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HIGHLIGHTED HANDOUT

ENG515

Teaching of Reading and Writing Skills

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Teaching of Reading and Writing Skills

(ENG515)

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Lesson-01

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Topic: 001: Overview of the course and background

In the companion volume to this one, Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking (Nation and Newton, 2009), the four strands of a language course are described. The basic idea behind the four strands is that, in a wellbalanced language course, equal time is given to each of the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. Meaning-focused input involves getting input through listening and reading where the learners' focus is on understanding the message and where only a small proportion of language features are outside the learners' present level of proficiency. In a reading and writing programme, extensive reading is likely to be the major source of meaning-focused input. Meaning-focused output involves the learners producing language through speaking and writing where the learners' focus is on others understanding the message. Meaning-focused output occurs when learners write essays and assignments, when they write letters, when they write a diary, when they send email and text messages to each other, and when they write about their experience. Language-focused learning involves deliberate attention to language features both in the context of meaning-focused input and meaning focused output, and in decontextualized learning and teaching. In the reading and writing programme, language-focused learning occurs in intensive reading, when learners consult dictionaries in reading and writing, when they get language-focused feedback on their writing, when they deliberately learn new vocabulary for receptive or productive use, when they practise spelling, when they concentrate on learning to write or form written letters of the alphabet, and when they study grammar and discourse features.

There are lots of ways of making language-focused learning a part of the course, but a teacher needs to be careful that this does not take up more than 25 percent of the total course time. Fluency development is often neglected in courses, partly because teachers and learners feel that they should always be learning something new. Fluency development involves making the best use of what is already known. The best-known kind of fluency development is speed reading where learners focus on increasing their reading speed while still maintaining good comprehension. For speed reading courses to work well with learners of English as a second or foreign language, the reading material needs to be well within the learners' level of proficiency. There should be little or no unknown vocabulary or grammatical features in the speed reading texts. Writing fluency also needs to get attention in a well-balanced course, especially where learners need to sit a written test as part of academic study and where they have to write under time pressure.

These four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development need to take up roughly equal time in a language course. As we shall see, there are many ways of getting this balance, and the way this is done depends on local conditions, teacher preferences, the way the classes are divided up and scheduled, and timetabling constraints. What is important is that over a period of time probably no greater than a month or two, there is a roughly equal amount of time given to each of these four strands, and that the necessary conditions exist for the strands to occur. In this book, this idea of the four strands will be applied to goals as diverse as learning to spell, learning to write, and becoming fluent in reading. The first six chapters of this book focus largely on

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reading, and the next four on writing, although links will be made between these skills and also with the skills of listening and speaking. This is a lot to cover in such a small number of chapters, so this book should be seen as a practical overview of what can be done in the reading and writing programme. There are long traditions of research into reading and writing and this research is drawn on particularly to justify certain teaching and learning procedures. Let us now look at a beginner learning to read.

Topic: 002: Receptive & Productive Skills

People learn to read their first language in a wide variety of circumstances. The following description is of a fortunate child in a fortunate country where reading is well prepared for and well taught. An excellent account of the teaching of reading to native speakers in New Zealand can be found in Smith and Elley (1997). Children are prepared for reading at an early age by listening to stories, being read to, and interacting with adults and others about the stories they hear. This is done not with the main purpose of preparing a child for reading but as a way that parents and others interact with, show affection for, and entertain and educate children. The interaction involves asking questions about what is going to happen in the story, getting the child to complete sentences in a known story, talking about the interesting and scary parts of the story, and generally having fun.

When native-speaking children start to learn to read, they already have a large vocabulary of several thousand words which includes most of the words they will meet in early reading. They also have good control of the grammar of the language, have a lot of knowledge about books and reading conventions, and have had many many stories read to them. They are very keen to learn how to read. They begin formal schooling at the age of about five or six. The teacher and learners work with books that are interesting, are well illustrated, use language that is close to spoken language, and are not too long. The texts contain a lot of repetition, and are often very predictable but in an interesting way. The techniques used to teach reading are largely meaning-focused. That is, they give primary attention to understanding and enjoying the story. They include shared reading, guided reading and independent reading. A small amount of attention may be given to phonological awareness and phonics but this is in the context of enjoying the story and only takes a very small amount of time. Let us now look at the typical techniques used to teach reading to young native speakers.

Topic: 003: Four Strands of Language Teaching

The learners gather around the teacher and the teacher reads a story to the learners from a very large blown-up book while showing them the pictures and the written words. The teacher involves the learners in the reading by asking them what they think will happen next and getting them to comment on the story. Where they can, the learners read the words aloud together. The procedure is an attempt to make the shared book activity like a parent reading a child a bedtime story. The learners are asked to choose what blown-up book they want read to them and the same book may be used in the shared book activity on several occasions. In the later readings, the learners are expected to join in the reading much more. At other times, learners can take the small version of the blown-up book and read it individually or in pairs. After a reading,the learners draw, write, act out the story or study some of the language in the

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story. The shared book activity is a very popular reading activity in New Zealand pre-schools and primary schools. It was developed by a New Zealander, Don Holdaway, and is such a normal part of a primary teacher's repertoire that publishers now print blown-up book versions of popular children's books. The purpose of the shared book activity is to get the learners to see the fun element in reading. In the activity, this fun comes from the interesting story, the interaction between the teacher and the learners in predicting and commenting on the story, and the rereading of favourite stories. Teachers can make blown-up books. Although a blown-up book takes some time to make, it will be used and re-used and well repays the effort of making it or the cost of buying it. The books also make attractive displays in the classroom. The shared book activity was used in one of the experimental groups in the Elley and Mangubhai (1981) Book Flood experiment.

Blown-up books can be bought from the following publishers:

Nelson Price Milburn (http://www.newhouse.co.nz/),

Giltedge Publishing (http:// www.giltedgepublishing.co.nz/).

Titles include Where Do Monsters Live?; Bears, Bears Everywhere; Mr Noisy; What Do You See?; Pirate Pete; William's Wet Week; The Sunflower Tree.

Topic: 004:What Reading Is?

It is a commonplace of teacher education that teachers tend to teach by the methods which were used by the teachers who taught them. In no area of language teaching is this more true than in that of reading. It is probably for this reason that the procedure of reading round the class has been perpetuated, though anyone who considers it seriously, even briefly, in terms of what it contributes to new learning, or of pupil participation, or of communicative function, realises very quickly that it is a singularly profitless exercise. It may be well, therefore, to begin by looking carefully at just what 'reading' entails in the context of teaching English as a foreign language—see Appendix 1 for a summary. First it must be recognised that reading is a complex skill, that is to say that it involves a whole series of lesser skills. First of these is the ability to recognisestylised shapes which are figures on a ground, curves and lines and dots in patterned relationships. Moreover it is not only a matter of recognising the shapes as such but recognising them as same or different, and recognising that shapes which are quite different may for the purposes of reading be regarded as the same, as is the case with upper and lower case letters like 'A' and 'a'. Good modern infant teaching recognises the need for training in this kind of recognition and a good deal of time is devoted to the matching of shapes and patterns and in general cultivating the perceptual apparatus necessary for it.This is, however, in the nature of a low level skill, which becomes increasingly mechanical; where learners are already literate in a language which uses the Roman alphabet, acquiring this skill presents few problems. It is only where learners are illiterate or literate in a language which uses a non-Roman script that difficulties may be encountered. The second of the skills involved in the complex is the ability to correlate the black marks on the paper—the patterned shapes—with language. It is impossible to learn to read without at least the capacity to acquire language. The correlation appears to be made between elements of the patterns on the paper and formal elements of language. According to the nature of these formal linguistic elements the nature of the skill involved alters.

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The elements may be complex groups of sounds which might be called ‘words’ or ‘phrases’ or ‘sentences’ or even ‘paragraphs’, ‘chapters’, or ‘books’; or they might be the most basic elements, the single ‘sounds’ called phonemes. Readers who learn to correlate larger groups of sounds with the patterns on the paper might perhaps be learning by ‘look and say’, those learning to correlate the patterns on the paper with phonemes by a ‘phonic’ method; both kinds of skill are needed to develop efficient reading. Reading speed, for example, probably depends to a considerable extent on the development of the first; reading aloud would seem to depend at least to some extent on the second. A third skill which is involved in the total skill of reading is essentially an intellectual skill; this is the ability to correlate the black marks on the paper by way of the formal elements of language, let us say the words as sound, with the meanings which those words symbolise.

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Lesson-02

TEACHING READING IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

Topic: 005:Introduction To Learning To Read In Another Language (I)

The learners gather around the teacher and the teacher reads a story to the learners from a very large blown-up book while showing them the pictures and the written words. The teacher involves the learners in the reading by asking them what they think will happen next and getting them to comment on the story. Where they can, the learners read the words aloud together. The procedure is an attempt to make the shared book activity like a parent reading a child a bedtime story. The learners are asked to choose what blown-up book they want read to them and the same book may be used in the shared book activity on several occasions. In the later readings, the learners are expected to join in the reading much more. At other times, learners can take the small version of the blown-up book and read it individually or in pairs. After a reading,the learners draw, write, act out the story or study some of the language in the story. The shared book activity is a very popular reading activity in New Zealand pre-schools and primary schools. It was developed by a New Zealander, Don Holdaway, and is such a normal part of a primary teacher's repertoire that publishers now print blown-up book versions of popular children's books. The purpose of the shared book activity is to get the learners to see the fun element in reading. In the activity, this fun comes from the interesting story, the interaction between the teacher and the learners in predicting and commenting on the story, and the rereading of favourite stories.

Teachers can make blown-up books. Although a blown-up book takes some time to make, it will be used and re-used and well repays the effort of making it or the cost of buying it. The books also make attractive displays in the classroom. The shared book activity was used in one of the experimental groups in the Elley and Mangubhai (1981) Book Flood experiment. Blown-up books can be bought from the following publishers: Nelson Price Milburn (http://www.newhouse.co.nz/), Giltedge Publishing (http:// www.giltedgepublishing.co.nz/). Titles include Where Do Monsters Live?; Bears, Bears Everywhere; Mr Noisy; What Do You See?; Pirate Pete; William's Wet Week; The Sunflower Tree.

Topic: 006:Introduction To Learning To Read In Another Language (Ii)

Guided reading can be done silently or with a child reading aloud to a friend, parent or teacher. Before the reading the learner and teacher talk about the book. Research by Wong and McNaughton (1980) showed that for the learner they studied, pre-reading discussion resulted in a greater percentage of words initially correct, and a greater percentage of errors self-corrected. The teacher and the learner look at the title of the book and make sure that all the words in the title are known. Then they talk about the pictures in the story and make predictions about what might happen in the story and talk about any knowledge the learner already has about the topic. Important words in the story are talked about but need not be pointed to in their written form. So, before the learner actually starts to read the story, the ideas and important words in the story are talked about and clarified. Then the learner begins to read. If the learner is reading aloud to the teacher, then it is good to use the pause, prompt, praise procedure (Glynn et al., 1989; Smith and Elley, 1997: 134–136). This means that when the learner starts to struggle over a word the teacher does not rush in with the answer but pauses for the learner to have time to make a good

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attempt at it. If the learner continues to struggle the teacher gives a helpful prompt, either from the meaning of the story orsentence or from the form of the word. When the learner finally reads the word correctly the teacher then praises the attempt. If the learner is reading silently, then a part of the text is read and there is a discussion of what has just been read and prediction of the next part of the text.

Independent Reading

In independent reading the learner chooses a book to read and quietly gets on with reading it. During this quiet period of class time, the teacher may also read or may use the time as an opportunity for individual learners to come up to read to the teacher. In beginners' classes there is a set time each day for independent reading and learners are expected to read out of class as well. Other names for extended independent reading are sustained silent reading (SSR) and drop everything and read (DEAR). Learning to read is also helped by learning to write and learning through listening. In writing as in reading, first language teachers emphasise the communication of messages and expect the learners gradually to approximate normal writing over a period of time. Research indicates that the best age to learn to read is about six to seven years old. Starting early at five has no long-term advantages and may make it more difficult for some learners to experience success in reading. At the age of about six or seven children are intellectually ready to begin reading. It should be clear from this description that native speakers learning to read have the advantage of bringing a lot of language knowledge and a lot of experience to learning to read. They might have the disadvantage of beginning to learn a complex skill when they may not be quite ready for it.

Learning to Read in Another Language

There are numerous factors that affect the difficulty of learning to read in another language. Table 1.1 focuses on three factors but as the footnote to the table suggests, there are other factors that are important particularly when working with a group of learners. Let us look at the factors in Table 1.1 by focusing on a learner from a particular language background, Thai, who is in the very early stages of learning English. The learner is 12 years old and can already read fluently in Thai. A Thai learner beginning to read English will know very little English vocabulary. There are English loan words in Thai like free, but a Thai learner probably does not realise that they have an English origin. This means that the initial reading material will need to be much more controlled than the material aimed at young native speakers of English who already know close to five thousand words. A Thai learner may also needmuch more preparation or pre-teaching before they start on their reading. These are all disadvantages. There are, however, numerous advantages that the Thai learner has.

First, the Thai learner can already read Thai and so knows a lot about reading. Thai is an alphabetic language so the Thai learner is already very familiar with the alphabetic principle; that is, that letters can represent sounds and these can go together to make up words. Thai script is not related to English script, so the Thai learner will have to spend time learning letter shapes. An Italian learner of English does not have this problem because Italian uses substantially the same script as English.

Second, if the Thai learner is good at reading Thai, the learner will have many reading strategies like guessing from context, scanning, skimming, and careful decoding which could be carried over to the reading of English if the conditions for reading were suitable. There is evidence, for example, that training in increasing reading speed in the first language can transfer to another language if the materials

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in the other language are at a suitable level (Bismoko and Nation, 1974; Cramer, 1975). Third, reading is largely a valued and enjoyed activity in Thai society so there may also be positive attitudes to reading carried over to English. Fourth, a 12 year old is much more able to learn to read than a five year old. A 12 year old has much more developed cognitive skills and is much more able to learn from direct instruction. Table 1.1 summarises these characteristics.

Table 1.1 L1/L2 Differences for an Individual Beginning to Read

Characteristics	General effects	Particular effect
L1 beginning readers already know a lot of the language they are beginning to read (sounds, vocabulary, grammar, discourse). L2 learners do not.	Learning to read an L2 involves a great deal of language learning.	L2 learners need very controlled texts. L2 learners need a greater amount of pre-reading activities.
L2 beginners can already read in their L1.	L2 beginners have general cognitive skills. They have preconceptions and attitudes to reading. They have language specific skills. There will be interference and facilitation effects between the L1 and L2.	L2 beginners do not need to learn what they can transfer from the L1. They may need to change their attitudes to reading. Learners may have to learn a different writing system.
L2 beginners are usually older than L1 beginners.	L2 learners have greater metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness.	It is easy to transfer L1 skills. L2 learners can use more explicit approaches and tools like dictionaries.

This table has been kept simple by focusing on only one learner who is just beginning to read. It is more complicated if you have several learners with different L1s, different L2 proficiencies, different L1 reading proficiencies, and different motivations for reading.

Topic: 007:Principles For Teaching Reading: Meaning Focused Input

Principles for Teaching Reading the following principles can guide the design and practice of a reading programme. For another list of principles, see Williams (1986).

Meaning-focused Input

- Practice and training in reading should be done for a range of reading purposes. A reading course should cover these purposes—reading to search for information (including skimming and scanning), reading to learn, reading for fun, reading to integrate information, reading to critique texts, and reading to write. These are looked at throughout the following chapters.
- Learners should be doing reading that is appropriate to their language proficiency level. The course should include reading simplified material at a range of levels, particularly extensive reading of graded readers.
- Reading should be used as a way of developing language proficiency.
- Learners should read with 98 percent coverage of the vocabulary in the text so that they can learn the remaining 2 percent through guessing from context.

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Topic: 008:Principles For Teaching Reading: Meaning-Focused Output

- Reading should be related to other language skills. The course should involve listening, speaking and writing activities related to the reading. See, for example, Simcock (1993) using the ask and answer technique and several others described later in this book.

Topic: 009:Principles For Teaching Reading: Learning-Focused Learning

Language-focused Learning

- Learners should be helped to develop the skills and knowledge needed for effective reading. The course should work on the subskills of reading and the language features needed to read, including phonemic awareness activities, phonics, spelling practice, vocabulary learning using word cards, and grammar study. Some of this can be done through intensive reading.
- Learners should be given training and practice in a range of reading strategies. These strategies could include—previewing, setting a purpose, predicting, posing questions, connecting to background knowledge, paying attention to text structure, guessing words from context, critiquing, and reflecting on the text. Janzen and Stoller (1998) describe a similar list of strategies.
- Learners should be given training and practice in integrating a range of strategies. Learners should be familiar with a strategy package procedure like reciprocal teaching or concept-oriented reading (CORI).
- Learners should become familiar with a range of text structures, such as those used in newspaper reports, stories, recounts and information reports.

Topic: 010: Principles for Teaching Reading: Fluency Development

Fluency Development

- Learners should be helped and pushed to develop fluency in reading. They need to read material that is very familiar and contains no unknown language features. There should also be speed reading practice in word recognition and in reading for understanding. These can include activities like speed reading, repeated reading, paired reading, scanning, and skimming.
- Learners should enjoy reading and feel motivated to read. Learners should have access to interesting texts and be involved in activities like listening to stories, independent reading, and shared reading (blown-up books). Native-speaking children like to read scary books, comics and cartoons, books about sports and magazines about popular culture (Worthy, Moorman and Turner, 1999). These are not usually found at school.
- Learners should read a lot. This can be monitored and encouraged through the use of extensive reading and issue logs.

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Topic: 011: Introduction to Recognize and Spell Words

An essential part of the reading skill is the skill of being able to recognise written forms and to connect them with their spoken forms and their meanings. This involves recognising known words and also deciphering unfamiliar words. There has been considerable debate in first language reading over the role and nature of direct systematic teaching of word recognition skills. See Moorman, Blanton and McLaughlin (1994) for an example of this. There is also debate over the role of language-focused activities, such as reading aloud (see Griffin, 1992; Rounds, 1992). The position taken in this book is that there needs to be a balance of the four strands of meaningfocused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development, and there is thus a role for appropriate amounts of formal word recognition instruction. The principles that should guide this teaching are that most attention can be given to rules and items that occur frequently, are simple, and are regular.

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Lesson-03

TEACHING HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND SPELL WORDS I

Topic: 012: Prerequisites For Formal Reading Instruction

Prerequisites for Formal Reading Instruction To be able to benefit from instruction on spelling rules, learners need to:

(1) know at least some of the letter shapes;
(2) be aware that words are made up of separable sounds (phonemic awareness);
(3) know basic English writing conventions (we read from left to right, beginning at the top and moving down the page); and
(4) Know the spoken forms of most of the words that will be met in the initial stages of reading.

Learning Letter Shapes If a second language learner is already able to read in their first language, and their first language uses the same alphabet as English, then little if any letter shape learning will be needed. A native speaker of Malay who can read Malay already knows the letter shapes needed for reading English. They may have to apply different spelling-sound rules to these shapes but the written forms are not a problem. Learners who are not literate in their first language, or whose language uses a different writing system, like Arabic or Japanese, may need to learn to recognise the letter shapes. Because of the detailed recognition skills that are needed, it may be most effective to teach learners how to write the letters rather than just rely on reception. Activities can include tracing over letters; repeated copying of letters of the alphabet; delayed copying (Hill, 1969) where the learners look, look away, and write from memory; letter matching of flash cards (find the pairs); and letter dictation. Letters of similar shapes p, d, b, g, should not be learned at the same time as they are likely to interfere with each other. There may be some value in practising letter patterns, for example,or, but this is probably more useful for cursive writing and developing writing fluency.

Topic: 013: Prerequisites For Formal Reading Instruction Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the knowledge that spoken words are made up of sounds that can be separated, that is, that /kæt/ (cat) is made up of the sounds /k æ t/. If the learner can already read in their first language, and the writing system of the first language is alphabetic, the learner will already have phonemic awareness. To get a clearer idea of the nature of phonemic awareness, see Table 2.1 which describes two tests of phonemic awareness.

In essence, phonemic awareness is not awareness of particular sounds. It is awareness of the general principle that words are made up of separable sounds. It is likely that learners who are not literate in their L1 but who are above the age of seven or eight will already have phonemic awareness in their L1 but this should be checked. Learners who are between four and six years old could be tested for phonemic awareness and, if necessary, could be given phonemic awareness activities (see Table 2.2). Phonemic awareness and letter knowledge are the two best predictors of how well first language children just

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entering school will do at learning to read during the first two years of school. Phonemic awareness training can have positive long-term effects on spelling.

In the vast majority of cases, learners of English as a second language will not need phonemic awareness activities because they will already have this knowledge.

Table 2.1 Tests of Phonemic Awareness

Phoneme deletion test (Bruce, 1964)

What word would remain if this sound was taken away? (Practice words c-at, b-r-ight, crie-d). Takes about 10 minutes.

1. S-t-and (middle)	11. S-top (first)	21. thin-k (last)
2. J-am (first)	12. Far-m (last)	22. p-late (first)
3. Fair-y (last)	13. Mon-k-ey (middle)	23. s-n-ail (middle)
4. Ha-n-d (middle)	14. s-pin(first)	24. b-ring (first)
5. Star-t (last)	15. for-k (last)	25. pin-k (last)
6. Ne-s-t (middle)	16. c-old (first)	26. le-f-t (middle)
7. F-rock (first)	17. Part-y (last)	27. car-d (last)
8. Ten-t (last)	18. we-n-t (middle)	28. s-p-oon (middle)
9. Lo-s-t (middle)	19. f-r-og (middle)	29. h-ill (first)
10. N-ice (first)	20. n-ear (first)	30. Ever-y (last)

Phoneme segmentation test (Yopp, 1988)

Today we're going to play a different word game. I'm going to say a word, and I want you to break the word apart. You are going to tell me each sound in the word in order. For example, if I say old, you will say o-l-d. Let's try a few words together.

(Three more examples are given ride, go, man) Total score = 22. Takes about 5–10 minutes.

Dog	lay	keep	Race
Fine	Zoo	no	Three
She	Job	Wave	In
Grew	Ice	That	At
Red	Top	Me	By
Sat	do		

Table 2.2 Phonemic Awareness Activities

Activities

The most basic procedures involve:

1) the teacher saying separate sounds (/t/ /e/ /n/) and the learner putting the separate heard sounds together to make a familiar word (ten) (i.e. phoneme blending); and

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2) the learner saying the separate sounds of a word for the teacher to guess what the word is (i.e. phoneme segmentation). These activities can be done as a game.

Other activities include:

1. phoneme isolation (What is the first sound in run?)
2. phoneme identification (What sound is the same in rat, run, ripe?)
3. phoneme deletion (What word do we have if we take /t/ out of stand?)

Principles

- Phonemic awareness activities should be done with known words.
- Phonemic awareness activities should be fun.

Topic: 014:Prerequisites For Formal Reading Instruction ;Spoken Language And Reading

Writing Conventions

English has the following writing conventions. Not all languages follow the same conventions.

1. Writing goes from left to right (cf. Arabic—right to left, Japanese— top to bottom).
2. The lines of writing come one under the other starting from the top of the page (cf. Japanese).
3. The pages go from front to back (cf. Japanese—back to front).
4. Words are separated by spaces (cf. Thai—no spaces between words).
5. Sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark.
6. Quotation marks are used to signal speech or citation.
7. English has upper case (capital) letters and lower case (small) letters. The use of capital letters may carry an extra meaning.
8. Sentences are organised into paragraphs.
9. In formal and academic writing there are conventions that need to be learned, such as the use of bold and italics, the use of headings and sub-headings, the use of indentation, the use of footnotes, the use of references, and page numbering.

In early reading, learners may need to be checked for knowledge of these conventions, and some may need to be pointed out and explained.

Spoken Language and Reading

The experience approach to reading is based on the idea that when learning to read, learners should bring a lot of experience and knowledge to their reading so that they only have to focus on small amounts of new information. Sylvia Ashton-Warner's (1963) approach to teaching young native speakers to read is an excellent example of this. Here are the steps in her approach.

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1. Each learner draws a picture illustrating something that recently happened to them or something that they are very interested in.
2. One by one the learners take their picture to the teacher who asks them what it is about.
3. The teacher then writes the learner's description below the picture exactly as the learner said it using the same words the learner said, even if it is non-standard English.
4. This then becomes the learner's reading text for that day. The learner reads it back to the teacher and then takes it away to practise reading it, and to read it to classmates, friends and family.
5. These pictures and texts all written by the same learner are gathered together to be a personal reading book for that learner.

Note that most of the knowledge needed to read and comprehend the text is directly within the experience of the learner. The ideas come from the learner, the words and sentences come from the learner, and the organisation of the text comes from the learner. The only learning needed is to match the new written forms provided by the teacher with this knowledge.

It is possible to learn to read a foreign language without being able to speak it, but learning to read is much easier if the learner already has spoken control of the language features that are being met in the reading. Reading texts used with young native speakers of English use language that is already known to them and are on topics that interest them. However, young native speakers learning to read have an oral vocabulary size of around 5,000 words. Non-native speakers will have a very much smaller English vocabulary and so if native-speaker texts are used to teach second language reading, they need to be checked to see if they contain known and useful vocabulary.

Topic: 015: Phonics And The Alphabetic Principle

Learning phonics is learning the systematic relationships between written letters and sounds, for example, learning that the written form p is usually pronounced /p/. At a very general level, learning phonics means learning the alphabetic principle, that is that letters and groups of letters represent sounds in a largely systematic way. At a detailed level, learning phonics involves learning the range of spelling-sound correspondences that exist in a particular language.

Some languages like Chinese do not follow the alphabetic principle. They do not have separate letters that represent the individual sounds that go together to make a spoken word. Other languages follow the alphabetic principle in a very regular way. The Maori language, for example, has 12 consonant sounds and five vowel sounds (10 if long and short versions of vowels are not counted as the same sound). These are represented by 11 consonant letters and five vowel letters. The only exceptions to a one letterone sound (not necessarily one phoneme) rule are that the letters wh represent a sound which is not /w/ plus /h/, and the letters ng represent a sound /ŋ/ which is not /n/ plus /g/. After a few lessons in Maori pronunciation, it is possible for anyone familiar with the English alphabet to learn all the Maori spelling-sound correspondences in a few minutes.

This is an over-simplification because there are different dialects of Maori. However, there are frequent, systematic relationships in English that can provide a good basis for effective phonics

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instruction. Here aresome English spelling-sound rules that are regular and very, very frequent. The letter b is pronounced /b/, f—/f/, k—/k/, m—/m/, v—/v/.

There are exceptions to these rules, but most of the exceptions are rulebased (bb—/b/, mm—/m/) or do not occur in many words. As a fluent reader of English you already know the regular rules and can thus make a reasonable pronunciation of written words that you have probably never seen before—lyncean, glogg, cordwain, sclerotium, tussah.

If a teacher wants to do some phonics instruction, it is important to know what the most useful rules in English are and to be able to determine whether it is better to deal with a particular word phonically or simply to encourage learners to memorise the spelling of the whole word. Appendix 1 lists the important rules for English and provides some guidance and practice in applying the rules. By working through Appendix 1 you should be able to do the following things.

1. Make an ordered systematic syllabus for phonics instruction. In particular, decide what phonics rules deserve attention early in a reading programme.
2. Be aware of the most common exceptions to the rules.
3. Where there are conflicting rules, for example a—/a:/, a—/æ/, decide which one should get attention first.
4. Decide whether a word is regularly spelled or not. In other words, work out the learning burden of its written form.
5. Interpret errors in learners' reading aloud to see if they are rule-based or not.

