he*, *those*)
– auxiliary verbs (such as *is*, *do* before a main verb)
– modal verbs (such as *can*, *must*)
– determiners (such as *the*, *some*)
– prepositions (such as *in*, *before*)

Question Open a newspaper. Can you find and underline examples of some or all of the categories?

Unit Four: Presenting and explaining grammar

Task **Classroom or peer-teaching**

Stage 1: Presentation

Present and explain a grammatical structure to a class; the presentation should not take longer than five minutes.

The presentation should be recorded in some way; you might tape-record it or ask another participant to observe and take notes. If neither of these is possible, then write down as accurate an account as possible immediately after the lesson.

Stage 2 (optional)

If you did not do so before, look up a grammar book to check your explanation: was there anything important you omitted or misrepresented?

Stage 3: Feedback

Ask another participant or student to tell you immediately afterwards how clear they thought your presentation was, and if they have any particular comments.

You may find it useful to use the questions in Box 6.2 as points of reference.

Stage 4

In the light of critical discussion of your presentation, write out for yourself a set of guidelines for presenting and explaining grammar.

BOX 6.2: QUESTIONS ON GRAMMAR PRESENTATIONS

1. **The structure itself.** Was the structure presented in both speech and writing, both form and meaning?
2. **Examples.** Were enough examples provided of the structure in a meaningful context? Are you sure the students understood their meanings?
3. **Terminology.** Did you call the structure by its (grammar-book) name? If so, was this helpful? If not, would it have helped if you had? What other grammatical terminology was (would have been) useful?
4. **Language.** Was the structure explained in the students' mother tongue, or in the target language, or in a combination of the two? Was this effective?
5. **Explanation.** Was the information given about the structure at the right level: reasonably accurate but not too detailed? Did you use comparison with the students' mother tongue (if known)? Was this / would this have been useful?
6. **Delivery.** Were you speaking (and writing) clearly and at an appropriate speed?
7. **Rules.** Was an explicit rule given? Why / Why not? If so, did you explain it yourself or did you elicit it from the students? Was this the best way to do it?

Unit Five: Grammar practice activities

Application Look at the grammar exercises in a locally-used foreign language coursebook, and classify them roughly according to the types listed in Box 6.3. Many coursebooks provide plenty of exercises that suit the descriptions of Types 2–3, but tend to neglect the others. Is this true of the book you are looking at?

BOX 6.3: TYPES OF GRAMMAR PRACTICE: FROM ACCURACY TO FLUENCY

Type 1: Awareness
After the learners have been introduced to the structure (see Unit Four above), they are given opportunities to encounter it within some kind of discourse, and do a task that focuses their attention on its form and/or meaning.
Example: Learners are given extracts from newspaper articles and asked to underline all the examples of the past tense that they can find.

Type 2: Controlled drills
Learners produce examples of the structure: these examples are, however, predetermined by the teacher or textbook, and have to conform to very clear, closed-ended cues.
Example: Write or say statements about John, modelled on the following example:

John *drinks tea* but he *doesn't drink coffee*.
a) like: ice cream/cake   b) speak: English /Italian   c) enjoy: playing football/playing chess

Type 3: Meaningful drills
Again the responses are very controlled, but the learner can make a limited choice.
Example: In order to practise forms of the present simple tense:
Choose someone you know very well, and write down their name. Now compose true statements about them according to the following model:

He/She *likes ice cream*; OR He/She *doesn't like ice cream*.
a) enjoy: playing tennis   b) drink: wine   c) speak: Polish

Type 4: Guided, meaningful practice
The learners form sentences of their own according to a set pattern; but exactly what vocabulary they use is up to them.
Example: Practising conditional clauses, learners are given the cue *If I had a million dollars*, and suggest, in speech or writing, what they *would* do.

Type 5: (Structure-based) free sentence composition
Learners are provided with a visual or situational cue, and invited to compose their own responses; they are directed to use the structure.
Example: A picture showing a number of people doing different things is shown to the class; they describe it using the appropriate tense.

Type 6: (Structure-based) discourse composition
Learners hold a discussion or write a passage according to a given task; they are directed to use at least some examples of the structure within the discourse.

Example: The class is given a dilemma situation ('You have seen a good friend cheating in an important test') and asked to recommend a solution. They are directed to include modals (*might*, *should*, *must*, *can*, *could*, etc.) in their speech/writing.

Type 7: Free discourse
As in Type 6, but the learners are given no specific direction to use the structure; however, the task situation is such that instances of it are likely to appear.
Example: As in Type 6, but without the final direction.

Unit Six: Grammatical mistakes

Inquiry **Learner errors**

Stage 1: Gathering samples

Gather a few samples of learners' writing that does not consist of answers to grammar exercises: answers to comprehension questions, essays, letters, short paragraphs. Alternatively, record foreign learners speaking.

Stage 2: Classifying

Go through the samples you have collected, noting mistakes. Can you categorize them into types? What are the most common ones?

Stage 3: Ordering

Together with other participants, make a list of the most common mistakes, in rough order of frequency.

Stage 4: Reordering

There are, of course, all sorts of other factors, besides frequency, which may affect the level of importance you attach to an error. It may be, for example, less urgent to correct one which is very common but which does not actually affect comprehensibility than one that does. In English, learners commonly omit the third-person *-s* suffix in the present simple, and slightly less commonly substitute a present verb form when they mean the past; on the whole, the second mistake is more likely to lead to misunderstanding than the first and therefore is more important to correct. Another error may be considered less important because a lot of very proficient, or native, speakers often make it. And so on.

Rearrange your list of errors, if necessary, so that they are in order of importance for correction.

Unit One: Topics and situations

Question 1   Have a look at a locally-used coursebook. Is each unit in fact based on a clearly definable topic, or situation, or both? Is there a general 'base' situation which is maintained throughout the book (for example, the doings of a particular set of people)?

Question 2   Look through the techniques suggested in Box 7.1. Are there any you would not use? Can you add more?

BOX 7.1: SOME IDEAS FOR PRESENTATION OF NEW TOPICS OR SITUATIONS

– Write the name of the topic in the middle of the board and invite the class to brainstorm all the associated words they can think of.
– Write the name of the topic in the middle of the board and ask the class what they know about it and/or what they would like to know.
– Describe a communicative situation and characters and invite the class to suggest orally what the characters will say.
– Give the title of a text and invite the class to write down sentences or expressions they expect will occur within it.
– Define briefly the opening event and characters in a communicative situation and ask the class to imagine what will happen next.
– Present a recorded dialogue and ask the class to tell you where they think it is taking place and who the characters are.
– Present a text and ask for an appropriate title.
– Express your own, or someone else's, opinions about a topic and invite discussion.
– Teach a selection of words and expressions and ask the class what they think the situation or topic is.

Task   **Peer-teaching**

Choose one of the following topics or situations: the first two are appropriate for a relatively young, elementary class, the next two for an older, more advanced one.

1. School
2. Two children discussing their favourite lessons
3. Education
4. A teachers' meeting about a problem student

In small groups, plan how you would introduce your chosen item to your class, perhaps utilizing some of the ideas in Box 7.1; then one representative actually presents it to the rest of the full group. Continue until each small group has 'taught' its topic.

Then discuss the presentations: how interesting were they? How well do you think the learners would have understood the material?

Unit Two: What ARE notions and functions?

Task Have a look at the items listed in Box 7.2. Can you sort them into separate lists of notions and functions? And can you then suggest which of the functions would be likely to be 'binary', i.e. followed or preceded by a complementary further function?

BOX 7.2: NOTIONS AND FUNCTIONS

location	offer	request
obligation	promise	spatial relations
advise	the future	food
threat	crime	instruction
apology	the body	remind
probability	expression of opinion	

Unit Three: Teaching chunks of language: from text to task

Task **Different interpretations of the same text**

Imagine you are teaching the function of offering help and accepting. You have selected the dialogue shown in Box 7.3 to exemplify it. Having learned it by heart, what sorts of different interpretations would you or your students suggest in order to consolidate learning and vary its performance? For example, you might wish to suggest different situations or contexts for the dialogue; different kinds of characters; different relationships between them; different attitudes to the problem about which help is being offered.

BOX 7.3: OFFERING HELP

A: Can I help?
B: Oh yes, please, I don't know what to do . . .
A: What's the matter?
B: He doesn't understand what I'm telling him!
A: Would you like me to explain?
B: Please do!

(adapted from Alan Maley and Alan Duff, *Variations on a Theme*,
Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 46)

Task **Looking at a coursebook**

Select a coursebook you know that uses texts based on communicative events or situations. What are some of the tasks through which the book gets the learners to engage with the topics, situations, notions and functions within the texts? Do these tasks limit learner activity to the actual words of the text, or do they lead into further variations, other ways of expressing similar themes? Have you any suggestions of your own for supplementing the tasks set by the book?

Unit Four: Teaching chunks of language: from task to text

Task **Role play**

One member of the group role-plays the teacher; the rest are not very advanced learners who have been studying the foreign language for, say, a year or two at school.

Stage 1: Role play

The 'learners' divide into pairs and do the following task. Each member of the pair has a different pair of characters in front of them (either Box 7.4.1 or Box 7.4.2), and describes each in turn: the partner has to try to draw the people from the description. (Put a piece of paper or a book over the picture your partner is describing so that you can't see it.) As you work, remember how limited you are in your knowledge: ask the 'teacher' for new language as you need it.

Stage 2: Discussion

Discuss the following questions.

1. How did you feel doing this activity? Do you have any particular comments, positive or negative, as teacher or learners?
2. The objective of the task was to produce and use language growing out of topics and notions connected with parts of the body, clothes and accessories and of situations and functions connected with describing and explaining. Did the task in fact achieve this objective?
3. Was this language noted down – or could it have been – by the teacher or students and used as a basis for further practice?
4. What would you suggest doing next in order to engage further with the target language functions, notions, etc.?
5. Do you feel the need for a prepared written or spoken text? If so, what sort of text might you use? Would you prefer to use it before the task or after?

BOX 7.4.1: PEOPLE TO DESCRIBE
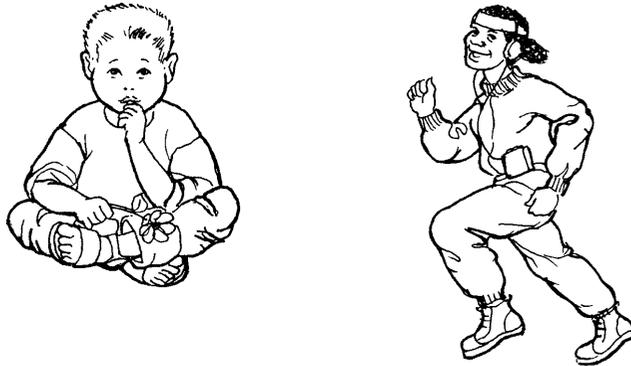
BOX 7.4.2: PEOPLE TO DESCRIBE
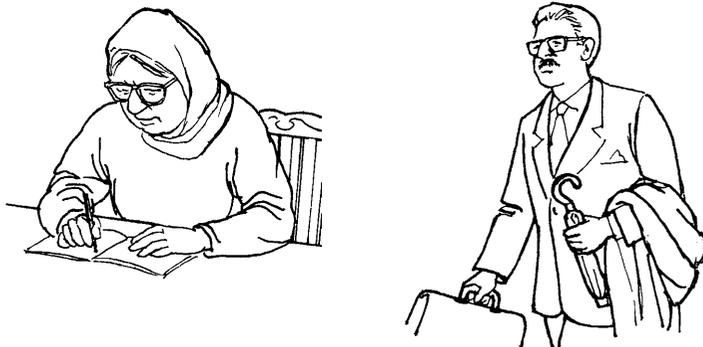
Unit Five: Combining different kinds of language segments

Task **Coordinating different categories of language in a teaching programme**

In the table shown in Box 7.5 each column represents a different basis for selection of language: situation, function, vocabulary, etc. In each row one of these is filled in; can you fill in some suggestions for the others? Note that pronunciation has been omitted, since any specific aspect of pronunciation can be linked to a very wide range of other categories, and the decision about which to concentrate on will be to some extent arbitrary. In the vocabulary column put only a sample of the kinds of words and expressions you would teach, or a definition; you do not have to list them all.

You do not, of course, have to fill in every single box; but try to fill in as many as you can in, say, twenty minutes. Then perhaps compare your table with another participant's.

BOX 7.5: COORDINATING DIFFERENT LANGUAGE CATEGORIES

Situations	*Topics*	*Notions and Functions*	*Grammar*	*Vocabulary*
Getting to know someone				
	Road accidents			
		Making requests		
			Future tense	
				farmer, *secretary*, etc. (jobs)

Module 8: Teaching listening

Unit One: What does real-life listening involve?

Task **Real-life listening situations**

Stage 1: Gathering samples

Make a list of as many situations as you can think of where people are listening to other people in their own mother tongue. These include, of course, situations where they may be doing other things besides listening – speaking, usually – but the essential point is that they need to be able to understand what is said in order to function satisfactorily in the situation. One way of doing this task is to talk yourself through a routine day and note all the different listening experiences that occur.

Stage 2: Finding typical characteristics

Looking at the list you have compiled, can you find some features that seem to be common to most of the situations? Such features might be associated with: the kind of language that is usually used; the kind of interaction; what the listener is doing. For example, in most situations the speaker is improvising as he or she speaks, which results in a rather informal, disorganized kind of language; and in most situations the listener is responding to what is being said as well as listening. Can you think of other such common characteristics?

   This is a rather difficult task, and you may not be able to find many ideas. Share your ideas with other participants.Together, find as many as you can. Your trainer will help you add to your list.

Application   Think of a situation where you yourself have recently been listening. How many of the features you have thought of in fact apply?

Unit Two: Real-life listening in the classroom

Guidelines

1. Listening texts
Informal talk. Most listening texts should be based on discourse that is either

genuine improvised, spontaneous speech, or at least a fair imitation of it. A typical written text that is read aloud as a basis for classroom listening activity will provide the learners with no practice in understanding the most common form of spoken discourse.

Speaker visibility; direct speaker–listener interaction. It is useful to the learners if you improvise at least some of the listening texts yourself in their presence (or, if feasible, get another competent speaker of the language to do so).

Single exposure. Learners should be encouraged to develop the ability to extract the information they need from a single hearing. The discourse, therefore, must be redundant enough to provide this information more than once within the original text.

2. Listening tasks

Expectations. Learners should have in advance some idea about the kind of text they are going to hear.

Purpose. Similarly, a listening purpose should be provided by the definition of a pre-set task, which should involve some kind of clear visible or audible response.

Ongoing listener response. Finally, the task should usually involve intermittent responses during the listening; learners should be encouraged to respond to the information they are looking for as they hear it, not to wait to the end.

Question What practical advantages or problems can you foresee, or have you experienced, that might derive from applying any of the guidelines listed above?

Unit Three: Learner problems

Inquiry **Learner problems**

Stage 1: Defining some problems

Read through the list given in Box 8.2 of some difficulties that learners have with listening to a foreign language. Add more if you wish.

Stage 2: Interview

Interview some learners to find out which of these they consider particularly problematic, whether there are any others they can suggest, and what sort of practice they find helpful.

Stage 3: Summary

On your own or with other participants, try to summarize the main

problems and make some suggestions as to what the teacher can do to help solve them.

BOX 8.2: LEARNER DIFFICULTIES IN LISTENING

1. I have trouble catching the actual sounds of the foreign language.
2. I have to understand every word; if I miss something, I feel I am failing and get worried and stressed.
3. I can understand people if they talk slowly and clearly; I can't understand fast, natural, native-sounding speech.
4. I need to hear things more than once in order to understand.
5. I find it difficult to 'keep up' with all the information I am getting, and cannot think ahead or predict.
6. If the listening goes on a long time I get tired, and find it more and more difficult to concentrate.

Unit Four: Types of activities

1. No overt response

The learners do not have to do anything in response to the listening; however, facial expression and body language often show if they are following or not. They might listen in this way to stories, songs or entertainment (films, theatre, video).

2. Short responses

Obeying instructions: Learners perform actions, or draw shapes or pictures, in response to instructions.

Ticking off items: Listeners mark or tick off words/components as they hear them.

True/false: Learners indicate whether statements are right or wrong; or make brief responses ('True!' or 'False!' for example).

Detecting mistakes: Listeners raise their hands or call out when they hear mistakes.

Cloze: The listening text has occasional brief gaps, represented by silence or some kind of buzz. The learners write down what they think might be the missing word.

Guessing definitions: The teacher provides brief oral definitions; learners write down what they think it is.

Skimming and scanning: Learners are asked to identify some general topic or information (skimming), or certain limited information (scanning).

3. Longer responses
Answering questions: Questions demanding full responses are given in advance.
Note-taking: Learners take brief notes from a short talk.
Paraphrasing and translating: Learners rewrite the text in different words.
Summarizing: Learners write a brief summary of the content.
Long gap-filling: A long gap is left somewhere in the text for learners to fill in.

4. Extended responses
Here, the listening is only a 'jump-off point' for extended reading, writing or speaking: in other words, these are 'combined skills' activities.
Problem-solving: Learners hear about a problem and try to solve it.
Interpretation: An extract from a piece of dialogue or monologue is provided, with no previous information; the listeners try to guess from the words, kinds of voices, tone and any other evidence what is going on. Alternatively, a piece of literature that is suitable for reading aloud can be discussed and analysed.

Follow-up task

Listening activities in coursebooks

Any one specific set of materials is unlikely, of course, to provide examples of all the types listed here. But certainly teachers and learners have a right to expect a fair range and variety in the specific materials used in their course.

Go through the list of *Types of listening activities* again, marking activity types that seem to you particularly useful, or even essential. Then look at a coursebook or listening comprehension book that you are familiar with, and see how many of these are represented. Are there many that are totally neglected? Are there others that are over-used?

If the range and variety in a book you are using is very limited, you may be able to remedy this by improvising your own activities or using supplementary materials.

Unit Five: Adapting activities

Task

Criticizing and adapting coursebook listening activities

In Boxes 8.3.1–3 are descriptions of three listening tasks, with the listening texts that go with them. What might you do to improve or vary them to suit a class you teach or know of? Try doing them yourself before thinking about changes: one person reads or improvises the text(s), others do the tasks. This will not, of course, reproduce exactly learner experience with such activities, but it will give you a 'feel' for possible problems.