Topic: 016: The Role of Phonics in a Reading Program

Phonics can fit into a reading programme in the following ways.

Isolated Words and Words in Texts

- Help learners in using phonics to read specially chosen isolated words.
- Introduce phonics with known words.
- Ask students to read interesting texts that use regular spelling-sound correspondences such as Dr Seuss books.

Individual and Class

- Use phonics in one-to-one reading instruction as a part of reading a text.
- Carry out class teaching of the most frequent, simple, regular spelling-sound correspondences.

Word Attack Skills

- Teach learners to sound out all the sounds in a word.
- Teach learners to concentrate on the first letters of a word.
- Where possible, use phonics when giving help with difficult words.

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Outlandish Proposals

- Use regularised English as an intermediary step.
- Allow invented spellings that follow rules—the rule is more important than the items.

Word recognition when reading is helped by familiarity with what is being read (from having read it before or from listening to it being read), by context clues coming from the meaning of what is being read, by being able to recognise some words as complete units, and by being able to decode words phonically. It is worth drawing on all these sources of help because ultimately it is the quantity of successful reading that will contribute most to the development of reading skills, and using all these sources is more likely to guarantee success.

As phonics involves spelling-sound relationships, it is significant both for learning to read and for learning to spell.

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Lesson-04

TEACHING HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND SPELL WORDS II

Topic: 017: Spelling: Productive Phonics I

Being familiar with spelling-sound correspondences can be seen as a receptive skill in that it relates to the receptive skill of reading. The productive equivalent of this part of the reading skill is spelling, which is part of the skill of writing.

There has been considerable research with native speakers on the learning of spelling and the definitive collection of research reviews is Brown and Ellis's (1994) Handbook of Spelling. From an applied linguistics perspective, the study of research on spelling is rewarding not only for the information it provides on the teaching and learning of spelling, but also because it provides valuable insights into many of the central issues involved in second language learning. Spelling is a very limited and clearly defined area, involving only 26 letters and a definable set of combinations of letters. Working within this limited area makes the issues clearer and easier to deal with in a comprehensive way.

Table 2.3 lists the most important of these with a brief summary of findings from L1 research. Let us look briefly at some of these.

Deliberate and Incidental Learning

In the learning of both grammatical and vocabulary items there has been debate over the roles of incidental learning (acquisition in Krashen's

Issues	Findings
Deliberate versus incidental learning	Deliberate analytic learning can speed up learning and can help with learning problems. Regular tests help. Most learning is incidental. Substantial reading improves spelling.
System learning versus item learning	Some words can be dealt with by rules, others have to be learned as unique items. The unpredictability of the English spelling system is a major obstacle to learning to spell.
A single kind of learning versus interactive systems	Alphabetic learning interacts with lexical learning.
The effect of other levels of language on this level and this level on others	Phonological awareness affects spelling and has long-term effects on spelling. Spelling affects word recognition. Poor spellers have problems in writing— they use avoidance strategies. Phonological awareness affects reading and reading can affect phonological awareness. Writing the letter shapes helps learning.
The direction of the effect	Spelling affects use, use affects spelling.
The effect of the origin of the feature	Etymology affects spelling
The treatment of irregularity	Some high frequency items are irregular. Irregular items are learned as lexical units.
The effect of frequency on the type of storage	Highly frequent items, even regular ones, are stored as lexical items. Regular low frequency items are

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	dealt with by rules.
The effect of age on learning	Older learners are better at deliberate learning.
The effect of age on learning	Complex items need to be learned through a series of stages.
The treatment of error	Letting students invent spellings can have positive effects.
The effect of the first language	The writing system of the first language can have positive and negative effects on learning the second language.

(1981) terms) and deliberate learning. Some argue that incidental learning is what really matters and that at best deliberate learning can only play an indirect secondary role. In vocabulary learning, however, there is considerable evidence supporting the deliberate learning of vocabulary as part of a well-balanced programme (Elgort, 2007). First language research on the learning of spelling also supports having both deliberate and incidental learning. Although most learning of the many sound-spelling correspondences is picked up incidentally and good readers are usually good spellers, deliberate analytic learning can speed up learning and can help with learning difficulties.

Topic: 018: Spelling: Productive Phonics II System Learning and Item Learning

Partly as a result of the impact of corpus linguistics, there has been considerable debate over whether learners develop substantial control of a complex grammatical system or whether what seems to be grammar learning is really the accumulation of knowledge of numerous collocations. That is, much language use is not rule-based but is based on the use of pre-fabricated units (see Pinker, 1999, for an interesting discussion of this). Research on the learning of complex words like decompose, combinability and unrefugeelike suggests that high frequency complex words are stored as whole, readymade units. Low frequency complex words are recreated each time they are met or used. That is, low frequency items are dealt with according to systematic rules, while high frequency items are dealt with by accessing memorised complete units. Frequency and complexity combine nicely in this argument. High frequency items are relatively small in number so there are not too many to store. If they were processed according to rules, because they are very frequent a lot of processing time would be spent dealing with them and that would be difficult. Thus storing them as readymade items is the most efficient option. Low frequency items are very numerous. There are too many of them to store as ready-made complex units. However, low frequency items make up only a small proportion of the running words so dealing with them according to rules does not occupy too much on-line processing time. Thus, processing them according to rules is the best option.

Research on spelling supports this high frequency/low frequency distinction. Many high frequency words are irregularly spelled and must be stored as memorised items. Low frequency words tend to be more regularly spelled and can be dealt with by the application of rules.

Topic: 019: First Language Effects on Second Language Reading

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In its simplest form, the contrastive analysis hypothesis argued that second language learning can be strongly affected by first language knowledge.

Where there are similarities between languages, second language learning will be easier. Where there are differences, second language learning will be more difficult. Complications in the hypothesis arise from the ways in which a second language is learned, and in the nature of the similarities and differences between the two languages.

There is evidence of positive and negative effects of the first language on the second at the levels of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse. Spelling is no exception, and there is plenty of evidence of first language spellings having both positive and negative effects according to the degrees of similarity and difference between the language items and rules.

Topic: 020: Learning to Spell and Its Significance for Teaching Reading (I)

English spelling is difficult. Although there are many rules, there are also many irregularities and decision points where competing rules need to be chosen. Learning how to spell in more regularly spelled languages likeIndonesian, Samoan or Finnish is a much easier task. If learners have poor spelling skills, they will typically avoid writing tasks, and when writing will avoid words that they find difficult to spell.

One way of organising an approach to spelling improvement is to ensure that spelling is dealt with across the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development.

Spelling and Meaning-focused Input

The more learners read, the more their spelling will improve. Continual receptive exposure to the written forms of words provides a useful basis for later written production (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1991). In the early stages of learning to read English as an L1, the number of words learners can read is much greater than the number they can spell and the size of this gap persists for several years.

Spelling and Meaning-focused Output

Spelling is particularly important for writing and at the very least, having to write can make learners aware of gaps in their spelling knowledge.

In the early stages of writing by young native speakers, teachers accept the invented spellings they produce as useful steps on the way to more accurate spelling.

Writing activities that can help with spelling are copying, delayed copying, read and write from memory, dictation, the various forms of guided writing, writing with the help of a dictionary, and free writing. Too muchattention to spelling when responding to learners' writing can result in an unwillingness to write or avoidance strategies where learners only use very familiar words.

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Topic: 021: Learning To Spell And Its Significance For Teaching Reading (II)

There are numerous techniques for giving deliberate attention to spelling. The critical factor is making sure that there is an appropriate balance of each of the four strands so that there is some deliberate attention to spelling but this attention does not become excessive. Deliberate attention to spelling can include the following.

The Deliberate Memorization of the Spelling of Individual Words

Cover and Retrieve

The learner writes a list of difficult to spell words down the left-hand side of the page. The first letter or two of each word is written next to it, for example

yacht y

occurrence o

The words are studied and then covered and each word is written from memory using the first letter clue. The first letter is written again so that the activity can be repeated.

Yacht yacht y

Using Analogies

Working with the teacher or in pairs or small groups, the learners think of known words that share similar spelling features to words that they have difficulty in spelling. For example, if learning to spell apply, the learners think of the known words reply, supply, etc.

Using Word Parts

For advanced learners, drawing attention to word-building units can help. For example, separate contains the root par which is also in part. The spelling is therefore separate not seperate. Pronouncing the Word in the Way it is Spelled A word like yacht can be deliberately mispronounced as /yætc˘t/ as a kind of mnemonic for the spelling. Visualising Learners look at a word, close their eyes and try to see the spelling of the word in their mind. If a part of the word is particularly difficultto remember, try to think of that part in a striking colour such as red.

Tests

Teachers can have regular tests to encourage learners to work on spelling. These can be dictation tests or individualised tests as in the cover and retrieve technique where the learners each give the teacher a list of words on one sheet and on another sheet a list of the first letters of the words. The sheet with the first letters is used for the test, and the other for marking.

The Deliberate Study of Regular Correspondences and Rules

Noticing Patterns

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Words following a similar set of sound-spelling correspondences are grouped together so that learners see several examples of the same correspondence, for example day, play, say, may, stay Learners' involvement in such noticing can be deepened by getting learners to work in pairs grouping such words from a mixed list, by dictating the words to the learners, by getting learners to suggest other words that follow the pattern, and by following up these activities with a dictation test drawing on a variety of patterns.

Studying Rules

A few very common complicated rules deserve a bit of deliberate study, particularly for advanced learners. The most useful of these rules are:

1. i before e except after c
2. free and checked vowels.

The rule for free and checked vowels is rather complicated but it is very useful because it provides explanations for the doubling of consonants when adding affixes, the function of final silent e, and the spelling and pronunciation of a large number of words. To understand the rule it is necessary to know what the free vowels are and what the checked (or limited or short) vowels are. The free vowels a e i o u are pronounced / ei i: aiou u:/, which is the same as their names (for example, the name for the letter a is pronounced /ei/). The checked vowels a e i o u are pronounced /æ e i o u/. Some people call free and checked vowels long and short vowels but this is misleading from a phonological point of view because there is much more than a length difference between the two sets of pronunciations.

Here are the rules associated with the free and checked vowels. These rules apply only to stressed syllables.

1. **Free vowels occur in the pattern**

freevowel+consonant+vowel. date, medium

2. **Checked vowels occur in the patterns**

checkedvowel+consonant with nothing following the consonant hat, fetch, sip, lot, shut

checkedvowel+consonant+consonant (+consonant)+vowel

happen, better,

sitting, bottle, funny

Note (a) the single letter x behaves like two consonants, (b) y in final position acts as a vowel.

If you have understood the above explanation, you should be able to answer these questions. (Answers are supplied on page 24.)

1. What job does final silent e do in the following words? plate, scene, fine, home, tune
2. Why do you have to double the final consonant in the stem when you add y to the following words? fun, fat, slop, bag

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3. Why don't you have to double the final consonant when you add ing or ed to the following words? Look at each word carefully. weed, lengthen, push, hope
4. Why is occurrence correct and not occurence?
5. Why is exclamation correct and not exclammation?

There are exceptions to the rules and it may be that the best use of the free/checked rule is as a way of explaining and helping to learn difficult words that follow the rules. The free and checked rules are items AV3, AV14, AV18, AV24, AV1, AV8, AV13, AV16, AV23 in Appendix 1. The exceptions are BV7.

Strategy Training

Learners should have familiar and well-practised strategies to follow to: (1) commit the spelling of a newly met word to memory; (2) find the spelling of a needed word when writing; and (3) decide how to pronounce a newly met word when reading. These strategies should be made up of activities that have already been practised in class.

A Strategy for Memorising Spellings

The activities described above in the section on deliberate memorisation can be put into a sequence that can be followed as far as is necessary foreach word. That is, first, the learner should close their eyes and try to visualise the word, that is, make a retrieval. Second, the learner should think of similarly spelled words. Third, if possible, the word can be broken into parts to see if knowing the parts helps remember the spelling. Fourth, if the word is really difficult to remember, it can be added to a list to use with the cover and retrieve technique. Alternatively, it can be placed on a word card for spaced recall practice. Ideally, learners should get plenty of practice using this strategy, and reflecting on it by thinking about it and talking about its application with other learners.

A Strategy for Finding the Spelling of a Word

Before looking up the spelling of a word in a dictionary, the learner should make an informed guess about how the word might be spelled. This can be done by thinking about other known words that sound the same and, if possible, checking that the spelling fits known rules.

A Strategy for Deciding how to Pronounce a Written Form

First, if the word looks like known words, the learner can try that pronunciation. Second, breaking the word into parts could help with getting the stress in the right place. Third, seek confirmation by asking someone who might know or by using a dictionary.

Spelling and Fluency Development

Fluency in spelling will come from large quantities of reading and writing, and from fluency practice in reading and writing. A typical writing fluency development activity is ten minute writing where learners write as much as they can on an easy topic in a regular, timed ten-minute period. The teacher does not correct spelling errors or grammatical errors, but responds to the content of the text encouraging the learner to write more. The speed of writing in words per minute is kept on a personal

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graph by each learner and their goal is to see their speed in words per minute increase. This is done about three times a week.

Topic: 022: Designing a Focused Spelling Program for Reading

If spelling is a significant problem for learners, it may be worthwhile giving it some focused, planned special attention. Numerous studies looking at spelling and on other learning issues have shown the positive effects of a balanced, focused programme. Table 2.4 lists general principles that can be applied to any focused programme. These are organised under the headings affective, cognitive and social to make them easier to remember and to put into practice the idea that an effective programme will approach a problem from several perspectives; in this case, the attitudes and feelings ofthe learners, the knowledge involved, and the support that others can give. Table 2.4 also gives examples of application of the principles. There could be a third column in Table 2.4 and that would show the particular applications to a spelling programme.

Let us take an example. Under the applications of the affective principle, Keep learners motivated, there is the application, Do mastery testing. Mastery testing involves repeated learning and testing until learners gain near perfect scores in what they have to learn. For mastery testing to work, there needs to be a clearly defined set of things to learn and there needs to be repeated and varied opportunities to do this learning. Mastery testing could be applied to a spelling programme in the following way. For a particular course, the focus may be the regularly spelled words in the first one thousand words of English. Those words would be ones that could be completely described by sections A and B of Appendix 1. Each week a few correspondences would be focused on and these would be tested by word dictation tests to see if learners had mastered the rules. If they did not score 90 percent or more on a 20-item test, they could sit another test focusing on the same correspondences. Before sitting another test, the teacher or learners could analyse the errors in the previous test and the learners could work on some practice items.

Table 2.4 can also be used as a basis for evaluating a focused programme. Not all of the applications need be used but there should be variety and balance.

Table 2.4 Features of a Good Intensive Learning Programme

Principles	Applications
Affective	
Keep learners motivated	Praise success Give quick feedback Do mastery testing Measure progress Record success on graphs or tables
Make learning fun	Use attractive aids Have amusing competitions
Cognitive	
Encourage thoughtful processing	Use rich associations, mnemonics, rules, retrieval, visualisation, deliberate learning, movement Use both analytic and holistic techniques Isolate and focus on problems
Plan for repetition and revision	Give regular practice Plan increasingly spaced revision
Provide training	Combine activities into strategies Train learners in

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	strategy use Get learners to reflect on learning
Organise the items to learn in helpful ways	Group the items to learn into manageable blocks Avoid interference Group helpfully related items together
Plan for transfer of training	Provide fluency training
Social	
Provide peer support	Do peer tutoring Get learners to report progress to others Organise support groups
Aim for individual responsibility	Let learners choose what and how to learn Encourage autonomy

Note that the multi-focused approach in Table 2.4 can be applied to other things besides spelling, for example, learning to read, pronunciation, writing and so on. Spelling is only a small part of learning a language and for some learners it may not be an important focus, either because they have no problem with it or because writing is not a major part of their language use. What should be clear from this chapter is that spelling is no different from other aspects of language use. If it is given attention, this attention should be balanced and in proportion to other focuses.

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Lesson-05

TEACHING INTENSIVE EFL/ESL READING I

Topic: 023: Introduction to Intensive EFL/ESL Reading

Intensive study of reading texts can be a means of increasing learners' knowledge of language features and their control of reading strategies. It can also improve their comprehension skill. It fits into the language focused learning strand of a course. The classic procedure for **intensive reading** is the grammar-translation approach where the teacher works with the learners, using the first language to explain the meaning of a text, sentence by sentence. Used on suitable texts and following useful principles, this can be a very useful procedure as long as it is only a part of the reading program and is complemented by other language-focused learning and by extensive reading for language development and extensive reading for fluency development.

At its worst, intensive reading focuses on comprehension of a particular text with no thought being given to whether the features studied in this text will be useful when reading other texts. Such intensive reading usually involves translation and thus comprehension of the text. So, one goal of intensive reading may be comprehension of the text. The use of translation makes sure that learners understand, and when the learners do some of the translation themselves, it allows the teacher to check whether they understand.

Intensive reading may also have another goal and that is to determine what language features will get attention in the course. That is, the language features that are focused on in each text become the language syllabus for the course. This has several positive aspects. First, the language features are set in the communicative context of a text. The text can beused to show how the language features contribute to the communicative purpose of the text and this can be good preparation for subsequent writing activities. Second, choosing features in this way is likely to avoid the interference between vocabulary items or grammatical features that can occur when topic-centred syllabus design is used.

There are also negative aspects to letting texts determine the language features of a course. First, the features given attention to may be an uncontrolled mixture of useful and not very useful items. That is, high frequency and low frequency vocabulary, frequent grammatical items and very infrequent or irregular grammatical items may get equal attention. Second, the topic of the text determines the salience of the items and the teaching gets directed towards this text rather than what will be useful in a range of texts.

If intensive reading is to be done well, the major principle determining the focus of the teaching should be that the focus is on items that will occur in a wide range of texts. The teacher should ask "How does today's teaching make tomorrow's text easier?". There are four ways of putting this important principle into practice.

1. Focus on items that occur with high frequency in the language as a whole (see Table 3.1 for examples). Such items will occur often in many different texts.
2. Focus on strategies that can be used with most texts (see Table 3.1 for examples).

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Table 3.1 Useful Focuses in Extensive Reading

Focus	items	Strategies
Comprehension	Question type	Predicting
	Question forms	Standardised reading procedures
Sound-spelling	Regular sound-spelling correspondences	Spelling rules Free/checked vowels
Vocabulary	High frequency vocabulary Underlying meanings of words	Guessing Noting and learning on cards Word parts Dictionary use
Grammar and cohesion	High frequency grammatical features	Dealing with sources of difficulty (clause insertion, what does what?, coordination, cohesion)
Information content	Topic type constituents	Topic type
Genre	Features that typify this type of text	Generalise to writing

3. Quickly deal with or ignore infrequent items.
4. Make sure that the same items and strategies get attention in several different texts.

Topic: 024: Focuses In Intensive Reading

Intensive work on a reading text can focus on the following aspects. These will be looked at in more detail in the rest of this chapter and in other chapters in this book.

1. Comprehension. Intensive reading can aim at understanding a particular text.
2. Regular and irregular sound-spelling relations. This can be done through the teaching of phonics, through teaching spelling rules, and through reading aloud. This is covered in Chapter 2 on sounds and spelling.
3. Vocabulary. Learners' attention can be drawn to useful words, and the underlying meaning and use of these words can be explained. Words from the text could be assigned for later study.
4. Grammar. Difficult grammatical features can be explained and analysed.
5. Cohesion. Learners can practise interpreting what pronouns refer to in the text, what the conjunction relationships between sentences are, and how different words are used to refer to the same idea.
6. Information structure. Certain texts contain certain kinds of information. Newspaper reports, for example, can describe what happened, what led to the happening, what the likely effects will be, who was involved, and when and where it happened. Learners can be helped to identify these different kinds of information. This is covered in Chapter 9 on topic types.
7. Genre features. The vocabulary, grammatical features, cohesive features and information all contribute to the communicative effect of a text. Intensive reading can focus on how the text achieves its communicative purpose through these features and what this communicative purpose is.
8. Strategies. Intensive reading can be used to help learners develop useful reading strategies. By working intensively on a text, learners can practise the steps in guessing from context, using a dictionary, simplifying difficult sentences and taking notes. They can also receive training in

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integrated packages of strategies. In this chapter, strategies are included in the sections on comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and cohesion.

The discussion and explanation of the text need not be done using the first language, but use of the first language makes explanation much easier. The effect of this teaching should be to get learners to actually learn specific features or to make them aware of these so that they notice them in future reading and thus have a greater chance of learning them later.

Language-focused learning for reading can occur through intensive reading with a teacher and it can also occur through written exercises accompanying a text.

Topic: 025: Features Of Good Intensive Reading Exercise

Let us look at what a good reading exercise should do.

1. A good reading exercise directs the learners' attention to features of the text that can be found in almost any text, or to strategies for dealing with any text, with the aim "to develop in the language learner the ability to comprehend texts, not to guide him to comprehension of a text" (Davies and Widdowson, 1974: 172). To put it another way, when learners study a reading text, we want them to gain knowledge that will help them to understand tomorrow's reading text. We want them to learn things that apply to all texts. We want them to gain knowledge of the language and ways of dealing with the language rather than an understanding of a particular message. If a reading exercise does not focus on generalisable features of a text, it does not provide much opportunity for any useful, cumulative learning to take place. This requirement is particularly important for teaching reading.
2. A good reading exercise directs the learners' attention to the reading text. That is, the learners need to read the text or at least part of it in order to do the exercise. It is also important that some reading exercises require the learners to consider parts of the text in relation to their wider context, that is, other parts of the text, and information from outside the text.
3. A good reading exercise provides the teacher and the learners with useful information about the learners' performance on the exercise. If the learners were not successful on some parts of the exercise, then they should be aware of what they have to learn in order to do the exercise successfully with another text. Also, the teacher can get guidance from the learners' performance to improve teaching. Good exercises provide useful feedback for the teacher and the learners. Also, if the teacher understands what an exercise is trying to teach, they can judge the value of the exercise according to what they think is important for teaching reading.
4. A good reading exercise is easy to make. Teachers have to choose texts suited to the particular needs of their learners, and if these texts do not have satisfactory exercises, the teachers must make their own. Often teachers may want the learners to work with a textbook that is used in another discipline they are studying, and so they will have to make their own exercises. This should require a minimum of skill and time. If the preparation of language teaching materials becomes the job only of experts, then language teachers will have lost the flexibility needed for successful teaching.

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So, a good reading exercise focuses on items or strategies that apply to any text, requires the learners to read the text, provides useful feedback for the learners and the teacher, and is easy to make.

Topic: 026:Are Comprehension Questions Good For Reading Exercise? (I)

Comprehension questions in one form or other are one of the language teaching techniques most frequently used to train learners in reading. They can take many forms, namely pronominal questions, yes/no questions, true/false statements, multiple-choice items and blank-filling or completion exercises. However, although comprehension questions may have a role to play in practising reading, the various forms of reading comprehension questions are not so effective for teaching learners to read. In order to show this, let us look at comprehension questions according to the four features of a good reading exercise. After that, a variety of other reading exercises are described which may also be used in intensive reading.

The basic weakness of comprehension questions is that a simple question form can do so many things. A question can check vocabulary, sentence structure, inference, supposition, the ability to understand the question itself, and many other things. It is not always easy to decide which of these is being asked for in a particular question. Let us now evaluate comprehension questions as a type of exercise by seeing how they fit the four criteria given in the previous section.

1. Comprehension questions are local rather than general. They focus attention on the message of a particular text and, although they may require the learners to use more generalisable knowledge (like the interpretation of reference words or modal verbs), this requirement is usually hidden to the learner, and often to the teacher, by the message-focusing effect of the question. The teacher's aim should be to help the learners develop knowledge of the language and its conventions of use, and strategies, so that they can successfully deal with any text that they may meet. This knowledge of the language, however, is more difficult to gain if the learners' attention is directed not towards the language but towards the meaning or message of a particular text. The motivation to give attention to language features is different from the motivation to give attention to particular messages (George, 1972: 11). Comprehension questions say to the learners "Do you understand this passage?" whereas a good intensive reading exercise should say "Can you handle these language features which are in this passage and other passages?".
2. Generally, comprehension questions direct learners' attention to the reading text, although occasionally some questions are answerable from the learners' own experience without having to refer to the text. Comprehension questions in standardised tests are usually pre-tested to make sure that they cannot be answered without reading the text. Comprehension questions can be designed to make the learners consider more than one sentence in the text in order to find the answer.
3. As comprehension questions can do so many jobs, it is not always clear which job they are doing and thus it is difficult to get useful feedback. Munby (1968) tried to solve this problem by using very carefully constructed multiple-choice comprehension questions.

Topic-027: Are Comprehension Questions Good For Reading Exercise? (II)

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By setting carefully constructed distractors we can train [the learners] to reason their way through the linguistic and intellectual problems posed by the text. (p. xxii). . . in comprehension training we want [the learner] to recognize the areas of comprehension error (through the distractors) so that he learns to respond accurately and more maturely to what he reads. (p. xiii)

One of the most important steps in Munby's technique is discussion between the teacher and learners in order to eliminate the distractors. The value of Munby's technique is that through the discussion it becomes clear to the learners that they have made errors in comprehension and that these errors, as long as their causes are clearly identified, can be avoided by mastering recurrent language features. There are three important weaknesses in the technique. First, such comprehension questions are difficult to make. Second, such questions are clearly inefficient in terms of opportunity for learning the significance of a particular language feature. For example, there will probably be only one or two questions at the most for one text which focus attention on conjunction relationships, and so the learners will have few opportunities to master them. Third, from the learners'point of view, the most important information that they will gain from making an error is that they made the wrong choice and their interest will be in discovering what the right answer is rather than in discovering what they should do to avoid a similar error in the future. Thus comprehension questions which could give valuable feedback to the learners will be unlikely to do so, because there will always be the more immediate attraction of getting the right answer for that particular item.

4. It is difficult to make good comprehension questions. It takes considerable skill, time, and effort. Thus most teachers who wish to use such exercises will be forced to rely on often unsuitable published material.

In spite of these disadvantages, comprehension questions are useful ways of practising reading and of motivating learners to read.

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Lesson-06

TEACHING INTENSIVE EFL/ESL READING II

Topic: 028: Comprehension of the Text (I)

Typically comprehension questions are used as the major means of focusing on comprehension of the text. The learners read a text and then answer questions about the content of the text. There is a variety of question types that can be used.

Question Forms

1. **Pronominal questions** are questions beginning with who, what, when, how, why, etc.

What is a saccade? How long does a fixation take?

These questions often test writing ability as well as reading ability because the learners must write the answers. The questions can ask for one-word answers, or ask the learners to copy the answers directly from the passage. This makes them easier to mark. The learners can also answer questions using their first language. Instead of questions, commands may be used.

Explain the three kinds of eye actions.

Describe a fixation.

2. **Yes/no questions** and alternative questions only need short answers so the learners do not need to have a high level of writing skill.

Does a fixation take a longer time than a jump?

Do some words get more than one fixation?

Does every word get a fixation?

3. **True/false sentences** are similar to yes/no questions. As with yes/no questions the learners have a 50 percent chance of guessing correctly. The learners look at each sentence and decide if it is true or false according to the passage. The learners answer by writing True or False, or by copying the sentences that are true and not copying the false sentences. This last way provides an opportunity for more learning to take place.

A good reader makes about ten fixations per second.

Most jumps are from one word to another.

The learners may also be asked to rewrite the false sentences making changes so that they are now true.

Topic: 029: Comprehension of the Text (II)

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4. **Multiple-choice sentences** are easy to mark. If four choices are given, the learners have only a 25 percent chance of guessing correctly. If the questions are not well made, often the learners' chances are higher. Good multiple-choice questions are not easy to make and often they are more difficult than they should be. This is because the wrong choices must seem possible and not stupid. If they are possible then they might be partly correct.

1. A fixation

(a) takes about two-tenths of a second
(b) is about one word long
(c) is the opposite of a regression
(d) is longer in Finnish than in English

5. **Sentence completion**. The learners complete sentences by filling the empty spaces to show that they understand the reading passage. The sentences come after the reading passage. There are four different types of sentence completion.

(i) The sentences are exact copies of sentences in the passage.
(ii) The missing words can be found in the passage.
(iii) The sentences are not exactly the same as the sentences in the passage although they talk about the same idea.
(iv) The missing words are not in the passage so the learners must use their knowledge of vocabulary to fill the empty spaces. A skilled reader makes about fixations per 100 words. A skilled reader makes around fixations per minute.

The learners are helped if there is a short line for each letter of the missing word, if the first letter is given and so on.

6. **Information transfer**. The learners complete an information transfer diagram based on the information in the text (Palmer, 1982). Chapter 9 provides examples of information transfer diagrams.
7. **Translation**. The learners must translate the passage into another language. Although translation is often a special skill, it can also show areas of difficulty that the learners have in reading. It also shows clearly where the learners do not have any difficulty. It is a very searching test of understanding, but it includes other skills besides reading.
8. **Précis**. After the learners read the passage they write a short composition about one-quarter of the length of the passage containing all the main ideas that are in the passage. This is called a précis. It can be done as group work. The learners are divided into small groups. Each group makes a list of the main ideas in the passage. Then the class as a whole discusses the main points and the teacher writes them on the blackboard. Then each group writes the précis (Forrester, 1968).

Usually, a summary is made by choosing the main ideas from a text. Chambers and Brigham (1989), however, suggest a more teachable strategy, summary by deletion. This involves systematically deleting unimportant parts of the text and using what is left as the text for the summary.

The steps are:

(1) read the passage and delete all the sentences that merely elaborate the main sentences;

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(2) delete all unnecessary clauses and phrases from the main sentences;
(3) delete all unnecessary words from what remains;
(4) replace the remaining words with your own expressions;
(5) write the summary out neatly.

Topic: 030: The Focus of Comprehension Questions (I)

There have been several schemes to describe the possible focuses of comprehension questions (Tollefson, 1989; Day and Park, 2005). Typically they cover the following:

1. **Literal comprehension of the text**. This involves understanding what the text explicitly says. At their easiest, such questions could be answered by quoting parts of the text. These questions would be more demanding if the learners were not allowed to look at the text while answering the questions.
2. **Drawing inferences from the text**. This involves taking messages from the text that are not explicitly stated but which could be justified by reference to the text. This can involve working out the main idea of the text, looking at the organisation of the text, determining the writer's attitude to the topic, interpreting characters, and working out cause and effect and other conjunction relationships which might not be explicitly stated.
3. **Using the text for other purposes in addition to understanding**. This involves applying ideas from the text to solve problems, applying the ideas in the text to personal experience, comparing ideas in the text with other ideas from outside the text, imagining extensions of the text, and fitting the ideas in the text into a wider field as in a review of the literature.
4. **Responding critically to the text**. This involves considering the quality of the evidence in the text, evaluating the adequacy of the content of the text, evaluating the quality of expression and clarity of language of the text, expressing agreement or disagreement with the ideas in the text, and expressing satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the text.

The value in having a list of such focuses is that it allows teachers to check the questions they set their learners to see if they are providing a suitable range of focuses. Kraus-Srebric ˇ et al. (1981) have shown that itis possible to devise comprehension activities for young learners at different levels of challenge using Bloom et al.'s (1956) six-level taxonomy. These six levels, starting from the least demanding, involve the focuses of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, four of which are described above.

The above list of four focuses is roughly in order of difficulty and there is some evidence that more demanding questions involve deeper and more thoughtful processing and can result in more substantial language learning. Learners can also get involved in question making as the following techniques show.

Topic: 031: Comprehension of the Text (II)

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In **predicting the passage** the learners see about eight topic-related words taken from a text they are going to read. They use these words to predict what sort of text it is and what content it will contain (Rinvolucri, 1981). Learners can also be encouraged to make questions rather than statements based on some starting point. Their reading attempts to find answers to those questions. The starting point for the questions can be: (1) the title or the first sentence of the text; (2) the theme of the text; (3) the pictures which accompany the text; (4) the previous parts of the text (Henry, 1984). The first sentence of a text can be used for predicting in the following ways (Nation, 1993).

1. The first sentence is used to decide what topic type the text is likely to be (see Chapter 9 for a discussion of topic types). As topic types are based on the general content matter of texts, this allows for very rich prediction. For example, a text beginning with the sentence "For this recipe, it is better to use fish that will not break up too easily" is likely to tell you how to do something. That is, it is an example of the instruction topic type. Texts which are of the instruction topic type typically tell you what tools and ingredients are needed, what steps to follow, what to be careful about at some of the steps and what the result of following the steps will be. It is surprisingly easy to guess the likely topic type from the first sentence and thus make very useful predictions.
2. The first sentence is used to predict what conjunction relationship might exist between the first sentence and the following sentence. Appendix 2 has a list of conjunction relationships—cause and effect, time sequence, contrast, etc. Often the first sentence will give a good clue of the following conjunction that could be inserted between it and the following sentence and this can suggest the rest of the paragraph. For example, "Independent reading is an activity in which children, alone or with friends, read their own self-selected books during a set period of time each day" (Smith and Elley, 1997: 41) suggests that the next sentence(s) will amplify or provide more detail about independent reading.
3. The nouns in the first sentence are looked at to see which ones are indefinite nouns or noun groups. That is, which ones do not have specifying the, are indefinite plurals, begin with a, or are unspecified uncountable nouns. In the sentence on independent reading just quoted above, there are several indefinite noun groups—independent reading (an indefinite unaccountable noun), an activity (an indefinite countable noun with a), children, friends (indefinite plural nouns). Which of these indefinite nouns are likely to be specified or expanded on in the rest of the text?

Focusing on clues for prediction in this way applies the principle mentioned earlier, a good reading exercise directs the learners' attention to features of the text that can be found in almost any text. That is, studying today's text makes tomorrow's text easier.

Some words are written on the blackboard for the **guess the questions** activity. The learners are told that these words will be a part of questions and/or answers to questions based on the passage, but the teacher does not tell the learners what the questions will be. While the learners read they thus try to guess what the questions will be and find the answers. This is a very amusing technique and ensures a lot of close attention to the passage. When they finish reading, the teacher then gives the questions or asks the learners to tell him their guesses about the questions and asks for the answers. The teacher can either write all the suggested questions on the blackboard or just choose the questions that are the same as the ones he made. Here is an example based on the sample text on reading faster (Figure 3.1).

1. long fixation

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2. jump time

3. pattern fixation jump

After the learners have read the passage and tried to guess the questions, the teacher asks them what they thought the questions were. The teacher then puts the real questions on the board and the learners answer them.

1. How long is the average fixation?
2. Does a jump take a long time?
3. What is a typical reading pattern?

In **group questions**, the learners are divided into small groups. Each group makes some questions based on the passage. Then the groups exchange questions and answer them. The groups mark each other's work.

The learners are divided into groups for **class questions**. If the passage is quite long, it is divided into parts. Each group makes some questions for a different part. Then the teacher asks the groups, one after another, to read out their questions. They are written on the blackboard and the class discusses them. Everybody answers all the questions.

Topic: 032: Standardized Reading Procedures

There are several examples of a range of techniques and strategies which are put together in an approach that is then given its own special name. These approaches are usually more than just a collection of strategies and include principles to guide the teaching and learning, and a theory that justifies the particular approach. Some of these approaches, such as reciprocal teaching and CORI, have been the focus of experimental research.

In the **standard reading exercise**, the learners are taught a series of questions to ask that can be used with any text. These questions can be taught in the learners' first language. Usually the questions cover what are thought to be the most important reading skills, such as predicting, choosing the main points, deciding on the writer's purpose, etc. (Edge, 1985; Scott, Carioni, Zanatta, Bayer and Quintanilha, 1984; Walker, 1987).

Palincsar and Brown (1986) designed a procedure called reciprocal teaching which involved the training and use of four strategies which could be applied paragraph by paragraph to the text: (1) prediction of the content of the paragraph before reading it; (2) making questions focusing on the main idea of the paragraph; (3) summarising what has just been read; and (4) seeking clarification on difficult points in the paragraph. The set of strategies has been called "reciprocal teaching" and the idea is that the procedure is modelled by the teacher and gradually taken over by the learners working in groups, and finally learners working independently.

Concept-oriented reading instruction (CORI) is an integrated strategy approach to reading comprehension (Guthrie, 2003). It involves systematic explicit instruction in the six strategies of

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activating background knowledge, questioning, searching for information, summarising, organising graphically, and structuring stories. The strategy instruction involves working through the sequence of modelling, scaffolding, and guided practice. Strategy practice should involve a minimum of 30 minutes per day.

Topic: 033: Vocabulary

Intensive reading can be an opportunity for teachers and learners to work on vocabulary. In the broad scheme of things, vocabulary work in intensivereading should make up only a very small proportion of the vocabulary development programme. Vocabulary teaching during intensive reading needs to share the time in the language-focused learning strand of a vocabulary programme with deliberate learning using word cards, vocabulary strategy training, and vocabulary teaching not related to intensive reading. The following principles should guide attention to vocabulary in intensive reading.

1. High frequency words (words from the first 2,000 and Academic Word List) deserve sustained attention.

2. Low frequency words are best ignored or dealt with quickly.

3. The vocabulary learning strategies of guessing from context, analysing words using word parts, and dictionary use deserve repeated attention over a long period of time. These strategies can be practised with both high frequency and low frequency words.

The following options could be used during intensive reading (see Nation (2004a or 2008: Chapter 4) for a more detailed description).

Techniques for High Frequency Vocabulary

- Pre-teach a small amount of vocabulary from the passage before reading the passage. Such teaching must involve a reasonable amount of time on each word, focusing on several aspects of its form, meaning and use, such as its pronunciation, its word parts, its meaning, different senses of the word, common collocations, its grammar and any restrictions on its use, such as being technical, colloquial, impolite, etc.
- Put the word in an exercise after the text. Such exercises can include completing word family tables, matching words and meanings, classifying collocational patterns, and working out core meanings.
- Spend time on a word during the reading looking at several aspects of its form, meaning and use.
- Make a glossary before the learners read the text. The glossary is there to help learn the words.

Techniques for Low Frequency Vocabulary

- Ignore the word.

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- Quickly give the meaning of the word by using a translation, picture, diagram, demonstration, or L2 definition.
- Replace the word in the text with a more useful high frequency word before the learners work on the text. Simplifying the text aims to reduce the density of unknown words so that the text is more accessible for the learners.
- Make a glossary before the learners see the text so that the learners can see the meanings of low frequency words, thus avoiding the need to spend valuable class time on them. Here the glossary has the role of getting rid of the need to pay attention to the word.

Strategy-focused Techniques for High Frequency and Low

Frequency Vocabulary

- Help learners use context clues to guess the meaning of the word. The main goal of this is to practise and refine the guessing from context strategy.
- Help learners break a word into parts and relate the meaning of its parts to the meaning of the word. The main goal of this is to practise the word part strategy.
- Help learners use a dictionary to look up the meaning of a word and to gather extra information about the word so as to make it stay in their memory.

When the three strategies of guessing, word parts and dictionary use are practised with high frequency words, there is a bonus—a useful strategy is practised and a useful high frequency word may be learned. When the strategies are used with low frequency words, the teacher's main concern should be for the learning of the strategy (Nation, 2001).

By combining exercises that the learners have practised before, part of speech, What does what? and conjunction relationships, it is possible to guess the meanings of most new words from their context. The guessing from context strategy has five steps. They will be applied to the word fixation in the text in Figure 3.1.

- **Step 1**—Decide what part of speech the word is in the passage. (fixation is a noun)
- **Step 2**—Do the What does what? exercise with the word. If it is an adjective, for example remote, ask "What is remote?" If it is an adverb, for example cosmically, ask "What does what or what is what cosmically?" (A skilled reader makes around 95 fixations per 100 words)
- **Step 3**—See if the word is involved in any conjunction relationship. (fixation is related to When people read, and is one of three types of action)
- **Step 4**—Guess the meaning of the word. (look at something, keep looking, stop)
- **Step 5**—Check your guess by seeing that it is the same part of speech as the word in the passage, by checking for any prefixes, roots, or suffixes that will confirm your guess is correct or that might causeyou to guess again, and by substituting your guess for the word in the passage to see that it makes sense (Nation, 2001: 256–260).

This is a very useful vocabulary focused strategy.

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Lesson-07

TEACHING INTENSIVE EFL/ESL READING III

Topic: 034: Grammar Features in the Text (I)

Many learners expect grammar to get some attention in a language course. Focusing on grammar features during intensive reading provides a good opportunity to satisfy this expectation and at the same time to deal with grammar in a meaningful context. Most of the following activities involve focusing on the grammar to get a clear interpretation of a grammatically complex part of the text.

The following principles should guide attention to grammar in intensive reading.

1. High frequency grammar items deserve sustained attention. In general, such items tend to be formally simple. That is, the shorter a grammatical feature, the more frequent it is likely to be. Although frequency information about grammatical features has been around for a long time (George, 1963), it is only recently that grammar descriptions have included such information (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan, 1999).
2. Low frequency grammatical features are best given attention as part of strategies for dealing with complicated grammatical features such as subordinate clauses, coordination, and complicated noun groups. All of the following activities in this section on grammar are strategy based.

For the **part of speech activity**, the teacher chooses words from the passage and writes them with their line numbers on the blackboard. The learners find each word in the passage and say whether it is a noun, a verb, an adjective, or an adverb by writing n., v., adj., or adv. after it. The words chosen for this exercise are usually words that can be different parts of speech in different contexts. Being able to recognise the part of speech of a word in a given context has three values. First, when trying to guess the meaning of a word from the context, knowing the part of speech of the word will make sure that the meaning guessed is the same part of speech. Second, it makes looking up the word in a dictionary much easier because the meanings of words are usually classified according to the part of speech of the word. Third, if a sentence is difficult to understand, it might be because the learners are applying the wrong meaning or function to one or more of the words in the sentence. By checking the part of speech of the words the learners may be able to understand the sentence.

The What does what? exercise makes the learners look for the nounverb relationships that are often not clearly seen because of the word order of a passage. The learners need to ask themselves the question “What does what?” or “What is what?” in order to see these relationships. The exercise becomes more difficult if the subject or object of a verb is separated from the verb by a clause, or if the verb is acting as a noun or adjective.

The teacher chooses verbs, or words related to verbs, from the passage and writes the list of words with line numbers on the blackboard. The learners find these words in the passage and write the subjects and objects (if any) of the words according to the passage. All the verbs should be written as active verbs.

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Independent reading is an activity in which children, alone or with friends, read their own self-selected books during a set period of time each day. It is similar to the recreational reading done by adults, and provides a time for children to enjoy reading and to practice the skills learned in guided reading sessions. (Smith and Elley, 1997: 41)

The exercise usually takes this form.

(line 2) read

(line 2) select

(line 4) provide

(line 4) enjoy

(line 4) practise

When learners write their answers, they must not use passives (they must make them active) and reference words like it, he, they, this must be replaced by what they refer to. So, to do the second item select above, the learners need to answer children select their own books. This exercise is very easy for the teacher to make, makes the learners look closely at the text, and is a useful way of focusing on features like nominalisation, clauses occurring after the subject, and coordination which can make reading difficult. **What does what**? can be a good substitute for comprehension questions.

The **coordination activity** involves simplifying sentences. Often when there is and, but, or or in a sentence, there are two parts of the sentence that are similar to each other and these parts may relate to some common part of the sentence. So in the sentence The Earth is a planet just under 8,000 miles in diameter, moving round the Sun at a distance of 93,000,000 miles, and completing one circuit in 365¼ days, moving around the sun at a distance of 93,000,000 miles and completing one circuit in 365¼ days are parallel. They both relate to the common part The Earth is a planet just under 8,000 miles in diameter. So, the sentence can be rewritten as twoseparate sentences, The Earth is a planet just under 8,000 miles in diameter, moving round the Sun at a distance of 93,000,000 miles and The Earth is a planet just under 8,000 miles in diameter completing one circuit in 365¼ days. Where the items joined by and, but, or or are short, it is not worth rewriting the sentence when answering the exercise. Instead, the similar parts can be underlined and numbered.

The teacher writes the line numbers of and, but or or on the whiteboard, for example:

(line 20) and

The learners have to mark the parallel parts or rewrite the sentence as two or more sentences. If learners find the exercise difficult, it can be broken into the following steps.

1. Find and, but or or.
2. Look at what follows.
3. Find a similar part of speech in front of and, but or or.
4. Decide what part of the sentence (if any) the similar parts relate to.
5. Rewrite the sentence so that each sentence contains the common part plus one of the similar parts.

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This exercise is one step in the strategy of simplifying complicated sentences.

Topic: 035: Grammar Features In The Text (Ii)

Simplifying noun groups, like the coordination activity, involves looking for the essence of a sentence. Noun groups containing items following the headword of the group add considerably to the difficulty of a sentence. Here are some examples from the sample text on reading speed. The headword in the noun group has been underlined.

Three types of action

movements back to an item already looked at

anitem already looked at

the maximum number of letters that can be seen clearly in one fixation

This exercise teaches the learners to find these parts and thus makes it easier to see the overall plan of the sentence. The learners number the items following the headword simply to make themselves conscious of the forms these items can take so that they will recognise them more readily. This exercise is one step in simplifying sentences. It is also useful for understanding reference words because once the head noun referred to has been found, it is still necessary to find the beginning and end of that noun group.

The teacher chooses the headwords of noun groups from the passage and writes the list of headwords with line numbers on the whiteboard.

(line 1) types

(line 1) fixations

(line 3) movements

(line 13) number

(line 17) average

The learners find these words in the passage, circle them, and draw a bracket "(" at the beginning of the noun group and another bracket ")" at the end. If the noun group contains words which come after the headword, the learners show what form these following words take by writing a number according to the list given below. Here are the seven kinds of items that may typically follow the headword of a noun group, with examples. The headword has been underlined and the following items are in italics.

1. a preposition + a noun (their own special points of interest)
2. who, that, which etc. + a clause (the only two planets which do not appear overwhelmingly hostile)
3. stem + ing (a planet . . . completing one circuit in 365 days)

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4. stem + ed (a contact lens manufactured to a preconceived formula)
5. to + stem (the first contact lenses to enjoy wide use amongst the general public)
6. a noun in apposition (our one natural satellite, the moon)
7. an adjective (the stars visible at night-time)

A Sentence Simplification Strategy

By combining exercises that they have practised before, **reference words, coordination, simplifying noun groups**, and **What does what?**learners can simplify sentences that seem to be too complicated for them to understand. The strategy has four steps.

- **Step 1**—Find the reference words in the difficult sentence and find what they refer to.
- **Step 2**—Rewrite the sentences as two or more sentences by removing and, but, or or.
- **Step 3**—Find the nouns and remove the items following the nouns which are a part of each noun group.
- **Step 4**—Do the What does what? exercise with the verbs to make sure their subjects and objects are known.

The learners should memorise the steps of this strategy so they can apply it whenever they meet a difficult sentence.

If the sentence Of course, the nearest to us are Mars, which may approach the Earth to within 35,000,000 miles, and Venus, which has a minimum distance from us of only about 24,000,000 miles. was simplified according to these steps, the result would be

Topic: 036: Cohesive Devices (I)

The classic text on cohesion is Halliday and Hasan (1976) Cohesion in English. Their categorisation of the major cohesive devices is the model for the following activities. The arguments for focusing on cohesive devices are that they occur in every text so the learning from one text should readily transfer to the reading of another text, and that they focus learners' attention on the message of the text at a level beyond the sentence level. Cohesion involves the devices of reference words, substitution and ellipsis, comparison, conjunction relationships, and lexical cohesion. Exercises focusing on cohesive devices are easy to make and the discussion of the answers can lead to useful insights into language use that can have positive effects on both reading and writing.

Reference Words and Substitutes

Reference words include words like he, she, his, her, this, that, these, those, it, its, and which. Substitutes consist of so, one(s), the same and not. For the purpose of this reading exercise it is not necessary to distinguish between reference and substitution although Halliday and Hasan (1976: Chapters 2 and 3) have shown that there are important differences between them. This exercise helps learners recognise some of the signals that show that a sentence is related to something that has been mentioned elsewhere in the text.

Each reference word or substitute has its own grammar and when learners have difficulty understanding these words in a context, this grammar should be used as the basis for preparation before

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the exercise, and for discussion when marking. Their, for example, can only refer to plural nouns or two or more related singular nouns. This can refer to singular nouns, to a phrase, a clause, or a group of clauses or sentences. He usually refers to a singular, male person. They cannot have singular reference. The exercise can take this form. The teacher writes the reference word on the blackboard with its line number next to it (see Figure 3.1, page 31).

it (line 7)

these (line 10)

this (line 13)

The learners copy their answer from the text and give the line number of their answer. The learners can check their answers by making sure the grammar of their answer agrees with the grammar of the reference word and by substituting the words referred to for the reference word to see thatthe sentence containing the reference word makes sense. The exercise on noun groups in the grammar section of this chapter helps with this exercise because often the reference word refers to a noun plus other items in the noun group. The exercise may also be done as a multiple-choice exercise (Mackay and Mountford, 1976).

Ellipsis

Ellipsis occurs when something which is structurally necessary is left unsaid. What is left unsaid is usually recoverable from a previous part of the passage. Ellipsis is very common in dialogue but it is also found in some written texts, as in the following example.

Most words are fixated on, but function words much less often than content words.

Exercises on ellipsis help learners make sense of sentences by giving them practice in recovering the missing parts. The easiest type of exercise tells the learner where there is ellipsis.

(line 6) What happens less often?

The exercise can also take the form of a question. What is missing from this sentence? Rewrite the sentence as a complete sentence.

Ellipsis can also occur when two clauses are coordinated with and. The beginning of the second clause may be left out because it is the same as the beginning of the first clause. Here is an example.

It is similar to the recreational reading done by adults, and provides a time for children to enjoy reading and to practice the skills learned in guided reading sessions (Smith and Elley, 1999: 41).

Topic: 037: Cohesive Devices (II)

Halliday and Hasan (1976) include much of comparison under reference. Words used in comparison include same, similar, identical, equal, different, other, additional, else, likewise, so, more, fewer, less, adjectives or adverbs + -er. Often comparison between sentences and this type of exercise

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helps the learners understand the passage by helping them to see what is being compared. The exercise can take this form.

others. Other than what?

farther than what?

smaller, thinner, and lighter than what?

In another form, the comparison word with its line number is written on the blackboard. The learners write the two things that are compared.

Conjunction Relationships

Signals of conjunction like and, namely, but, in spite of this, relate sentences or parts of sentences to each other. Generally speaking, they show "the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before" (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 227). The list of types of conjunction relationships in Appendix 2 is complete enough for teaching reading. Knowing about conjunction relationships has five useful effects.

1. It helps the learners to see how ideas in a passage are related to each other and to discover the effect of a statement on other parts of the text.
2. It helps in finding the meanings of words in context. If, for example, an unknown word occurs in the effect clause of a cause–effect relationship, then it is possible to find the meaning of that word because the effect can be guessed from the cause.
3. It is important in finding the main idea in a paragraph. Effects are usually more important than causes. The second item in a contrast is more important than the first. The weightings in column 4 in Appendix 2 show this.
4. It helps in learning new connectives. For example, moreover signals the inclusion relationship. Knowing this simplifies learning the meaning of moreover.
5. It helps in predicting what will come in a passage.

Exercises on conjunction may draw attention to the signals of conjunction which include: conjunctions so, because, while; adverbs firstly, however, alternatively; verbs cause, follow, exemplify; preposition groups and other forms. However, many sentences are in a conjunction relationship which is not formally signalled at all. Thus it is the relationship between the two clauses which is most important and which should be given most attention. Here are three types of conjunction exercise in increasing order of difficulty (see Figure 3.1, page 31 for the text).

1. Because (line 20) signals a cause-effect relationship. What is the cause? What is the effect?
2. Find the following words in the passage. Say what relationship each one signals and find the two related parts.
   When (line 1)
   but (line 5)
   thus (line 21)
3. What relationship occurs in lines 5–6? What is the signal, if any? What are the two parts?

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Lexical Cohesion

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 278) distinguish repetition, synonyms, near synonyms, superordinates, and general words. These are all used to refer to exactly the same item in the passage. Thus, in a passage about Thomas Telford, he is referred to as Tom, their son, the baby, the boy, Thomas. Obviously it is important for the reader to realise that a change in the noun used does not necessarily mean a change in the person being referred to.

1. What does all (line 17) in the passage (Figure 3.1) refer to?
2. What different words are used in the passage to refer to words?

Topic: 038: Genre Features

Intensive reading is a good opportunity for making learners aware of how the various vocabulary, grammatical, cohesive, formatting, and ideas content aspects of a text work together to achieve the communicative purpose of the text. A useful introduction to this is the predicting activity where learners use the topic and first sentence to predict what a text will be about. Here is an example from Nation (1993). The title of the text is Limestone Caves, and the first sentence is "Limestone is just one of the many kinds of rocks found in New Zealand". To predict what will occur in the following text, the learners can draw on several generalisable systems of knowledge. These include features that we have looked at earlier in this chapter— grammatical features (particularly verb forms and noun groups), conjunction relationships, and topic types. Here is how it can be done. The first sentence mentioned above contains the verb is which is present tense. This suggests it is likely to be about a general description rather than a particular event.

The first sentence contains indefinite noun groups, that is, noun groups without the definite article the or some other specifier. These nouns are limestone and rocks. One or both of these indefinite noun groups is likely to be described in detail in the following text, probably limestone. We could also ask what kind of conjunction relationship is likely to exist between the first sentence and the following sentence. If we look at the list in Appendix 2, the most likely candidate is amplification. That is sentence 2 and perhaps the rest of the passage will give us more detail about something in the first sentence. The third system of knowledge we can use for predicting is topic type (see Chapter 9). This text seems likely to tell us what something is like. The title Limestone Caves (an indefinite noun group) indicates that. So it is likely to be an example of the characteristics topic type. The characteristics topic type includes the features of the thing described of them (limestone caves), proof that some of the features exist such as examples, the general category that the thing fits into, and otherinformation about the thing. We should thus expect at least some of these kinds of information to occur in the paragraph or text.

Topic: 039: Handling Exercises and Role of Teaching Exercises

Handling the Exercises

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Most of the exercises described in this chapter have one important feature in common. They do not require specially constructed or adapted texts. They can be applied to any texts that the teacher has or to texts that the learners use in their study of other subjects. Moreover, the exercises do not require a large amount of preparation. The exercises can be written up quickly on the blackboard and the learners can use some type of coding system to mark them on their texts, underlining for reference words, a box around a word for part of speech, and so on.

Each exercise is like a test, but it should be clear to the learners what feature they are looking at and the significance of this feature for reading. Each exercise requires certain types of knowledge which can be specified. Thus, when learners make an error, or before they do the exercise, the teacher or the learners in groups can go through the knowledge needed to do the exercise.

The Role of Teaching Exercises

The focus in this chapter has been on language-focused learning activities that teach rather than just provide practice. Exercises that teach are used in the belief that through such teaching, learning will be faster and more sure. Such exercises have an obvious value where time is short or where learners have not succeeded in learning to read well by other methods. But these exercises are not a substitute for practice. It is very important that learners should have the opportunity to gain meaning-focused input through reading plenty of material that does not contain too many unknown or difficult items. This meaning-focused input material provides the learners with experience in reading and allows them to apply what they have learned in other parts of the reading course.