BOX 8.3.1: LISTENING ACTIVITY 1

Instructions

1. Listen to the recording of someone giving instructions. What are they talking about?
2. Look at the words below. Use a dictionary to check the meaning of any you are not sure about.
   Nouns: *switch*, *slot*, *disk*, *handle*, *key*, *arrow*, *screen*
   Verbs: *lock*, *type*   Adjectives: *bent*, *capital*
3. Listen to the cassette again, and use the words to complete these notes:

   Turn it on, here is the _____ at the side. Then you'll see some words and numbers on the _____ and finally a _____ C.
   Take your _____ and put it in the _____ , and _____ it in; you have to close this _____ . Now _____ in 'A' and press the _____ with the sort of _____ _____ at the side.

The listening text

First you turn it on, here's the switch at the side. Then you'll see some words and numbers on the screen, and finally a capital C and a sort of V sideways on. OK, now take your disk, this one, and put it in the slot – it's called a 'drive' – and lock it in, you have to close this little handle here. Now type in 'A' and press the key with the sort of bent arrow at the side.

BOX 8.3.2: LISTENING ACTIVITY 2

Instructions to student

Your worksheet shows a map of a zoo; write in the names of the animals in the appropriate cages as your teacher tells you.

Instructions to teacher

Using your filled-in map of the zoo, describe to the class where each animal lives; they may ask you to repeat or explain anything they did not catch or understand.

Student's map
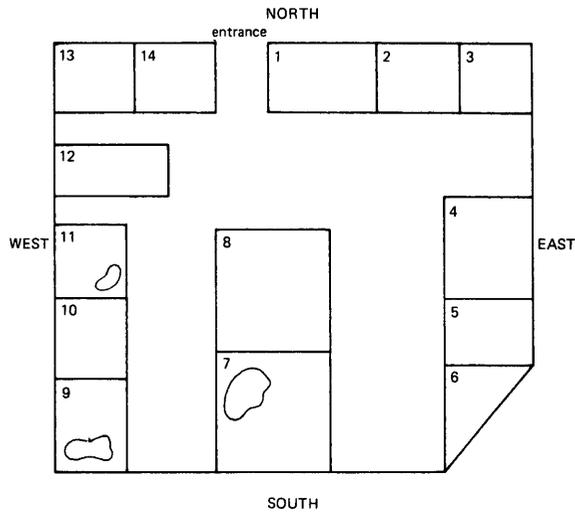
Teacher's map
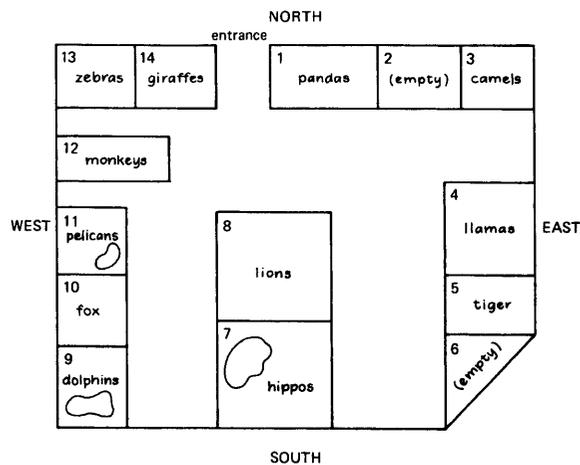
(Adapted from Penny Ur, *Teaching Listening Comprehension,*
Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 109–10)

BOX 8.3.3: LISTENING ACTIVITY 3

Instructions

Listen to the following recorded talk, and then answer the multiple-choice questions below.

The listening text

Crash! was perhaps the most famous pop group of that time. It consisted of three female singers, with no band. They came originally from Manchester, and began singing in local clubs, but their fame soon spread throughout the British Isles and then all over the world. Their hairstyle and clothes were imitated by a whole generation of teenagers, and thousands came to hear them sing, bought recordings of their songs or went to see their films.

The questions

1. 'Crash!' was
   a) notorious   b) well-known   c) unpopular   d) local
2. The group was composed of:
   a) three boys   b) two girls and a boy
   c) two boys and a girl   d) three girls
3. The group was from:
   a) Britain   b) France   c) Brazil   d) Egypt
4. A lot of young people wanted to
   a) sing like them   b) look like them
   c) live in Manchester   d) all of these

Module 9: Teaching speaking

Unit One: Successful oral fluency practice

Question 1   Imagine or recall a successful speaking activity in the classroom that you have either organized as teacher or participated in as student. What are the characteristics of this activity that make you judge it 'successful'?

Question 2   What are some of the problems in getting students to talk in the classroom? Perhaps think back to your experiences as either learner or teacher.

Follow-up discussion   Consider what you might do in the classroom in order to overcome each of the problems you have listed.

Unit Two: The functions of topic and task

Group experiment   **Comparing two activities**

Stage 1: Experience

In Box 9.3 is a description of two oral fluency activities. Try them out in small groups, one after the other, allowing about five minutes for each.

Stage 2: Comparing

Now compare the two: which was more successful in producing good oral fluency practice, and why?

BOX 9.3: TYPES OF ORAL FLUENCY ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Discuss the following conflicting opinions.

Opinion 1. Children should be taught in heterogeneous classes: setting them into ability groupings puts a 'failure' label onto members of the lower groups, whereas putting more and less able learners together encourages the slower ones to progress faster, without penalizing the more able.

Opinion 2. Children should be divided into ability groupings for most subjects: this enables the less able ones to be taught at a pace suitable for them, while the better students do not need to wait for the slower ones to catch up.

Activity 2

A good schoolteacher should have the following qualities. Can your group agree together in what order of priority you would put them?

sense of humour	enthusiasm for teaching
honesty	pleasant appearance
love of children	fairness
knowledge of subject	ability to create interest
flexibility	ability to keep order
clear speaking voice	intelligence

Unit Three: Discussion activities

Task **Classroom- or peer-teaching: trying out activities**

Stage 1: Preparation

The activities in Box 9.4 are laid out more or less in order of difficulty (of both language and task), the simplest first. Select one that seems appropriate for a class you teach, or may be teaching in the future, and, alone or with another participant, discuss and note down how you expect this to work with them. How will you present it? Will all your students participate? Will they enjoy it? Can you foresee any particular problems?

Stage 2: Experience

Do the activity with other participants or with a class of learners.

Stage 3: Reflection

After finishing, discuss the questions under Stage 1 above and your anticipatory answers: how accurate were your predictions?

BOX 9.4: DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

1. Describing pictures

Each group has a picture (one of the two shown below) which all its members can see. They have two minutes to say as many sentences as they can that describe it; a 'secretary' marks a tick on a piece of paper representing each sentence. At the end of the two minutes, groups report how many ticks they have. They then repeat the exercise with the second picture, trying to get more ticks than the first time.
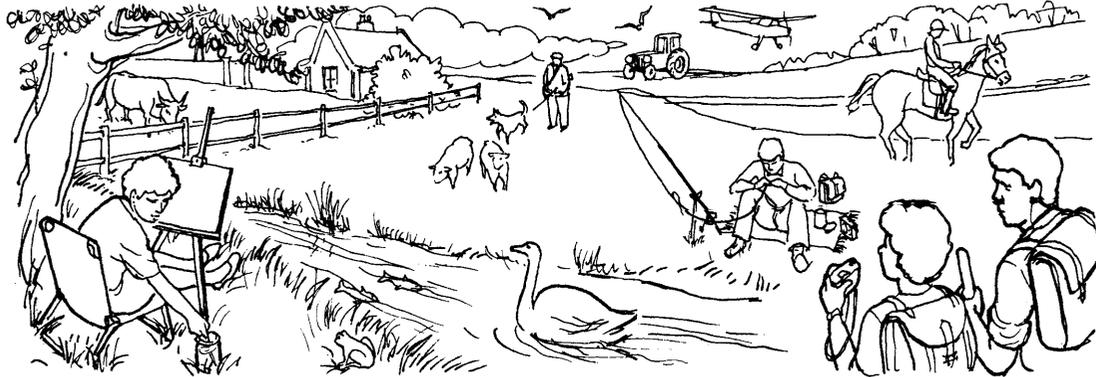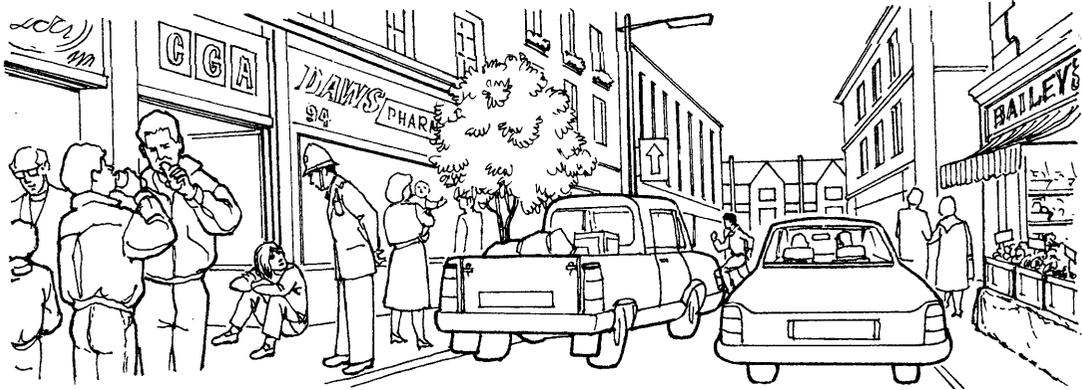
2. Picture differences

The students are in pairs; each member of the pair has a different picture (either A or B). Without showing each other their pictures they have to find out what the differences are between them (there are eleven). (Solution on p. 53.)

A
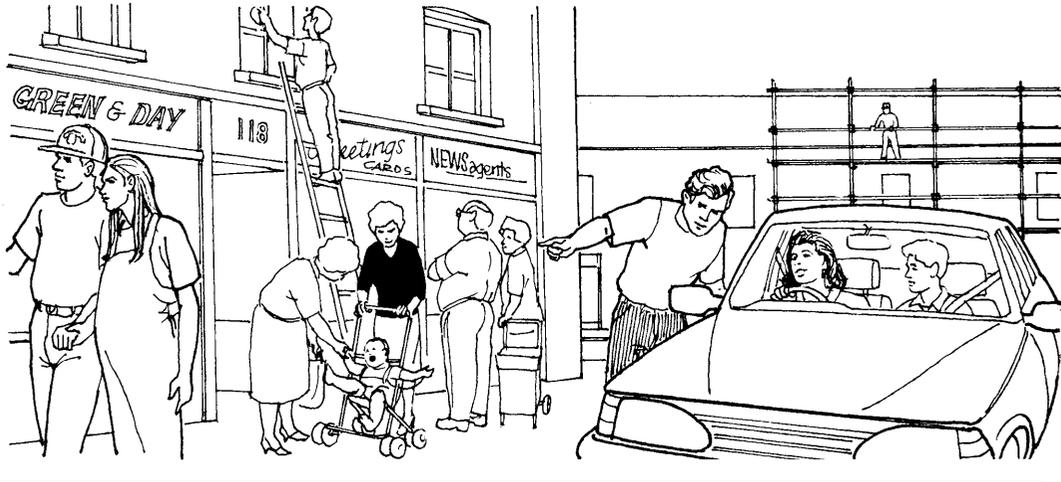
B

3. Things in common

Students sit in pairs, preferably choosing as their partner someone they do not know very well. They talk to one another in order to find out as many things as they can that they have in common. These must be things that can only be discovered through talking – not obvious or visible characteristics like 'We are in the same class' or We both have blue eyes'. At the end they share their findings with the full class.

4. Shopping list

Imagine there is a miracle store that actually sells the commodities shown in the table below. The owners of this store will, however, only stock the items if they are convinced there is a demand. Students each choose three items they want to buy, and try to find for each at least three other 'buyers' – that is, students who have also chosen it. They mark the names of the other students in the appropriate column; if four people want an item, this is enough 'demand' to justify the owners of the store acquiring the stock. The aim is to get the owners to stock all the items you have chosen.

Name of commodity	Second buyer	Third buyer	Fourth buyer
1. More free time			
2. An automatic house-cleaning robot			
3. Popularity			
4. A job that involves travel abroad			
5. Fame			
6. More patience			
7. A perfect figure			
8. More excitement in my life			
9. Perfect health			
10. A talent for making money			

5. Solving a problem

The students are told that they are an educational advisory committee, which has to advise the principal of a school on problems with students. What would they advise with regard to the problem below? They should discuss their recommendation and write it out in the form of a letter to the principal.

> Benny, the only child of rich parents, is in the 7th Grade (aged 13). He is unpopular with both children and teachers. He likes to attach himself to other members of the class, looking for attention, and doesn't seem to realize they don't want him. He likes to express his opinions, in class and out of it, but his ideas are often silly, and laughed at. He has bad breath.
>
> Last Thursday his classmates got annoyed and told him straight that they didn't want him around; next lesson a teacher scolded him sharply in front of the class. Later he was found crying in the toilet saying he wanted to die. He was taken home and has not been back to school since.

Solution to differences between the pictures in *Picture differences* in Box 9.4

1. In picture A the baby is crying.
2. In picture A the mother has a black sweater; in picture B she has a white sweater.
3. In picture A a woman is driving the car; in picture B a man is driving.
4. In picture A the passenger in the car is different from the passenger in picture B.
5. In picture A the building in the background has four windows; in picture B it has seven windows.
6. In picture A the man in the foreground has a hat.
7. In picture A the man directing the car has striped trousers; in picture B he has white trousers.
8. In picture A the woman in the foreground has long hair; in picture B she has short hair.
9. In picture B there is a wheelbarrow on the scaffolding in the background.
10. In picture A the number on the door is 118; in picture B it is 119.
11. In picture A the man on the ladder has a T-shirt; in picture B he has a long-sleeved shirt.

Unit Four: Other kinds of spoken interaction

Question   Look (again) at the activities described in Box 9.4. What kinds of speaking (situations) can you think of that they do not give practice in?
    The extracts in Box 9.5 suggest some more kinds of oral interaction; study and perhaps discuss them.

BOX 9.5: TYPES OF SPOKEN DISCOURSE

Extract 1

Interactional uses of language are those in which the primary purposes for communication are social. The emphasis is on creating harmonious interactions between participants rather than on communicating information. The goal for the participants is to make social interaction comfortable and non-threatening and to communicate good will. Although information may be communicated in the process, the accurate and orderly presentation of information is not the primary purpose. Examples of interactional uses of language are greeting, making small talk, telling jokes, giving compliments, making casual 'chat' of the kind used to pass time with friends or to make encounters with strangers comfortable.
    Brown and Yule (1983) suggest that language used in the interactional mode is *listener oriented* . . . *Transactional* uses of language are those in which language is being used primarily for communicating information. They are 'message' oriented rather than 'listener' oriented. Accurate and coherent communication of the message is important, as well as confirmation that the message has been understood. Explicitness and directness of meaning is essential, in comparison with the vagueness of interactional language . . . Examples of language being used primarily for a transactional purpose include news broadcasts, lectures, descriptions and instructions.

(from Jack C. Richards, *The Language Teaching Matrix,*
Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 54–5, 56)

Extract 2

A short turn consists of only one or two utterances, a long turn consists of a string of utterances which may last as long as an hour's lecture . . . What is demanded of a speaker in a long turn is considerably more demanding than what is required of a speaker in a short turn. As soon as a speaker 'takes the floor' for a long turn, tells an anecdote, tells a joke, explains how something works, justifies a position, describes an individual, and so on, he takes responsibility for creating a structured sequence of utterances which must help the listener to create a *coherent* mental representation of what he is trying to say. What the speaker says must be coherently structured . . . The general point which needs to be made . . . is that it is important that the teacher should realise that simply training the student to produce short turns will not automatically yield students who can perform satisfactorily in long turns.

(from Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Teaching the Spoken Language*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 12, 14)

Extract 3

The use of role play has added a tremendous number of possibilities for communication practice. Students are no longer limited to the kind of language used by learners in a classroom: they can be shopkeepers or spies, grandparents or children, authority figures or subordinates; they can be bold or frightened, irritated or amused, disapproving or affectionate; they can be in Buckingham Palace or on a ship or on the moon; they can be threatening, advising, apologising, condoling. The language can correspondingly vary along several parameters: according to the profession, status, personality, attitudes or mood of the character being role-played, according to the physical setting imagined, according to the communicative functions or purpose required.

(from Penny Ur, *Discussions that Work*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 9)

Follow-up questions   Which of the kinds of interaction described in Box 9.5 are important for your students? For those kinds you think important, can you suggest activities that give practice in them?

Unit Five: Role play and related techniques

Dialogues

This is a traditional language-learning technique that has gone somewhat out of fashion in recent years. The learners are taught a brief dialogue which they learn by heart. For example:

> A: *Look, it's stopped raining!*
> B: *So it has! Do you want to go out?*
> A: *Yes, I've got a lot of shopping to do.*
> B: *Right, let's go. Where do you want to go first?*

They then perform it: privately in pairs, or publicly in front of the whole class.

Plays

These are an expansion of the dialogue technique, where a class learns and performs a play. This can be based on something they have read; or composed by them or the teacher; or an actual play from the literature of the target language.

Simulations

In simulations the individual participants speak and react as themselves, but the group role, situation and task they are given is an imaginary one. For example:

> *You are the managing committee of a special school for blind children. You want to organize a summer camp for the children, but your school budget is insufficient. Decide how you might raise the money.*

They usually work in small groups, with no audience.

Role play

Participants are given a situation plus problem or task, as in simulations; but they are also allotted individual roles, which may be written out on cards. For example:

> *ROLE CARD A: You are a customer in a cake shop. You want a birthday cake for a friend. He or she is very fond of chocolate.*

> *ROLE CARD B: You are a shop assistant in a cake shop. You have many kinds of cake, but not chocolate cake.*

<div align="right">(Porter Ladousse, 1987: 51)</div>

Discussion

Have you experienced any of the above techniques as teacher or learner? Choose the one that you think most useful, and write down or share with other participants your experiences and reflections.

Unit Six: Oral testing

Question Does a final language proficiency examination you are familiar with (a state school-leaving exam, for example) include an oral component (as distinct from listening comprehension)? If so, how much weighting is it given in the final grade?

Task **Debate**

Stage 1: Preparation

Think about what your own arguments would be for, or against, testing oral proficiency.

Stage 2: Debate

Divide into two groups; one prepares the case in favour of oral testing, the other against. (It does not matter, for the moment, which side you are really on; prepare the case for your group as convincingly as you can for the sake of the argument.) One or two main speakers present the case for each group, and the discussion is then thrown open for free participation.