They should also have the opportunity to work with very easy material so that they can develop fluency in reading. These two points are taken up in the following chapter on extensive reading.

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Lesson-08

TEACHING EXTENSIVE READING I

Topic: 040: Introduction Extensive Reading

Extensive reading fits into the meaning-focused input and fluency development strands of a course, depending on the level of the books that the learners read. When the books contain only a few unknown vocabulary and grammar items, extensive reading provides the conditions for meaningfocused input. Where the books are very easy ones with virtually no unknown items, extensive reading provides the conditions for fluency development.

This chapter examines the research on graded readers to draw up a set of guidelines for setting up and managing extensive reading programmes. These guidelines involve understanding the type of learning that can occur through such reading, determining learners' existing vocabulary knowledge, having interesting and engaging books, getting learners to do large quantities of reading, and making sure that the learning from reading is supported by other kinds of learning. In order to meet the conditions needed for learning from extensive reading at a variety of levels of proficiency, it is essential to make use of simplified texts.

Reading is a source of learning and a source of enjoyment. It can be a goal in its own right and a way of reaching other goals. As a source of learning, reading can establish previously learned vocabulary and grammar, it can help learners learn new vocabulary and grammar, and through success in language use it can encourage learners to learn more and continue with their language study. As a goal in its own right, reading can be a source of enjoyment and a way of gaining knowledge of the world. As learners gain skill and fluency in reading, their enjoyment can increase.

However, because of the nature of reading and learning from reading, a reading development programme will benefit from careful planning and monitoring. There are two major language-based reasons for this. First, reading requires considerable knowledge and skill. This knowledge includes recognizing the letters and words of the language, having a large vocabulary and substantial grammatical and textual knowledge, being able to bring knowledge of the world to the reading task, and developing a degree of fluency with the reading skill. Second, learning through extensive reading is largely incidental learning, that is, the learners' attention is focused on the story not on items to learn. As a result, learning gains tend to be fragile and thus it is important to have quantity of input with substantial opportunities for vocabulary repetition.

This quantity of input needs to be close to 500,000 running words per year, which is equivalent to 25 graded readers a year, or one and a half substantial first year university textbooks, or six unsimplified novels. This needs to continue over several years. In the following discussion of planning and running an extensive reading programme, we will look at the conditions for learning that need to exist, the quantities of text that learners need to read, how to keep learners motivated, and the principles that teachers should follow in running the programme. The chapter is organised around a set of guidelines for planning a programme.

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Topic: 041: Understand the Goals and Limitations of Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is a form of learning from meaning-focused input. During extensive reading learners should be interested in what they are reading and should be reading with their attention on the meaning of the text rather than on learning the language features of the text. Extensive reading can occur within class time (Elley and Mangubhai, 1981), or outside class time. In their very useful survey of extensive reading, Day and Bamford (1998) characterise extensive reading as involving a large quantity of varied, self-selected, enjoyable reading at a reasonably fluent speed.

There is now plenty of evidence (Elley, 1991) that reading can result in a variety of substantial proficiency gains. However, it is important to note that these gains require considerable time and effort. In their classic study of extensive reading, Elley and Mangubhai (1981) had 8 to 10-year-old learners read in class time for no more than 30 minutes per day each school day for almost eight months. The results were remarkable with learners making the equivalent of 15 months' gain in eight months. However, the time involved was substantial, but not beyond the means of an English as a foreign language situation.

In a study of learners reading a single graded reading text, Waring and reading.

Takaki (2003) used vocabulary tests at three levels of difficulty (Which of these words did you meet in the text?, a multiple-choice test, and a translation test) to measure vocabulary learning. The three tests all involved the same 25 words. These three tests represented different levels of vocabulary knowledge. On the word form recognition test, the learners scored 15.3 out of 25, on the multiple-choice test 10.6, and on the translation test 4.6. These results show that only a small number of words (4.6 out of 25) were learned well, but a much larger number (up to 15 out of 25) had taken a useful step towards being known. Further meetings with these words should strengthen and enrich this knowledge. The Waring and Takaki study included a delayed post-test which showed that over a period of time without further reinforcement, the vocabulary gains from reading were gradually lost. It is thus important to make sure that there are repeated opportunities to meet the same vocabulary in reading, and these repeated opportunities should not be delayed too long. Teachers considering setting up an extensive reading programme should understand very clearly that such a programme needs to involve large amounts of reading and needs to continue for a long time. If this happens, the results will be impressive.

Topic: 042: Finding Learners' Present Vocabulary Level

Extensive reading can only occur if 95 to 98 percent of the running words in a text are already familiar to the learner or are no burden to the learner (Hu and Nation, 2000). Hu and Nation investigated learners' comprehension of a fiction text at different levels of known word density. Where only 80 percent of the running words were known, no learners gained adequate comprehension. Where 90 or 95 percent of the words were known, a few learners gained adequate comprehension but the majority did not. The degree of comprehension was predictable from the density of unknown words and the optimum density was 98 percent. That is, no more than two words in every 100 running words should be unfamiliar to the reader. This estimate is probably conservative because research with native speakers (Carver, 1994) indicates that a density of 99 percent is preferable for meaning-focused input. If we relate these densities to the vocabulary size needed to read an unsimplified fiction text, we find that learners would need a

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vocabulary of 9,000 words to read novels written for adults (Nation, 2006). The clear message from this is that for learners of English to do extensive reading at the elementary and intermediate stages of proficiency, it is essential that they read graded readers that have been specially prepared for learners of English. It is only by reading such texts that learners can have the density of known words that is essential for extensive reading.

Graded readers typically cover a range of levels beginning at around300–500 words and going to around 2,000–2,500 words. For example, there are six vocabulary levels in the Oxford Bookworms series.

Level	New words	Cumulative words
1	400	400
2	300	700
3	300	1,000
4	400	1,400
5	400	1,800
6	700	2,500

In order to know at what level learners should begin reading, it is useful to measure their receptive vocabulary size. This involves measuring their knowledge of the most frequent 2,000 words of English. The test developed by Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham (2001) provides a means of doing this. There are also very useful bilingual vocabulary tests which can be used to do this (see the Vocabulary Resource Booklet at http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/ staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx).

Topic: 043: Providing Plenty of Interesting and Appropriate Reading Texts

We have looked briefly at the Oxford Bookworms series. This is an excellent and well established series of graded readers with many interesting titles. However, it is only one of many series of readers that are available (see Hill, 1997, 2001; Thomas and Hill, 1993; Hill and Thomas, 1988 and 1989 for reviews). Hill (in Day and Bamford, 1998) says that there are around 1,650 graded readers in print. These are in over 40 different series. Unfortunately, the levels in these series are not identical with each other in the number of levels, the amount of vocabulary at each level, nor the vocabulary lists on which they are based. This is not as serious as it sounds. There seems to be quite a big overlap between the vocabulary covered in the differentseries, and any particular reader can only make use of some of the words available at a particular level.

It is thus not important to stick to only one series of graded readers. It is much better to choose titles from any of the available series that are interesting and well written. Hill (in Day and Bamford, 1998) provides a very useful list of what he considers to be the best graded readers and this is a very valuable starting point in building a collection of graded readers. As there is no recent report of what

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learners enjoy most, it is worth collecting data on this. The Extensive Reading Foundation website (http://www.erfoundation.org/) is also an excellent source of award-winning graded reader titles.

If an extensive reading programme is to be successful, it must providebooks that learners are interested in reading or that will develop their interest in reading. Teachers' judgements of books are likely to be different from learners' judgements of books, and learners' judgements should get priority.

Topic: 044: Setting, Encouraging and Monitoring Large Quantities of Extensive Reading

Research on the vocabulary covered by different numbers of graded readers (Nation and Wang, 1999) suggests that learners need to read many books in order to gain control of the high frequency words of English, preferably at the rate of a graded reader every one or two weeks. There are several techniques and procedures that can be used to motivate learners to do this and to keep a record of their reading.

In an extensive reading program, reading should be the main activity and other activities should occupy only a very small proportion of the time so that time is not taken away from reading. For this reason, most extensive reading programs do not require learners to do elaborate comprehension tests or exercises on the books they read. Generally, learners are simply required to fill out a short record form indicating the name of the book they have just read, its level, the date, how long it took to read, and a brief comment on the quality of the book (Was it a good story? Would you recommend it to others?). Twelve or more of these short report forms can be printed on one piece of A4 paper, allowing the learner and teacher to see at a glance how much has been read over what period of time.

Additional activities to motivate reading may take a bit more time. There may be a slip of paper in the back of each book for learners to record their opinion of the book. Other learners considering whether to choose to read this book could look at this slip of paper to see what others thought of it.

Oral book reports involve a learner presenting a commentary on a book to the class or a reading group. The idea behind such reports is not to give away the story of the book but to encourage others to read it. These reports can follow a set format covering questions like what was the name of the book, what type of story was it (a mystery, a love story, etc.), where and when was it set, was it enjoyable, who would like to read it?

Discussion groups can bring learners together who have already all read the same book. Such a group should consist of four or five learners. As a result of their discussion, they may prepare an oral book report or a written review to present to others in the class. They then decide what book they will discuss at their next meeting.

The Extensive Reading Foundation has been set up to recognize quality in the production of graded readers. Awards are given to the best books each year just like the Oscars for movies.

After the extensive reading program has been running for some time, learners can vote on what they thought were the best books they read. Labels can be stuck on the front of the winning books to indicate that they are well worth reading.

As well as books getting awards, learners can get awards for the quantity of reading that they do. After reading five books an award can be given, and after ten a further award, and so on. The way books

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are displayed can encourage reading. Publishers now try to make graded readers as attractive as possible with colorful covers sometimes showing a scene from the movie based on the book. Displays can be arranged to show the different types of stories, the range of levels, new books, and books that have won awards or have been highly recommended.

The aim of all these activities is to keep learners excited about reading and wanting to read more.

Topic: 045: Supporting and Supplementing Extensive Reading

Language-focused Learning and Fluency Development

An extensive reading program is only one part of a language course. Teachers need to make sure that other parts of the course are supporting extensive reading and that extensive reading is supporting other parts of the course.

One of the most useful ways in which the course can support extensive reading is by providing training in reading faster. A speed reading program involves the learners reading texts that are well within their language knowledge; that is, they contain no unknown vocabulary or grammatical features. Their reading of each text is timed, and their speed and comprehension scores are recorded on graphs so that learners can easily see their progress and are encouraged to increase their reading speed. Properly designed courses are usually very successful with most learners soon doubling their speed. A good reading speed is around 250 words per minute. Most learners without training read at less that 100 words per minute. The essential requirements for such a course are: (1) easy texts (Quinn, Nation and Millett, 2007; Millett, 2005 Books 1 and 2; Nation and Malarcher, 2007); (2) regular practice (about three times a week); and (3) a push to read faster (see Chapter 5).

One way an extensive reading program can contribute to proficiency development is through vocabulary growth. This can be encouraged in extensive reading by making the vocabulary learning more deliberate and less incidental. Care needs to be taken, however, that this vocabulary learning goal does not overshadow reading for pleasure. Here are some brief suggestions that may boost vocabulary learning from extensive reading.

1. Before reading a text, the learner quickly skims it and selects five or six words to focus on while reading. This has the effect of raising consciousness about some words and thus making them more noticeable when they are met again in the text.
2. While reading the learner can collect new words that are repeated in the text to put on word cards for later deliberate study.
3. A more formal follow up to this is for learners to report to the class on a word that they met while reading—explaining what it means, how it was used in the text, its word parts, its etymology, and any unusual features about it.
4. The use of a dictionary while reading should also have positive effects (Knight, 1994), although this tends to increase the time it takes to read a text (Hulstijn, 1993).

After reading a graded reader, the learner can spend a few minutes reflecting on new words that were met in the book and looking back in the book to revise them.

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Vocabulary learning and reading are helped if the learners are good at guessing the meanings of unknown words from context clues. Guessing from context is a trainable strategy and it is worth spending a few minutes on it each week. There are several ways of practicing the strategy, but all require a text where there is not a heavy density of unknown words. Typically, the teacher should model the procedure for the learners, then work together with the learners on some items, then get the learners working together in pairs and eventually working individually.

A **deductive guessing** procedure involves the learners making a guess at the meaning of an unknown word in a text and then justifying their guesses. This involves a discussion of the various available clues.

An **inductive guessing** procedure involves looking at the available clues—the part of speech of the unknown word, its immediate context, and the relationship between the clause with the unknown word and the adjoining clauses (for a detailed description, see Nation, 2001; Nation, 2008). It is worth spending small amounts of time over several weeks or months on practicing guessing because it is a very powerful and useful strategy.

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Lesson-09

TEACHING EXTENSIVE READING II

Topic: 046: Helping Learners Move Systematically through Graded Reading

Reader Levels

Research on the occurrence of vocabulary in graded readers can provide useful guidelines for planning such reading. Nation and Wang (1999), in a detailed study of 42 graded readers in the Oxford Bookworms series, reached the following conclusions, considering only the aim of vocabulary learning.

1. Learners should read at least one graded reader every week, no matter what level they are reading at. This rate of reading allows unknown vocabulary to be repeated before the immediately previous occurrence is forgotten.
2. Learners should read at least five books at a level (say Level 2) before moving to books at the next level (Level 3). This number of books provides a chance for most of the vocabulary introduced at that level to occur.
3. Learners should read more books at the later levels than the earlier. This is because the vocabulary of the earlier levels occurs very frequently in the books at the later levels. Books at the later levels thus provide good conditions for learning all the vocabulary of the graded reader series.
4. Learners should read at least 15–20 and preferably 30 readers in a year. This number of graded readers provides plenty of repetition for the vocabulary and provides the opportunity to meet most of the vocabulary several times. A programme where learners read only three or four graded readers per year is not an extensive reading programme.
5. Learners should work their way through the levels of graded readers as the later levels provide excellent conditions for establishing the vocabulary of the earlier levels.
6. Learners may need to study directly the new vocabulary at the earlier levels or at least make use of a dictionary when starting to read books at a particular level. This is because the density of unknown vocabulary tends to be a little higher at the earlier levels.

Extensive reading programmes do not run as neatly as the guidelines described above. Learners often choose books according to their appeal without considering the level of the reader. So they may read a Level 2 reader, then a Level 5 reader, then a Level 3 reader, and so on. This does not matter too much as long as plenty of enjoyable reading is done. An extensive reading programme needs to have a fluency strand (where learners read very easy texts quickly) and a meaning-focused input strand (where learners read with around 98 percent coverage). It also does not hurt if there is occasional language-focused learning through extensive reading where learners struggle through an interesting but difficult text. Moving around the levels provides these different levels of opportunities for learning. Some learners begin reading with enthusiasm and then stall when they see that the reading takes time and effort. Some learners have great trouble getting started. Others read very slowly and laboriously and are reluctant to increase their reading speed. All of these problems have solutions andteachers need to monitor learners' progress carefully by looking at their record sheets, observing them while they are reading, and talking with them individually about their goals, progress and problems. When learners are not enthusiastic

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readers, it helps initially to make extensive reading part of the programme during class time, with the teacher ensuring that the reading is done. When learners become hooked on reading, it can then be set as an out-of-class activity.

Topic: 047: Simplified and Unsimplified Texts

For some teachers and researchers, graded readers are seen as being inauthentic, watered-down versions of richer original texts. Vocabulary simplification is also seen to result in more complicated grammar as what could be neatly expressed in one word is now expressed in several simpler words. These criticisms are largely true of the poorest quality graded readers but there are many of high quality (Day and Bamford, 1998). Publishers and editors of graded readers would say that the most convincing argument in favour of graded readers is that there are numerous interesting well-written books, many of them not simplifications but original language-learner literature. This is undoubtedly true. From a vocabulary learning perspective, however, the most convincing argument is that the vocabulary control required by the graded reader schemes results in texts where there are very few low frequency words and the high frequency words of the language get plenty of repetition. As a contrast, let us compare a simplified version of Dracula (written within a 700-word vocabulary at Level 2 of the Oxford Bookworms series) and the original version (Nation and Deweerdt, 2001). Table 4.1 shows that the books differ greatly in length. The simplified version is much shorter than the original. The coverage by the first two thousand words and proper nouns shows how accessible each book would

Table 4.1A Comparison of the Vocabulary in the Simplified and Original Versions of Dracula

	Simplified version	**Original**
Length of the books	7,957 words	161425 words
Percentage coverage by the first 2,000 words of English plus proper nouns	98.6%	92.8%
Total word families	556	5.640
Number of word families not in the first 2,000 occurring only once in the book	19	3038

be for a learner with a limited vocabulary. Proper nouns are included because these do not need to be known before reading the text. Coverage of 98.6% means that there is just over one unknown word in every 100. Coverage of 92.8% means that there are just over seven unknown words in every 100, or almost one in every line of the text. This is a heavy vocabulary load.

The total number of word families in the book is another indication of how accessible the book would be to a learner with a limited vocabulary. This figure is directly affected by the different lengths of the books, but even if the lengths were the same, the number of word families in the simplified version would be much less than in the original (the first 7,957 running words of the original Dracula contains 1,435 word families). The most striking contrast, however, is in the number of words occurring only once in the books. The original version has a very large number and when we look at the kinds of words that make up this number, it is easy to see how difficult and unrewarding it would be for an elementary or intermediate language learner to try to read such books. Here are some of the 3,038 words that only occur once in the original of Dracula—solicitude, therapeutics, physiognomy, mundane, lugubrious. If these words were looked up in a dictionary while reading, they would not help with later parts of the text

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because they occur only once. They are also likely to be forgotten before they are met again in other texts. Eventually, advanced learners may need to learn these words, but they should be learned when the more useful high frequency words are already very well known. Unsimplified texts have a very heavy vocabulary load and, for the purposes of extensive reading, do not set up the conditions needed for successful learning from meaningfocused input. Dracula, in spite of its age, is typical of other unsimplified texts, including recent unsimplified texts written for teenagers.

Topic: 048: Various Ways of Supporting Extensive Reading

Not all texts for extensive reading need to be simplified texts as there are other ways of helping with the vocabulary load of extensive reading. These include glossing, computer-assisted reading, and elaborating.

Glossing

Glossing involves providing the meanings of words in L1 or in a simple L2 definition in the margin next to the line containing an unknown word. Some glossaries come at the end of a text, but learners prefer glosses near the unknown word, probably because these do not disrupt reading too much. In Japan, some English texts are printed with translations in a lighter type above the low frequency word in the text. Glosses may contribute tovocabulary learning and may improve comprehension of the text, although the research on this is not conclusive. Glosses are an alternative to dictionary use and are generally less disruptive than dictionaries. Using dictionaries while reading usually adds considerably to the time taken to complete reading the text. There is renewed interest in research on glossing as a result of the growth in computer-assisted reading.

Computer-assisted Reading

One of the best computer-assisted reading programs can be found on Tom Cobb's website www.lextutor.ca. Look under the heading Read with resources. The learner pastes in a text, clicks build, and then starts reading. By clicking once on a word, a spoken form of the word can be heard. By clicking twice, several concordance examples appear. These additional contexts can help with guessing the word's meaning from context clues. By clicking on a dictionary link, the word can be looked up in one of several possible dictionaries. To make use of this program texts need to be in computer-readable form, but there are now thousands of such texts on the web—out of copyright classics at project gutenberg (http:// www.gutenberg.org/catalog/), and newspapers at the internet public library. Such support effectively individualises intensive reading, allowing learners to seek help of various kinds where it is needed in a speedy way that does not take the learners too far away from the text. There is now a growing body of research supporting the use of concordances, electronic dictionary look-up and hypertext glossing (Cobb, Greaves and Horst, 2001; Cobb, 1997) as aids to vocabulary learning and reading.

Elaboration

Elaboration involves the rewriting of texts but it involves adding to the original text rather than removing or replacing what is there. The unknown words in the text are, in effect, glossed in the text itself. Here is an example of a piece of elaborated text from the novel Lord Jim. I have put the

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elaborations in italics and the words outside the 2,000 word level in bold, but in the text they would not be marked in any way. Note that apparelled is not elaborated as the text provides enough elaboration for this word.

He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop or bend of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging animal like a bull. His voice was deep, loud, and his manner displayed a kind of dogged self-assertion, that is always saying things ina strong way, which had nothing aggressive (like attacking someone) in it. It seemed a necessity, that is, it was something he needed, and it was directed apparently as much at himself as at anybody else. He was spotlessly neat, apparelled in beautifully immaculate white from shoes to the hat on his head, and in the various eastern ports where he got his living as ship-chandler's water-clerk he was very popular. A ship-chandler provides supplies for ships, and a clerk works for the chandler.

Although there are no published elaborated texts available, there have been several pieces of research looking at the effect of this elaboration (Chung, 1995; Parker and Chaudron, 1987; Yano, Long and Ross, 1994; Kim, 2006). In general, this research shows that elaborated text seems to work about as well as simplified text.

Topic: 049: The Extensive Reading Program

This discussion of guidelines for an extensive reading programme has focused mainly on learning conditions and research and has not given attention to more practical factors such as how to organise and manage a library of graded readers, how to obtain graded readers, and how many are needed to set up a library. These issues are well covered in Day and Bamford (1998). The main purpose of this chapter is to convince teachers that it is worthwhile setting up an extensive reading programme, making it a substantial, obligatory part of a course, and persisting with it in an organised way. The results of such programmes (Elley, 1991; Waring and Takaki, 2003) are impressive.

Note

This chapter is a revised and updated version of an article entitled "Planning and running an extensive reading programme" published in NUCB Journal of Language Culture and Communication 3, 1, 2001, pp 1–8. It is reprinted here with the editor's permission.

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Lesson-10

ISSUES IN EXTENSIVE READING

Topic: 050: Extensive Reading and the Choice of Materials

What is extensive reading?

According to Carrel and Carson(1997, pp. 49-50), "extensive reading… generally involves rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer readings (e.g., whole books) for general understanding, with the focus generally on the meaning of what is being read than on the language." although this definition provides an overview of ER, Davis (1995, p. 329) offers one description of ER from ELT classroom implementation perspective:

An extensive reading prograame is supplementary class library scheme, attached to an English course, in which pupils are given the time, encouragement, and materials to read pleasurably, at their own level, as many books as they can, without the pressure of testing or marks. Thus, pupils are competing only against themselves, and it is up to the teacher to provide the motivation and monitoring to ensure that the maximum number of books is being read in the time available. The watchwords are quantity and variety, rather than quality, so that books are selected for their attractiveness and relevance to the pupil's lives, rather than for literary merit.

Although ER programs come under th different names, including Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), Silent Uninterrupted Reading Fun (SURF), and the Bokk Flood Approach (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983), they all share a common purpose, that learners read large quantities of books and other material in an environment that nurtures a lifelong reading habbit. In addition, these programs share a common belief that the ability to read fluently is best achieved through a instructional program that emphasizes reading extensively in the language.

ER differs from intensive reading. In intensive reading, students normally work with short texts with close guidance from the teacher. The aim of intensive reading is to help students obtain detailed meaning from the text, to develop reading skills-such as identifying main ideas and recognizing text connectors-and to enance vocabulary and grammar knowledge. It is important to note that these two approaches to teaching reading-intensive and extensive reading-should not be seen as being in opposition, as both serve different but complementary purposes (Carrel and Carson, 1997; Nuttall, 1996).

What are the characteristics of successful ER programs? The following characteristics are generally thought to be among the most important (Bamford and Day, 1997; Davis, 1995; Hill, 1997; Hsui; 1994; Jacobs, Davis. And Renandya, 1997; Waring, 1997; Yu, 1993).

Students read large amounts of material

This is one of the key features that distinguishes extensive from intensive reading programs. In ER, teacher attempt to build a teaching culture in which students read in quality. The program will not obtain optimal benefits, unless students are "hooked" on reading. In a study we recently completed, quantity of reading was the single most important predictor of students' gain scores. (Renandya, Rajan, and Jacobs, 1999).

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Students usually choose what they want to read:

With highly motivated students, this feature is easy to achieve. With less motivated learners, however, the availability of materials that they do like to read can make a lot difference. These learners usually do not read much. To get them hooked on reading, they need access to a good collection of books and other materials that they want to read. Unfortunately, the kind of material that these students are more likely to pick up (e.g. ghost stories, comics, and the like) may be hard to find, or even nonexistent, in schools (Richards, Thatcher, Shreeves, Timmons, and Barker, 1999; Worthy, Moorman, and Turner, 1999). Although we are stating that student choice of reading materials should be the norm, a place does exist for ER in which the entire class reads the same book.

Topic: 051: Reading Materials in Terms of Topic and Genre

Reading materials vary in terms of topic and genre

Students should be exposed to different types of materials so that they become familiar with different kinds of genre and accustomed to reading for different purposes and in different ways. Although younger learners may prefer fiction, they should gradually be introduced to nonfiction. Although a good selection of fiction often can be found, there is a relative scarcity of nonfiction materials for less proficient readers. Even scarcer are materials for adult learners who want to read simplified materials on such topics as law, business, technology, and medicine.

The material students read are within their level of comprehension:

Unlike in intensive reading, where the materials is typically above students' linguistic level. In ER the material should be near or even below their current level. To use second language Acquisition (SLA) jargon, students should be reading texts at an i+1, I, or i-1 level, with 'i' being their current proficiency level. The rule of thumb here is that to get students started in the program, it is better that they read easier texts than more challenging ones. For students who have had minimal exposure to contextualized language and who lack confidence in their reading, even i-2 material may be appropriate, at least at the initial stage of ER program.

Students usually take part in post reading activities.

The most commonly reported postreading task that teachers employ is, unfortunately, that of summary writing or book review. This task is not without value, but because writing a summary is time-consuming and often dreaded by students, it should be used lass often.

Other less laborious and potentially more inviting postreading tasks can be fruitfully used.

These include asking students to:

- Design a bookmark to suit the book
- Role-play the story
- Design a poster to advertise the book
- Read interesting/ exciting/ well-written parts aloud

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- Copy interesting words and useful expressions into a notebook
- Write a letter to the author
- Share their views about the book with a small group of classmates

Topic: 052: The Student-Teacher Relationship in Extensive Reading

Teachers and students keep track of student progress:

Ideally students read on their own without the need for teachers to monitor their reading. However, regular monitoring is recommended, especially when working with reluctant readers. A simple book record can be designed to check students' progress. In addition to using book records, a monthly student-teacher conference can be scheduled to find out if students are having any problem with their reading. This conference can be as brief as 5 minutes or less, monitoring should be seen as a way of displaying student progress and motivating students, rather than as a way for teacher to access them.

Finding the materials to suit the students' reading as well as having a wide range of books at different levels can be difficult, especially where funding is insufficient. Lituanas (1997) describes how she collects materials from a wide variety of sources, including fellow teachers, past students, and community groups. Toh and Raja (1997) explain ways that teachers themselves can write ER material suited to their students' cultural contexts and proficiency levels. Ways that students can be involved in creating reading materials for themselves and peers are explored in Davidson, Ogle, Ross, Tuhaka, and Ng (1997) and Dupuy and Mcquillan (1997).

It is worth noting that not all writers on ER agree that postreading tasks take time away from reading and may spoil students' reading enjoyment, and that in ER, reading should be seen as its own reward.

However, we feel that postreading tasks, if carefully designed, can serve useful purposes (See Yu, 1993, for a similar view). Postreading activities can be used to (1) reinforce what students have learned from their reading; (2) give students a sense of progress; and (3) help students share information about materials to read or avoid. The output hypothesis (Swain, 1993) provides additional support for the use of postreading tasks. This hypothesis states that although comprehensible input supplies an essential basis for second language acquisition, it must be supplemented by the production of comprehensible output if learners are to reach a high level of proficiency in the target language. Swain argues that production tasks push learners to notice features of the target language and to form and test hypothesis about the language.

Some educators use student groups to support ER. Group activities support reading interest and proficiency and can take place before, during, and after ER. For instance, Cockburn, Isbiter, and Sim-Goh (1997) and Rodgers (1997) depict programs in which more proficient, often older readers, support less proficient, often younger students, in various literacy activities. Mcquillan and Tse(1997) and Renandya, Rajan, and Jacobs (1999) describe group activities that provide readers wit opportunities to discuss what they have been reading.

Topic: 053: Benefits of Extensive Reading

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ER is seen as offering many advantages (Day and Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 1993; Nation, 1997), some of which are as follows:

1. Enhanced language learning in such areas as spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and text structure
2. Increased knowledge of the world
3. Improved reading and writing skills
4. Greater enjoyment of reading
5. More positive attitude toward reading
6. Higher possibility of developing a reading habit

Rationales for these proposed advantages of ER range from the commonsense-we learn to x(in this case, read) by doing x (in this case, reading)- to the currently more esoteric, for example, chaos theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), which postulates that dynamic, complex, nonlinear systems such as human language are self-organizing, given sufficient input and feedback, and that reading provides one source of such input and feedback. A more common scholarly explanation of the benefits of ER argues that the human brain contains innate potential for language learning of both L1 and L2s. this potential is known as language acquisition device or universal grammar (Chomsky, 1968). The large quantities of meaningful and comprehensible input provided by ER activate that potential, thereby fostering language acquisition, as learners induce the rules of grammar and other language elements, such as spelling, from the data they receive in their environment (Krashen, 1993).

In first language acquisition, this innate ability enables young children to gain mastery of most of their first language's rules and a good deal of its vocabulary regardless of their socioeconomic status and intelligence.

We generally agree with this nativist view, and feel that the same processes come into play for the learning of second languages, but we also see the possible benefit of what interactionist theorists (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Swain, 1999) have proposed, namely, that although comprehensible input is an absolutely crucial condition for second language acquisition, it may by itself not be sufficient. The effectiveness of ER may be further enhanced by such means as students engaging in activities in which they talk and write about what they have read and will read (Renandya, Rjan, and Jacobs, 1999). This talking and writing can help make the reading more comprehensible and may provide a means for student to 'infect' each other with the joy of reading. Talking and writing also pussh students to move from the receptive language competence neede for reading to the more demanding productive competence required for speaking and writing.

From a cognitive point of view (see Day and Bamford, 1998, Chapter 2, for an excellent summary), ER is particularly crucial in aiding the development of three of the most important components of fluent reading: a large sight vocabulary, a sizable general vocabulary, and knowledge of the target language and of the world. Sight vocabulary refers to words that readers can recognize quickly and effortlessly. This rapid and automatic process of word recognition is extremely crucial for reading. If this ability is lacking, subsequent reading processes are likely to be seriously impeded, which in turn makes comprehension difficult, if not impossible. Similarly, without possessing a large stock of vocabulary, reading becomes a frustrating dictionary-thumbing exercise that disrupts smooth processing of textual information. Although these two components are necessary, they do not by themselves make comprehension happen. This is where the third component comes into the picture, as comprehension

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depends to a large extent on the reader's prior knowledge of syntax, text structures, and the subject of the reading. The repeated exposure to massive amounts of written language afforded by ER is believed to help readers develop these three aspects of fluent reading.

Topic: 054: Issues in Practicing Extensive Reading

ER is not new, yet although many of us would readily acknowledged the educational benefits of ER, how many of us are actually implementing it in our second language program? If ER is good for second language development, why isn't everybody doing it? According to Day and Bamford (1998), one of the most important reasons is that many teachers believe that intensive reading alone will produce good, fluent readers. As was mentioned earlier, in intensive reading students spend lots of time analyzing and dissecting short, difficult texts under the close supervision of the teacher. The aim of intensive reading is to help students construct detailed meaning from the text, develop reading skills, and enhance vocabulary and grammar knowledge. This overemphasis on te explicit teaching of reading and language skills leaves little room for implementing other approaches. The intensive reading approach itself, Day and Bamford further argue, may produce skilled readers but not skilled readers.

A related reason why ER is not done goes back to the whole paradigm issue of the role of the teachers: sages in the stage or guides on the side. Many teachers are perhaps still uncomfortable with the idea of playing a 'less' central role in the classroom. In intensive reading, instruction is more teacher-centered in that teachers are more center stage in what is happening in the classroom. They do lots of talking and decide what skills or strategies to teach, how these are taught, and what passages to use. In contrast, with ER, roles shift as teachers not only pass on knowledge, but also 'guide students and participate with them as members of a reading community' (Day and Bamford, 1998, p.47).

Other reasons for the relative absence of ER in second language instruction are more practical in nature. In our in-service courses, we often hear teachers saying that they do not have enough time to get students to read extensively because they feel pressured by the administration to cover the predetermined materials specified in the syllabus. Some others report that since ER is not directly assessed, they feel that curriculum time would be better spent on other subject that students are tested on. Even in place whrer ER has been incorporated into the second language curriculum (e.g., Singapore), full implementation of te ER programs is hampered by these practical considerations. Careful examination of these implementation variables should receive more attention in future research.

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Lesson-11

TEACHING HOW TO READ FASTER I

Topic: 055: Introduction to Read Faster

In a typical speed reading course, each lesson is like this. The learners each select the text they want to read. The teacher then says, Are you ready? Go! At this command, 18 heads dip down and the learners begin reading in earnest. At the same time the teacher is pointing to minutes and seconds written on the board, indicating how much time has passed since the learners began reading.

Minutes	Seconds
0	00
1	10
2	20
3	30
4	40
5	50

As each learner finishes reading the short text (usually around 500–600 words long), they look up at the board, note down the time it took them to read, and then turn over the text and start answering the ten comprehension questions on the back of the sheet. When they have answered the questions, they get their answer key and mark their own answers. They look at the conversion chart and convert their time into words per minute. They enter their speed in words per minute onto the speed graph and they enter their comprehension score out of ten onto the comprehension graph. The teacher moves around the class looking at graphs and giving comments and encouragement to the learners. The whole activity has takenabout seven minutes. The same activity will happen two or three times more in the same week and will continue for a total of around seven weeks until most of the 25 texts have been read. This is one lesson in a speed reading course for non-native speakers of English. This chapter looks at the reasons for having such a course. It then examines a range of ways in which reading speed can be increased and maintained.

Topic: 056: Nature and Limits Of Reading Speed

To see what reading speed goals it is sensible to aim for, we need to understand the physical nature of reading and how this relates to reading speed. There are many misconceptions about reading faster, particularly about how fast people can read, and these can be cleared up by looking at the physical nature of reading. When people read, three types of action are involved—fixations on particular words, jumps (saccades) to the next item to focus on, and regressions (movements back to an item already looked at). This means that while reading the eyes do not move smoothly along a line of print, but jump from one word to another. There has been a great deal of research on eye movements while reading and recent improvements in eye-tracking technology have confirmed the following findings (Rayner, 1998).

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1. A skilled reader reading at around 250–300 words per minute makes around 90 fixations per 100 words. Most words are fixated on, but function words like the and of are fixated on much less often than content words. The longer the word, the more likely it is to receive a fixation. If a word is really long, it may receive two or even three fixations. Around 200 milliseconds are spent on each fixation (about five per second). The length of these fixations varies a lot depending on how difficult a word or sentence is to read.
2. Each saccadic jump is around 1.2 words in English. This is about eight letters. In Finnish, where words are longer, the average jump is ten letters. This is around the maximum number of letters that can be seen clearly in one fixation. During the jump no items can be focused on because the eyes are moving. A jump takes about 20 milliseconds. The basic unit in the jump is the word and languages with quite different writing systems (for example, English and Chinese) all tend to have an average of one jump for every 1.2 words.
3. A skilled reader makes around 15 regressions in every 100 fixations. Regressions occur because the reader made too big a jump (many regressions when reading in English are only a few letters long), and because there were problems in understanding the text.

What this research shows is that in normal skilled reading, most words are focused on. As there are limits on the minimum time needed to focus on a word and on the size and speed of a jump, it is possible to calculate the physiological limit on reading speed where reading involves fixating on most of the words in the text. This is around 300 words per minute. (Five fixations per second times 1.2 = 6 words per second times 60 = 360 words per minute. If regressions are considered, this reduces the forward movement through the text to around 300 wpm.) If someone is reading at a speed of 400 words per minute or more, then that person is no longer fixating on most of the words in the text. In Urquhart and Weir's (1998) terms, that person is no longer doing careful reading, but instead is doing "expeditious reading" which includes skimming and scanning. Unless such readers bring a great deal of background knowledge to their reading, they will usually be unable to answer detailed questions on parts of the text not fixated on.

Many non-native speakers of English and some native speakers read at speeds which are well below 300 wpm. About one-quarter of the time in a well-balanced language course should be spent on the strand of fluency development helping learners become more fluent in using the language they already know; that is, making the best use of what they have already learned. This fluency development needs to cover the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and needs to involve substantial amounts of input and output.

The physical symptoms of slow reading are: (1) fixating on units smaller than a word (word parts, letters, parts of letters), thus making several fixations per word; (2) spending a long time on each fixation or on some fixations; and (3) making many regressions to look back at what has already been read. Increasing speed will result in a change in these symptoms.

Reading speed is affected by a range of factors including the purpose of the reading, and the difficulty of the text. The difficulty of the text is affected by the vocabulary, grammatical constructions, discourse, and background knowledge. A reasonable goal for second language learners who are reading material that contains no unknown vocabulary or grammar and that has easy content is around 250 words per minute.

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Chung and Nation (2006) looked at the effect of a speed reading course on Korean learners of English at university level. The learners read 23 passages over nine weeks. The passages were all within the first 1,000 words of English (Quinn, Nation and Millett, 2007). Using a very conservative scoring system (the average speed in words per minute of the last three passages read minus the average speed of the first three passages read), the learners began with the speed of 141 wpm and after 20 passagesreached on average 214 wpm—an increase in speed of 52 percent. Of the 40 learners, two made no increase. The majority of the learners (30 out of 40) made gradual increases, while four increased erratically with rises and drops, two reached plateaus and stayed there for a while before making further increases, and two had a mixed pattern. Most of the gains were made in the first ten texts, but 11 students out of 40 made most gains in the second ten texts, and most students made some gains in the second ten texts. It is thus worth persisting with speed reading. Hunt and Beglar (unpublished paper) looked at the effect of extensive reading over several months on reading speed and found increases especially for those learners who read simplified texts. The gains of speed were significant but not enormous and may have been greater if learners had followed a focused speed reading course.

Topic: 057: Nature of Fluency Development

We have looked briefly at the physical aspects of reading and how these change as fluency develops. However, these signs are the result of mental processes. One of the mental processes involved in reading is decoding; that is, turning the written form of a word into a familiar spoken form with a known meaning. Readers develop skill in decoding in two related ways. Through practice they become faster at recognising the unit they are working with and, second, they change the size of this basic unit. When someone begins to read an unfamiliar written script there are many things to notice. Say, for example, an Arabic speaker is learning to read English. Because Arabic uses a different script from English, learning to read the English letters p b d g is quite difficult because although the letters have some similarities, there are important differences. Where is the circle part of the letter, at the top or at the bottom, on the left of the stalk or on the right? p b d have straight stalks, g has a bent stalk. At a very early stage of reading English, each part of a letter is an important piece of information. With practice, fluency in recognising the different letters develops and soon the basic unit that the reader is working with is no longer the parts of the letters but the letters themselves. With further reading experience the basic unit will change from letters to word parts and words. At early stages of word recognition, learners may rely on only some of the letters, usually the initial letters, for word recognition. As they become more accomplished readers, they may no longer need to notice each letter but can recognise whole words and, if necessary, apply rules or use analogy to quickly decode unfamiliar words. What this means is that fluency development involves not just becoming faster, it also involves changing the size and nature of the basic unit that the reader is working with. Anotherway of putting this is to say that fluency develops when complex activities like reading are made less complex by the fluent mastery of some of the subskills involved in the activity.

Research on speaking fluency (Nation, 1989) provides evidence for this. The 4/3/2 speaking activity involves learners working in pairs and one member of the pair speaking on a familiar topic to the other (the listener) for four minutes. Then they change partners. The speaker remains as a speaker and the listener stays as a listener. The speaker now has to give the same talk to the new partner in three minutes.

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The partners change again and the same talk is given for two minutes. When the two-minute and four-minute talks are compared, it is typically found that: (1) the speed of speaking has increased in terms of words per minute; (2) the number of hesitations has decreased per 100 words; (3) the number of grammatical errors in repeated sections of the talk has decreased; and (4) there are two or three more complex sentences in the two-minute talk compared with the four-minute talk. For example, if in the four-minute talk the speaker said "We went to Paraparaumu. Paraparaumu is outside Wellington", in the two-minute talk they may say "We went to Paraparaumu which is outside Wellington". Two simple sentences become one complex sentence. Fluency is thus accompanied by improvements in accuracy and complexity (Schmidt, 1992). This is because as parts of the task become more under the control of the speaker, other parts of the task can receive better attention.

There are two main paths to fluency. One could be called "the wellbeaten path" and the 4/3/2 activity is an example of this. In such activities, repetition of the same material is used to develop fluency. By doing something over and over again you get better at doing it. The second path to fluency could be called "the rich and varied map". In such activities, the learners do things which differ slightly from each other but which draw on the same kind of knowledge. A good example of this is easy extensive reading where learners read lots of graded readers at the same level. The stories differ but the same vocabulary and grammatical constructions reoccur and the learners develop a rich range of associations with the words and constructions.

Topic: 058: Nature of Fluency Development Activities

If an activity is going to contribute effectively to fluency development, then it needs to meet certain conditions. Let us look at a very useful fluency development activity for reading aloud to see what these conditions are.

Repeated reading has been used with good results with first language readers to help reach a good degree of oral reading fluency (Samuels, 1979;Dowhower, 1989; Rasinski, 1990; Sindelar, Monda and O'Shea, 1990). The learner reads a text (about 50–300 words long) aloud, with help where necessary, while the teacher or another learner listens. Then the text is reread reasonably soon after (within a day). Then the text is read again a day later. The text should only be a little bit above the learner's present level. Most of the running words should easily be recognised. The optimal number of repetitions is around three to five. Using texts intended to be read aloud, like poems, plays, jokes or stories can increase the purposefulness of the activity. Repeated reading and repeated reading while listening to a taped passage give similar positive results.

The first condition needed for a fluency development activity is that the learners should be focused on the message. In repeated reading this condition is met by having a listener. The reader is trying to communicate the message of the text to the listener. The second condition needed is that the material should be easy. It is important to choose texts for repeated reading where all the vocabulary is known and there are not too many irregularly spelt words. The third condition for a fluency activity is that there should be some pressure to perform at a faster than normal speed. In the repeated reading activity the repetition provides this encouragement. To strengthen this condition, the time taken to read the text could be noted for each reading and the reader should be trying to beat their previous speed for the same text.

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The fourth and final condition is that there should be quantity of practice. In repeated reading, the text is not very long but the repetitions mean that there is quite a lot of reading practice. To truly be a fluency development activity these four conditions need to be met.

Let us now look at a range of reading activities that meet these conditions and that are thus very useful for developing reading fluency. The activities are divided into three groups which are in order of development. The first group of reading fluency activities involve reading aloud. Such reading is a very important first step towards the second group of activities which involve careful silent reading. The third group involve "expeditious reading" or skimming and scanning very quickly to get a particular piece or a particular type of information. Skill in careful silent reading is an important prerequisite to most skimming and scanning.

Topic: 059: Increasing Oral Reading Speed

Reading aloud has not been looked on very favourably in the second language reading class, mainly because of the misuse of the technique of reading aloud around the class. However, in the first language classroom, reading aloud to the teacher or to a peer is a very important step towards gaining fluent decoding and comprehending skills which are a necessarypreparation for fluent silent reading. There are several useful activities for working on oral reading and they have just as much value in the second language class as in the first. What all these activities have in common is a learner reading aloud, trying to convey the message of the text to a sympathetic and interested listener. In small classes this may involve a learner reading to the teacher, but in most classes it will involve pair work where a learner reads to a classmate.

We have already looked at **repeated reading**. A strength of this technique is that it can be used with material that has some difficulties for the reader. By repetition these difficulties are overcome and in the later repetitions the activity can thus meet the conditions needed for fluency development.

Paired reading is a form of assisted reading. In this activity, the learner is paired with a more proficient reader. They sit side by side and read the same text aloud together with the more proficient reader keeping at the same speed as the less proficient reader. The less proficient reader nudges the more proficient reader as a signal that they want to read alone. If the less proficient reader strikes problems, the more proficient reader joins in reading again. Word recognition errors are corrected as soon as they happen, simply by the proficient reader saying the word without further explanation. The same activity can be used with a parent or an older or more proficient learner. A paired reading activity can last for about 15 to 30 minutes, and the learners should be trained in the use of the procedure. Research on this activity with first language learners shows that learners make very substantial progress in accuracy and comprehension. The tutors also make progress in their reading (Rasinski and Hoffman, 2003; Topping, 1989).

4/3/2 reading is an adaptation of the 4/3/2 speaking activity (Nation, 1989) for reading aloud. Each learner has a text to read. All the learners could have the same text but it is more interesting for the listeners and more suitable for a class with a wide range of proficiency if they all have different texts. The learners form pairs. One member of each pair is the listener and the other is the reader. When the teacher

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says “Go!” each reader reads their text to their listener. After four minutes the teacher says “Stop!” and the readers stop reading. They change partners and the readers then read the same text for three minutes to their new listener. They change partners again and the readers now read the same text to the new listener for two minutes. The learners are told that they should try to speed up each reading so that each listener hears about the same amount of text even though the time is less. As a variation, after each reading the reader can mark in pencil the place in the text they reached. A part of the class time can be set aside for **extensive reading** aloud where learners read to each other or where one learner reads a continuing story to a small group. The story should be easy to read and the reader can concentrate on making it interesting. A variation could be learners making a tape-recording of a story for others to listen to.

The **read-and-look-up** activity does not meet many of the conditions for a fluency activity but it is one that encourages learners to work with a larger basic unit. Michael West (1960: 12–13) devised this technique as a way of helping learners to learn from written dialogues and to help them put expression into the dialogues. West regarded the physical aspects of read-and-look-up as being very important for using the technique properly. The learners work in pairs facing each other. One is the reader, the other is the listener. The reader holds the piece of paper or the book containing the dialogue at about chest level and slightly to the left. This enables the reader to look at the piece of paper and then to look at the listener, moving only their eyes and not having to move their head at all. The reader looks at the piece of paper and tries to remember as long a phrase as possible. The reader can look at the paper for as long as is necessary. Then, when ready, they look at the listener and say the phrase. While they look at the paper, they do not speak. While they speak they do not look at the paper. These rules force the reader to rely on memory. At first the technique is a little difficult to use because the reader has to discover what length of phrase is most comfortable and has to master the rules of the technique. It can also be practised at home in front of a mirror. West saw value in the technique because the learner “has to carry the words of a whole phrase, or perhaps a whole sentence, in his mind. The connection is not from book to mouth, but from book to brain, and then from brain to mouth. That interval of memory constitutes half the learning process . . . Of all methods of learning a language, Read-and-Look-up is, in our opinion, the most valuable” (West, 1960: 12).

Good spoken reading speeds range from 100 to 200 words per minute. These are necessarily slower speeds than silent reading speeds.

Reading aloud is a useful activity to practise accurate decoding and it is a useful activity in its own right—people gain pleasure from listening to stories and talks and from reading stories to others. The activities in this section provide a useful preparation for the silent reading activities described in the next section.

Topic: 060: Increasing Careful Silent Reading Speed

The classic way of increasing reading speed is to follow a **speed reading** course consisting of timed readings followed by comprehension measures. For learners of English as a second or foreign language, such courses needto be within a controlled vocabulary so that the learners are not held up by unknown words. The first published course for foreign learners of English was Reading Faster by Edward Fry (1967) which had an accompanying teachers’ book called Teaching Faster Reading (Fry 1965). The

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course consisted of texts around 500 words long, each followed by ten multiplechoice questions. The texts were taken from a graded reader and were written at the 2,000 word level. The course worked well but it was not suitable for learners with vocabularies of less than 2,000 words and it also contained the names of diseases like kwashiorkor and yaws which tended to slow the reading. Quinn and Nation (1974) developed a course written well within the first 1,000 words of English consisting of 25 texts, each exactly 550 words long, and followed by ten comprehension questions. Millett (Quinn, Nation and Millett, 2007) has revised the Quinn and Nation text and has produced two other texts, one at the 2,000 word level and one at the 2,000 plus Academic Word List level (Millett, 2005) (see also Nation and Malarcher, 2007). Other speed reading courses have not used a controlled vocabulary and this has meant that they do not meet the conditions needed for fluency development.

There have been mechanical reading pacers where the text is revealed at a pre-set speed and there have been films which reveal text at a certain rate. Such aids are fun but are not necessary for increasing reading speed. The essential requirements are suitable texts and questions.

Easy extensive reading is another very effective way of increasing reading speed by asking learners to read graded readers at a level which is much easier than the level they would normally read to gain meaning-focused input. Learners should be encouraged to do large quantities of such reading and to re-read books that they have really enjoyed. It is important to remember that there need to be two types of extensive reading involving graded readers. One type, reading for meaning-focused input, involves learners reading at a level where about one word in 50 is unknown. These words can be guessed from context and add to the readers' vocabulary knowledge. The second type of extensive reading, reading for fluency development, should involve texts where there are virtually no unknown words. Such texts should be read quickly for enjoyment, and large numbers of them should be read.

In **silent repeated reading**, the learners silently re-read texts that they have read before. In order to encourage faster reading, they can note the time each reading took so that they have the goal of reading it faster each time.

Issue logs are a very effective way of involving learners. At the beginning of a language course the learners each decide on a topic that they will research each week. Each learner should have a different topic. Thetopics can include pollution, global warming, oil, traffic accidents, the stock market, etc. Each week the learners find newspaper reports, magazine articles, academic texts, information from the internet, television reports, and so on, on their topic and write a brief summary. As they are reading lots of material on the same topic, they will soon be in control of the relevant vocabulary and will bring a lot of background knowledge to what they read (Watson, 2004).

Careful silent reading is the most common kind of reading. Learners need to be able to read with good comprehension near the upper speed limits of such reading.

Topic: 061: Increasing Silent Expeditious Reading Speed

There are two major kinds of expeditious reading—**skimming and scanning**. The major goal of expeditious reading would be to increase skimming speed. In skimming the reader goes through a text quickly, not noting every word but trying to get the main idea of what the text is about. This is sometimes

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called getting the gist of the text. After such reading the reader is unlikely to have noticed details, but should be able to say in a general way what the text is about. The more background knowledge that a reader brings to skimming, the faster the skimming speed is likely to be. Reading speeds higher than 300–400 words per minute are the result of skimming, not careful reading.

Being able to skim text is a useful skill because skimming can be used to help decide if a text or section of a text deserves careful reading. Skimming activities should involve texts which are at least 2,000 words long and which are on topics that the learners are familiar with. Comprehension should be measured by questions which ask "What was the text about?". Multiple-choice or true/false questions which focus on the gist of the text could also be used.

Scanning involves searching for a particular piece of information in a text, such as looking for a particular name or a particular number. It is probably better to spend time increasing skimming speed than to devise scanning activities. This is because effective scanning depends on good careful reading and skimming skills, and training in scanning is unlikely to result in more fluent access to items. This is worth researching.

Typical scanning tasks include searching a text for a particular quotation, someone's name, a particular date or number, or a particular word; or searching a list for a telephone number, someone's name, or a particular word or phrase.

Topic: 062: Frequently Asked Questions about Reading Speed

What about Comprehension?

Comprehension is very important when developing fluency in reading. There is no point in reading faster if little is understood. For careful silent reading, readers should score seven or eight out of ten on a comprehension test. Higher scores than this indicate that the reader is going too slowly and is trying to get too much from the text. It would be easy for the reader to increase their speed. Scores of six or less out of ten are too low and the reader should read subsequent texts at the same speed until comprehension improves. Speed reading courses use both words per minute graphs and comprehension score graphs. Lower comprehension scores are acceptable for skimming tasks, because while skimming readers do not give attention to every part of the text. Questions on skimming texts should look for the main ideas.

How can Reading Fluency be Measured?

The typical measure for all kinds of fluency tasks is words per minute (see Lennon (1990) for a wide range of measures for speaking fluency). There has been some debate over whether syllables per minute is a more precise measure, but the difficulty in counting syllables is much greater than any small returns in accuracy it may bring. Moreover, research into eye movements suggests that words not syllables are the primary unit of attention. A useful compromise when doing research may be to use standard word units, that is counting the number of letters in the text (easily done by a word processor) and dividing by eight. Carver (1982) has used six character spaces as the standard word measure, but the speed reading research suggests that eight character spaces may be a more justifiable measure.

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How can Progress in Reading Fluency be Monitored?

- **One minute reading**. An interesting activity for regularly checking on reading speed is one minute reading (Iwano, 2004). The learners read a text with the time being recorded by a stopwatch. After exactly one minute the teacher says "Stop!", and the learners mark where they reached in the text. They then count how many words there are up to that point. Doing this on the same text before and after a speed reading programme can be a good way of showing learners how their speed has increased.
- **Reading logs**. A log is a regular record of what happened at particular times. Learners can keep a log of their extensive reading, noting the name of the book, the time they started reading and how much theyread. If this is accurately done, it may provide a rough indicator of reading speed and increases in speed.
- **Speed reading graphs**. When learners do a speed reading course with short texts and questions, they score their speed and comprehension on graphs (see Quinn, Nation and Millett, 2007). Teachers should regularly look at learners' graphs and give them advice and encouragement. Where progress is not being made, the teacher can suggest remedial procedures like repeated reading, skimming before reading, and discussion and prediction of the content with a friend before reading.

What are Good Reading Speeds?

A good oral reading speed is around 150 words per minute. A good careful silent reading speed is around 250 words per minute. A good skimming speed is around 500 words per minute. These are reasonable goals for foreign and second language learners who are reading material that contains no unknown vocabulary and grammar.

What are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Reading Faster?

There are disadvantages of reading faster. The pressure to go faster can be a source of stress. Such pressure can reduce the enjoyment that learners get from reading. It is best to see the skill of reading faster as providing a wider range of choices for a reader. Sometimes it is good to read fast. At other times it is not. Being able to make the choice is an advantage.

Research on reading faster has shown that increasing reading speed in one language can result in increases in another known language. This has been tested from the first language to English (Bismoko and Nation, 1974) and from English to the first language (Cramer, 1975; West, 1941). It is likely that the transfer of training here is the transfer of confidence; that is, the confidence that you can read faster and still comprehend.

It has been suggested that reading too slowly at speeds of much less than 100 words per minute can have negative effects on comprehension. Anyone who has learned to read another script knows the phenomenon of slowly sounding out the script and then having to go back and read the sentence again more fluently to see what it means.

Fluency development is an essential strand in a language course (for a discussion of listening and speaking fluency, see the companion book in this series (Nation and Newton, 2009), Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking. Learners need to be able to make the best use of what they already know at every

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stage of their learning. Giving attention to readingfluency is one part of this strand. As with the development of listening fluency, speaking fluency and writing fluency, the development of reading fluency can have clear practical and motivational benefits for a language learner.