At the end of the debate, you might like to put the issue to the vote. At this point you may abandon the views of 'your' group if you do not really accept them, and vote according to your own inclination.

Unit One: How do we read?

BOX 10.1: SOME ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF READING

1. We need to perceive and decode letters in order to read words.
2. We need to understand all the words in order to understand the meaning of a text.
3. The more symbols (letters or words) there are in a text, the longer it will take to read it.
4. We gather meaning from what we read.
5. Our understanding of a text comes from understanding the words of which it is composed.

Task **Examining how we read**

Stage 1: Preliminary thinking

Look at the statements shown in Box 10.1. Do you agree with them? Disagree? Agree, but with reservations?

   Think about or discuss these statements, and perhaps note down your responses.

Stage 2: Short experimental readings

Now try reading some short texts, and see whether the results make any difference to, or confirm, your answers.

1. Can you read the English words shown in Box 10.2.1?

BOX 10.2.1: CAN YOU READ IT? (1)

You might guess various possibilities; but you cannot be sure you are right. If, however, you look at Box 10.2.2 below, you will probably be able to read the same words with little difficulty.

2. Read carefully the three texts in Box 10.3. Which takes you most time to read and which least?

BOX 10.3: HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE YOU TO READ?

1. X   P   T   A   Q   E   W   T

2. jam hot pin call did tap son tick

3. How quickly can you read and understand this?

---

3. Finally, read the text in Box 10.4 as quickly as you can.

BOX 10.4: READ QUICKLY

The handsome knight mounted his horse, and galloped off to save the beautiful princess. On and on, over mountains and valleys, until his galloping house was exhausted. At last he dismounted . . . Where was the dragon?

Did you notice that the second occurrence of the word 'horse' was spelled 'house'?

Stage 3: Drawing conclusions

In the light of the above experiments, do you need to revise your original responses to the questions in Box 10.1?

BOX 10.2.2: CAN YOU READ IT? (2)

She's a "natural" teacher! (And it was a pleasure to have her with us)

Unit Two: Beginning reading

Task   **Thinking about teaching the beginning of reading**

Look at the questions in Box 10.5 and note for yourself, or discuss with other participants, what your own answers would be.

BOX 10.5: SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT BEGINNING READING

1. Should I teach my students only orally for a while, so that they have basic oral proficiency in the foreign language before tackling reading? Or start reading and writing from the beginning?
2. Should I teach them single letters, and gradually build these up into words? Or teach the written form of meaningful words first, letting them come to the different component letters by analysis later?
3. If I decide to teach single letters, should I teach them by name first, or by (usual) sound?
4. If there are various forms to letters (such as the capital and lower case forms in the Roman alphabet, the beginning, middle and end forms in Arabic), at what stage should I teach each?
5. At what stage should I teach the conventional order of the alphabet?

Unit Three: Types of reading activities

A conventional type of reading activity or test consists of a text followed by comprehension questions.

Task   **Answering comprehension questions (1)**

Try doing the activity shown in Box 10.6.

BOX 10.6: COMPREHENSION TEXT AND QUESTIONS (1)

READ THE TEXT AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

Yesterday I saw the palgish flester golling begrunt the bruck. He seemed very chanderbil, so I did not jorter him, just deapled to him quistly. Perhaps later he will besand cander, and I will be able to rangel to him.

1. What was the flester doing, and where?
2. What sort of a flester was he?
3. Why did the writer decide not to jorter him?
4. How did she deaple?
5. What did she hope would happen later?

Question   What is it about these questions which makes them answerable in spite of the incomprehensibility of the source text?

Task   **Answering comprehension questions (2)**

The text and questions in Box 10.7 are different. Try answering them, and then think about the question that follows.

BOX 10.7: COMPREHENSION TEXT AND QUESTIONS (2)

READ THE TEXT AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

Yesterday I saw the new patient hurrying along the corridor. He seemed very upset, so I did not follow him, just called to him gently. Perhaps later he will feel better, and I will be able to talk to him.

1. What is the problem described here?
2. Is this event taking place indoors or outside?
3. Did the writer try to get near the patient?
4. What do you think she said when she called to him?
5. What might the job of the writer be?
6. Why do you think she wants to talk to the patient?

Question   Here, the reader would have to understand the content of the passage in order to answer these questions (similar ones would be unanswerable if applied to the previous 'nonsense' text). Can you put your finger on why? In other words, in what ways – apart from the fact that they are in normal English – do these questions differ from those given in Box 10.6?

Task   **Answering comprehension questions (3)**

Stage 1: Trying a task (1)

Try doing the exercise in Box 10.8.1.

BOX 10.8.1: QUESTIONS GIVEN BEFORE THE TEXT

Read the questions and guess what the answers are going to be. Later, you will read the text and be able to check how many you got right.

1. Where was Jane walking?
2. What did she hear behind her?
3. What was her necklace made of?
4. What did the thief steal (two things)?
5. What did he do next?

Stage 2: Reflection

Before reading on, try answering the following questions (assuming that you did not cheat and read the source passage first!): Were your guesses as to what the answers would be completely random? Or did you base them on some kind of evidence or knowledge?

Stage 3: Trying a task (2)

Now look at Box 10.8.2, which is the text on which the questions are based. Try as you do so to compare your motivation to read and ease of comprehension with those you felt when reading the 'new patient' passage.

BOX 10.8.2: PASSAGE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

As Jane was walking down the street, she heard someone walking quietly behind her. She began to feel afraid. Suddenly a large hand touched her neck: her gold necklace broke and disappeared. In another moment, her bag too was gone, and the thief was running away.

Task **Thinking of alternative reading activities**

Make a list of further possible reading activities that are not based on text plus comprehension questions, using different kinds of texts. These can be for different kinds of learners, or for a specific class you are acquainted with. A locally-used textbook may be one source of ideas, as well as your own and other participants' experience and creativity.

Unit Four: Improving reading skills

Task **Characteristics of efficient reading, and implications for teaching**

Look at the list of ideas on efficient and inefficient reading in Box 10.10; cross out or change any you do not agree with, and add any further items you wish.

Next, note for each under 'My recommendation' what the implications are for teaching. In other words, try to put your finger on what you as a teacher could, or should, do to help to foster the 'efficient' quality: what types of texts or tasks you might select, what kinds of instructions and advice you might give.

BOX 10.10: EFFICIENT AND INEFFICIENT READING

	Efficient	*Inefficient*
1. Language	The language of the text is comprehensible to the learners.	The language of the text is too difficult.

My recommendations:

	Efficient	*Inefficient*
2. Content	The content of the text is accessible to the learners: they know enough about it to be able to apply their own background knowledge.	The text is too difficult in the sense that the context is too far removed from the knowledge and experience of the learners.

My recommendations:

	Efficient	*Inefficient*
3. Speed	The reading progresses fairly fast: mainly because the reader has 'automatized' recognition of common combinations, and does not waste time working out each word or group of words anew.	The reading is slow: the reader does not have a large 'vocabulary' of automatically recognized items.

My recommendations:

	Efficient	*Inefficient*
4. Attention	The reader concentrates on the significant bits, and skims the rest; may even skip parts he or she knows to be insignificant.	The reader pays the same amount of attention to all parts of the text.

My recommendations:

	Efficient	*Inefficient*
5. Incompre-hensible vocabulary	The reader takes incomprehensible vocabulary in his or her stride: guesses its meaning from the surrounding text, or ignores it and manages without; uses a dictionary only when these strategies are insufficient.	The reader cannot tolerate incomprehensible vocabulary items: stops to look every one up in a dictionary, and/or feels discouraged from trying to comprehend the text as a whole.

My recommendations:

| **6. Prediction** | The reader thinks ahead, hypothesizes, predicts. | The reader does not think ahead, deals with the text as it comes. |

My recommendations:

| **7. Background information** | The reader has and uses background information to help understand the text. | The reader does not have or use background information. |

My recommendations:

| **8. Motivation** | The reader is motivated to read: by interesting content or challenging task. | The reader has no particular interest in reading. |

My recommendations:

| **9. Purpose** | The reader is aware of a clear purpose in reading: for example, to find out something, to get pleasure. | The reader has no clear purpose other than to obey the teacher's instruction. |

My recommendations:

| **10. Strategies** | The reader uses different strategies for different kinds of reading. | The reader uses the same strategy for all texts. |

My recommendations:

Application Look at the reading texts and tasks supplied in a foreign language textbook you know. How far do they accord with your recommendations? And what might you do to compensate for any weaknesses you discover?

Unit Five: Advanced reading

Task **Criticizing reading materials**

In Boxes 10.12.1–5 are five examples of texts in English for intermediate to advanced readers. The first three are accompanied by tasks; the last two are not. What would be your comments on the first three? And can you design your own tasks for the others?

BOX 10.12.1: READING TEXT AND TASK (1)

EXERCISE
Choose the best answers.

a. The Bay Window is
   – a bar
   – a restaurant
   – a theater

b. You can order dinner at the Bay Window Restaurant
   – on weeknights
   – every night
   – on weekends

c. Bay Window Restaurant advertises
   – seafood only
   – meat dishes only
   – both seafood and meat dishes

d. Bay Window Restaurant is next to
   – the Paramount Theater
   – the Bayside Theater
   – Bay View Community College

e. Bay Window Restaurant's telephone number is advertised so you can
   – order dinner
   – arrange for parking
   – make reservations

Bay Window
RESTAURANT

Live Maine Lobster / Fresh Fish
Steaks & Chops
Cocktails • Dinner Nightly

2040 Broadway, San Francisco
Next to Bayside Theater • Reservations (415) 555-1855
Valet Pkg.

(from Evelyne Davis, Norman Whitney, Meredith Pike-Blakey and Laurie Bass, *Task Reading*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 98–9)

BOX 10.12.2: READING TEXT AND TASK (2)

The following excerpt is taken from *Alice in Wonderland*. The Dodo (a kind of bird) is suggesting a way in which the whole party, who are very wet, can get dry. What is ridiculous about this excerpt?

A Caucus Race

"What I was going to say," said the Dodo in an offended tone, "was that the best thing to get us dry would be a caucus race."

"What *is* a caucus race?" said Alice; not that she much wanted to know, but the Dodo had paused as if it thought that *somebody* ought to speak, and no one else seemed inclined to say anything.

"Why," said the Dodo, "the best way to explain it is to do it." (And as you might like to try the thing yourself, some winter day, I will tell you how the Dodo managed it.)

First it marked out a race-course, in a sort of circle ("the exact shape doesn't matter," it said), and then all the party were placed along the course, here and there. There was no "One, two, three, and away," but they began running when they liked and left off when they liked so that it was not easy to know when the race was over. However, when they had been running half an hour or so, and were quite dry again, the Dodo suddenly called out, "The race is over!" and they all crowded round it, panting, and asking, "But who has won?"

This question the Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought, and it sat for a long time with one finger pressed upon its forehead (the position in which you usually see Shakespeare, in the pictures of him); while the rest waited in silence. At last the Dodo said, "*Everybody* has won, and all must have prizes."

(from Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll)

- We all have concepts of what "a race" is. In what ways does this passage challenge the usual concepts?
- Look up the word "caucus" in your dictionary. In the light of the dictionary definition, can you offer a deeper interpretation of the passage than "a description of a silly game that Wonderland characters play"?

(from Amos Paran, *Points of Departure*, Israel: Eric Cohen Books, 1993, p. 74)

BOX 10.12.3: TEXT AND TASK (3)

Beat the Burglar

Don't invite crime – take basic, sensible precautions. Your house and property are valuable and must be properly protected. When you buy a lock, you buy time – and this is the one thing a burglar can't afford. Most thieves are casual opportunists to whom the best deterrents are delay and noise which could mean discovery.

When you leave it – lock it!

First of all, fit security locks to all doors and windows and a safety chain on the front door. Secondly, use them! And use them every time you go out, even if it's only for a short time. If you have any ladders or tools, don't leave them lying about in the garden, lock them away or at least immobilise them.
Don't rely on "safe" or "secret" places for keys and valuables – nine times out of ten, they are the first place a thief will look.

When you move house ....

When you move into a new home, even if it is fitted with security locks, change them. You don't know who may have duplicate keys. When you are new to a district, you are particularly vulnerable. Never let anyone that you don't know into your house. An official-looking cap is not enough, ask for proof of identity and look at it carefully – if you are still not satisfied, don't let the person in.

Valuables need special protection

Really valuable items, such as jewellery, should be given special protection – preferably by leaving them with your bank. But a small security safe, properly installed, should protect you against all but the most determined burglar. It is also most important to maintain an up-to-date list of valuables and their descriptions. In the case of fine art, paintings, ceramics or jewellery, colour photographs can sometimes be of assistance to the police should you be unfortunate enough to have them stolen. Enter the details on the back of the pictures. But don't keep such documents in your house, keep them at the bank or with your insurance company.

Going on holiday?

Don't advertise the fact that your house is empty. Do remember to cancel the milk and newspapers and also to draw curtains back. Don't leave notes for tradesmen and try not to talk about your holidays and future plans loudly in public.
Operate a "Good Neighbour" scheme to ensure that mail is taken in, the house checked regularly and that lights are put on. If you plan to be away for a long time, make sure that your lawn is cut.
Call at your local police station and tell them you are going away. Make sure that they know who has your spare key and how you can be contacted in case of trouble.
Especially at holiday time, don't leave cash or valuables in the house – take them with you or lodge them with the bank.

(Metropolitan Police: *Beat the Burglar*)

(from Simon Greenall and Michael Swan, *Effective Reading: Skills for Advanced Students*, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 38–9)

BOX 10.12.4: TEXT (4)

Human rights for everyone

The main Declaration of Rights, covering human rights for all people, was proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948*, has thirty articles. These are some of the most important.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the
 Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex,
 language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin,
 property, birth or other status.
Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruelty, inhuman or degrading
 treatment or punishment.
Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent
 until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which
 he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family,
 home or correspondence, nor attacks upon his honour and reputation.
Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from
 persecution.

(Nan Berger, *Rights*)

(quoted in Michael Swan (ed.), *Kaleidoscope*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 154–5)

BOX 10.12.5: TEXT (5)

Good marriages

I know some good marriages. Second marriages mostly. Marriages where both people have outgrown the bullshit of me-Tarzan, you-Jane and are just trying to get through their days by helping each other, being good to each other, doing the chores as they come up and not worrying too much about who does what. Some men reach that delightfully relaxed state of affairs about age forty or after a couple of divorces. Maybe marriages are best in middle age. When all the nonsense falls away and you realize you have to love one another because you're going to die anyway.

(Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying*)

(quoted in Michael Swan (ed.), *Kaleidoscope*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 71)

Module 11: Teaching writing

Unit One: Written versus spoken text

Task **Defining the differences between spoken and written discourse**

Stage 1: Listing differences

Can you define and note down some of the differences between spoken and written discourse? These may refer to vocabulary, style, grammar, content, the activity of the producers and receivers of the different kinds of discourse – anything you can think of. It may help to look at the samples of speech and writing shown in Box 11.1.

BOX 11.1: SAMPLES OF WRITTEN AND SPOKEN TEXTS

The written text (refers to a diagram of a cassette recorder with different components numbered)

- For recording from the built-in microphone ensure that no equipment is connected to socket (1)
- For other recordings connect the separate microphone or the equipment from which you wish to record to socket (11)
- Insert a cassette
- Press record (2) and start key (4) at the same time
- To stop, press stop key (6)

The spoken text

Marion: Could you explain to me how to make a recording with this cassette recorder?

Ron: (er) Yes certainly. (um) First of all you (er) open the (er) place where the cassette goes, press down the button marked eject, then you put the cassette in and close the lid. (um) Then (um) to record you have to press down two buttons simultaneously (er) the one marked rec for record and the one marked start. So you press those two down like that –

Marion: Uhuh

Ron: and it starts recording (er) automatically . . .

Marion: Ummm. And what if I want to record with a different microphone, not the built-in one here?

Ron: There's a, a place, a socket here –
Marion: Oh yes
Ron: on the bottom left, and you can put an outside microphone into that and
          record from another source.

(from Ronald V. White, *Teaching Written English*,
Heinemann Educational Books, 1980, pp. 11–12)

Question   How far would you think it necessary or useful to make your own – present
or prospective – students aware of the differences between written and
spoken language?

Unit Two: Teaching procedures

Writing as means or as an end

Some coursebook exercises teach writing for its own sake; some merely use
writing as a means to an end such as practising grammar or vocabulary.

Task   **Classifying writing activities**

In Box 11.2 are a series of instructions introducing 'writing' activities in
textbooks. Where would you put each on the scale shown here?

WRITING AS AN	WRITING AS	WRITING AS
END IN ITSELF	MEANS AND END	A MEANS

BOX 11.2: INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING ACTIVITIES

A. The sentences in the following paragraph have been jumbled. Write them
   out in the correct order.
B. Finish the following sentences in a way that makes the underlined word
   clear. For example:

   An underline expert is someone who . . .

C. The following story is written in the present tense. Rewrite it in the past.
D. We have come to an exciting point in the story. Write down what you think
   will happen next, and why.
E. For a survey on child education in this country: could you please state your
   main criticisms of the way you were brought up?

Writing for content and/or form

The purpose of writing, in principle, is the expression of ideas, the conveying of a message to the reader; so the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of the writing. On the other hand, the writer needs also to pay some attention to formal aspects: neat handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation, as well as acceptable grammar and careful selection of vocabulary.

Task **Writing activities in textbooks**

Look at a textbook you know, or a book that explicitly sets out to teach writing, and identify two or three activities that do, in your opinion, really teach writing as an 'end' not just as a 'means'. Do these activities maintain a balance between content (i.e. the substance of what is being said) and form (i.e. the way the words, sentences and paragraphs are formed) that seems to you appropriate for your own teaching situation? If there is a bias, which way does it tend?

Unit Three: Tasks that stimulate writing

Question Are the criteria shown in Box 11.3 acceptable to you? Would you omit or change any of them, add more?

BOX 11.3: SOME CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF TEXTBOOK WRITING ACTIVITIES

1. Would my students find the activity motivating, stimulating and interesting to do?
2. Is it of an appropriate level for them? Or would they find it too easy/difficult/childish/sophisticated?
3. Is the kind of writing relevant to their needs?
4. Would I need to do some preliminary teaching in preparation for this activity?
5. In general, do I like this activity? Would I use it?