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Lesson-12

ENHANCING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH READING I

Topic: 063: Introduction Enhancing Communicative Competence through Reading

The ability to read in a second language (L2) is considered to be an essential skill for academic students and it represents the primary way for independent language learning (Carrell and Grabe 2002). In addition, arguments for the importance of this skill abound in the amount of reading research conducted in the last few decades, which has greatly refined and enriched our knowledge about the enigmatic nature of reading comprehension. One strong outcome of this research is that it has helped us to better understand why the skill of reading was traditionally considered a passive skill with no place in L2 teaching, and how it has been increasingly recognized as an interactive, constructive and contextualized process with a key role in developing learners' communicative competence. The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to trace these changing patterns of reading comprehension in order to position current teaching practices. To accomplish this goal, this chapter will first briefly summarize advances in learning the skill of reading by describing its influences from a variety of disciplines – mainly linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology and sociolinguistics. By so doing, the theoretical foundations of current approaches to teaching reading from a communicative perspective will then be presented, and finally the important role this skill plays in enabling L2 learners to acquire communicative competence will finally be addressed.

Topic: 064: Reading within an Environmental Approach

Since the history of language learning has had an enormous influence on how reading has been viewed over the past decades, I will accomplish the task of describing trends in learning and teaching reading by placing the ability to read within each of the three approaches to language learning described in Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (this volume), namely those of the environmentalist, the innatist and the interactionist approaches.

Reading within an environmentalist approach

Up to the end of the 1960s the field of language learning was dominated by environmentalist ideas that avoided speculation about the workings of the human mind and concentrated only on observable facts outside the person. Moreover, modeling and practicing the correct structures time after time were paramount (see Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor this volume). Under such an influence, reading was viewed primarily as a passive, perceptual process. Readers were decoders of symbols printed on a page and they translated these symbols into the corresponding word sounds before they could construct the author's intended meaning from them (Carrell, Devine, and Eskey 1988). Comprehension of printed material was merely comprehension of speech produced by the reader since the ability to comprehend was regarded as an abstract operation that was difficult to grasp. Environmentalist ideas shaped not just the theoretical conceptions of what reading was but also research (Venezky 2002). Yet early reading research focused chiefly on the nature of perception during reading and it became mainly restricted to the

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relation between stimuli as words and responses as word recognition. Given this view of reading, most language programs tackled reading comprehension by focusing on the development of decoding skills, and their major instructional task was to teach readers to discriminate among the visual symbols they encountered on a printed page before they could translate them into word sounds (Pearson and Stephens 1994).

Furthermore, error was prevented in order to achieve oral correctness. Consequently, the reading methods used to help learners to build fluent decoding relied mainly on the phonic method of teaching reading by sounding-outroutines or the look-and-say method of whole-word teaching (Bielby 1994). The rationale behind this teaching practice was that mastery in decoding skills had to precede the development of reading comprehension. This conception of the nature of reading, however, was to be challenged by many researchers in an attempt to identify comprehension skills.

Topic: 065: Reading within an Innatist Approach

The early view of reading as a passive, perceptual process was first challenged by the 1960s by Chomsky (1957, 1965) with his theory of language and language development which undermined the behaviourists' models of language learning that prevailed throughout the 1950s. Chomsky's (1957, 1965) theory of language provided the basis for the innatist theory of language learning (see Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor this volume), which claims that children are born with a predisposition to language acquisition. Thus, together with the advent of the discipline of psycholinguistics which attempted to test Chomsky's contentions of language and language development, cognitive processes began to gain more attention. By the mid1960s reading practitioners were wondering how an innatist position would work in studying the acquisition of reading and a new generation of reading research began to test that idea. This research came mainly from the work carried out in psycholinguistics and in particular from the work of Goodman (1965, 1967) and Smith (1971).

Goodman (1965) conducted one of the first studies to explain the role of errors or miscues (Goodman 1965) made by readers when reading aloud and his experiment resulted in two important findings. First, learners were able to read a far greater number of words in context than without a context (i.e., word lists). Second, miscues were due to the reader's intention to make sense from the written text. Goodman's application of the miscue concept gave a new meaning to oral reading errors, as they became positive aspects in the understanding of the reading process. Later, in a seminal work, Goodman (1967) posited that reading was a psycholinguistic guessing game in which readers guess or predict the text's meaning on the basis of textual information and activation of background knowledge, then confirm or correct their guesses, and thereby reconstruct the message. In addition, he described the three sources of information (what he called cue systems) that readers make use of to reconstruct text meaning: 1) graphophonic cues (or knowledge of the visual and phonemic features); 2) syntactic cues (or knowledge of syntactic constrains); and 3) semantic cues (orknowledge of the meaning of words). Moreover, he added that semantic knowledge is refined by background knowledge. Goodman (1967) saw readers as having a natural motivation to make sense of the reading texts and established clear parallels between learning a language and learning to read. This approach to reading was reinforced by Smith (1971), who stated that reading was not something one was taught but rather something one learned to do by reading. Smith believed that the act of learning to read should be considered as any other natural comprehensible

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aspect of existence. The hypothesis advanced by Goodman and Smith that people learn to read by reading was later confirmed by Krashen (1988) in his research on the relationship between the amount of free voluntary reading and reading ability. As a result of such a view of reading, learners were taught to become active readers (Reid 1993), that is, to derive meaning from the text by predicting and guessing its meaning by using both their knowledge of language and their background knowledge. Most important, errors were no longer considered negative aspects that should be prevented. Instead, they were viewed as a way to better understand the reading process (Pearson and Stephens 1994).

The research conducted by Goodman (1965, 1969) and Smith (1971) represented the first step of a transition toward an increasing interest in what goes on in the reader during the reading act. Reading comprehension research began to focus on the reader as a text processor and to move away from the text itself. However, this shift was gradual and, in fact, it was not until the late 1970s that comprehension started to be developed.

Topic: 066: Reading within an Interactionist Approach

By the late 1970s researchers were attempting to identify comprehension skills. This significant change, though, grew out of the interactionist approach to language learning (see Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor this volume) and, particularly, from the work carried out essentially in the disciplines of cognitive psychology and sociolinguistics.

In the cognitive psychology field, researchers started to conduct studies on basic processes in reading. They analyzed what happened during the reading act and they incorporated notions of how readers represented text in memory. A major development within this field was the emergence of story grammars. A story grammar is a structural account of narrative stories that readers develop, based on acquisition of knowledge about human interactions and repeated exposure to stories. Story grammarians (Rumelhart 1975; Thorndyke 1977; Stein and Glenn 1979) started looking at the organization of narrative episodes and claimed that certain categories appear to be universal in well-formed stories, regardless of the language in which they were written. For instance, the story grammar categories for Stein and Glenn (1979) were: 1) setting, which consists of characters and surroundings; 2) initiating event, which marks a change in the story environment; 3) internal response, which represents the goal; 4) attempt, which is the effort to achieve the goal; 5) consequence, the attainment or non-attainment of the goal, and 6) reaction, which is the outcome of the consequence. This research direction represented an effort to formulate some correspondence between the structure of the story or text and the processing properties involved in the reading process and its effect on understanding (Rumelhart 1975). However, it did not get to the heart of comprehension because, by being so structural (that is, form was considered more important than content) they tended to ignore non-textual factors of the reading act (Pearson and Stephens 1994). The task of considering the non-textual factors involved in the reading process gave rise to the most influential theory of the 1980s: schema theory.

Schema theory (Rumelhart 1977, 1980; Anderson and Pearson 1984) arrived on the scene during the latter part of the 1970s and early 1980s to tackle the relationship between the background knowledge that readers bring to the text and text comprehension. A schema theory, in Rumelhart's words (1980: 34), "is a theory about how knowledge is represented and about how that representation facilitates the use of

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the knowledge in particular ways." One of its fundamental tenants is that any given text, whether it be spoken or written, does not carry any meaning in itself. Rather, it provides directions for readers so that they can construct meaning from their own cognitive structure, that is to say, from their own previously acquired knowledge (Anderson and Pearson 1984). On applying this theory to reading, researchers (Grabe 1988; Rosenblatt 1988; Swaffar 1988) found that reading was an interactive process, i.e., it was a dynamic interaction between the writer and the reader in which the reader creates meaning from the text by activating his stored knowledge and extending it with the new information supplied by the text (Grabe 1988). This direction in reading research concentrated on the text-reader interaction. Indeed, that appears to be the current direction, with the added dimension of the social context, which came from the work of sociolinguists.

Research conducted in the field of sociolinguistics contributed to reconceptualize the notion of context (Shuy 1986; Pearson and Stephens 1994).

Whereas prior to the advent of sociolinguistics context in reading meant the relationship between the graphic symbols that surrounded a word on a page, the work of sociolinguistics extended the meaning of context not only to the immediate context of the situation in which a text was encountered (i.e., the institutional context), but also to a larger social context with its values, beliefs and norms. Bloom and Green (1984: 395-396), for instance, proposed viewing reading as a social process focusing on author-reader interaction:

As a social process, reading is used to establish, structure, and maintain social relationships between and among peoples… a sociolinguistic perspective on reading requires exploring how reading is used to establish a social context while simultaneously exploring how the social context influences reading praxis and the communication of meaning.

This approach to reading was rooted in the belief that readers construct the meaning of the texts within a culture. More important, this approach further emphasized the context of the reading event since different cultural contexts may provide different readings of the text. Therefore, this sociolinguistics view of reading as a constructed process enhanced the interactivist views of reading emerging from psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology by incorporating the social dimension of reading.

This social view of reading was supported by the classic studies of Heath (1983) and Wells (1986). The study of Heath (1983) depicted the strong influence of family and cultural values on schooling, and the work of Wells (1986) helped the field to reinforce the conception that literacy in general and reading in particular is inherently social. All in all, perhaps the most important consequence from the sociolinguistics view of reading was that it highlighted the vital role that institutions and the sociocultural environment play in the reading act.

Contributions from the disciplines of cognitive psychology and sociolinguistics were extremely useful in helping both researchers and practitioners to view the process of reading as a dynamic, constructive and contextualized process through which individuals make meaning. The major pedagogical implications from such a view of reading were twofold. On the one hand, teachers should move away from what learners do not know about the text and place emphasis on what they do know about it. There was general acceptance of the idea that learners do not need to understand every single word in a passage, but rather they should be able to read dynamically and selectively in order to construct text meaning with

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confidence. On the other hand, different text interpretations should be accepted and welcomed in the classroom. This approach to reading laid the foundation for current work in teaching reading as a communicative act, which is the focus of the next section.

Topic: 067: Teaching Reading within a Communicative Competence Framework

Communicative approaches to L2 language teaching have evolved over the past two decades. A strong background influence is associated with the work of Hymes (1971), who was the first to argue that Chomsky's (1965) competence-performance dichotomy did not include any reference to aspects of language use in social practice. Hymes (1971) was the first to point out that what was needed was a characterization of not just how language is structured internally but also an explanation of language behavior for given communicative goals.

Therefore, he proposed the notion of communicative competence, which included both grammatical competence as well as the rules of language use in social context and the norms of appropriacy. From the 1980s on, various models of communicative competence have given specifications of the different components which should integrate the communicative competence construct in order to make the process of L2 teaching more effective (Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983; Savignon 1983; Bachman 1987, 1990; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell 1995; Alcón 2000; Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor this volume).

In such a construct, the reading skill plays an essential role in facilitating the acquisition of communicative competence. Therefore, this section aims to show where the reading skill fits into the bigger picture of the proposed communicative competence framework presented by Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (this volume). More important, it offers a description of how the different components influence the development of this particular skill in order to increase learners' overall communicative ability in the L2. Figure 1 shows the diagram representing the framework with reading in a core position.



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Figure 1. Integrating reading within the communicative competence framework

Discourse competence

As shown in Figure 1, the core of the proposed framework of communicative competence is the reading skill since it is the manifestation of interpreting written discourse and a way of manifesting the rest of the components. Discourse competence involves the knowledge of written discourse features such as markers, cohesion and coherence as well as formal schemata (i.e., knowledge of how different discourse types are organized) with reference to the particular communicative goal and context of the written text. In other words, if readers are to be able to interpret a written piece of discourse, they need to understand how discourse features are used and why, as well as to relate them to the purposes and contextual features of the particular text. Thus, during the process of interpreting a given text at the discourse level, the reader plays an active role in which knowledge activation of other components of the proposed model (namely, linguistic, pragmatic,intercultural and strategic competencies) is necessary to develop overall communicative ability when reading a piece of text.

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Lesson-13

ENHANCING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH READING II

Topic: 068: Teaching Reading and Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence consists of the elements of the linguistic system such as grammar rules and knowledge of vocabulary. Moreover, the ability to read also involves the mastery of the mechanics of the language, such as the alphabet and punctuation (Scarcella and Oxford 1992). All these features are set at the bottom level of the reading process and they are fundamental for the readers to be able to decode the written text. This competence is intrinsically related to discourse competence since deficiencies in linguistic competence may result, for instance, in a failure to identify the cohesive links and, therefore, cause problems in the interpretation of a written passage (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000).

Within this competence, knowledge and development of vocabulary has been considered a critical area in the reading process. Of course, as Anderson (1999) and Field (this volume) comment, knowing a lot of vocabulary does not necessarily result in comprehension of the text. However, there is ample evidence that an extensive knowledge of vocabulary does facilitate the overall reading process. In fact, both Grabe and Williams (this volume) report the strong relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Additionally, the development of automatic recognition of words for achieving effective reading comprehension merits special attention. In this regard, Grabe (this volume) points out that word recognition automaticity is a key factor in explaining fluent reading comprehension. This is also the view held by Field (this volume) but, additionally, she points out that in order to develop the skill of automaticity, it is desirable to match the language of the text with the language level of the learners.

Topic: 069: Teaching Reading and Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence involves an understanding of the illocutionary force of an utterance by being aware of situational and participant variables within which the utterance takes place, as well as politeness issues. This competence has been regarded as essential to understanding spoken communication in which the social contextual factors are explicit (see Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan this volume). However, this information ismissing when interpreting the communicative intention of a given written text and, therefore, readers must rely on a set of graphic, syntactic and linguistic devices that may help them to interpret the writer's intended meaning. Kern (2000: 71-73), for example, characterizes the following features: 1) typographical issues such as the choice of capitalization, italic and bold font styles, underlining, the use of exclamation marks or punctuation, and layout of print, among many others; 2) syntactic issues such as cleft constructions to simulate spoken discourse; and 3) lexical issues such as the choice of verbs (i.e., command, ask) or adverbs (i.e., sharply, soothingly) which in a way parallel the tone of voice of oral speech. Additionally, Kern (2000) points out that the physical situation of a given text also provides information about the possible communicative intent of the text.

Knowledge of these clues to illocutionary force may facilitate readers' inferences about what is written in order to interpret the writer's intended meaning (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000). However,

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the role of the pragmatic consequences of written form is just beginning to receive attention. Williams (this volume) reports the critical perspective undertaken by Kern (2000) in the teaching of L2 reading in which these aspects of pragmatics are an essential part in reading instruction.

Topic: 070: Teaching Reading and Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence refers to the knowledge of how to interpret written texts appropriately within their sociocultural context. Therefore, it involves knowledge of the cultural factors such as knowledge of the sociocultural background of the target language community, knowledge of dialects, and cross-cultural awareness (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell 1995). Thus, readers' background knowledge on the cultural factors involved in a given written text will help them to construct its meaning and will prevent possible misinterpretations. Williams (this volume), in fact, pays attention to the social perspective on reading and contends that the teaching of L2 reading should not be detached from the social context within which the text has been created.

Topic: 071: Teaching Reading and Strategic Competence

Strategic competence has been added to all above-described competencies, since it has been regarded as crucial to the development of reading skills(Anderson 1999). This competence refers to the possession of both communication and learning strategies (Scarcella and Oxford 1992). With reference to reading, the former refers to the ability to use reading strategies to make up for interpretation problems, whereas the latter refers to the ability to use reading strategies to enhance the communicative act between the writer and the reader. Thus, knowledge of different reading strategies, which have been categorized into metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective (see Ediger this volume), and the ability and disposition to use them effectively has received prime consideration in L2 reading. In fact, Grabe, Field and Ediger (this volume) regard strategic reading as an essential competence for successful comprehension. Grabe (this volume) highlights strategic reading development as an important research area within reading. Field (this volume) emphasizes the benefits of paying attention to reading strategies and metacognitive awareness in a reading program to develop fluency in reading and Ediger (this volume) gives a detailed explanation of key reading strategies, the use of which may result in improved comprehension.

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Lesson-14

DEVELOPING STRATEGIC L2 READERS I

Topic: 072: Introduction Developing Strategic L2 Readers

Learning to read is a type of problem solving, and has often been described in this way (Pressley et al. 1992). Researchers of reading, in both first and second language (L1/L2), have known for many years now that good readers become "strategic" in their attempts to make sense of a text, and over the years, a great deal of research has focused on identifying which strategies they use, which ones are most effective, how skilled readers use them, and finally, whether such strategies are then teachable to developing readers. By now, we also know that a person's strategic competence, the ability to control and guide the direction of one's own process of learning or using a new language in order to communicate is a key part of one's overall communicative competence (although its role in reading and writing is not often addressed). This strategic competence is vital for enabling L2 learners to achieve their purpose for communicating, whether orally, or through producing or comprehending written text, as well as for finding and repairing the communicative attempt if something goes wrong for some reason. In fact, the literature on reading strategies (as well as on strategies involved in many other areas of learning and thinking) has now grown to the point where researchers have moved beyond simply extolling the virtues of just any strategy use, and are now able to explain in considerably more detail which sorts of strategy use are more effective and which are less so.

However, before we launch into what is known about good reading strategy use, we need to understand where reading strategies fit into the bigger picture of reading and reading instruction in general. When we talk about reading and reading instruction, we do so with the basic assumption that reading fundamentally involves comprehending what we read – in other words, the finding, or creating, of meaning. The creation of this meaning, then (the ability to comprehend what we read) depends heavily on having automatic word-level skills, the appropriate background knowledge, and a range of comprehension strategies (Pressley 2000). This suggests that instruction designed to develop comprehension abilities should similarly focus on improving students' abilities in these same areas. Good readers need strong word-level skills because having them enables readers to decode a text efficiently, leaving their remaining mental processing capacity available for focusing on other aspects of comprehension. Skilled readers also contribute significantly to their comprehension of texts through the background knowledge that they bring to the reading task. Among other things, the knowledge helps them make inferences that fill in the gaps in the information that is provided explicitly in a text. This prior knowledge they bring also does something else: it works hand-in-hand with the third requirement for comprehension, namely, the skilful use of comprehension strategies – the focus of this chapter.

The term **strategies** is used to describe a variety of different notions in reading and reading instruction (both for L1 and L2), ranging from using it to describe broad approaches to learning or using the L2; to the specific, automatic reading skills readers use; and even to various techniques that teachers can use to help students develop aspects of reading they find difficult. There is also still some disagreement about whether strategies should be used to describe only those actions that readers deliberately choose to use (as opposed to skills, which are automatic, like recognizing letter-sound correspondences, etc.). Some researchers argue that strategies can become skills when automatized, and

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conversely, skills can become strategies when used intentionally (Paris, Wasik, and Turner 1991; Pressley and Woloshyn 1995). In spite of this variation in usage, there is still fairly broad use of the term strategies (whether for language learning or language use) to refer tothose (often conscious) procedures, actions, techniques, or behaviors that a learner selects and uses in order to enhance their comprehension or their learning from what they read. However, as I hope to show later in this chapter, if we move closer toward a focus on real-world reading, it may be helpful to view strategies more in the way that Pressley and Woloshyn (1995: 6) do, as "nothing more than a listing of the processes required to accomplish a particular task efficiently," and begin to see that "learning to use strategies is not the mechanized sequencing of processes, but rather a flexible, constructive execution of the processes" [emphasis in the original] that we might need in order to carry out all sorts of important day-to-day, as well as academic, tasks.

Topic: 073: Reading Strategies (I)

Over the last 30 years or so, already many different reading strategies have been identified. As can be seen in Figure 1 below, strategies can be categorized into metacognitive (including purpose-oriented, comprehension monitoring, and strategies that focus on learning from text), cognitive (including strategies for interacting with the author and the text, strategies involving different ways of reading, strategies for handling unknown words, and those making use of one's prior knowledge in some way), as well as social and affective strategies, among others.

Key reading strategies

Metacognitive strategies

Purpose-oriented strategies:

- Planning what to do next, steps to take
- Reminding oneself about the purpose for reading
- Evaluating information in terms of whether it leads to one's purpose
- Deciding whether a text is relevant to one's purpose
- Comparing information from one text with that of another
- Reflecting on how well objectives were met
- Evaluating the quality of a text
- Checking the time one has available

Comprehension-monitoring strategies:

- Assessing comprehension
  - Evaluating one's understanding
  - Identifying difficulties in understanding
  - Summarizing what one has read o Restating for oneself what one has read
  - Reviewing a text after reading is completed
- Repair strategies
  - Re-reading
  - Slowing down and reading again
  - o Trying to pronounce words

Figure 1. Key reading strategies (adapted from Grabe and Stoller 2002; Oxford 1990; Sarig 1993; Pressley 2000; Anderson 1991, 1999)

Strategies that focus on learning from reading:

- Reflecting on what has been learned from the text
- Underlining or marking in text
- Thinking how to use a text in the future
- Making notes about what one has read

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- Paraphrasing what the author said in order to remember it

Cognitive strategies	
Strategies for interacting with author and text: - Previewing a text - Predicting the contents of the text - Checking/confirming predictions - Asking questions about the text - Looking for answers to questions about the text - Connecting one part of the text to another - Critiquing the author - Critiquing the text - Evaluating and revising hypotheses that arose while reading - Interpreting the text - Making associations to ideas presented in a text based on prior knowledge - Constructing mental images to represent the meanings expressed in text	Strategies involving different ways of reading: - Reading slowly - Reading quickly • Skimming for a general idea • Scanning for specific information - Re-reading - Ignoring certain texts or parts of a text - Reading out loud (and listening to how it sounds) - Reading selectively/deciding whether or not to read something - Reading ahead

Strategies for handling unknown words: - Using other information in the context to understand an unknown word - Skipping/ignoring an unknown word - Waiting to see if more information is provided later - Analyzing the structure or parts of a word in order to understand it - Asking someone the meaning of a word - Looking up a word in a dictionary - Pronouncing a word - Thinking about other related words that one already knows - Thinking about cognates in the L1 - Translating a word/phrase into the L1 - Checking the spelling of a word	Strategies involving prior knowledge: - World knowledge: • Thinking about what one already knows about a topic • Making connections between a text and one's prior knowledge o Revising one's prior knowledge that is inconsistent with ideas in the text, if convinced by information or arguments in the text - Knowledge of texts and text formats: • Using discourse markers to identifyrelationships o Connecting one part of a text to another • Paying attention to text structure

Figure 1. cont

Verifying whether one's guess about meaning fits the context and one's conceptual knowledge; then revising or seeking alternative explanations	Analyzing texts (e.g., stories, science reports) into the typical components and language of that genre (e.g., story grammar, steps/components of science experiments)

Affective & Social Strategies
- Rewarding oneself - Talking with others about what one reads - Encouraging oneself - Selecting what one wants to read

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Topic: 074: Reading Strategies (II)

After years of research on reading strategies, there is now a strong pattern of findings, both in L1 (Pressley and Afflerbach 1995; Pressley and Woloshyn 1995) and L2 (Barnett 1989; Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto 1989; Kern 1989; Oxford 1990) that the use of reading strategies results in improved comprehension and greater self-confidence. The self-regulated use of comprehension strategies is clearly evident in the reading of skilled readers, and now believed to be crucial for effective L2 reading. Carrell (1998: 4) describes it this way:

Strategic reading is a prime characteristic of expert readers because it is woven into the very fabric of 'reading for meaning,' and the development of this cognitive ability. Reading strategies – which are related to other cognitive strategies enhancing attention, memory, communication, and learning – allow readers to elaborate, organize, and evaluate information derived from text. Because strategies are controllable by readers, they are personal cognitive tools that can be used selectively and flexibly. And, reading strategy use reflects both metacognition and motivation, because readers need to have both the knowledge and the disposition to use strategies.

Topic: 075: Reading in L2 Classrooms (I)

So, what does the effective use of reading strategies involve? And how can instruction in their use be integrated into L2 classrooms of today? A look at L2 reading classrooms today reveals a wide variety of methods for teaching reading, not all of which are effective. In some of the L2 classrooms that I have observed in various parts of the world, the reading instruction treatsreading material primarily for the purpose of teaching grammatical structures found in the text, where students labor over word-by-word translations and spend hours looking up in dictionaries and memorizing the meanings of the vocabulary and structures they encounter in these texts. In many L2 classrooms, the readings that students typically encounter are short texts, each on a completely different topic from the previous one, with each passage typically followed by a mandatory list of comprehension questions. Probably much of the reasoning for teaching reading through single texts on many different topics is based on the idea that students need to be exposed to many different subject areas so that they can learn the vocabulary of all of those areas.

Also in many L2 classrooms, often encouraged by the ways in which reading textbooks and materials are designed, students are taught to conduct all of their reading (at least, of prose texts) in a similar manner, regardless of the text being read or the purpose for reading. Students are almost invariably asked to find the main idea of each passage they read, and the entire passage is viewed as having equal importance to the reader, because the reader's main task is to answer all of the comprehension questions about what the writer has said. In fact, "it is not surprising, therefore, that students conclude that the very 'purpose of reading text is to answer the questions that follow it' and that answering these questions correctly signifies that they have understood what the text means" (Belanoff 1987, as cited in Zamel 1992: 464).

From my observations of such classes, I would argue that this type of instruction shows little awareness of how we often read in real life, namely, that: we often have wide-ranging purposes for reading; we often need to choose and/or synthesize information from multiple sources (think especially of

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how we use information when browsing the Internet); we pick and choose certain information from a text while disregarding other parts as irrelevant or not useful; we sometimes even read, re-read, and re-read material yet again until we get what we need from it; or sometimes we even decide not to read something at all, because we have determined that it is not interesting or relevant to our purpose. In other words, much of the reading that is done in the sorts of L2 classrooms described above is merely the "practicing" of reading in an artificial context, something that does not often reflect the reading we have to do in real life.

Thus, I would argue that much of the reading instruction that presently takes place in L2 classrooms unfortunately does not prepare L2 learners for the sorts of reading that they will encounter in real-life contexts, where they must be able to make immediate use of what they read in the L2. Leki (1993: 13) also decries theteaching of reading for no particular purpose, saying that in many ESL classrooms, the reason for reading is to learn to read… the failure to provide real purposes for reading suggests that in isolated L2 reading classes (i.e., ones in which students are not reading to write), students are not reading but merely practicing reading. This "reading practice" is evident in reading selections and in pedagogical focuses in L2 reading classrooms.

Topic: 076: Reading In L2 Classrooms (II)

In other L2 classrooms I have observed, teachers of reading do indeed try to teach specific strategies, for example, by having students read specific texts in different ways (e.g., skimming for the general idea, scanning for specific information), but here too, in these contexts L2 learners are asked to do these things without much instruction in why they might want to read differently at different times, or in determining when they might want to read in different ways, or even what more of those different ways might be. Leki (1993: 16) criticizes this, too, when she says,

If proficient readers skim some texts, they do so because the text, as they themselves judge it for their own internally motivated purposes, merits no more careful reading. The answer to the question of which texts should be skimmed, which scanned, which words looked up in the dictionary, or which texts abandoned altogether is determined by the reader's purpose in reading. If the purpose in reading is only to practice reading, there can be no internally motivated answers to these questions. With no purpose for reading, then skimming, scanning, or any of the other strategies we teach all become no more than artificial exercises. By taking over control of their reading through post-reading exercises and telling our students which texts to skim, which information to scan for, and how fast to read, we are preventing the very grappling with meaning that would allow students to develop their own strategies for rapid and accurate text processing.