Task **Evaluating writing activities**

In Box 11.4 are some writing activities of types commonly found in coursebooks. How would you evaluate them for use in a particular class? The class can be one you are teaching or have taught; or one you remember participating in as a student; or even a hypothetical one, which you can imagine teaching. If you answered the question above, then you have a list of appropriate criteria ready; otherwise you might find it useful to refer to those provided in Box 11.3.

BOX 11.4: SOME TEXTBOOK WRITING ACTIVITIES

1. Write a report of a book you have just read.
2. Write a review of a book you enjoyed and would like to recommend to other people in the class.
3. Write an instruction sheet for something you yourself know how to do well (e.g. prepare some kind of food).
4. Write a narrative based on a picture or series of pictures.
5. Describe an occasion when you were disappointed (or afraid, surprised, relieved . . .).
6. Look out of the window, and describe the view you see.
7. Describe someone you know very well.
8. Write imaginary descriptions of five people, based on photographs and some information about their professions.
9. Write an answer to a (given) letter of complaint.
10. Write a letter applying for a job as baby-sitter, stating your qualifications for the job.
11. Think of a change you would like to see introduced in your country, home community or place of work/study. Write a recommendation to the authorities, explaining why it is desirable and suggesting how it might be effected.
12. Read a newspaper article reporting a piece of news, and notice the kinds of information provided. Write a similar article of your own on an imaginary event.
13. Imagine your ideal school. Describe it.
14. Describe the process represented in a flow chart or other kind of diagram.
15. Listen to a piece of music. Describe the plot and atmosphere of the film for which it is to be the background music.

Unit Four: The process of composition

Experience **The writing process**

Stage 1: Writing

Choose one of the two problems described in Box 11.5, and compose a written answer in the form of a short text of about 200–300 words. As you compose your answer, try to be aware of how you are thinking and what you are doing.

BOX 11.5: PROBLEMS TO RESPOND TO IN WRITING

Problem 1

If the immediate objective of the students in a specific class is to pass a school-leaving exam which does not include any extended writing, and if after leaving school very few of them will need to do much writing in the foreign language – how much writing should be taught, if any?

Problem 2

If not-very-proficient students are asked to write freely, they produce work that is full of language mistakes. What should be done about this? Not let them write freely? Not correct mistakes? . . .

Stage 2: Reflection

Compare your results with those of other participants. What were the similarities and differences in your writing process? You might find the questions shown in Box 11.6 help to focus your thinking.

BOX 11.6: REFLECTING ON THE WRITING PROCESS

1. Preparation

Did you make preliminary notes? If so, were these in the form of a brainstorm? A series of numbered points? A skeleton outline? A combination of these? Or did you just think for a bit and then launch straight into the writing?

2. Process

How far did you get without crossing out / inserting / changing anything? In general, how much rewriting did you do? Did you finish one part to your own satisfaction before going on to the next? Or did you find yourself writing a later part, conscious that you had not yet done an earlier one? Did you find yourself writing something that you felt was not quite satisfactory, with a mental note to come back to it later? Did you change the order of 'chunks' of writing as you went on? At what stage did you edit formal aspects such as punctuation or grammar?

How did you feel during the writing process? Was it interesting? Absorbing? Tedious? Enjoyable? Uncomfortable?

Would you have liked help or advice from an experienced writer, or teacher, at any stage? If so, when and how?

3. Product

If you made preliminary notes, how closely did the final result in fact accord with the plan? How satisfied did you feel with it? Did you feel you wished someone to read it? Were you interested in reading what others had written on the same topic?

Stage 3: Conclusion

Try to draw some practical teaching conclusions from the results of your introspection and discussion.

Unit Five: Giving feedback on writing

Task **Critical discussion**

After reading each section below think or discuss: how far do you agree with the advice? Would you (or do you) use the recommended feedback strategies?

1. What should feedback be mainly on: language? content? organization?

The problem
When a student submits a piece of original writing, the most important thing about it is, arguably, its content: whether the ideas or events that are written about are significant and interesting. Then there is the organization and presentation: whether the ideas are arranged in a way that is easy to follow and pleasing to read. Finally, there is the question of language forms: whether the grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation are of an acceptable standard of accuracy.

Many teachers are aware that content and organization are important, but find themselves relating mainly to language forms in their feedback, conveying the implicit message that these are what matters.

Advice
We should, I think, correct language mistakes; our problem is how to do so without conveying the message that these are the only, or main, basis for evaluation of a piece of writing. One possibility is to note corrections within the body of the text, and devote comments at the end to matters of content and organization, followed by the evaluation. Alternatively, we may correct mistakes and make suggestions as to content and organization, but not evaluate; and give the evaluation only on the basis of the rewritten, polished version.

2. Should all mistakes be corrected?

The problem
If we accept that language (including punctuation) should be corrected, another problem arises: should *all* language mistakes be noted, even if there are so many that the page will be covered with corrections? If not, how do we judge which to relate to and which not?

Advice
The problem is one of potential conflict between two of our functions as teachers: language instruction versus support and encouragement of learning. The correcting of mistakes is part of the language instruction, but too much of it can be discouraging and demoralizing.

Some kind of compromise is obviously called for, which will vary according to context. We might correct only mistakes that actually affect meaning (that is, might lead to misunderstanding or confusion on the part of the reader), and/or those which are very basic; or, of course, vary our response according to individual need.

3. Should learners rewrite, incorporating corrections?

The problem
When we receive written work, we normally correct and comment on it and give it back. The question is whether to insist on the students rewriting the compositions, incorporating our suggestions for improvements. This can be tedious, and students do not like doing it; on the other hand, it does probably help to reinforce learning of the correct forms.

Advice
I think rewriting is very important: not only because it reinforces learning, but also because rewriting is an integral part of the writing process as a whole. However, if we demand rewriting on the part of the students, they have a right to demand from us that we reread – and value – what they have done. It makes sense to see the first version as provisional, and to regard the rewritten, final version as 'the' assignment, the one that is submitted for formal assessment. This helps to motivate the students to rewrite and to appreciate the value of doing so.

4. Should we let students correct or give feedback on each other's written work?

The problem
Correcting written work is very time-consuming, particularly if we have large classes. One possible solution is to let students correct and edit each other's writing. They may not be able to see or define all the good qualities or shortcomings of an assignment; but they will detect at least some of them. The

problem is: will students feel uncomfortable correcting, or being corrected by, their peers? Will they accept criticism (positive or negative) from each other?

Advice

In general, yes, peer-correction can be a time-saving and useful technique; also, critical reading for style, content and language accuracy is a valuable exercise in itself. This does not release us from the duty of checking and evaluating student writing; but it can be a substitute for first-draft reading. Students can work together on their first drafts, giving each other feedback on content, language and organization; they then rewrite and give in the final version to the teacher.

Module 12: The syllabus

Unit One: What is a syllabus?

Preliminary questions How would you define the term 'syllabus'? What should, or may, a syllabus contain?

Task **Your own syllabus**

Which of the characteristics you have identified apply to your own syllabus (or one that is commonly used locally)? Can you, perhaps, comment on the significance of the presence or absence of any of the characteristics?

Unit Two: Different types of language syllabus

1. **Grammatical:** A list of grammatical structures, such as the present tense, comparison of adjectives, relative clauses.
2. **Lexical:** A list of lexical items (*girl*, *boy*, *go away* . . .) with associated collocations and idioms.
3. **Grammatical–lexical:** Both structures and lexis are specified.
4. **Situational:** Sections are headed by names of situations or locations such as 'Eating a meal' or 'In the street'.
5. **Topic-based:** Headings are broadly topic-based, including things like 'Food' or 'The family'.
6. **Notional:** General notions may include 'number', for example, or 'time', 'place', 'colour'; specific notions look more like vocabulary items: 'man', 'woman', 'afternoon'.
7. **Functional–notional:** Functions are things you can **do** with language, as distinct from notions you can express: examples are 'identifying', 'denying', 'promising'.
8. **Mixed or 'multi-strand':** Increasingly, modern syllabuses are combining different aspects in order to be maximally comprehensive and helpful to teachers and learners; in these you may find specification of topics, tasks, functions and notions, as well as grammar and vocabulary.
9. **Procedural:** These syllabuses specify the learning tasks to be done rather than the language itself or even its meanings. Examples of tasks might be: map-reading, doing scientific experiments, story-writing.

10. **Process:** This is the only syllabus which is not pre-set. The content of the course is negotiated with the learners at the beginning of the course and during it, and actually listed only retrospectively.

Task   **Classifying syllabuses**

Look at the syllabuses of two or three coursebooks, not necessarily those used locally. Which of the types listed above do they belong to?

Unit Three: Using the syllabus

Task   **Thinking about how to use the syllabus**

In Box 12.2 five teachers describe how they use their syllabuses. Consider on your own or discuss with other participants: with whom do you identify most closely?

   With regard to the teacher you feel you identify with most closely: what is it about his or her statement that you feel in sympathy with? What alterations would you need to introduce to make it express your own position more precisely? With regard to the others: what is it about their approaches that you reject, or that is irrelevant to your own teaching context? If you found yourself in their situation, how would you use the syllabus?

BOX 12.2: USING THE SYLLABUS

Anna: The syllabus of the language school where I teach is very comprehensive: it includes grammar, vocabulary, functions, notions, situations; and gives references to material I can use. I use it all the time and could not do without it. When preparing a teaching session or series of sessions I go first to the syllabus, decide what it will be appropriate to teach next according to its programme, plan how to combine and schedule the components I have selected, and take the relevant books or materials from the library as I need them.

Joseph: There is a syllabus, but we don't have to use it; nor is there any fixed coursebook, although the college recommends certain ones. Personally, I simply ignore the syllabus, since I prefer to do my own thing, based on the needs of my [adult] students. I use materials and activities from different sources (teacher's handbooks, textbooks, enrichment materials, literature) which are available in my institution's library in order to create a rich and varied programme that is flexible enough to be altered and adapted to student needs during the course.

Maria: They made us read the national syllabus in my teacher-training course, but I haven't looked at it since. What for? In my [state] school we use a class coursebook which lays out all the language I have to teach, as well as giving me texts, exercises and ideas for activities. I assume the Ministry would not have authorized the book if it didn't accord with the syllabus, so there's no reason for me to double-check if I'm teaching the right things.

Lilly: I possess the syllabus, and look at it occasionally, but mostly I work from the coursebook that my school chose for the class. It's just that sometimes I get a bit fed up with the coursebook and want to do something different: so then I 'do my own thing' for a bit, using the syllabus as a retrospective checklist, to make sure I'm still reasonably on target with the content . . . after all, I am being employed to teach a certain syllabus, I can't stray too far.

David: The school where I work cannot afford to buy coursebooks for the children, so I have the only book; I also have an officially authorized syllabus. Everything I teach I take either from the syllabus or from the coursebook. I don't add material of my own; for one thing, the authorities do not approve; for another, I am not confident enough of my knowledge of the language I am teaching – I might make mistakes.

Module 13: Materials

Unit One: How necessary is a coursebook?

Question   What would your own answer be to the question asked in the title of this unit? And what would be your arguments to support it?

Task   **Thinking about advantages and disadvantages of using a coursebook**

In Boxes 13.1.1 and 13.1.2 are some of the arguments for and against the use of a coursebook. Read through them, ticking off those you agree with, and noting your criticisms of those you disagree with or have reservations about.

BOX 13.1.1: IN FAVOUR OF USING A COURSEBOOK

1. Framework
A coursebook provides a clear framework: teacher and learners know where they are going and what is coming next, so that there is a sense of structure and progress.

2. Syllabus
In many places the coursebook serves as a syllabus: if it is followed systematically, a carefully planned and balanced selection of language content will be covered.

3. Ready-made texts and tasks
The coursebook provides texts and learning tasks which are likely to be of an appropriate level for most of the class. This of course saves time for the teacher who would otherwise have to prepare his or her own.

4. Economy
A book is the cheapest way of providing learning material for each learner; alternatives, such as kits, sets of photocopied papers or computer software, are likely to be more expensive relative to the amount of material provided.

5. Convenience
A book is a convenient package. It is bound, so that its components stick together and stay in order; it is light and small enough to carry around easily;

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it is of a shape that is easily packed and stacked; it does not depend for its use on hardware or a supply of electricity.

6. Guidance
For teachers who are inexperienced or occasionally unsure of their knowledge of the language, the coursebook can provide useful guidance and support.

7. Autonomy
The learner can use the coursebook to learn new material, review and monitor progress with some degree of autonomy. A learner without a coursebook is more teacher-dependent.

BOX 13.1.2: AGAINST USING A COURSEBOOK

1. Inadequacy
Every class – in fact, every learner – has their own learning needs: no one coursebook can possibly supply these satisfactorily.

2. Irrelevance, lack of interest
The topics dealt with in the coursebook may not necessarily be relevant or interesting for your class.

3. Limitation
A coursebook is confining: its set structure and sequence may inhibit a teacher's initiative and creativity, and lead to boredom and lack of motivation on the part of the learners.

4. Homogeneity
Coursebooks have their own rationale and chosen teaching/learning approach. They do not usually cater for the variety of levels of ability and knowledge, or of learning styles and strategies that exist in most classes.

5. Over-easiness
Teachers find it too easy to follow the coursebook uncritically instead of using their initiative; they may find themselves functioning merely as mediators of its content instead of as teachers in their own right.

Question   Were any of the ideas expressed in the 'for' or 'against' arguments in Boxes 13.1.1 and 13.1.2 new to you? If they were, and if they seem acceptable, would you now modify at all your answer to the question asked at the beginning of this unit as a result? Or do you find your previous opinion unchanged? Or even reinforced?

Unit Two: Coursebook assessment

Task **Assessing a coursebook**

Stage 1: Deciding on criteria

Study the list of criteria for assessing language-learning coursebooks shown in Box 13.2. In the left-hand column, note how important you think each criterion is: a double tick for 'very important', and a single tick for 'fairly important'; a question mark for 'not sure'; and a cross or double cross for 'not important' or 'totally unimportant' respectively. Then add any further criteria you feel are significant (either general, or specific to your own context) in the spaces left at the end, and mark in their importance. Ignore the extreme right-hand column for the moment. Compare your ideas with those of other participants.

Stage 2: Applying criteria

Now take a locally-used coursebook and examine it, applying the criteria you have in your list; note your ratings in the extreme right-hand column of the table. You might use a similar code to the one employed in Stage 1: a single or double tick indicates that the book scores high, or very high, on this criterion; a cross or double cross that it scores low or very low; and a question mark shows that you are not sure, or that the criterion applies only partially.

   You might compare notes with other participants who have looked at the same materials, and see if you can come to a consensus on most or all of the items.

Stage 3: Summary

Can you now make some overall evaluation of the coursebook? Note that for this you need to compare the two columns you have filled; it is not enough simply to 'add up' the right-hand column. For example, if the book has scored very high on a criterion which you rated unimportant, this is less in its favour than a fairly high rating on a criterion you see as essential.

BOX 13.2: CRITERIA FOR COURSEBOOK ASSESSMENT

Importance	Criterion	
	Objectives explicitly laid out in an introduction, and implemented in the material	
	Approach educationally and socially acceptable to target community	
	Clear attractive layout; print easy to read	
	Appropriate visual materials available	
	Interesting topics and tasks	
	Varied topics and tasks, so as to provide for different learner levels, learning styles, interests, etc.	
	Clear instructions	
	Systematic coverage of syllabus	
	Content clearly organized and graded (sequenced by difficulty)	
	Periodic review and test sections	
	Plenty of authentic language	
	Good pronunciation explanation and practice	
	Good vocabulary explanation and practice	
	Good grammar presentation and practice	
	Fluency practice in all four skills	
	Encourages learners to develop own learning strategies and to become independent in their learning	
	Adequate guidance for the teacher; not too heavy preparation load	
	Audio cassettes	
	Readily available locally	

Unit Three: Using a coursebook

Coverage

Any single unit of a coursebook should cover a fair range of language content and skills. Some categories of content are shown in Box 13.3.

Questions

Which categories in Box 13.3 do you think are most important? Does your coursebook cover these satisfactorily? Are there some that are neglected? Are there others that it spends too much time or space on in your opinion?

BOX 13.3: COURSEBOOK COVERAGE

– pronunciation practice
– introduction of new vocabulary and practice
– grammar explanations and practice
– recordings for listening practice
– listening and speaking communicative tasks
– reading and writing communicative tasks
– mixed-skills communicative tasks
– short and long reading texts
– dictionary work
– review of previously learnt material
– some entertaining or fun activities

Texts

Questions Are the (reading or listening) texts of an appropriate level? Are they interesting? Varied?

Tasks (activities, exercises)

Questions Do the tasks provide opportunities for plenty of use of the target language? Are they heterogeneous, allowing for responses at different levels? Do they cover a satisfactory range of language items and skills? Are they interesting? Are they relevant and useful for your class(es)? Is there a balance between accuracy and fluency practice: that is to say, activities whose objective is the production of correct language forms, and those whose objective is communicative language use?

Administration

Questions With regard to any specific component of the coursebook: would this be most effectively administered through teacher-led question-and-answer? Or perhaps learners should tackle it individually, through reading and writing? Or might it be most effective if they work on it collaboratively, in pairs or groups? Or use a combination of these strategies? Does the coursebook provide you with guidance on these questions?

Application Select one unit from a coursebook you are familiar with, and make a copy of it. Study it, using the questions and comments suggested in this unit, and note in the margins of your copy which components you might omit, change or supplement, and why; and how you think those you have retained would be most effectively administered in class. If there is a Teacher's Book, look at what it says after you have done the above, and compare its ideas with your own.

Unit Four: Supplementary materials

Task **Simulation**

BOX 13.4: PACKAGES OF SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Package 1: A set of computers for learners' use, with accompanying language-learning programs on floppy disk.

Package 2: A set of reference books for the teachers, including: grammars, dictionaries; various specialized textbooks; handbooks of activities; and a subscription to a teachers' journal of your choice.

Package 3: A number of overhead projectors and slide projectors, with all necessary film, slides and markers.

Package 4: Video equipment, with assorted cassettes, including language-learning material and films in the target language.

Package 5: Computers and printers for teachers' use; each computer has a hard disk with the latest word processor and various programs that enable you to compose your own computer tasks for learners.

Package 6: Several cassette recorders with accompanying earphones (so that several learners can listen quietly to one machine); a selection of accompanying cassettes for language learning.

Package 7: A wide variety of posters and sets of coloured pictures, plus board and card games for language learning.