Indeed, if we look at the big picture in which authentic reading occurs, we must acknowledge that reading "is a 'goal-directed, context-specific' behavior, which means that a literate person is able to use reading and writing in a transactional sense to achieve some purpose in the world at hand…" (Flower et al. 1990: 4).

If this is the case, then how might reading be taught to prepare L2 students to be able to handle the demands of real-life reading better? And how can reading strategies be taught effectively in such a context? How will a focus on strategies bring us to real-life reading processes? Answering thesequestions is our goal in this chapter – to understand a little better how readers use strategies to make meaning from

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the texts they read for real-life purposes, and to spell out the implications of this knowledge for teaching students to read in another language. In addition, we will also consider how the development of strategy use in reading can be interwoven with the development of the vital word-level abilities and the world knowledge that Pressley (2000) says we need for optimal comprehension.

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Lesson-15

DEVELOPING STRATEGIC L2 READERS II

Topic: 077: How Do Good Readers Use Reading Strategies?

Now that we are aware of our own goal for reading in this chapter, let's return to what is now known about how strategies can be used most effectively in reading. Although learning to use strategies has repeatedly been shown to facilitate comprehension in reading, using strategies effectively is not just a matter of learning to use a couple of "good ones," and then using them wherever we can, without an understanding of why we're using them. In fact, it is probably safe to say that there are no strategies that are in themselves inherently good or bad (Anderson 1991). What one reader may find useful when reading a particular text may not be very effective for another reader in a different situation. Unfortunately, simply using certain strategies may not necessarily guarantee comprehension, and conversely, not using certain strategies may not necessarily result in the lack of comprehension, either. The picture that is beginning to form of good strategy users from the reading research is that they are "strategic," which means that they:

- Are primarily focused on the drive to obtain meaning from a text, not on "using strategies".

- Are aware of their purpose for reading, whether it be for pleasure, for obtaining important information needed to perform a task (e.g., for performing a procedure, writing a paper, making a decision), or to learn something new (Pressley 2000; Grabe and Stoller 2002). Within that context, then, they tailor their strategies specifically to fit the particular task involved (Oxford 1994).

- Overview a text to decide if it is relevant to their purpose and to identify the portions that might be particularly relevant or helpful (Pressley 2000). They then read selectively, focusing on those parts of the text that are most relevant to their purpose (Ediger 2000).

- Use strategies in ordered hierarchies that are generated from an analysis of the steps in the process needed to accomplish their task (Pressley and Woloshyn 1995). - Know and utilize multiple strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and other types, integrating and orchestrating their use in relation to each other, and then evaluating their effectiveness in achieving the purpose (Block 1986; Oxford 1994); Well-tailored combinations of strategies are more effective than single strategies (O'Malley and Chamot 1990).

- Make use of, and integrate their prior knowledge, not only of the world, but also of the nature of texts, and of how they have used different strategies for different purposes in the past, to help them make sense of what they read (Block 1986; Pressley et al. 1992). Having prior world knowledge and knowledge of the topic of a text influences which strategies they need to use (Afflerbach 1990) and the effectiveness of the strategy use (Pressley and Woloshyn 1995; Nassaji 2003).

- Make particularly effective use of metacognitive strategies, the "higherlevel thinking" (or "thinking about how one is thinking"), the monitoring system that readers use in order to direct and control their overall strategy use. They use metacognitive strategies for planning, selecting and using strategies, monitoring comprehension and effectiveness of strategy use, and learning (Carrell 1998; Anderson 2002).

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- Make effective use of varying strategies for handling unknown vocabulary, with the quality of their strategy use more important than the quantity, and in relation to the various sources of knowledge they have available for inferring meaning (Nassaji 2003).

- Differ in their use of strategies, depending on their gender, language and cultural background, age, beliefs, motivations, or learning style (Oxford 1996).

- Know if their strategy use was effective or not by assessing whether they were able to accomplish their purpose (Ediger 2000).

Topic: 078: Skimming and Scanning

One crucial element of this good reading strategy use that is often mentioned, but that has been given little detailed attention (especially in instruction), involves the purpose for which one reads. This may also be seen as involving the task one is trying to accomplish with what one reads, and fits closely with what is known as task-based learning. In task-based learning, atask is "an activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome" (Skehan 1996, as cited in Ellis 2003: 4).

In "real-world" reading, there are many different authentic purposes for which readers read – and, presumably, precisely the same real-world purposes for which many L2 learners will eventually need to be able to read in their target language. These include the range of purposes for which we read in daily life, for example, to obtain the information that we need in order to accomplish some real-world task. For example, this might take place when we read a guidebook, a train schedule, or an Internet website in order to purchase a ticket as part of making the necessary arrangements to travel to a desired destination. It could also include reading for academic purposes (e.g., reading to obtain information from various sources so that one can write a research paper or make an oral presentation in class); reading for business purposes (e.g., reading information or data in order to write a report or make a business decision); or even reading for entertainment, passing the time, or pleasure (e.g., reading a novel or a poem; or a magazine while waiting for a friend).

These types of real-world reading are important to focus on because the strategies a reader uses in order to achieve them are different from those one needs or uses when reading to learn the grammar of a language, to "practice" reading, or when reading without any particular purpose at all. As Knutson (1988: n.p.) says, "whether we are reading for pleasure or information, the nature of the reading depends on what we want from the text, as well as situational factors such as time available or constraints relative to place of reading. No matter what our agenda, why and where we read inevitably determine how we read" [emphasis in the original]. If the purpose for which one reads is ignored, or if one always reads for the same purpose (such as to answer comprehension questions), then an important element influencing the choice and use of particular strategies is missing from that reading context. In a parallel fashion, it would follow that leaving out the purpose from L2 instruction distorts the learning context within which L2 readers need to learn about effective reading strategy use.

This is not to say that reading for a purpose is never addressed in the literature on L2 reading. In fact, many L2 reading researchers do indeed mention the importance of one's purpose for reading (Eskey 1986; Oxford 1994; Carrell 1998; Grabe and Stoller 2002); however, few go the next step to spell out

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how to focus reading toward accomplishing the purpose that one has set. Also, in some lists of reading strategies, the setting of goals orobjectives is indeed mentioned, but it is described as just one of the strategies (Anderson 1999; Grabe and Stoller 2002; among others), but here too, a key point is often missed: in real-life reading, generally one starts out with a goal or purpose for which one is going to read, a reason for taking up a text in the first place, and then one uses various strategies to determine how to proceed with reading in order to get the information necessary for accomplishing that purpose.

One of the primary reasons why we read is because we want to do something and we need to obtain the information that is in a text in order to accomplish it. In fact, often when we read, we only learn the extent to which we have understood what we have read when we try to do something with that information, what Blanton (1993) calls "reading as performance" (see Blanton, 1993 for a list of classroom activities teachers can use in order to determine whether students have understood what they have read). When we have a purpose for reading from the outset, our ability to accomplish our task can give us important clues about whether we have understood what we read. Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986: 16) describe it this way:

We never know what we've read until we are forced to perform as readers – as though we know what we've read – and we face all those occasions (lectures, tests, papers) with that sense of anxiety, that doubt whether we can pull it off, which is evidence that comprehension is not something we possess but something we perform.

Topic: 079: Importance of Reading

Reading for specific purposes requires students to do something with the information they have gleaned from reading. If we aren't able to do what we set out to do (our original purpose for reading), then we invariably need to set in motion further strategies to remedy that lack of comprehension, or do what is necessary in order to "fill in the holes" in our understanding. If we didn't have this "comprehension check," we might not know to use some of those additional strategies. In real life, then, because we read in different ways for many different purposes, our purpose must be an important early consideration in determining which strategies to use and how to use them. In my own study of one particular purpose for reading in an academic context, the writing of a research paper based upon the reading of a collection of articles on a chosen topic (Ediger 1999), two graduate student readers continually referred back to their ultimate task – the paper they had been assigned to write – to determine whether they were pursuing an appropriate strategy and obtaining the information they needed for their goal. In this case, their understanding of their ultimate task – to write a synthesis paper on a topic related to their class – formed the basis for many of the decisions they made.

For example, it was their purpose that led them to do all of the following:

- Skip from the beginning of an article they were reading to the last page, and then, to read only the last page of it, because they realized that that was where the information was that they needed.

- Compare the degree of detail in an article they were reading with the degree of detail that they thought they would need to use in the paper they were going to write.

- Take detailed notes, compare them with an article they were reading, then go back and read their notes, before going on to the next article.

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- Reflect on and check the meaning of a particular term

– by saying to themselves what they thought it meant, reflecting on it, and then looking at how the word was used in an article they had read earlier, and finally, when satisfied, moving on to reading something else.

- Reject an article completely, realizing it was not as relevant to their task as they had first thought.

- Re-read, at the end of the process, a particular paper that they had originally read at the beginning, because at that point, they realized that it contained the most important information, and thus, was crucial for accomplishing their task.

The students involved in this study reported that being forced to think aloud throughout the entire process turned out to be a useful strategy in itself, in that it helped bring to their awareness what they needed to do along the way in order to achieve their purpose.

Another remarkable effect of reading for a purpose is that the purpose increases a reader's interest and recall (Schraw and Dennison 1994) and provides a built-in motivation to read. When students read for a purpose, their internal desire to accomplish the goal often causes them to do things that they might otherwise be resistant to doing. For example, in one purpose-focused reading class I have worked with, if the students had been asked to read a particular book chapter over seven or eight times, they would have protested and been extremely reluctant to do it. However, at one point in the class when their complete understanding of a chapter was needed in order to be able to summarize its content as part of a presentation to their class, I observed them reading the chapter over and over – seven oreight times – until they felt confident about their understanding of the material. In this case, repeated re-reading became a strategy that they used without being asked to because the end task compelled them to. They reported that it was an extremely helpful strategy, not only for finding the information they needed, but also for confirming their comprehension of it. Reading seven or eight times turned out to be a strategy that enabled them to accomplish their task (and, by the way, one frequently recommended in reading instruction) (Taguchi, Takayaso-Maass, and Gorsuch 2004).

Reading for real purposes also makes it easier for us to see that not all reading should be performed in the same way – it depends on what our purpose is. For instance, it calls into question the common practice of always teaching students to look for main ideas in everything they read. In one illustration of this, when investigating how one group of high school students read their science texts when asked to summarize what they had read, Johns and Paz (1997) concluded that since much of what they read had no main idea, looking for the main idea didn't make sense as a reading strategy. A more useful strategy in this case, and one that was used by the expert readers in their study, involved using what they knew about the discourse structure commonly found in scientific reports. Ultimately, looking for information in the science texts in a way that paralleled the different parts of the genre of science reports produced the best summaries of the science texts.

Leki (1993: 17) also makes a similar point about not always reading for main ideas when reading for a different real-world purpose:

What difference does it make if the student correctly or incorrectly identifies the same main idea as the teacher? In natural reading contexts, proficient and even less skilled readers reading for a real-world

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purpose not only skim, scan, or chunk for their own purposes, but they also choose to privilege either main ideas or details of a text, again depending on their purpose in reading. In a given text read by a specific reader in a real-world context, the main idea may or may not be significant. The reader may retain only a striking image or line of reasoning, or even, as is often the case with academic readers, only a citation or reference to another text. But if the purpose for reading a text is to practice reading, then students have no basis on which to privilege main ideas or details. By persistently imposing a check on comprehension of main ideas, we may in fact be training our students to read in ways characteristic of poor readers, bound to the text and lacking the purpose that would allow them to skip over information they themselves judge uninteresting or unnecessary.

When we read for a purpose, our purpose is often different from the original purpose of the writer of the text – and it is important for our students to understand this. What we have to read for instead is information that fits our purpose, not necessarily the purpose of the original writer. Sometimes, this means that we may need to read a large amount of material in a certain way (often quickly) to determine generally if it is relevant to our purpose, and then we may read more closely and carefully only that specific information or the portion of the text that we have determined is relevant to our own purpose. This may be quite different from the original writer's main idea, and may even be quite contrary to it.

Topic: 080: Fostering Effective Reading Strategy

By now, numerous studies on reading in both L1 (Baker and Brown 1984; Bereiter and Bird 1985; see also Pressley and Woloshyn 1995 for a very useful review) and L2 (Hosenfeld 1984; Hamp-Lyons 1985; Barnett 1988a, 1988b; Carrell, Pharis and Liberto 1989; Kern 1989; Carrell 1998) show that teaching learners to use reading strategies helps students improve their reading comprehension. Furthermore, the research suggests a number of qualities for such instruction to be maximally beneficial (Duffy 1993; Oxford 1994; Pressley and Woloshyn 1995; Janzen and Stoller 1998). In order for strategy instruction to be effective, it should:

- **Focus on establishing a purpose for reading** – Duffy (1993) found that until the teachers he was working with established a purpose for their students' reading, their strategies didn't make sense, and didn't lead toward the ultimate ability to use strategies.

- **Extend over time** – learning to become strategic readers is a long-term developmental process, often taking even years (Pressley 2000).

- **Be multi-componential**, and thus, should focus on the teaching of multiple integrated strategies, oriented toward specific purposes.

- **Be different for different learners**, depending on their language background, ethnicity, goals of study, proficiency level, learning styles, and gender. There are no universal "good language learning or using strategies" as past research has led us to believe (Oxford and Leaver 1996; Chandler, Lizotte, and Rowe 1998).

- **Involve either explicit explanation or modeling** (e.g., by "thinking aloud") of strategies by teachers for students. Then students graduallyassume more control for their own use of strategies from the teacher, eventually becoming able to use them independently.

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- **Focus on helping students** understand when and where to use strategies, either by explaining it to them directly, or by having them abstract it while practicing the use of strategies. Such instruction needs to include important metacognitive information, such as why the strategy should be used, what it accomplishes, and specific situations in which the strategy is applicable.

- **Teach students to monitor** how they are doing in their strategy use, and to take corrective action when problems are identified; this focus on ultimately developing students into self-regulated strategy users will enable them to determine for themselves if their strategies are effective, or if they need to take other measures to ensure their understanding of a text.

- **Include specific information** about the benefits of the strategies being taught, and thus, to motivate students to use strategies regularly.

- **Teach strategy use in context-integrated** into the curriculum and into course content, rather than as a separate subject. Students benefit most when they can see when and where to use them through direct experience in realistic contexts.

- **Teach students non-strategic knowledge** along with the strategies – knowledge on which their strategy use often depends. In reading, one type of non-strategic knowledge involves background knowledge that readers need in order to make sense of what they are reading.

Topic: 081:Using Purposeful Reading to Develop Strategic L2 Readers (I)

At the beginning of this chapter, we saw that the key elements fostering comprehension in reading include, in addition to the skillful use of comprehension strategies, strong word recognition skills and the ability to integrate background knowledge. Thus, effective instruction in strategy use also can be enhanced by incorporating these other two comprehension-facilitating components, namely, the ability to incorporate world knowledge with the strategy use, and a learning context that facilitates the development of strong word-level skills. The following are some practical ways in which strategies, world knowledge, and vocabulary skills can be integrated into L2 reading instruction:

Integrate purpose into the overall curriculum design

Design the overall course curriculum in a way that supports real-life reading for a purpose. Although there are many different ways to do this, some of the types of curriculum that particularly support purposeful reading include sustained content instruction, narrow reading, or task-based reading (see Pally 2000; Schmitt and Carter 2000; Murphy and Stoller 2001; Ellis 2003; among others, for explanations of these types of curricula). When taught in these types of curricula, readers must strategically determine which readings or which parts of a reading are useful for their purpose, as well as which strategies will enable them to make use of the information contained in the texts to achieve their purpose. Some ways to do this are:

- Collect a variety of materials in different genres around a single topic or theme (e.g., “developing a multi-cultural identity”).

- Explore or develop collections of news articles on a single subject (e.g., “the war in Iraq”).

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- Select a longer novel, non-fiction book, or other extended text that will involve students in reading on a single subject for multiple class sessions over an extended period of time.

- Depending on the content, subject, and texts selected, consider including at least one text that is only marginally relevant, so that at some point students must evaluate whether reading it will help them achieve their purpose.

Begin each lesson with a purpose

Design instruction so that units or lessons begin with a real purpose for reading. Although few L2 reading textbooks available today provide such purposes (however, see Ediger and Pavlik 1999 and 2000 for some examples that do), designing a purpose is not difficult. Make this purpose fit the students' own reasons for learning the L2 and the content of the curriculum. (Are they learning the L2 for academic reasons? Business? Travel?) Some real-life purposes can be seen below, along with examples of how they might be integrated with selected content texts (See Figure 2, below).

Purpose – Read in order to:	**Classroom applications or activities that involve reading for such purposes:**
Make a decision	- Read business reports in order to make a business decision - Read a college catalogue in order to decide whether to apply for admission - Decide which candidate to vote for, on the basis of their campaign statements
Report (orally or in writing) what one has learned about a subject	- Research how advertisements are designed so that they have the most effect on their audience; then present this information in an oral report - Read a non-fiction book on gorillas in Rwanda, in order to understand how a group of animals work together to aid each other's survival
Synthesize or put information into a different format	- Write a research paper about a particular author's style, as seen in several of the author's books - Develop a travel brochure to highlight key features of a place people like to visit - Read and compare a novel and a non-fiction book on a related topic - Design an advertisement for an imaginary product, based upon the information learned from reading on this subject
Get a general idea about something	- Read several news articles to understand what happened in an event - Look over a magazine to get an idea of what it is about, or who its intended audience is
Learn about a subject (in order to pass a test on it)	- Prepare for a test to obtain a driver's license - Read about the history of the Civil War in order to take a test about its causes and impact on the country - Research a company at which you will have an interview for a job

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Obtain information crucial for performing a specific task	- Follow a series of directions in order to build a bookshelf - Read a travel guide to learn where to find a particular historical site and to understand better what happened there - Obtain necessary information to order books or merchandise over the Internet
Make an argument or case for something	- Read business reports to make a recommendation about which division a company should sell off - Read several stories by a single author, in order to determine if a particular interpretation or claim about this author is justified - Read a non-fiction book on the bear population in some urban areas, in order to decide if hunting of bears should be permitted
Be entertained, or to pass the time	- Read a novel, and share what you liked about it - Read a magazine while waiting for a bus - Enjoy a poem, by reading it out loud
Other	- (…)

Figure 2. Some real-world reading purposes and related classroom activities

Topic: 082: Using Purposeful Reading To Develop Strategic L2 Readers (II)

Teach students to regulate their strategies for achieving specific purposes

Teach by integrating into instruction the self-regulated use of comprehension strategies explicitly within the context of a particular purpose, and in a supportive classroom, following these steps:

- Begin by brainstorming and discussing as a class or with partners about which strategies to use, how to use a particular strategy in a particular context, and what alternatives they have if a strategy doesn't work.

- Break down a task into a series of steps that can be used to accomplish it. In the process of accomplishing the task or purpose, the entire task can be visualized and the component steps listed so that an appropriate strategy can be selected to address each of those sub-steps. Students may refer back to these steps in the process over and over in their minds

– as a way of keeping a constant focus on whether their strategies are helping them accomplish their purpose.

For example (adapted from Pressley and Woloshyn 1995; Johns and Paz 1997):

Purpose: To summarize a passage

- Identify the genre of the text, and the typical text organization system for that genre.

- Identify information that matches each typical element of that genre.

- If applicable, identify main vs. supporting information; Relate main and supporting information.

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- Delete trivial, irrelevant, and redundant information.

- Substitute superordinate terms for lists of items.

- Integrate a series of events with superordinate action terms.

- Select or create a topic sentence to generalize the other information.

- If necessary, explain strategies and provide a mental modeling of their use, i.e., show students how to apply a strategy by thinking aloud through your mental "decisions" and by putting into words your thoughts as you consider the purpose, the content, and different strategic courses of action.

- Have students practice the strategies in the context of real reading; Monitor this practice, providing additional explanations and modeling as needed.

- Teach students the language they need to share about and discuss their use of strategies (e.g., such vocabulary as: predict/prediction, etc.) and restate students' strategic and interpretive responses, for example:

- I tried the ___ strategy because …

- ___ doesn't make sense because …

- How did that strategy help you? It helped me by …

- Because I want to (purpose), I need to (strategy)

- Share with the class what works and what doesn't; Teach metacognitive monitoring of strategy use.

- Teach strategy use in conjunction with other strategies; discuss how different ones relate to each other.

- Help and encourage students to develop and test their own strategies individually, in the process of identifying which ones work well for them; Develop a classroom environment that builds on the understanding that different learners use strategies in different ways.

- Encourage students to ask themselves why the ideas related in a text make sense. "Why" questioning can have great effect on learning by connecting readers to prior knowledge that can make facts in a text more sensible, and hence, more comprehensible and memorable. - Gradually reduce feedback and instruction as students become more and more independent (i.e., scaffold the instruction).

- Encourage transfer of strategies by discussing when and where the strategies being learned might be used.

- Call students' attention to the times when they are using strategies; Praise them for their use of strategies; Encourage students to offer and try out their own strategies.

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- Cue the use of new strategies when students encounter situations where they might be applied profitably, regardless of when these occasions arise during the school day.

- Continue cuing and prompting until students independently apply the strategies they have been taught.

Help students access their world knowledge

Facilitate your students' ability to incorporate their world knowledge. L2 students often do not share the world knowledge of the author because their experience does not always overlap with that of the writer. Design prereading activities in ways that build background knowledge and help students focus that knowledge on achieving their assigned purpose for reading. In a sustained content curriculum, the learning environment and curriculum can help students build the world knowledge they need, while also supporting and situating the strategies they are developing. Sustained content and narrow reading allow students to build their knowledge of a subject gradually and incrementally through multiple texts on a single topic, or through reading multiple chapters that revolve around a single context. This "layering" effect gives students a chance to develop deeper background knowledge of the particular subject they are reading about.

Build students' vocabulary recognition through multiple exposures

Facilitate your students' ability to recognize vocabulary quickly by exposing them to key vocabulary over and over again through the content material they are reading. Do this by providing texts for reading that recyclevocabulary and provide multiple exposures to the same vocabulary and concepts. Allow students to experience and re-experience vocabulary in both written and oral language contexts, providing many encounters with the same words. Keep a class vocabulary list; at the same time, encourage students to keep their own personal vocabulary notebooks. Involve students actively in developing meanings of words and exploring them in those contexts. A sustained content or narrow reading curriculum does this also by exposing students to key vocabulary repeatedly through the multiple and extended readings on the same topic. As students see certain vocabulary repeatedly in different texts, all on the same general topic, they increase their word recognition speed, as well as develop a working vocabulary for talking or writing about that topic.

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Lesson-16

DEVELOPING FLUENT READING SKILLS I

Topic: 083: Defining Fluent Reading

Anyone who is reading this book is almost certainly a fluent reader of his or her L1 and possibly of one or more second languages. Defining fluent reading is not an easy task, however, specifically because we all have some deep-set notions about the meaning of fluency. Think for a moment about someone you consider to be a fluent L1 reader. Is it someone who seems to devour material of all kinds? Is it someone who can remember, summarize, discuss and comment on what was read? Someone who loves to read? Then, think about someone you know who is a fluent reader in an L2. Is that person a fluent reader in L1 as well as L2? Would you describe that person's L2 reading in the same ways that you describe his or her L1 fluent reading? Does that person love to read? How many people can you name who "hate to read" in their native language but love to read in an L2? Is there a lesson for us there? As you can see, the issues here are complex and often inter-related.

Despite our individual notions and experiences of fluent reading in native and second languages, we need to establish a basic definition of fluent reading in order to agree on the best ways to teach students to become fluent readers. Grabe and Stoller (2002: 110) comment that the elements of fluent reading "reflect cognitive abilities to process visual and semantic information efficiently, combining automatic and attentional skills most appropriately for the reading task involved." Day and Bamford (1998: 16) identify the "components upon which fluent second language reading depends [as] a large sight vocabulary; a wide general vocabulary; and knowledge of the target language, the world, and text types." Fluent reading comprehension, not just decoding words but coming away from a text with a clear understanding and an appropriate interpretation of it, involves a number of processes. Consider the astonishing processes that occur in every two seconds while we are reading in L1: recognize and understand the meaning of eight to ten words; recognize a grammatical structure and form a meaning unit; connect new meaning to what was read before; assess the 'fit' of the information; infer, check comprehension,revise if necessary; and evaluate information, making decisions about ambiguities when necessary (Grabe and Stoller 2002). That we achieve all those processes while reading in L1 is remarkable; reaching a level where we can complete those processes as rapidly (or nearly so) in L2 is doubly remarkable. No wonder a recent publication (Moats 1999) from the American Federation of Teachers was entitled "Teaching Reading IS Rocket Science."

Reading fluency in both L1 and L2 is not a static or fixed process that once achieved remains constant. We are not all fluent readers, even in L1, all of the time with all texts. Comprehension and speed vary with different tasks. First of all, not all L1 readers are fluent readers, and certainly few of us are fluent readers when confronted with materials that are specialized, de-contextualized, in a technical area outside our experience or simply not consistent with our cultural background and schemata. A fluent reader of 20th century novels may flounder when confronted with an economics text. A computer geek who has never read much fiction may be lost when reading a stream-of-consciousness novel. An article about physics leaves me completely baffled. Moreover, even fluent readers vary their speed according to the text they are reading and their purpose(s) for reading that text. When we read to learn or remember,

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we tend to read a bit slower. When we read through a detective story to discover who the villain is, we read rapidly (Grabe and Stoller 2002).

Even more disruptive to fluent reading can be cultural issues, ideas or assumptions that we are not conscious of or that do not exist in our own experience. An ESL student aptly describes that difficulty: "I do not know how to explain something which does not exist in the English-speaking world in the English language. And I do not know how to understand something that never existed in my frame of reference" (Zamel and Spack 1998: 97). Decoding words and understanding the meanings of individual words does not necessarily constitute comprehension of a text. Thus, a passage in English with no new words may still be incomprehensible to an L2 reader. In all situations it is critical to remember that individuals have particular literacy backgrounds that "will significantly affect attitudes towards texts" (Ridgway 2003: 9).

Fluent reading is a complex process that involves cognitive processes, cultural background, world knowledge, and linguistic knowledge. As a working definition for the purposes of this essay and adapting a list compiled by Grabe and Stoller (2002), along with the descriptions cited above, I suggest the following: Fluent L2 reading is a rapid, efficient, interactive, flexible linguistic process that incorporates purposeful,strategic, evaluating elements. In addition to providing comprehension of a wide variety of texts, fluent reading produces enhanced knowledge of the L2, reinforces knowledge of standard structures in the target language, and helps develop the habit of reading that in turn promotes fluent reading.

Topic: 084: Barriers to Achieving Fluent L2 Reading:

Language learners follow a certain general progression in learning a language. They must learn and begin to produce a new sound system (sometimes quite different, sometimes not), memorize, recognize, and produce a new orthography, and learn new rules of syntax and morphology, among other tasks. Hard work, feats of memory, hours of study, practice, repetition, translation and analysis are necessary for any language learner, no matter how talented, gifted or bright the student may be. While target languages that share orthography, sounds, etc. with the learner's native language may seem somewhat easier to learn (Grabe and Stoller 2002), the acquisition processes are similar no matter what the target and the L1 may be.

The part of the language learning sequence that is under consideration in this essay – the teaching that moves students from upper intermediate or advanced to fluent or bilingual – has not received as much attention as teaching at the beginning and intermediate levels. When do students go from being earnest studiers of a language to fluent users of a language? What is the crossover point? Does it happen in class or in the student's everyday use of the language? How long does it take? What triggers the change?