Package 8: A library of simplified readers in the target language, ranging from very simple to advanced. There would be enough books in this library to enable all students to borrow freely.

Imagine that you are to be given a grant of enough money to buy a 'package' of supplementary materials for your institution out of the catalogue given in Box 13.4, assuming, for the sake of argument, that each package costs about the same. You will be given a similar grant every half-year, so eventually you will be able to buy all the packages. The question is: in what order will you buy them, and how will you decide? Work out for yourself an order of priority, or do so together with other

participants. (You may, of course, add further packages if you wish, or alter the contents of the present ones, before beginning the task.)

It is assumed that the institution has a reasonable supply of standard stationery and office equipment, such as paper, pencils, felt-tipped pens, staplers, scissors, etc., and that classrooms are equipped with black- or whiteboards.

Unit Five: Teacher-made worksheets and workcards

Task **Making materials**

Stage 1: Preparation

Choose a language point for which you want to make your own learner tasks, preferably having in mind a course or class you know. If you wish to make workcards, prepare cards, coloured pens and perhaps magazine pictures, scissors and glue. Worksheets may be written by hand, or on a typewriter or word processor.

Stage 2: First draft

Make a sample worksheet or workcard, preferably for a class you know on language they are learning.

Stage 3: Feedback

If you are working in a group, exchange your resulting materials and discuss. You may find the points listed in Box 13.5 helpful as a basis for feedback.

Stage 4: Second draft

Remake your worksheet or workcard – or make a totally new one – implementing ideas you received from feedback on the first draft.

BOX 13.5: GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER-MADE MATERIALS

Worksheets and workcards should:
– be neat: clean, with level lines of neat writing, clear margins, different components well spaced;
– begin with short and clear instructions (if appropriate, in the learners' mother tongue), usually including an example;
– be clear and attractive to look at: have a balanced and varied layout, using underlining and other forms of emphasis to draw attention to significant items; possibly using colour and graphic illustration;
– be clearly do-able by the learners on their own;
– (optionally) include a self-check facility.

Module 14: Topic content

Unit One: Different kinds of content

Task   **Thinking about different kinds of content**

Stage 1: Deciding on relative importance

Look through the list in Box 14.1, and decide which of the types of subject matter you think it is more, or less, important to include in the language course(s) you teach or may teach in the future.

Stage 2 (optional): Inquiry

Ask some learners what kinds of content they would like to see included in an ideal language course. Do their ideas agree, on the whole, with yours?

Stage 3: Application

Look at a local syllabus or a coursebook commonly used in the course(s) you have been thinking of. Does it include the kinds of content you think it should? Does it have too much of some other kinds which you consider inappropriate? In either case, what might you do in teaching to improve the balance?

BOX 14.1: TYPES OF NON-LINGUISTIC CONTENT

1. Zero or trivial content
Bland, fairly neutral characters and events, or superficially interesting topics with no cultural or other information or engagement with real-world issues. For example: sentences about fictional 'John and Mary' doing everyday activities; stereotype family stories; many pop songs, trivial anecdotes, 'soap-opera' style narrative or video.

2. The language
Aspects of the target language treated as topics of study in themselves: its history, for example, etymology or morphology.

3. Another subject of study
Other subjects on the school or university curriculum, such as science or history, taught through the medium of the foreign language.

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4. Home culture
Discussion of institutions, people, places, events, writing, etc. pertaining to the learners' own culture. For example, Greek learners might discuss places they would recommend that tourists should visit in Greece.

5. Culture associated with the target language
Discussion of institutions, etc. pertaining to the culture of the target language. Materials for learners of English might take as topics the American Civil War, or British social customs.

6. Literature of the target language
In a sense a part of (5) above, but important enough to warrant a separate heading: stories, novels, plays, poetry written in the target language.

7. World or general knowledge
Culture or literature that is known in many countries, such as some folk tales, the Bible; geographical, historical or political information about any part of the world; general scientific or philosophical topics.

8. Moral, educational, political or social problems
Content that presents, or requires participants to take, a stance on some issue: for example, a dilemma to which learners suggest a solution.

9. The learners themselves
Exploration of learners' own experiences, knowledge, opinions and feelings: for example, activities that ask learners to write about someone they know, or compare tastes in food and drink.

Unit Two: Underlying messages

Task **Checking out underlying messages in a coursebook**

Take a coursebook – preferably one you are fairly familiar with – and try some or all of the following experiments.

1. Sexism

a) If your book is illustrated, look at the first 30 pictures. Count the number of men and the number of women featured in them. If there are no pictures, look at the grammar or vocabulary exercises, and do the same count on pronouns or nouns with clear gender. In either case, was there a significant difference? If so, what is the implication?

b) Again, using either illustrations or texts, look at the occupations which are assigned to men and women. Was there a consistent 'type' of occupation assigned to either? If so, do you find such a division acceptable?

2. Ageism

If your book is illustrated, look through the pictures and count the number of adults clearly over the age of 40 as compared with 'young' adults (not counting pictures of children). Does the division reflect what you would estimate to be the proportion of young/older adults in society? If not, do you approve or disapprove of the book's distorted picture? If you approve, can you justify your approval?

3. Social orientation

Read a selection of texts and exercises. What kinds of people are shown in them? Look at aspects such as wealth, social class, ethnic affiliation, occupation, cultural background. Do the kinds of people shown in these texts reflect more or less the social background of most of your students? If not, is the picture shown misleading or disturbing? Or positive, in that it presents acceptable role models for your students?

4. Values

Again look at texts and try to assess the kinds of things seen as desirable by the characters or writer. For example, are the characters mainly interested in material benefits (travel, cars, clothes, entertainment)? Or are they mostly concerned with personal relationships? Or do they care about social or moral issues such as the environment, peace, justice/injustice? Or do they have some other consistent dominant aspiration? (In some cases you may even be able to discern a clear political orientation.) Whatever you find: ask yourself if you approve of the values the book conveys and – particularly if you are a schoolteacher – if the educational message is an acceptable one for your students.

Unit Three: Literature (1): should it be included in the course?

Question What would be your own answer to the question asked in the title of this unit?

Task **Considering advantages and disadvantages of literature teaching**

Look at the lists of advantages of literature teaching listed in Box 14.2.1, add any further items you can think of in the space provided, and then put

a tick by those you consider most significant and influential. Then do the same for the list of disadvantages or problems shown in Box 14.2.2.

BOX 14.2.1: ADVANTAGES OF LITERATURE TEACHING

– Literature can be very enjoyable to read.
– It provides examples of different styles of writing, and representations of various authentic uses of the language.
– It is a good basis for vocabulary expansion.
– It fosters reading skills.
– It can supply an excellent jump-off point for discussion or writing.
– It involves emotions as well as intellect, which adds to motivation and may contribute to personal development.
– It is a part of the target culture and has value as part of the learners' general education.
– It encourages empathetic, critical and creative thinking.
– It contributes to world knowledge.
– It raises awareness of different human situations and conflicts.
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BOX 14.2.2: DISADVANTAGES OF, OR PROBLEMS WITH LITERATURE TEACHING

– Much literature is written in language that may be difficult for foreign language learners to read.
– We can use simplified versions, but these are a poor representation of the original.
– Many literary texts are long and time-consuming to teach.
– The target-language culture on which the literature is based is alien to learners and may be difficult for them to relate to.
– By using texts as a basis for language teaching we may spoil learners' enjoyment and appreciation of them as literature.
– Students of science and technology may find literature irrelevant to their needs.
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Task **Summarizing discussion or writing**

Could you now summarize in more detail your own approach to literature teaching in a language course, either through discussion with other

participants in your group or through writing on your own? Think about which were the main considerations that led you to decide whether you are for or against literature teaching, and also how you would answer some of the opposing arguments.

Unit Four: Literature (2): teaching ideas

It is helpful to think of the learning and teaching of a piece of literature as a process containing three main stages:

1. encounter and impact;
2. understanding and familiarization;
3. analysis and interpretation.

Encounter and impact

The teaching objective here is to get learners to perceive the basic form and meaning of the text, and for it to make some kind of real impact on them.

Task **Thinking about how to introduce a literary text**

Some questions are shown in Box 14.3. Try to decide, preferably in negotiation with other participants, what your answers would be.

BOX 14.3: FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH A LITERARY TEXT: SOME QUESTIONS

1. Should you pre-teach new words or let learners try to guess them from context?
2. Should you do some preparatory work on content or atmosphere before presenting the text itself?
3. Should you provide some information about the author or the cultural or historic background before presenting the text itself?
4. Should you try to get through as much of the text as possible first time for the sake of immediate impact, or take it more gradually, making sure one bit is thoroughly studied before going on to the next?
5. Is the best way to manage students' first encounter with a text by getting them to read it silently on their own? Or by asking them to read it aloud round the class? Or by reading it aloud yourself?
6. How can you check initial understanding?

Understanding and familiarization

The next stage is to get learners to interact with the text thoroughly and repeatedly so that they become familiar with the words and ideas, are confident they know the sequence of events and characters; and to help them to understand and appreciate the text in more depth and detail.

Task **Studying and suggesting ideas for familiarizing learners with a text**

Some ideas are shown in Box 14.4. Read through and tick ones that seem useful to you; can you add more?

BOX 14.4: UNDERSTANDING AND FAMILIARIZATION: TEACHING IDEAS

1. Reread, differently from the first time (if the first time was reading aloud, then this time silently, or vice versa).
2. Read through looking for bits you didn't understand: note them for later discussion.
3. Look through the text, pick out bits you particularly liked, or that stick in your memory; copy them out if they are short, otherwise just note the page reference. Then share.
4. Look through the text for a quotation which could serve as an alternative title.
5. Rewrite some or all of the text from someone else's point of view.
6. Rewrite some or all of the text in a different genre or style: for example, report the events of a short story for a newspaper.
7. Present the text, or particular aspects of it in a different visual format: as a flowchart, as a diagram, as a graph, as a list of events, as a grid . . .
8. Draw an illustration; or design a book-cover or advertisement for the text.
9.
10.

Analysis and interpretation

A deeper probing into the meanings and implications of a text does not necessarily demand a knowledge of the terminology of literary criticism, though this can help; it is essentially an attempt to discover new levels of meaning or perspectives, or to deepen appreciation of style or structure.

Task **Interpretative discussion**

In Box 14.5 are some teacher statements. Which do you identify with? Which do you find problematical?

BOX 14.5: LEADING INTERPRETATIVE DISCUSSION: THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Miri: 'I read this poem often, love it, and have a clear idea of its underlying meanings: I try to lead the students towards a similar understanding, sometimes expressing my own ideas about it.'

Bella: 'I intervene as little as possible in discussions on literature, only pose questions; I would certainly never express my own opinions.'

Ali: 'I try to encourage students to develop their own interpretations, even if I think they are ''wrong''.'

Mat: 'On the whole, I stand aside and let the students build their own ideas; but if I see them going wildly wrong, I'll step in and show them why.'

Sylvie: 'I see my function in the discussion as prober, challenger, getting students to examine ideas critically, bring evidence. Sometimes I'll throw in outrageous ideas for the sake of provocation.'

Unit Five: Literature (3): teaching a specific text

Task **Teaching a text**

Stage 1: Planning

Prepare a lesson or two on one of the texts shown in Box 14.7, having in mind a specific class you know. Some points you may need to relate to are shown in Box 14.6.

BOX 14.6: PREPARING TO TEACH A LITERARY TEXT

– Will I do any pre-text teaching of language or content? If so, what?
– Will I do any other 'warm-up' activities? If so, what?
– How will the text be presented the first time?
– What should I do immediately after the first reading to encourage and check comprehension?
– What activities or tasks might encourage interaction and engagement with the text?
– What sorts of questions or tasks might get students to probe and explore more subtle meanings, aspects of style or structure?
– What might be a good way to 'round off' the study of this text?

Stage 2 (optional): Experience and reflection

If feasible, try teaching the literature to a class, using your plan as a basis.
Immediately afterwards, note down for yourself how things went, which
ideas seemed to succeed and which not, and why.

BOX 14.7: SAMPLE TEXTS FOR TEACHING

Teevee
In the house
of Mr and Mrs Spouse
he and she
would watch teevee
and never a word
between them spoken
until the day
the set was broken.

Then 'How do you do?'
said he to she,
'I don't believe we've met yet.
Spouse is my name.
What's yours?' he asked.
'Why, mine's the same!'
said she to he,
'Do you suppose that we could be – ?'

But then the set came suddenly right about
And so they never did find out.

Eve Merriam

He Treats them to Ice-cream
Every Sunday they went for a walk together
He, she
And the three children.

One night
when she tried to stop him going
to his other woman,
he pulled out a flick-knife
from under the mattress.

They still go for a walk
every Sunday,
he, she and the three children.
He treats them to ice-cream and they all laugh.
She too.

Anna Swirszczynskia

Stage 3: Sharing and summarizing

Share and compare your ideas and (if relevant) your experiences trying them out. Finally, summarize for yourself the main conclusions from the experience, as you may have done at the end of Stage 2, but taking into account also what you have learned from exchanging ideas with others: what kinds of literature-teaching techniques seemed to work well, which not so well, and why.

Module 15: Lesson planning

Unit One: What does a lesson involve?

Exploring metaphors

Stage 1: Choosing a metaphor

Which of the metaphors shown in Box 15.1 expresses best, in your opinion, the essence of a lesson? There is, of course, no 'right' answer, but your choice will reflect your own conception. If you can find no metaphor here which suits you, invent your own.

BOX 15.1: METAPHORS FOR A LESSON

a variety show	a conversation
climbing a mountain	doing the shopping
eating a meal	a football game
a wedding	a symphony
a menu	consulting a doctor

Stage 2: Comparing choices

If you are working in a group, get together in pairs or threes and share your selections and reasons for making them.

Unit Two: Lesson preparation

Lesson preparation

Stage 1: Preliminary study

In Box 15.2 are seven questions about lesson preparation. Start by answering them yourself, in writing. After writing each response, leave two or three lines empty before going on to the next.

BOX 15.2: QUESTIONS ON LESSON PREPARATION

1. How long before a specific lesson do you prepare it?
2. Do you write down lesson notes to guide you? Or do you rely on a lesson format provided by another teacher, the coursebook, or a Teacher's Book?
3. If so, are these notes brief (a single page or less) or long (more than one page)?
4. What do they consist of?
5. Do you note down your objectives?
6. Do you actually look at your notes during the lesson? If so, rarely? Occasionally? Frequently?
7. What do you do with your lesson notes after the lesson?

Stage 2: Interview

Now interview at least two language teachers who are experienced and (as far as you can tell) conscientious and competent professionals. Ask them the same questions, stressing that what you want to know is what **they actually do** in daily practice, not what they think they ought to do!

Stage 3: Results

Share your results with other participants. Can you make any generalizations, or does lesson preparation seem to be entirely idiosyncratic?

Stage 4: Conclusions

Think about or discuss the evidence you have gathered. What conclusions can you draw? Try to assess critically the relevance and usefulness of these conclusions for your own practice.

Stage 5: Personal application

Finally, revert to the answers you wrote yourself at the beginning of this process, and add notes below each one, recording ideas you have learned from this inquiry that may be helpful to you in future lesson planning.

Unit Three: Varying lesson components

Task **Brainstorm**

How many different ways of varying language-learning activity within a lesson can you think of? It helps to think in terms of contrasts: for example,

rapid-moving versus leisurely activities; or individual versus pair/group versus full-class organization.

Guidelines for ordering components of a lesson

1. Put the harder tasks earlier
On the whole, students are fresher and more energetic earlier in the lesson, and get progressively less so as it goes on, particularly if the lesson is a long one. So it makes sense to put the tasks that demand more effort and concentration earlier on (learning new material, or tackling a difficult text, for example) and the lighter ones later. Similarly, tasks that need a lot of student initiative work better earlier in the lesson, with the more structured and controlled ones later.

2. Have quieter activities before lively ones
It can be quite difficult to calm down a class – particularly of children or adolescents – who have been participating in a lively, exciting activity. So if one of your central lesson components is something quiet and reflective it is better on the whole to put it before a lively one, not after. The exception to this is when you have a rather lethargic or tired class of adults; here 'stirring' activities early on can actually refresh and help students get into the right frame of mind for learning.

3. Think about transitions
If you have a sharp transition from, say, a reading–writing activity to an oral one, or from a fast-moving one to a slow one, devote some thought to the transition stage. It may be enough to 'frame' by summing up one component in a few words and introducing the next; or it may help to have a very brief transition activity which makes the move smoother (see Ur and Wright, 1992, for some ideas).

4. Pull the class together at the beginning and the end
If you bring the class together at the beginning for general greetings, organization and introduction of the day's programme, and then do a similar full-class 'rounding-off' at the end: this contributes to a sense of structure. On the whole, group or individual work is more smoothly organized if it takes place in the middle of the lesson, with clear beginning and ending points.

5. End on a positive note
This does not necessarily mean ending with a joke or a fun activity – though of course it may. For some classes it may mean something quite serious, like a summary of what we have achieved today, or a positive evaluation of something the class has done. Another possibility is to give a task which the class is very likely to succeed in and which will generate feelings of satisfaction. The point is to have students leave the classroom feeling good.

Discussion task   Think about or discuss the questions:

– How far do you agree with these guidelines?
– Are they appropriate for your own teaching context as they stand, or would you wish to omit, add to or change any of them?

Follow-up observation task   Observe one or two foreign language lessons, noting down in detail what the components are and how they are organized. The lessons should preferably be given by a teacher you do not know; or a video recording can be used. If these options are not available, use the lesson description given in Box 15.5.

Afterwards, think about your notes, or discuss them with other participants, analysing the way the lesson was constructed. What possible alternatives, or improvements, can you think of?

Unit Four: Evaluating lesson effectiveness

Task   **Evaluating criteria**

Imagine you have just come out of a lesson – whether your own, or one that you have observed – and wish to assess how effective it was. By what criteria will you evaluate it?

In Box 15.4 is a list of criteria I have heard suggested by teachers; you may wish to add more. Can you put them in order of priority: the most important, in your opinion, first, the least important last? You may, of course, put two or more at the same level if you think they are of the same importance.

BOX 15.4: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING LESSON EFFECTIVENESS

a) The learners were active all the time.
b) The learners were attentive all the time.
c) The learners enjoyed the lesson, were motivated.
d) The class seemed to be learning the material well.
e) The lesson went according to plan.
f) The language was used communicatively throughout.
g) The learners were engaging with the foreign language throughout.
h)
i)
j)

Follow-up task

Practice and/or observation

The aim of this task is to try to evaluate the effectiveness of a lesson. The lesson itself could be one of the following possibilities:

1. Most usefully: one you yourself have planned and taught, based on a unit in a coursebook or syllabus you use or are familiar with.
2. One taught by someone else.
3. Less effective: a video recording of a lesson.
4. As a final resort: the observation notes shown in Box 15.5.

   Try to evaluate how good the lesson was, using the criteria and priorities you have worked on in this unit. If you have observed together with other participants, come together after the lesson to compare notes.

BOX 15.5: DESCRIPTION OF A LESSON

This was a heterogeneous class of 35 fifteen-year-olds.

9.15   The teacher (T) enters, students (Ss) gradually quieten, sit, take out books.
9.20   T elicits the topic Ss had been asked to prepare for today ('conformism'), elicits and discusses some key words, does not write them up.
9.25   T distributes cartoons, asks Ss to work in pairs and suggest captions that have to do with the topic. Some Ss work, most do not.
9.30   T elicits results: only three pairs are willing to suggest ideas. T suggests they carry on for homework.
9.32   T tells Ss to open books at p.35: an article on conformism. T: 'What would you do if you wanted to get the general idea of the article?' Suggests they read only first sentence of each paragraph.
9.35   Silent reading.
9.38   T does true/false exercise from book based only on these first sentences, using volunteer responders for each item, correcting and commenting. Some questions are not yet answerable.
9.45   T gives homework: read the entire article, finish finding the answers to the T/F questions.
9.47   T invites individual student to perform a prepared monologue (about Stalin) before the class. The class applauds. T approves warmly, refrains from commenting on language mistakes.
9.52   T initiates discussion on the topic of the monologue; about seven students participate, most of the rest are listening.
10.00   The lesson ends, some Ss come up to talk to T.

Unit Five: Practical lesson management

BOX 15.6: HINTS FOR LESSON MANAGEMENT

1. Prepare more than you need: it is advisable to have an easily presented, light 'reserve' activity ready in case of extra time (see Ur and Wright, 1992 for some ideas).
2. Similarly, note in advance which component(s) of the lesson you will sacrifice if you find yourself with too little time for everything!
3. Keep a watch or clock easily visible, make sure you are aware throughout how time is going relative to your programme. It is difficult to judge intuitively how time is going when you are busy, and the smooth running of your lesson depends to some extent on proper timing.
4. Do not leave the giving of homework to the last minute! At the end of the lesson learners' attention is at a low ebb, and you may run out of time before you finish explaining. Explain it earlier on, and then give a quick reminder at the end.
5. If you have papers to distribute and a large class, do not try to give every paper yourself to every student! Give a number of papers to people at different points in the class, ask them to take one and pass the rest on.
6. If you are doing group work: give instructions and make sure these are understood **before** dividing into groups or even, if practicable, handing out materials; if you do it the other way round, students will be looking at each other and at the materials, and they are less likely to attend to what you have to say.

Discussion task If you are yourself experienced, find an inexperienced participant to sit with, and vice versa; or form mixed groups of more and less experienced participants. The experienced participant(s) should first talk their inexperienced colleague(s) through the list in Box 15.6, adding further comment and illustration, and answering questions; and then add any other practical advice that they feel can be helpful.

Module 16: Classroom interaction

Unit One: Patterns of classroom interaction

Task **Classifying forms of interaction**

Look at the various patterns of interaction described in Box 16.1, and note for each one how active the teacher and students are in their participation, using the following code:

TT = Teacher very active, students only receptive
T = Teacher active, students mainly receptive
TS = Teacher and students fairly equally active
S = Students active, teacher mainly receptive
SS = Students very active, teacher only receptive

Can you add any further ideas for interaction patterns, and attach appropriate codes?

Follow-up observation and discussion Observe one or two lessons, and note down the types of interaction you saw, using your own list or that shown in Box 16.1. After the observation, discuss or reflect on the following questions:

1. Was there one particular type of interaction that seemed to predominate?
2. Did teacher activity predominate? Or student activity? Or was the interaction more or less balanced?
3. How appropriate did you think the chosen interaction patterns were for the teaching objectives in the different activities? Perhaps look at one or two specific examples from your observation.

BOX 16.1: INTERACTION PATTERNS

Group work
Students work in small groups on tasks that entail interaction: conveying information, for example, or group decision-making. The teacher walks around listening, intervenes little if at all.

Closed-ended teacher questioning
Only one 'right' response gets approved. Sometimes cynically called the 'Guess what the teacher wants you to say' game.

Individual work
The teacher gives a task or set of tasks, and students work on them independently; the teacher walks around monitoring and assisting where necessary.

Choral responses
The teacher gives a model which is repeated by all the class in chorus; or gives a cue which is responded to in chorus.

Collaboration
Students do the same sort of tasks as in 'Individual work', but work together, usually in pairs, to try to achieve the best results they can. The teacher may or may not intervene. (Note that this is different from 'Group work', where the task itself necessitates interaction.)

Student initiates, teacher answers
For example, in a guessing game: the students think of questions and the teacher responds; but the teacher decides who asks.

Full-class interaction
The students debate a topic or do a language task as a class; the teacher may intervene occasionally, to stimulate participation or to monitor.

Teacher talk
This may involve some kind of silent student response, such as writing from dictation; but there is no initiative on the part of the student.

Self-access
Students choose their own learning tasks, and work autonomously.

Open-ended teacher questioning
There are a number of possible 'right' answers, so that more students answer each cue.

Unit Two: Questioning

Task **Reasons for questioning**

There are various reasons why a teacher might ask a question in the classroom. Read through the list of possible reasons shown in Box 16.2, and add any more that you can think of.

BOX 16.2: REASONS FOR QUESTIONING

– To provide a model for language or thinking.
– To find out something from the learners (facts, ideas, opinions).
– To check or test understanding, knowledge or skill.
– To get learners to be active in their learning.
– To direct attention to the topic being learned.
– To inform the class via the answers of the stronger learners rather than through the teacher's input.
– To provide weaker learners with an opportunity to participate.
– To stimulate thinking (logical, reflective or imaginative); to probe more deeply into issues.
– To get learners to review and practise previously learnt material.
– To encourage self-expression.
– To communicate to learners that the teacher is genuinely interested in what they think.
–
–
–

Note: Any specific question is likely to involve more than one of these aims; for example, it might review and practise while simultaneously encouraging self-expression.)

BOX 16.3: CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

1. **Clarity:** do the learners immediately grasp not only what the question means, but also what kind of an answer is required?
2. **Learning value:** does the question stimulate thinking and responses that will contribute to further learning of the target material? Or is it irrelevant, unhelpful or merely time-filling?
3. **Interest:** do students find the question interesting, challenging, stimulating?
4. **Availability:** can most of the members of the class try to answer it? Or only the more advanced, confident, knowledgeable? (Note that the mere addition of a few seconds' wait-time before accepting a response can make the question available to a significantly larger number of learners.)
5. **Extension:** does the question invite and encourage extended and/or varied answers?[1]
6. **Teacher reaction:** are the learners sure that their responses will be related to with respect, that they will not be put down or ridiculed if they say something inappropriate?

[1] Occasionally – for example, where the emphasis is on listening comprehension rather than speaking – brief single answers may be more appropriate; in such cases this criterion would not apply.

Effective questioning

Some useful criteria for effective questioning for language teachers are suggested in Box 16.3.

Task **Critical analysis of teacher questions**

Look at the exchanges in Box 16.4, which are loosely based on events actually observed in classrooms. Can you identify what the purpose of the teacher is in questioning, and comment on the way he or she went about it, perhaps applying the criteria suggested in Box 16.3?

BOX 16.4: TEACHER QUESTIONING

Exchange 1

T: Now today we are going to discuss circuses. Have you ever been to a circus?
Ss: (immediately): Yes, yes.
T: Yes. Where you see clowns, and horses and elephants and acrobats . . .

Exchange 2

T: Yesterday we learned various words that express feelings. Can you tell me
    . . . What does 'relief' mean?
    (pause)
    Well, when might you feel relief?
    (pause)
    Can you remember a time when you felt relief? Yes, Maria?
S1: When my friend was late, I thought he wasn't coming and then he came.
T: Good . . . Fran?
S2: I thought I will fail the exam, and then in the end I pass.
T: Good. Now: fear?

Exchange 3

T: Right: what was the story about? Can anyone tell me? Claire?
S: Man.
T: Yes, a man. What did this man do? Can you tell me anything about him?
S: He . . . married.

Exchange 4

T: Here's a picture, with lots of things going on. Tell me some of them. For
    example: the policeman is talking to the driver, perhaps he's telling him
    where to go. What else?
S1: The little girl is buying an ice-cream.
S2: There's a woman, old woman, in the middle, she's crossing the road.
S2: A man . . . sitting . . . on chair . . .
T: OK, a man is sitting on a chair, there in the corner . . . What else?

Unit Three: Group work

Task   **Evaluating guidelines**

The guidelines given in Box 16.5 are ones that I recommend, but may be of varying usefulness to you. As you read, tick ideas that seem in the light of your experience to be particularly important, delete any that you think trivial or unnecessary, and make notes in the margins of any queries, criticisms or other reactions that occur to you as you read.

Compare your notes with those of other participants.

BOX 16.5: GROUP-WORK ORGANIZATION

1. Presentation
The instructions that are given at the beginning are crucial: if the students do not understand exactly what they have to do there will be time-wasting, confusion, lack of effective practice, possible loss of control. Select tasks that are simple enough to describe easily; and in monolingual classes you may find it cost-effective to explain some or all in the students' mother tongue. It is advisable to give the instructions **before** giving out materials or dividing the class into groups; and a preliminary rehearsal or 'dry run' of a sample of the activity with the full class can help to clarify things. Note, however, that if your students have already done similar activities you will be able to shorten the process, giving only brief guidelines; it is mainly the first time of doing something with a class that such care needs to be invested in instructing.

Try to foresee what language will be needed, and have a preliminary quick review of appropriate grammar or vocabulary. Finally before giving the sign to start tell the class what the arrangements are for stopping: if there is a time limit, or a set signal for stopping, say what it is; if the groups simply stop when they have finished, then tell them what they will have to do next. It is wise to have a 'reserve' task planned to occupy members of groups who finish earlier than expected.

2. Process
Your job during the activity is to go from group to group, monitor, and either contribute or keep out of the way – whichever is likely to be more helpful. If you do decide to intervene, your contribution may take the form of:
– providing general approval and support;
– helping students who are having difficulty;
– keeping the students using the target language (in many cases your mere presence will ensure this!);
– tactfully regulating participation in a discussion where you find some students are over-dominant and others silent.

---

3. Ending

If you have set a time limit, then this will help you draw the activity to a close at a certain point. In principle, try to finish the activity while the students are still enjoying it and interested, or only just beginning to flag.

4. Feedback

A feedback session usually takes place in the context of full-class interaction after the end of the group work. Feedback on the task may take many forms: giving the right solution, if there is one; listening to and evaluating suggestions; pooling ideas on the board; displaying materials the groups have produced; and so on. Your main objective here is to express appreciation of the effort that has been invested and its results. Feedback on language may be integrated into this discussion of the task, or provide the focus of a separate class session later.

Unit Four: Individualization

In Box 16.6 there is a list of classroom procedures, listed in random order, that allow for differing degrees of individual learner choice. This choice may be in:

1. **Speed:** how fast or slowly each individual may work (everyone being engaged in the same basic task);
2. **Level:** tasks that are basically aimed at the same teaching point may be presented in easier or more difficult versions, so that the learner can choose the one that suits his or her level;
3. **Topic:** the learner may be able to select tasks that – while all are based on the same language skill or teaching point – are varied in the subject or topic of the text as well as in level;
4. **Language skill or teaching point:** each learner may choose to work on a quite different aspect of language: listening, for example, or grammar, or reading literature.

   Another way learning procedures can vary is in the amount of work demanded of the teacher in preparation.

BOX 16.6: CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

1. **Readers.** Students choose individual simplified readers, of varied level and topic, from a school library, and read quietly in class.
2. **Response to listening.** The teacher plays a recorded text on a topical issue, and asks the class to note down points they understood.
3. **Workcards.** A pile of workcards prepared by the teacher is put in the centre of the class, all practising the material the class has recently learnt, but each different. Each student chooses one, completes it and then takes another.
4. **Textbook questions in class.** The class has been given a set of questions from the textbook to answer in writing; each student does them on his or her own.
5. **Worksheets.** The teacher distributes worksheets which all practise the same grammar point, but containing various sections with different kinds of practice tasks and topics. The students choose which sections they want to do, and do as much as they can in the time allotted.
6. **Textbook exercises for homework.** The teacher gives three sets of comprehension questions from the textbook, of varying difficulty, on a passage that has been read in class; each student is asked to select and do one set.
7. **Varied tasks.** The teacher has prepared a number of workcards based on different language skills and content. There is a cassette recorder in one corner with headsets for listening tasks, and another corner available for quiet talk. Students select, work on and exchange cards freely.

Task **Assessing individualized procedures**

Stage 1: Categorization

Insert the names of the different procedures described in Box 16.6 into the appropriate squares in the grid shown in Box 16.7. It is possible to have procedures 'overflowing' across the lines, if you feel they do not fit neatly into a category.

Stage 2: Conclusions

When you have finished, look at your grid to see if any kind of systematic pattern emerges, and any conclusions can be drawn.

BOX 16.7: CATEGORIZING INDIVIDUALIZED PROCEDURES

Learner choice in:			
speed level topic language point			
speed level topic			
speed level			
speed			
	Little or no teacher preparation	*Some teacher preparation*	*A heavy load of teacher preparation*

Unit Five: The selection of appropriate activation techniques

Task   **Matching**

In Box 16.8 are some descriptions of materials and objectives in using them, expressed as teacher statements. Imagine you have been asked to advise the teachers what kind of classroom interaction would be most effective in producing learning in each context. To each description below (a–g) match one or more of the interaction patterns listed in Box 16.1 and note down, or discuss, your choice.

BOX 16.8: TEACHER OBJECTIVES AND LEARNER ACTIVATION

a) Comprehension check

'We've just finished reading a story. I want to make sure the class has understood it, using the comprehension questions in the book.'

b) Familiarization with text

'We've just finished reading a story. I'm fairly sure they've understood the basic plot, but I want them to get really familiar with the text through reading, they're going to have to pass an exam on it.'

c) Oral fluency

'I have a small [fifteen] class of business people, who need more practice in talking. I want them to do a discussion task where they have to decide which qualities are most important for a manager.'

d) Grammar check

'We've been working on the distinction between two similar verb tenses. I want to find out how far they've grasped it, using an exercise in the book where they have to allot the right tense to the right context.'

e) Writing

'They need to improve their writing. I want to ask them to write for a few minutes in class, but am worried they might just make a lot of mistakes and not learn anything.'

f) Grammar practice

'They need to practise forming and asking questions. I thought of using an interview situation; they might interview me or each other.'

g) New vocabulary

'I want to introduce some new vocabulary in preparation for a text we're going to read.'

Module 17: Giving feedback

Unit One: Different approaches to the nature and function of feedback

Preliminary definition: what is feedback?

Feedback given to learners has two main distinguishable components: assessment and correction. In assessment, the learner is simply informed how well or badly he or she has performed. In correction, some specific information is provided on aspects of the learner's performance: through explanation, or provision of better or other alternatives, or through elicitation of these from the learner.

Question **Are the two components of assessment and correction completely separable? In other words, can you have assessment without correction, or correction without assessment?**

Approaches to the giving of feedback

BOX 17.1: THE PROVISION OF ASSESSMENT: DIFFERENT OPINIONS

Audio-lingualism
Negative assessment is to be avoided as far as possible since it functions as 'punishment' and may inhibit or discourage learning. Positive assessment provides reinforcement of correct responses, and promotes learning.

Humanistic methodologies
A crucial function of the giving of assessment is to preserve and promote a positive self-image of the learner as a person and language learner. Assessment therefore should be positive or non-judgemental.

Skill theory
For successful acquisition of a skill, the learner needs feedback on how well he or she is doing; hence the importance of the provision of constant and honest assessment (Johnson, 1995).

Task *Stage 1: Study*

As you read Boxes 17.1 and 17.2, think about or discuss how far you agree with the various statements.

Stage 2: Discussion

After reading: can you summarize your own opinion on the functions of assessment and correction?

BOX 17.2: THE CORRECTION OF MISTAKES: DIFFERENT OPINIONS

Audio-lingualism
Learner mistakes are, in principle, avoided by the limiting of progress to very small, controlled steps: hence there should be little need for correction. The latter is, in any case, not useful for learning; people learn by getting things right in the first place and having their performance reinforced.

Cognitive code-learning
Mistakes are regrettable, but an unavoidable part of learning: they should be corrected whenever they occur to prevent them occurring again.

Interlanguage
Mistakes are not regrettable, but an integral and important part of language learning; correcting them is a way of bringing the learner's 'interlanguage' closer to the target language (Selinker, 1972, 1992).

Communicative approach
Not all mistakes need to be corrected: the main aim of language learning is to receive and convey meaningful messages, and correction should be focused on mistakes that interfere with this aim, not on inaccuracies of usage.

Monitor theory
Correction does not contribute to real acquisition of the language, but only to the learner's conscious 'monitoring' of speech or writing. Hence the main activity of the teacher should be to provide comprehensible input from which the learner can acquire language, not to correct (Krashen, 1982).

Unit Two: Assessment

Gathering information (1): tests

The most common way of gathering information for assessment is through tests; the usual criterion is an arbitrary level which the learner is expected to have reached; and the result is generally expressed through percentages.

Question Can you remember taking an exam or test at the end of a programme of study, or in order to be accepted into a course or profession? What was the criterion for success, and how was your result expressed?

Gathering information (2): other sources

1. **Teacher's assessment.** The teacher gives a subjective estimate of the learner's overall performance.
2. **Continuous assessment.** The final grade is some kind of combination of the grades the learner received for various assignments during the course.
3. **Self-assessment.** The learners themselves evaluate their own performance, using clear criteria and weighting systems agreed on beforehand.
4. **Portfolio.** The learner gathers a collection of assignments and projects done over a long period into a file; and this portfolio provides the basis for evaluation.

Question Have you yourself any experience of any of the above, as teacher or learner? How valid or useful were/are they, in your experience?

Criteria

Having collected the 'evidence' of the learner's proficiency in one or more of the ways described above, what will be our yardstick in deciding how good it is? The following are some of the possibilities.

1. **Criterion-referenced:** how well the learner is performing relative to a fixed criterion, where this is based on on an estimation of what it is reasonable or desirable to demand from learners at the relevant point in their development (age, career, level, stage of a course).
2. **Norm-referenced:** how well the learner is performing relative to the group. In this case, a group of slow learners would be assessed according to different, easier, norms than a group of faster ones.
3. **Individual-referenced:** how well the learner is performing relative to his or her own previous performance, or relative to an estimate of his or her individual ability.

Question What criteria do/would you yourself use in assessing learners'
performance? Would you combine different criteria? Would you take into
account learners' effort, motivation and progress in deciding on a final
grade?

Assessment Percentages are probably the most common way of expressing assessment
grades grades, but there are others.

1. **Letters, words or phrases:** 'A' or 'B'; 'Good', 'Excellent'.
2. **Profiles:** a totally different kind of expression of assessment, comprising a
   number of separate grades on different skills or sections of knowledge, so
   that there is a possibility of describing the performance of an individual
   student in more detail, showing his or her various strengths and weaknesses.

Summary What is the most common way of gathering information, assessing
question proficiency and awarding grades in your own teaching context? What
changes or improvements would you like to see introduced?

Unit Three: Correcting mistakes in oral work

Question Would you support the recommendation to refrain from correcting during
fluency-oriented speech, and to do so only during accuracy-oriented
exercises? Can you add any further comment?

Inquiry **Correction techniques in the classroom**

Stage 1: Preparation

Look at the set of oral correction techniques listed in Box 17.3. Reword, or
add further items as you feel necessary. Think about and note down for
yourself: which do you expect to be used most frequently in the
classroom; and which do you imagine most learners actually prefer?
   Make copies of the list for use at Stages 2 and 3.

Stage 2: Observation

Observe some lessons, taught, if possible, by different teachers; or look at
video recordings of lessons. Every time you hear a correction, try to
identify to which category it belongs and put a tick in the appropriate box.
At the end, count your ticks, and note down which kinds of correction are
most often used and which least.

BOX 17.3: ORAL CORRECTION TECHNIQUES

*Class observed ....

*Learner interviewed ....

Teacher's responses to mistakes	*Observation / Learner opinions*
1. Does not react at all.	
2. Indicates there is a mistake, but does not provide any further information about what is wrong.	
3. Says what was wrong and provides a model of the acceptable version.	
4. Indicates something was wrong, elicits acceptable version from the learner who made the mistake.	
5. Indicates something was wrong, elicits acceptable version from another member of the class.	
6. (May go with any of 3–5 above) Asks the learner who made the mistake to reproduce the corrected version.	
7. (May go with any of 3–5 above) Provides or elicits an explanation of why the mistake was made and how to avoid it.	

*Delete or fill in as appropriate.

Stage 3: Interview

Interview some learners to find out which kinds of correction they find most useful. If you are working on your own try to find ten or so respondents; if you are working in a group, then each participant can interview one or two, pooling results later.

The same list of techniques as used for observation can function as a basis for the interviews. Plus or minus signs can be inserted in the appropriate boxes to show which your respondents preferred or disliked.

Summarize the most, and least, popular techniques in the same way as you did at the end of Stage 2.

Stage 4: Summary and conclusions

Discuss or think about what you have found out. Some interesting questions to consider might be the following:

– Did your results differ from your expectations as recorded at Stage 1? If so, how?
– Did the teachers you observed actually correct in the way learners say they prefer? If not, how would you account for the differences?
– As a general conclusion, which would seem to be the most helpful way(s) of correcting? And under what circumstances might you do something different?

How the correction is expressed

At least as important as what the correction consists of is **how** it is expressed: gently or assertively, supportively or as a condemnation, tactfully or rudely.

Task **Observation and inquiry**

Pick out five or six instances of correction in a lesson, and for each note down briefly what happened and then add some adjectives you would use to describe the manner in which it was given (e.g. gentle/loud/hesitant/brisk/supportive?). If you were observing together with another participant, compare your descriptions after the lesson: did your opinions tally? If not, is there any way of finding out whose perception was truer?

If feasible, find out from the learner(s) how they felt at the time, and compare their impressions with your own.

Unit Four: Written feedback

Can you remember how you felt about the ways teachers responded to your own written work when you were learning a foreign language (or even your own)? Try to recall particular instances, and perhaps share with other participants.

Experiential task **Correcting written work**

Stage 1: Reading

Look at the written assignments provided in Box 17.4. The first is a grammar exercise mainly on the present perfect tense, which the students did for homework. The second is a test on vocabulary, which is also intended to check their mastery of the use of relative clauses in definitions. The third is a short piece of writing done in class as an individual summary of a group discussion, and given in to the teacher at the end of the lesson.

BOX 17.4: SAMPLES OF LEARNERS' WRITTEN WORK

1. Grammar exercise on the present perfect tense, given as homework

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14.1 *You are asking someone about things he has done in his life. Use the words in brackets to make your questions.*
Example: (you ever / be / to Italy?)   Have you ever been to Italy?

    1 (you ever / be / to / South America?)   Have you ever been to south America?
    2 (you / read / any English books?)   Have you ever read any English books?
    3 (you / live / in this town all your life?)   Have you ever _____ in this town all your ...
    4 (how many times / you / be / in love?)   how many times have you been in love?
    5 (what's the most beautiful country you / ever / visit?)   what's the most beautiful country have you ever visited?
    6 (you ever / speak / to a famous person?)   have you ever spoken to a famous ... ?

14.2 *Complete the answers to these questions. Use the verb in brackets.*
Example: Is it a beautiful painting? (see)   Yes, it's the most beautiful painting I've ever seen.

    1 Is it a good film? (see)   Yes, it's the best film I'ev ever seen
    2 Is it a long book? (read)   Yes, it's the longer book I'ev ever read
    3 Is she an interesting person? (meet)   Yes, she's the most interested gril I have ever met.

(From Raymond Murphy, *English Grammar in Use*
Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 29)

2. Test on vocabulary and relative clauses

Define the following words, using who/which/that/whose/when/where.

For example: a deserted house = a house where nobody lives

   1. a temple: a house where religious people lives in.

   2. a motionless tree: a tree which not moving at all.

   3. an illusion: a false sight.

   4. courage: a man who not have ony fear.

   5. sweat: its like terrible but more then this.

   6. a PR man: a man who work on a public relations.

   7. a virus: a thing which make people sick.

   8. an antibody: a thing which help the man get over the sickues.

   9. a host: a man who takes visitors to his haase

  10. a paw: a proke of a animal.

3. Writing following a discussion

```
Dear Helpful Harriet,
I have a problem with this teacher at school.
He is always shouting at me, though I don't
disturb more than lots of other pupils in the
class.  It's true that I sometimes don't do
my homework, but I know his subject very
well, always get high marks on the tests, so
there is no point doing silly homework.  He
gave me a much lower mark than I deserve at
the end of the term.  It's not fair.  And
it's no good saying go to the class teacher,
she always backs him up.  What can I do?

            Yours,
                 FRUSTRATED STUDENT
```

My advice to you is to talk with the problematic teacher and trying to expline him what do you fill and think about her and what do you think that you can do toythor to solve your prollem toythor please tet me know what happend with your case

Stage 2: Giving feedback

Imagine these are assignments done by your own students, and write in your corrections and other feedback. Do this on your own rather than collaboratively.

Stage 3: Reflection

Come together with other participants when you have finished to compare your responses. Perhaps work in pairs, reading each other's corrections and discussing differences.

You might find the set of questions shown in Box 17.5 useful to stimulate thinking.

BOX 17.5: CONSIDERING WRITTEN FEEDBACK

1. Did you use a red pen for your comments? Or another colour? Or a pen or pencil? Can you account for your choice?
2. For which of the assignments, if any, did you give some kind of assessment at the end ('Good', for example)? Why, or why not?
3. Did you correct all the mistakes? If so, why? If not, on what did you base your decision which to correct and which not?
4. Those mistakes you corrected: did you write in the correct form? Give a hint what it should be? Simply indicate it was wrong? Why?
5. Did you note only what was wrong, or did you give some kind of indication of what was right or particularly good?
6. Did you provide any kind of informative feedback other than mistake correction and overall assessment, designed to help the student improve? (e.g. 'This was good because . . .', or 'Take care when you . . .')
7. When responding to the assignment that entailed expression of personal opinion, did you provide a response of your own to the content? ('I agree with this point', 'Yes, but have you considered . . .?')
8. Did you require the student to redo any of the assignment? Can you say why, or why not?
9. Finally, try rereading your corrections imagining you are the student: what do you think the student will feel about them?

Follow-up discussion

Conclusions

Can you draw some conclusions as to what makes feedback on learner writing more or less effective? Try writing down what for you would be the three most important principles in giving written feedback, and share with other participants.

Unit Five: Clarifying personal attitudes

Task **Agree or disagree?**

In Box 17.6 there is a list of statements, with an 'Agree–Disagree' continuum below each. You may like to add more statements in the spaces provided.

Put a cross on the continuum for each statement to indicate how far you agree with it.

BOX 17.6: STATEMENTS ABOUT FEEDBACK

1. The fact that the teacher gives feedback on student performance implies a power hierarchy: the teacher above, the student below.
Very much   ⟵————————————⟶   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

2. Assessment is potentially humiliating to the assessed person.
Very much   ⟵————————————⟶   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

3. Teachers should give their students only positive feedback, in order to encourage, raise confidence and promote feelings of success; negative feedback demoralizes.
Very much   ⟵————————————⟶   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

4. Giving plenty of praise and encouragement is important for the fostering of good teacher–student relationships.
Very much   ⟵————————————⟶   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

5. Very frequent approval and praise lose their encouraging effect; and lack of praise may then be interpreted as negative feedback.
Very much   ⟵————————————⟶   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

6. Teachers should not let students correct each other's work, as this is harmful to their relationships.
Very much   ⟵————————————⟶   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

7. . . . .
Very much   ⟵————————————⟶   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

8. . . . .
Very much   ⟵————————————⟶   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

Module 18: Classroom discipline

Unit One: What is discipline?

Brainstorm and definition

The phrase 'classroom discipline' has for most teachers an immediate and clear meaning, but it is in fact quite a complex concept, and hard to define in words. One way into such a definition is to start by brainstorming all the ideas that seem to you to be comprised in it: 'control' for example, or 'rules'.

Try brainstorming a list of such words for yourself, or in your group. Using these, you may now find it easier to formulate a satisfactory definition.

There are, of course, more subtle and interesting distinctions to be discovered within the concept of 'discipline'. Try discussing the distinctions between the following pairs:

1. 'control' v. 'discipline';
2. 'authoritarian' v. 'authoritative';
3. 'power' v. 'authority'.

Unit Two: What does a disciplined classroom look like?

Examining assumptions

Imagine an ideally disciplined classroom. Then have a look at the set of statements in Box 18.2. Put a double plus (+ +) by statements which seem to you to describe a characteristic which is always typical of the disciplined classroom, and a single one by those which describe a characteristic which is fairly typical but not inevitable. Where you think the characteristic is entirely irrelevant or not very important, put a double or single minus (−); and a question mark where you feel uncertain. You may, of course, make any other combinations you like, or note reservations in the margin.

Compare your assessments with those of other participants and your trainer, and discuss.

BOX 18.2: POSSIBLE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISCIPLINED CLASSROOM

1. Learning is taking place.
2. It is quiet.
3. The teacher is in control.
4. Teacher and students are cooperating smoothly.
5. Students are motivated.
6. The lesson is proceeding according to plan.
7. Teacher and students are aiming for the same objective.
8. The teacher has natural charismatic 'authority'.

Unit Three: What teacher action is conducive to a disciplined classroom?

Some important factors that contribute to classroom discipline and are potentially within the control of, or influenced by, the teacher are:

– classroom management
– methodology
– interpersonal relationships
– lesson planning
– student motivation.

Question Have a look at the hints for teachers in Box 18.3. Can you pick out at least one example that has to do with each of the above?

Task **Practical hints**

Stage 1: Prioritizing

Read through the list of practical hints in Box 18.3, and decide which, for you, are the ten most important. You may, of course, add any you feel are missing.

Stage 2: Discussion

Compare your answers with those of other participants and your trainer and try to come to a consensus on the 'top ten'.

BOX 18.3: PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS ON CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

1. Start by being firm with students: you can relax later.
2. Get silence before you start speaking to the class.
3. Know and use the students' names.
4. Prepare lessons thoroughly and structure them firmly.
5. Be mobile: walk around the class.
6. Start the lesson with a 'bang' and sustain interest and curiosity.
7. Speak clearly.
8. Make sure your instructions are clear.
9. Have extra material prepared (e.g. to cope with slower/faster-working students).
10. Look at the class when speaking, and learn how to 'scan'.
11. Make work appropriate (to pupils' age, ability, cultural background).
12. Develop an effective questioning technique.
13. Develop the art of timing your lesson to fit the available period.
14. Vary your teaching techniques.
15. Anticipate discipline problems and act quickly.
16. Avoid confrontations.
17. Clarify fixed rules and standards, and be consistent in applying them.
18. Show yourself as supporter and helper to the students.
19. Don't patronise students, treat them with respect.
20. Use humour constructively.
21. Choose topics and tasks that will activate students.
22. Be warm and friendly to the students.

Adapted from Wragg (1981:22)

Unit Four: Dealing with discipline problems

Task **Discipline problems**

Read through the tips given in Box 18.4; can you add any more?

BOX 18.4: ADVICE ON DEALING WITH DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

1. BEFORE PROBLEM ARISES
   - Plan and organize your lesson carefully
   - Make sure instructions are clear, assertive, brief
   - Keep in touch with what is going on

   Slogan: Prevention is better than cure!

2. WHEN PROBLEM IS BEGINNING
   - Deal with the problem quickly; prevent escalation
   - Keep your cool: don't take things personally
   - Don't use threats (unless you are prepared to implement them!)

   Slogan: Do something!

3. WHEN PROBLEM HAS EXPLODED
   - 'Explode' yourself (loud and assertive command)
   - Give in
   - Make them an offer they can't refuse (postponement, arbitration, compromise)

   Slogan: Act quickly – don't argue!

Unit Five: Discipline problems: episodes

Task **Analysing episodes**

Read through the descriptions of episodes shown in Box 18.5. Deal with them in any order that you like and think about or discuss the following questions:

– What caused the problem?
– What could the teacher have done to prevent it arising?
– Once it had arisen, what would you advise the teacher to do?

BOX 18.5: EPISODES: DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

Episode 1

The teacher of a mixed class of thirteen-year-olds is working through a class reader in an English lesson. He asks Terry to read out a passage. 'Do we have to do this book?' says Terry. 'It's boring.' Some members of the class smile, one says 'I like it', others are silent awaiting the teacher's reaction.

(from E.C. Wragg, *Class Management and Control*, Macmillan, 1981, p. 12)

Episode 2

The teacher is explaining a story. Many of the students are inattentive, and there is a murmur of quiet talk between them. The teacher disregards the noise and speaks to those who are listening. Finally she reproaches, in a gentle and sympathetic way, one student who is talking particularly noticeably. The student stops talking for a minute or two, then carries on. This happens once or twice more, with different students. The teacher does not get angry, and continues to explain, trying (with only partial success) to draw students' attention through occasional questions.

(adapted from Sarah Reinhorn-Lurie, Unpublished research project on classroom discipline, Oranim School of Education, Haifa, 1992)

Episode 3

The teacher has prepared a worksheet and is explaining how to do it. He has extended his explanation to the point where John, having lost interest in the teacher's words, begins to tap a ruler on his desk. At first the tapping is occasional and not too noticeable, but John begins to tap more frequently and more noisily, building up to a final climax when he hits the table with a very loud bang. The class, startled by the noise, falls silent, and looks at both John and the teacher to see what will happen.

(adapted from E.C. Wragg, *Class Management and Control*, Macmillan, 1981, p. 18)

Episode 4

The teacher begins by giving out classroom books and collecting homework books.

Teacher (to one of the boys): This book's very thin.
Boy 1:   Yeah, 'tis, isn't it.
Teacher: Why?
Boy 1:   I've been drawing in it.
Boy 2:   He's been using it for toilet paper, sir.
(Uproar)

(adapted from E. C. Wragg, (ed.) *Classroom Teaching Skills*, Croom Helm, 1984, p. 32)

Episode 5

The students have been asked to interview each other for homework and write reports. In this lesson they are asked to read aloud their reports. A few students refuse to do so. The teacher tells these students to stand up before the class and be interviewed by them. They stand up, but do not relate to the questions seriously: answer facetiously, or in their mother tongue, or not at all. The teacher eventually sends them back to their places, and goes on to the next planned activity, a textbook exercise.

(adapted from Sarah Reinhorn-Lurié, Unpublished research project on classroom discipline, Oranim School of Education, Haifa, 1992)

Unit One: Motivation: some background thinking

Questions Try answering the questions in Box 19.1.

BOX 19.1: ASPECTS OF LEARNER MOTIVATION

1. How important do you think motivation is for success in language learning, compared to, for example, language aptitude?
2. How important is people's past success in language learning for their motivation to learn in the present and future?
3. What characteristics and behaviours do you associate with the image of a motivated learner?
4. Some people are motivated by wanting to integrate into the target-language culture ('integrative motivation'), some by needing the language for their career or other personal advantages ('instrumental motivation'). Which of the two would you imagine to be the stronger motive, on the whole?
5. The urge to engage in learning activity for its own sake (intrinsic motivation) is distinguishable from the urge to learn for the sake of some external reward (extrinsic motivation). Do you think there is any difference between children and adults in the degree of influence of these two kinds of motivation?

Unit Two: The teacher's responsibility

Task **Reflecting on the characteristics of a good teacher**

Stage 1: Recall

Think back to your own classroom learning, as either child or adult, not necessarily of a foreign language, and try to recall a teacher of yours who was outstandingly good, from whom you really learnt well. (I am

deliberately refraining from defining further what I mean by a 'good' teacher – interpret the term as **you** understand it.)

Stage 2: Writing

Write down, possibly in note form, as complete a description as you can of how this teacher functioned, within the classroom and outside it.

Stage 3: Reflection

Reading through what you have written, consider:

1. How much effort this teacher put in to motivating you to learn, whether deliberately or not, and:
2. How far your positive assessment of this teacher is based on the way he or she managed to motivate you.

Share your accounts of your good teacher with others, and discuss the questions with them.

Unit Three: Extrinsic motivation

Success and its rewards

This is perhaps the single most important feature in raising extrinsic motivation. Learners who have succeeded in past tasks will be more willing to engage with the next one, more confident in their chances of succeeding, and more likely to persevere in their efforts.

Failure and its penalties

Failure in any sense is generally regarded as something to be avoided, just as success is something to be sought.

Authoritative demands

Learners are often motivated by teacher pressure: they may be willing to invest effort in tasks simply because you have told them to, recognizing your authority and right to make this demand, and trusting your judgement.

Tests

The motivating power of tests appears clear: students who know they are going to be tested on specific material next week will normally be more motivated to study it carefully than if they had simply been told to learn it.

Competition

Students will often be motivated to give of their best not for the sake of the learning itself but in order to beat their opponents in a competition.

Task ### Summary discussion

Do you have any reservations about any of the above, based perhaps on negative experiences as learner or teacher? Are there others that you have positive experience of and have found particularly useful?

Unit Four: Intrinsic motivation and interest

Task **Finding ways of arousing learner interest**

Stage 1: Brainstorm

How many ways of creating learner interest in doing a task can you think of? Either on your own or with other participants, make as comprehensive a list as you can.

Stage 2: Assessing

With your list before you, think about or discuss: which of the items are used most and which least in a teaching situation you are familiar with? And can you single out those which are, in your opinion, under-exploited and you would like to try to use more yourself?

Unit Five: Fluctuations in learner interest

Observation task **Rises and falls in learner interest**

Stage 1: Observation

For this task you will need to observe one lesson. Place yourself somewhere where you have a good view of one or two particular students. Watch them carefully and notice fluctuations in their interest level; at the same time note what was going on in the classroom. I found this easiest to do by noting time, classroom event(s) and then '+ +' for 'high attention', '− −' for 'very low attention', or appropriate intermediate symbols. Your perception of when interest is rising or falling will be largely intuitive, but look particularly for the direction of the student's gaze, slumping or erect body posture, alert or apathetic facial expression, physical activity that is, or is not, directed at the task in hand.

Stage 2: Summary and conclusions

When you have finished your observation, try to pinpoint some of the apparent causes of rises and falls in attention, and what you might learn from these for your own teaching. If others in your group have also done such observation, you might find it interesting to compare notes.

Unit One: What differences does age make to language learning?

Task   **Critical assessment**

Look at the statements in Box 20.1, and note for each whether you agree or disagree, adding any comments or reservations you might have. Compare your reactions with those of other participants.

BOX 20.1: ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT AGE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

1. Younger children learn languages better than older ones; children learn better than adults.
2. Foreign language learning in school should be started at as early an age as possible.
3. Children and adults learn languages basically the same way.
4. Adults have a longer concentration span than children.
5. It is easier to interest and motivate children than adults.

Unit Two: Teaching children

Three very important sources of interest for children in the classroom are **pictures, stories** and **games:** the first being obviously mainly a visual stimulus; the second both visual and aural; and the third using both visual and aural channels as well as activating language production and sometimes physical movement.

Question   Can you add other important sources of interest for children learning languages besides the three mentioned above?

Task **Collecting pictures**

If you are teaching or going to teach children, and do not already have a collection of pictures of your own, start making one!

Task **Finding stories**

Can you think of stories or books which you think would be suitable for use in a children's foreign language class? Perhaps pool ideas with other participants and make a list of recommended material.

Task **Ideas for games**

Together with other participants, describe and list some language-learning games that you know or have used, or seen used, successfully with children.

Unit Three: Teaching adolescents: student preferences

Inquiry **Finding out how adolescents like to be taught**

Stage 1: Preparation

Look through the questionnaire shown in Box 20.2, noting down for each item which responses you expect. Optionally, administer it also to an experienced teacher of adolescents, and compare their answers with yours. This will help you to familiarize yourself with the items, and will also raise some interesting speculations to which your later survey may supply answers. Add further items if you wish, or delete any you feel irrelevant.

Stage 2: Interviews

Find some teenagers learning foreign languages locally who are willing to answer your questions: if possible about fifteen of them, but it is worth doing even with a smaller number.

You may do this as a series of interviews, noting a mark or tick in the appropriate space on your copy of the questionnaire for each answer. Or make multiple copies, and distribute to respondents, collating results later.

Stage 3: Summarizing results

Look at your results, and share them with other participants. Were there any surprises? If so, how would you account for the difference between your expectations and respondents' answers?

Stage 4: Drawing conclusions

Assuming that your results are based on honest and fairly representative student opinions, in what way can you use them to guide you in planning your own teaching approach and procedures? Discuss this question with other participants, and/or note ideas for yourself in writing.

BOX 20.2: SURVEY OF STUDENT OPINIONS

Put a tick in the appropriate column:

	Very much agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Totally disagree
1. It is important for a teacher to dress nicely and look good.					
2. It is important for a teacher to care a lot about his/her teaching.					
3. A good teacher controls the class firmly.					
4. A good teacher treats his/her students with fairness and respect.					
5. A good teacher is warm and friendly towards students.					
6. A good teacher knows and uses students' names.					
7. A good teacher is interested in each student as a person.					
8. A good teacher will change the lesson plan and do something else if that is what the students want.					
9. A good teacher lets students mark their own tests.					
10. I like it when the students take over and run the lesson.					
11. A good teacher makes sure students have fun in lessons.					
12. A good teacher gets students to work hard.					

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13. I prefer working in groups or individually to having a teacher-dominated lesson.					
14. I like it when the teacher asks my opinion in class.					
15. A good teacher always gives interesting lessons.					
16. A good teacher uses corporal punishment occasionally.					
17. If we need help, the good teacher finds time to talk outside the classroom.					

Acknowledgement: Many of the ideas for questions are based on Wragg and Wood, 1984, pp. 220–2.

Unit Four: Teaching adults: a different relationship

Discussion Look at Box 20.3, in which are listed definitions of various possible relationships between teacher and class. Which of these do you feel are more, or less, appropriate for adult classes in general? Do the same generalizations apply to a specific class you know or have observed? (You will notice that the dominance shifts from teacher to learners as you go down the list. It is looks as if the further down you go the more appropriate the relationship, but this would be an over-simplification.)

BOX 20.3: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHER AND ADULT STUDENTS

authority – subjects to authority
assessor – assessed
transmitter – receivers
motivator – people to be motivated
activator – people to be activated
counsellor – clients
seller of services – buyers of services
resource – users

Module 21: Large heterogeneous classes

Unit One: Defining terms

Question In your own situation: how big is a 'large' class?

Question A 'heterogeneous' class is one that has different kinds of learners in it, as opposed to a 'homogeneous' class, where the learners are similar. How many ways can you think of in which learners differ from one another in a heterogeneous class, and which are likely to affect the way you teach them?

Unit Two: Problems and advantages

BOX 21.2: TEACHING PROBLEMS IN LARGE HETEROGENEOUS CLASSES

1. **Discipline.** 'I have discipline problems in these classes; I find them difficult to control.'
2. **Correcting written assignments.** 'I can't keep up with the marking load.'
3. **Interest.** 'They get bored: I can't find topics and activities that keep them all interested.'
4. **Effective learning.** 'I can't make sure they're all learning effectively; the tasks I provide are either too difficult or too easy for many of them.'
5. **Materials.** 'I can't find suitable material: the textbooks are 'homogeneous' – rigidly aimed at one kind of learner, with no options or flexibility.
6. **Individual awareness.** 'I can't get to know and follow the progress of all the individuals in my class: there are too many of them, and they're all so different.'
7. **Participation.** 'I can't activate them all: only a few students – the more proficient and confident ones – seem to respond actively to my questions.'

Problems

Looking at the set of problems described in Box 21.2, which seem to you to be the most significant in classes of this type that you know?
Try categorizing them into three groups:

1. Crucial: These are problems which worry you and which you definitely need to solve.
2. Fairly important: You would like to be able to deal with these problems, but they are not top priority.
3. Not important, or not relevant to your teaching situation.

You may find there are problems you have come across which are not mentioned here: if so, add and decide how to categorize them.
Try to come to a consensus with other participants.

Question Large heterogeneous classes are seen mostly as problematical; but they have their advantages as well; and some of these can be used to help solve the problems. What positive aspects of large heterogeneous classes can you think of that might aid teaching? Make a quick list.

BOX 21.4: LARGE HETEROGENEOUS CLASSES: SOME TEACHING SOLUTIONS

a) **Vary your topics, methods, texts:** thus, if one day the material is not of the right level for, or does not interest certain members of the class, maybe the next day it will (be).
b) **Make activities interesting:** so that even if the language is not challenging for some of the learners, the content will hold interest and keep everyone participating.
c) **Encourage collaboration:** get students to work cooperatively and peer-teach, so as to maintain engagement with the language material even when you cannot directly interact with every individual yourself.
d) **Individualize:** allow the learner choice in what tasks or materials they use and how. (Various ideas on how to do this can be found in Module 16: *Classroom interaction*, Unit Four.)
e) **Personalize:** whenever possible design or adapt tasks in order to allow for different individual responses, based on learners' own experience, opinions or imagination.
f) **Use compulsory plus optional instructions:** tell the class that everyone has to do a certain minimal part of the task, the rest is optional – that is, available to those who understand / can do it / have time / wish to do more. (See Unit Three.)
g) **Use open-ended cues:** invite the class to respond to stimulus tasks or questions that have a range of possible acceptable answers rather than a single right solution. (See Unit Four.)

Task **Matching solutions to problems**

In Box 21.4 are some generalized suggestions for teaching that may go some way towards providing solutions to some of the problems. More specific and practical aspects of some of these suggestions will be explored in following units.

For each of the problems outlined in Box 21.2 try to find one or more ideas in Box 21.4 that might help to solve it. When you have finished: are there any problems left without even partial solutions? If so, can you suggest some solutions of your own?

Unit Three: Teaching strategies (1): compulsory + optional

The 'compulsory + optional' strategy means that the class is given material or a task and told that a certain minimal component of it has to be learned or done by everyone, the rest only by some. The basic attainment requested should be accessible to all, including the slowest; but provision should be made for more, or more advanced, work by those for whom it is appropriate.

Experience **Classroom or peer-teaching**

Preliminary note

This may be tried either with a class of students or with a group of participants. If the latter, divide them into three groups, each role-playing a different learner level: Group 1 will be of fairly low proficiency, Group 2 intermediate, Group 3 advanced. Tell them each to respond to the listening task according to their allotted roles.

Stage 1

Choose a situation or institution you know quite a lot about, or an experience you remember vividly, and be ready to describe it to the class. Make sure that you will be using some quite easy language and some fairly advanced.

Stage 2

Inform the class that they are going to do a listening comprehension activity: they will hear something from you (tell them roughly what it is about) and are asked to find out and write down in note form at least three facts they have found out about the topic. Those who can should note down more than three – as many as they can.

Stage 3

Deliver your description at normal speaking speed.

Stage 4

Check results. Have all the students succeeded in getting at least three facts? Did the more advanced ones accept the challenge and write more?

Unit Four: Teaching strategies (2): open-ending

'Open-ending' means the provision of cues or learning tasks which do not have single predetermined 'right' answers, but a potentially unlimited number of acceptable responses. See Box 21.5 for illustrations of a closed-ended versus open-ended exercise on the present simple tense.

BOX 21.5: CLOSED- AND OPEN-ENDED EXERCISES

Closed-ended

Choose the most acceptable alternative:

A good teacher _____ to class on time.

a) come   b) is coming   c) comes   d) came

Acceptable learner response: A good teacher comes to class on time.

Open-ended

A good teacher comes to class on time. Can you suggest other things a good teacher does?

Acceptable learner responses: A good teacher makes the lessons interesting, a good teacher smiles, a good teacher explains well, etc.

Task **'Open-ending' closed-ended exercises**

In Box 21.6 is a set of conventional textbook exercises, obviously intended to be 'closed-ended'. They can, however, be adapted during classroom work in order to transform them into 'open-ended' ones. Note down your own ideas on how to do this, and/or exchange ideas with other participants.

BOX 21.6: CLOSED-ENDED EXERCISES

1. (After the class has read or heard the story 'Little Red Riding Hood') Answer the following questions:

   a) Did Little Red Riding Hood live in the city?
   b) Where did Little Red Riding Hood's mother tell her to go?
   c) What did she tell her NOT to do on the way?
   d) Where did Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother live?
   e) Who did Little Red Riding Hood meet in the forest?
   f) What did the wolf want to know?
   etc.

2. Match each item in Column A with a suitable item from Column B.

   A   **B**
   a doctor   milks cows
   a teacher   drives a car
   a farmer   works in a hospital
   a police officer   gives lessons
   a driver   catches thieves

3. Complete each sentence with the appropriate relative pronoun: *who* or *which*.

   a) I dislike people _____ talk all the time.
   b) The best stories are ones _____ have happy endings.
   c) That is the road _____ leads to town.
   d) You won't enjoy the film _____ is showing at the cinema now.
   e) The woman _____ arrived yesterday is a new employee.

It is certainly not recommended here that activities done with large heterogeneous classes should always be open-ended; but the introduction of such procedures can increase learning and interest. Note, however, that the exercises in textbooks you use are likely to be based mainly on closed-ended items.

Follow-up task   Look at a textbook commonly used in your own teaching context. Is the statement at the end of the previous paragraph true of it? If so, select two or three closed-ended exercises and see if you can suggest ways of 'open-ending' them. Look also for other ideas for rendering them more appropriate and productive for use in large heterogeneous classes. (You may find it helpful to refer to the suggestions in Box 21.4.)

Unit Five: Designing your own activities

Five 'families' of techniques are presented here: *Brainstorm*, *Recall and share*, *Doing your own thing*, *Fluid pairs*, *Passing it round*.

Brainstorm

This activity consists of simple pooling of ideas: as many contributions are made as quickly as possible by as many participants as possible; ideas may or may not be written down. No time is spent on critical discussion of contributions; transitions from one to the next are swift.

Example 1: Say things about a picture
Students are invited to say anything they like about a publicly displayed picture: they may be asked to aim for a total of twenty/thirty/forty utterances; or every student may have to supply one idea; or they may be given a time limit. The same can then be done in groups, which drastically raises the number of students who can participate. (See Box 9.4, Activity 1.)

Example 2: How many things can you think of that are . . .?
Again this may be done in full-class or in small groups. The learners are given a definition such as 'made of wood', 'square', 'sweet', 'worked by electricity', and have to find (through discussion in groups, or through individual writing, or by a combination of the two) as many things as they can that fit it.

Recall and share

The class is exposed to some kind of material, written, spoken or graphic – for example, a set of words or phrases. The material is then withdrawn, and students are asked to write down as much as they can remember of it. Subsequently they come together in twos or threes to share results. Finally, the teacher may re-present the original material or initiate a pooling of results.

Example 1: Spelling
The teacher writes on the board ten or fifteen words that have been recently learnt or are difficult to spell. After a minute or so the words are erased, and learners challenged to recall and write them down correctly. They then come together to add to and correct each other's answers; the result is presented as a group achievement.

Example 2: What have people said?
In order to practise forms of indirect speech, learners are invited to write down all the utterances they can remember that have been said since the beginning of the lesson. In pairs or small groups they then pool their utterances and rephrase them in indirect speech.

Doing your own thing

In these activities each student writes or says a totally individual response to a stimulus. They may share responses with each other later for the sake of interest or to get to know each other's ideas, but there is no attempt to reach a common result or consensus.

Example 1: Five-minute writing storms

A topic is given to the class ('A good friend', 'A surprise I had', 'A film worth seeing') and the students are given five minutes to write down a paragraph or two about it. They may then, if they are willing, read out their texts to each other, or have the teacher read them out. Later, the texts may be rewritten as formal essays, or used as a basis for discussion.

Example 2: Metaphors

The class is given a set of metaphors for a familiar experience or function, and each student is asked to select the one that seems to them most appropriate. For example, they might be given the subject 'home' and the metaphors: a pillar, a bed, a springboard, a garden, a bank account, a chain. They then explain to each other why they chose what they did, perhaps find others who chose the same and compare reasons. (For another example, see Box 15.1.)

Fluid pairs

Members of the class are given a task which involves short exchanges with as many others as they can find: a survey of opinions, for example. The students move around the class, finding out the desired information from one peer before moving on to another.

Example 1: Finding twins

Students fill in forms answering certain questions about themselves: for example, their favourite colour, singer, television programme, leisure-time activity. They then try to find as many other students as they can who have the same answers as they do to each question, and note names. At the end the class discusses conclusions that can be drawn about the most popular colours, etc.

Example 2: Marketplace

Each student gets three slips of paper; on each of these they write a sentence expressing their opinion on a given topic (possibly a locally controversial one), and their name. They then find a partner, and present their opinions. If the partner identifies with the opinion, they may 'buy' it: sign their name to it, and take it. If not, it remains with its original owner. When the pair have decided what to buy, or not, of each other's 'wares' they part and each finds someone else with whom to repeat the process. The more popular opinions change hands rapidly and amass signatures; the minority ones move more slowly.

(*Acknowledgement*: I learned this activity from Tessa Woodward.)

Passing it round

This is also a collaborative activity, but it involves reading and writing and is done quietly. Each student (or pair of students) writes something on a large piece of paper and passes it on to their neighbour(s) who adds a further word or sentence – and so on.

Example 1: Collaborative composition

A topic is given, and each student writes a brief sentence or phrase at the top of their paper about it: the first ideas or associations that occur to them. They then pass it on; the next student reads what is written, responds to it or continues it on a new line, and passes it on. And so on, until there are about ten contributions on each page. Some of the results may be read out by volunteers, or displayed on the wall.

Example 2: Passive possibilities

Each pair of students is given a large piece of paper with a subject at the centre: 'a baby', for example, or 'money', 'paper', 'a pencil'. Around this subject they write all the things they can think of that *are done* with it: 'a baby', for example, *is washed*, *is played with*, *is loved*. After not more than a minute, at a signal from the teacher, the paper is passed on, and the next pair have a minute to read what is written and try to add further ideas.

Application Choose one or two of the activities described above, and try them out, either with other participants or, if possible, in a large heterogeneous class of language learners. Afterwards consider and/or discuss the following questions:

– How easy was the activity to prepare and administer?
– How far were learners engaging with the language at a level appropriate to them, and learning well?
– How far did the procedure succeed in activating all or most of the learners in language use?
– How interested or motivated did the participants seem?
– Were there any problems of organization or control?

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