A friend who teaches in an intensive language program phrased those questions to me recently – why do some students make it and some don't? Some make the leap, some never do. Two students with similar TOEFL scores begin graduate study in the same department of the same university. One fails; the other succeeds. Why? What barriers, hurdles, interferences or factors stopped one from being successful? What skills helped the other succeed? I argue here that a number of events, usually involving some kind of change in thinking or in approach, have to occur for a learner to find the path to fluency. Some changes are metacognitive – a better understanding of the nature of reading and the nature of language learning and strategy use. Some changes are strongly tied to culture, personality and identity. Some changes involve new behaviors, new goals, new motivation, new priorities. Without changes, many high-

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intermediate students reach a kindof plateau in their language-learning journey and do not move on to fluency.

The learner who has achieved a high intermediate or even advanced level in L2 has already established a number of habits, learning methods, beliefs about language, and assumption about his or her ability. Having been a successful language learner up to this point, those habits and beliefs are deeply embedded. There has been no reason to question them, no reason to modify them. Unfortunately, some of those habits may also be barriers to attaining fluency – or to continue the metaphor, hurdles in the path of the long distance runner. In order to move learners from competent to fluent, teachers and students alike must look honestly at previous learning behaviors and evaluate each one in terms of whether or not it will help produce fluency. Figure 1 below illustrates some of the most common and troublesome beliefs and behaviors that may be barriers. A discussion of each general area follows the table.

Previously useful language learning habits that may be barriers to gaining fluency	**How these habits inhibit the development of fluency**
- Study intensely and to the point of exhaustion	- Learners can only take in so much new information at a time and retain it. Beyond that limit, the 'hard work' is potentially wasted. A reader may make gains from reading "at level" that will be more useful than burning midnight oil to memorize another 20 words.
- Tackle increasingly difficult materials, far above one's current language level	- Very high-level materials force one to translate in order to understand; they often destroy confidence and erode motivation
- Continue to translate all texts into L1 under the assumption that one can't really understand them unless every word is translated	- Translation prevents one from functioning "in" the target language and developing automaticity.
- Memorize longs lists of words/definitions, especially technical or specialized words	This activity takes precious time away from the process of understanding words in phrases and frequently used combinations.
- Study only authentic materials at the highest levels	- Authentic texts may sometimes work against developing fluency.
Avoid long texts in favor of short, difficult ones	- Short texts prevent one from sustained reading and practicing automatic word and sentence pattern recognition
Read only to 'study' a text, never for pleasure or information	- Reduces and often eliminates any pleasure in reading, any desire to read for fun, any habit of reading or love of reading
Slow reading, using a pencil or a finger to keep track of lines, seeing one word at a time	- These behaviors are a sure indication of the learner's inability to process information, rely on understanding in the target language, and see larger chunks of language. The student is on a path that moves away from fluency.

Figure 1. Common barriers to developing fluent L2 reading

Topic: 085: Implications of Language Use, Cultural Identity and Translation for L2 Reading

Most beginning language learners are dependent on L1 as a base for their acquisition of L2. While the communicative method encourages learners to use the target language as soon as possible, it

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takes time for us to give up our dependence on some level of translation. Those who learn to communicate and to read without constant, simultaneous translation are well on the way to becoming fluent in the L2. However, when they are confronted with a reading text that has a high percentage of unknown words – high meaning more than 5 or 6% – or a text with complex grammar or syntax that is new to them, their natural tendency is to fall back on translation in order to understand the text. In an attempt to move students to higher levels of reading, teachers often assign more difficult texts. With each difficult text, the learner is thrown back to the need to translate in order to comprehend. The result is that reading is slow (far from fluent), tedious, unrewarding, and de-motivating. Fast, efficient, flexible, strategic reading will not result from the decoding, grammatical analysis, and translation of difficult texts (Day and Bamford 1998; Waring and Takahashi 2000).

Being fluent in an L2 may also create identity issues for some learners. While an L1 German speaker may not feel much loss of identity when speaking English, a Japanese speaker may feel quite disoriented when asked to function in an English speaking environment. Certainly an English speaker, especially a woman, will feel oddly uncomfortable being constrained to use various levels of honorifics and deferential terms, as well as grammatical markers and vocabulary, that mark her as being female. On a subconscious level, learners may resist the steps toward full understanding in the L2 because it makes them feel odd and forces them to think about the content of the text in their second language, which isn't THEM. Being aware of that resistance, an example of metacognitive understanding, is the first step toward overcoming it.

Topic: 086: Vocabulary Acquisition and Automaticity

Vocabulary acquisition and automaticity

There is considerable agreement about the need for a large general vocabulary and an appropriate specialized vocabulary in order to be a fluent reader in L2. There is a difference, however, between knowing definitions (or translations) of a long list of words and a rapid, automatic recognition and processing of many commonly used words. Automatic processing of text leads to fluent reading, but automatic processing only occurs when the language in the text matches the reader's own language level. Difficult texts, as noted above, throw the student back into translation rather than automatic processing.

Even those who have achieved a large specialized sight vocabulary in their areas of specialization can have trouble with texts written for native speakers that use a rich choice of English words. Zamel and Spack (1998: 97) show an example of a student describing problems with reading a psychology text. The student says:

It's not the actual scientific terms (such as 'repression,' 'schizophrenia,' psychosis,' or 'neurosis') that make the reading so hard, but it's descriptive and elaborating terms (e.g., 'to coax,' gnawing discomfort,' 'remnants,' 'fervent appeal'), instead. It is a very frustrating thing to read these kinds of texts, because one feels incredibly ignorant and stupid.

Feeling ignorant and stupid are not the affects that will motivate students to read often and more.

Sentence pattern processing and automaticity

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Language knowledge is critical to fluent reading. Readers must be able to process sentences, words, chunks of language, ideas, and syntactic structures. But as long as the learner sees those elements only as they appear in translation to L1, the pattern recognition and automaticity will not develop (Lewis 2000). Proponents of extensive reading argue convincingly that learners only develop automaticity by reading extensively at their own level. Through hours of reading at their own level they become better and better at recognizing larger chunks of language, understanding sentence structure and syntax, and processing information (Day and Bamford 1998; Lewis 2000; Waring and Takahashi 2000).

Fluent readers are confident readers.

Confidence is built over time, not bestowed suddenly. The materials that will build reading fluency and confidence must be selected with care. Interest, level (both vocabulary and grammar), cultural context, and length are considerations for the teacher who is selecting texts to help students develop fluency. The materials need to promote each learner's habit of reading, sustained silent reading, and the reading of longer and longer text. These materials must also lend themselves to increasing the learners' reading speed and to building their confidence. There can probably never be too many materials. Since gathering materials in a number of academic fields and career paths is too large a task for any one teacher, every student can be called up to download and print materials from the internet, peruse materials in the library, borrow, beg and buy any texts – from low level to high level – that deal specifically with their area. Indeed, the more the students are responsible for collecting the materials, the more likely they will be interested in the texts. The readings that are too easy will help reinforce rapid reading; the ones that are two difficult will be read much later in the program.

Topic: 087: L1 Environment Vs L2 Environment

Some argue that it is impossible to become fluent in an L2 unless one is living in an environment where that language is spoken. Certainly the amount of language input (Krashen 1988) available when everyone around speaks the L2 as a native language is a boost to listening and speaking fluency. On the other hand, people may live in an English-speaking environment and never learn to speak English – a point that infuriates many who understand little about language acquisition. The language environment does not insure language acquisition. In the case of L2 reading, the environment does not insure fluent reading. In fact, the influence of the environment may be even less important for reading than it is for speaking and listening. Anderson, in a study of students' use of reading strategies in L1 and L2 environments, concludes that the availability of English texts around the world and through the internet has diminished the differences between readers in the two settings (Anderson 2003). An English text in Spain is like an English text in Japan, a tool for improving reading skills regardless of the current language environment. More critical than the language environment is the nature, appropriateness, and interest of the text. Becoming fluent readers of English means having access to a large quantity of appropriate texts that will help the learner develop automaticity in word recognition and sentence pattern recognition. These texts will reinforce general vocabulary and give students the critically important confidence to continue reading.

Well, enough of barriers, hurdles, fears and difficulties. If fluent reading can be taught and nurtured, and I believe it can, we need to look at how to do just that. Recent studies conclude that L1 reading and L2 reading are quite different, and there are many reasons for those differences (Grabe and Stoller 2002). Even with obvious differences in vocabulary knowledge language knowledge, the process

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of reading in L2 at the high-intermediate level and above is more like the process of reading in L1 than anything else. At some point, fluent reading in L2 becomes something like reading in L1. Vastly different orthographies, cultural attitudes towards reading, availability of appropriate materials, and other factors may keep learners from reaching fluency quickly. Yet, when fluent readers use the target language, learn in the target language, and function in the target language, they are performing in ways that have some similarity to the ways that native speakers develop fluent reading and higher register speaking skills.

Topic: 088: How to Build Reading Fluency

Begin at the beginning – with your own reading

At the risk of making my readers a bit uncomfortable, I want to begin with a crucial, self-reflective activity. Teachers must first consider their own reading ability, both in L1 and in the L2. I am confident that you are fluent readers of your native language. I am equally confident that most of you have never thought much about your own L1 reading processes and how you became a fluent reader. Teachers faced with the task of helping learners become fluent L2 readers need first to be quite conscious of their own reading history, beliefs, abilities, strategies, etc. The suggested activity 6 at the end of this chapter takes you through a series of steps to become more conscious of your own reading.

Having considered your own L1 reading, it is also wise to examine your L2 reading. For teachers who are native speakers of English, consider how you read in Spanish, Greek, German, Japanese or any language you have studied. Have you achieved reading fluency in that language? How did you accomplish that? If not, what are the barriers that have kept you from becoming fluent? Do you model for your students your own attempts to read more fluently in a second language? My students in Japan were thrilled, amused, and motivated by my bringing kindergarten-level Japanese texts for my own reading while they engaged in silent extensive reading. If I could sit and read L2 texts at a kindergarten level, they could certainly read easy stories in graded readers at their own (much higher) L2 levels.

For non-native teachers of English, consider the model that you present to your students. Do you read English in front of them? Do you carry an English newspaper with you to read in spare moments? Do you enjoy reading novels, essays, or other texts in English? What are your own beliefs about becoming a fluent reader in English? Have you reached the reading level in English that you would like to achieve?

You cannot become a fluent reader of English overnight. But you can model for your students your own steps toward becoming a fluent reader. In a mixed-level class, and most classes contain a range of abilities, students can model reading for each other. You should remind learners frequently and emphatically that becoming a fluent reader is a process that occurs over time. They did not become fluent readers of L1 in the first two years of elementary school. Even as older or mature learners of a second language, they cannot become fluent readers in a few months. However, as olderlearners they can apply, with your guidance, conscious strategies, metacognitive awareness, focused study and savvy methods to that developmental process.

Topic: 089: Provide Plenty of Appropriate Materials

You and your students need access to a wide range of reading materials in order to find enough appropriate texts. On one hand it is good to let learners pick the reading materials that interest them and

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keep them engaged; on the other hand, learners often pick materials too far above, or occasionally even somewhat below, their own reading levels. Full sets of graded readers from a number of different publishers, English newspapers at all levels and with various points of view, materials from the internet that are written for elementary and middle school English speaking children, magazines for young people, textbooks for young people – all these may provide useful reading materials for your learners. Beware, however, of an emphasis on authentic texts simply because they are authentic. As Day (2003) so wisely illustrated in "Authentic Materials: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing", a text may seem useful because it is authentic; but if the level is too high, learners are thrown back on translation, decoding, and other strategies that slow down rather than promote fluent reading.

Topic: 090: Provide Continuous Motivation

The amount of time and effort that an intermediate-to-advanced students need to devote to becoming a fluent readers of English is substantial. Only students with high motivation, self discipline, and clear goals will achieve the levels they envision. Motivating students to do this much work is not easy, especially if they have not traveled or lived in the L2 environment at all. Fear and threats seldom work, and none of us want to teach in such a manner anyway. The motivation that will transform their wishes into the actions they must take to become fluent readers have to be internal, positive, and sustained. Day and Bamford's (1998) chapter on motivating students to do extensive reading provides excellent suggestions that apply to a fluent reading program as well. Motivation that arises from stress, worry, or fear is exhausting, short-lived, and usually external. No matter how high the motivation, learners must have a realistic understanding of the time and effort it will take them to become fluent readers. In addition, theymust be willing to adjust their learning methods, to accept that fluency is acquired gradually, and to know that fluent reading cannot be dependent only on translation.

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Lesson-17

DEVELOPING FLUENT READING SKILLS II

Topic: 091: Vocabulary II

The most obvious gap between fluent and non-fluent EFL readers is the English vocabulary that they have available for use while reading. A native English-speaking elementary school child in the US has a vocabulary that is usually estimated at 5,000 words. The highest levels of graded readers contain about 3,600 to 5,000 head words; college freshman sociology texts may contain between 20,000 and 40,000 words (Grabe and Stoller 2002). Most L2 readers begin reading without the spoken vocabulary advantage that native users have, and their progress is relatively slow. In addition, L1 readers begin reading with a wealth of knowledge about how words are combined in their language. Lewis (2000: 55), arguing that collocations are a key to fluency, comments that "advanced students do not become more fluent by being given lots of opportunities to be fluent. They become more fluent when they acquire more chunks of language for instant retrieval." What kind of curriculum can we design to help students acquire those chunks? Where is the path through this difficult patch in their language learning journey?

Students may be highly motivated to focus on vocabulary study. It is a familiar task for them, and many have probably been successful in memorizing lists of words. In order to build fluency, however, their vocabulary study tasks will be more complicated. Fluent readers need automatic recognition of many words and of many word combinations. They need to focus on acquisition of vocabulary in the long-term memory, giving them access to a broad, functional word base in various contexts. In addition, they need the specialized vocabulary that will occur repeatedly in their work situations or academic fields of study. No one method of vocabulary study is comprehensive enough to train learners in so many ways. Instead, several types of vocabulary study, pursued at different times and with different texts, may combine to produce the vocabulary skills that fluent readers need: bottom up strategy training; reading at their language level to improve sight recognition and develop automaticity; collocation study to help them recognize larger segments of texts; and, narrow reading exercises. All four should be a part of any fluent reading program, but not all at the same time.

Topic: 092: Bottom-Up Strategy Training for Fluent Reading

Most researchers agree that reading is an interactive process that involves both bottom-up and top-down activities. Recent emphasis on top-down processes (e.g., schema building, guessing words in context) is now being balanced with more attention to de-coding and word recognition exercises (Birch 2002). Exercises that push learners to recognize and process words quickly are good correctives for those who read very slowly and translate even the simplest words. Positive results with bottom up vocabulary study are reported by Ichiyama (2003). The exercises used in her study included rapid and repetitive exposure to vocabulary that appeared to help students not only to recognize but also to memorize and remember words (see also Grabe 1988; Segalowitz, Poulson, and Komoda 1991; Paran 1996). For beginning readers, the bottom-up strategies are critical, and some recent approaches have neglected them sadly. If high-intermediate-to-advanced readers are lacking some of these bottom-up skills, additional or new training may be necessary.

Topic: 093: Lexical Approach for Developing Fluent Reading

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Reading at level to develop automaticity

Proponents of extensive reading are unequivocal in their agreement that automatic recognition of words is critical to fluent reading (Eskey 1988; Wallace 2001; Birch 2002; Grabe and Stoller 2002). Native speakers develop this skill by years of reading at levels appropriate to their current language ability. Elementary school readers do not read medical textbooks; however, beginning EFL students may be asked to read nearly that far above their current language levels. Waring and Takaki (2000: 7) insist that "learners need to be reading at or below their reading ability in order to develop fluency and confidence." Moreover, they emphasize that "there is no 'short cut' to the automatic recognition of words." My own work with a Chinese graduate student is a case in point. When she came to me, her reading speed at Level One of the Cambridge Graded Readers (about 400 head words) was less than 100 words per minute. Over two months, she completed a rigorous reading program that took her through about 80% of the Cambridge Graded Readers at all six levels, moving up a level only when she was reading comfortably at the previous one. After two months, she was reading nearly 200 words per minute, with 90% comprehension, at the top level (about 3,5000 head words). One cannot assume an equal success from all students, but there is no question that she learned torecognize words and understand English syntax with a much higher degree of automaticity during that time.

Collocation study

A third type of vocabulary study that will nurture fluent reading is explained by Lewis (2000) in Teaching Collocation: Further Developments in the Lexical Approach. Lewis and other authors lay out an extensive program for collocation study, one that focuses on noticing and recording the most useful language in a given text and helping students build vocabulary through collocation notebooks. Collocations help us understand different meanings and definitions of words in actual contexts where they appear. Collocations also teach us to recognize "multi-word units" or "ready-made chunks" of language (Lewis 2000). Nearly all researchers agree that L2 readers need a large vocabulary in order to read fluently, but that is something of a simplification. A large vocabulary is only the first element in the recognition of larger-than-a-word chunks of language. By focusing on chunks of language and phrases that include a number of words, collocation study gives learners the chance to recognize larger packages of text, process them faster, and read more fluently. Combined with bottom-up strategy training, reading at level to develop automaticity, and narrow reading described below, collocation study will add an important processing element to the learner's program.

Topic: 094: Narrow Vs Wide Reading

The final element in a comprehensive vocabulary study plan must address the specialty vocabulary necessary for study or work in an English speaking environment. Most people already know the subject, career track, or specialization that they will pursue in another country. They need a program, concurrent with the three types of vocabulary study described above, that will help them recognize quickly the words and phrases in their academic or career area. Schmitt and Carter's (2000) experiment with "narrow reading" provides an illustration of how the teacher can design, with the student's input, some narrow reading exercises, gather materials for narrow reading on one topic, and re-enforce the learner's familiarity with a specialized vocabulary. For example, asking students to read 1 or 2newspaper articles specifically in their area (such as economics, computer science, business management, biology) will begin the process.

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Building a narrow or specialized vocabulary must occur simultaneously with building a large general vocabulary in order to allow learners to read fluently in their special fields or areas. Reading widely, as promoted by Krashen (1988) for language input and Day and Bamford (1998) for extensive reading is a powerful tool for improving reading skills. When learners read widely, especially at levels that contain fewer than 6% unknown words, they will improve reading speed, word recognition, and make progress toward fluency. When they read narrowly, in their own area of specialization, they will add the vocabulary and the specialized collocations that will help them read a subject-specific text fluently.

Topic: 095: Grammar Knowledge and Reading Fluency

Grammar knowledge exists in a variety of forms. Native speakers acquire considerable tacit grammar knowledge even before they begin to learn to read. The ability to read and understand simple, compound and complex sentences without having to stop and analyze specific structures is a powerful type of tacit grammar knowledge, one based partly on the ability to process chunks of language as we discussed earlier. The ability to draw a line from a pronoun to its antecedent indicates a more formal and conscious grammar knowledge. Many students of EFL have studied formal grammar rules and memorized grammatical charts, verb tense forms, rules of morphology and syntax. They may be able to complete grammar exercises at a rather high level of structural understanding. In order to become fluent readers, however, they must be able to process sentences with an increasing speed, competence and automaticity. Continuing to work high level grammar exercises may teach students new elements of grammar, but it will not improve their ability to recognize and comprehend those structures automatically. Corpus linguistics research illustrates for us that there is a “finite number of regularly-occurring patterns in language” (LarsenFreeman 2001). Learning to read fluently means recognizing word groups that occur in the same structural patterns and being able to process them quickly.

While acquiring grammar knowledge is an ongoing process in language learning, and learners must never abandon the goal of better understanding of the target language, they must apply that knowledge in way that will lead to fluency. They must read. In the beginning, they must read at a levelwhere the grammar and syntax of the text is far below their technical understanding of the target language, and they must read as quickly as they can without stopping to examine grammar or syntactical features. One problem with texts written for elementary level native speakers is that lowlevel vocabulary does not guarantee low-level grammar. Because of a native speaker’s tacit understanding of grammar patterns, the grammatical structures may be too advanced for the EFL reader. Remember Day’s (2003) warning about a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

A full-blown reading program to develop fluency, with hours and hours of reading at each level in the graded reader series, will help students move gradually from very simple structures to more complex one. When the learner can read at Level 1 without stopping and without problems understanding the sentences/syntax, the language and grammar of Level 2 will introduce a few new elements – but not too many. The learner will process all the Level 1 material automatically, and will pause briefly (then, eventually less and less) to review or examine the higher-level sentence/syntax grammar as it appears.

Topic: 096: Metacognitive Strategy Training for Fluent Reading

A reading program to develop fluency will also include some attention to reading strategies and metacognitive awareness of the nature of fluent reading. This is not to say that all hurdles can be

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overcome with strategy training. However, studies have hypothesized and confirmed that reader awareness and a flexible use of strategies among high intermediate to advanced students is directly correlated with reading proficiency (Carrell 1989a; Zhang 2002). Some of the most useful strategies are fully discussed in articles by Carrell (1989b) and Oxford (1990, 2001). Any program to develop fluent reading should also address a number of metacognitive strategies, including comprehension monitoring, connecting synonyms, outlining, structural highlighting, asking pre-reading questions, semantic mapping and others that are well discussed in the literature for teaching at the intermediate to advanced levels (Hosenfeld 1977; Carrell 1989b; Anderson 2003).

If, however, students already are familiar with these techniques, it is important to move on to a higher level of metacognitive awareness, especially an understanding of text structure in various academic disciplines or career areas. On the path to fluency, the structure of texts and the cross cultural features of texts are critical elements (Wallace 2001).

Students in the sciences need to understand the organization of a scientific article. Those who will specialize in social sciences or literary fields need to know the conventional structures of social and literary criticism. Career people need to know the ways that reports, memos, proposal, and projects are organized and developed (Carrell 1984a, 1984b).

In fact, probably the most helpful materials teacher can provide for their students are samples of the texts they will deal with in the L2 setting – a college syllabus, a theoretical text, a business report, a proposal to be submitted to a boss. All of these will help learners become familiar with the cultural and structural patterns of texts in their L2. The more they read those texts, the more fluent they will become. Teachers who are thus faced with the difficult task of trying to meet the needs of students with different specialties will find substantial help in works by Connor (1996) and Swales (1990).

Topic: 097: Programs for Developing Reading Fluency

It is now time to pull together the cautions and advice offered above and describes the elements in a program designed to develop reading fluency. Each of the following elements is critical:

Preliminaries: Before starting a program

1. Be as informed as possible about the different cultural expectations for reading in their native languages and reading in English.
2. Know the rhetorical structures of academic and business texts in the students' native language as well as in English.
3. Understand the nature of fluent reading – yours in L1, yours in L2, and the research that describes it.
4. Build support for the program you design, convince colleagues, students and administrators of its validity, and stick with it. Even if the design isn't perfect, a program based on the recommendations in this chapter will take students in the right direction, and maybe to their goal.

Critical elements in a fluent reading program

Time: learners must make daily, weekly, monthly time commitments and adhere to them throughout the program. Any program to produce fluent readers should be a minimum of four months,

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preferably six. There will be great advances in four months, but six months is more realistic for achieving results that will make the transition to study or work in the L2 environment.

Motivation: The motivation for a fluent reading program must be nurtured, modeled, and reinforced by the teacher, but the motivation must come from within the student. Motivation is energy transformed into constructive, methodologically sound, efficient and productive activities. It needs to be reinforced regularly by work with peers, rewards, and recognition of progress. Integrate motivational elements into the programs – team goals, a buddy system, posting of goals, posting of timed reading scores, posting of books or materials read, individual record keeping, reading logs, and anything that helps keep the learners' energy levels high.

Metacognitive awareness: Teachers must promote an increased understanding of the nature of reading, the processes of reading, the most effective strategies for reading, and the cultural and rhetorical patterns of texts in the L2.

Appropriate materials: Collect, beg, borrow, download, buy materials in the target language – graded readers, textbooks at all levels (elementary to college), technical texts at all levels, newspapers, magazines, internet articles and anything else that is relevant to the students' special fields and at a wide range of reading difficulty. By the end of the program both the teacher and each individual student will have a substantial collection of useful texts.

Four pronged vocabulary study: Whether simultaneous or serial, different types of vocabulary study will deepen and widen the learner's word recognition skills and automaticity. Identify, with the students' help, the kinds of specialized vocabulary they will need in order to function well in the English environment. After explaining the four types of vocabulary study that they need to pursue, have students prioritize their needs and decide on a sequence of study.

Willingness to change: Both teachers and students will need flexibility, open minds, and cultural awareness. Teachers must be willing to use new methods of teaching; learners must be willing to learn new ways of reading.

Confidence in the program: Flexibility, motivation, and the ultimate success of the program depend on both the teachers' and the students'belief that it will work! Explain to the students the value, efficiency and power of the program. Work with students to help them develop their goals and set up individualized programs: have them set a time frame; have them select the types of vocabulary study and strategy training they want to work on. Explain that they must do extensive reading, along with one type of vocabulary study and one metacognitive strategy training. Beyond that they can select from collocation study, narrow reading, timed readings, rereading exercises, paired reading exercises, guided reading exercises, and any other activities you specify. Other activities could include comprehension monitoring, question formulation, visualization techniques, rhetorical analysis, genre recognition, and schematic mapping.

Read: Model reading for the students. Talk to them about things you read recently. Most important, get students reading – in class, out of class, in groups, individually, on the internet, in the library, on the bus/train, waiting in line, early in the morning, late at night, in waiting rooms, waiting for a meeting, waiting for a class to begin, and instead of watching TV.

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Lesson-18

TEACHING READING: INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE I

Topic: 098: Introduction: Individual and social perspective

Academic work on reading in the English speaking world of today may be divided into two perspectives, the "narrow" and the "broad." The narrow perspective focuses upon the abilities of individuals, and generates research work into initial reading, and reading as comprehension, in both first and additional languages.

Work on reading in the broad perspective, on the other hand, examines literacy practices generally in society, and has its origins in sociology and anthropology. This perspective is part of an intellectual movement which has been influential from the 1980s onwards, and which has turned the focus of attention away from the individual, characteristic of the previous psychological approaches, and towards the social. It accordingly concentrates upon the meanings and values of literate behaviour in social contexts, and to some extent may be regarded as the "communicative competence" perspective on reading and writing.

Much of the work on the child's acquisition of initial literacy (both reading and writing) has been concerned with what may be termed "alphabetisation", that is, the process by which children come to master the orthographic system. In the English-speaking world a great deal of the pedagogy of initial reading has been politicised around the relative advantages of the so-called "phonic" methods as against the "real" books (alternatively "good" books) approaches. The general conclusion (Adams 1990), seems to be that both can, depending upon the context of acquisition, be effective, although research suggests that children of average and below average reading ability gain from systematic attention to "phonics". There is, however, very little research work on initial literacy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) of children who have already learned to read and write in their first language (L1). Children who are not taught literacy in their L1, but go "straight for English" from the first day of school – a phenomenon common in African countries that were British colonies – are known to have weak competence in reading English (Williams 1996, 1998).

Research work beyond initial literacy has generally dealt with reading and writing separately, and our account of the narrow perspective will reflect this, although more attention will be given to reading, where most research has been done (in fact, as early as 1908, Edward Huey in his seminal book on the subject claimed that "there is too much work in reading to review. Within this "narrow" perspective, work in reading has been preoccupied with characterising what knowledge and competencies readers need, and how these are deployed in comprehension (i.e., the construction of meaning). Reader proficiency in the language of the text is agreed to be crucial (Grabe this volume), and applied linguistics has devoted a great deal of attention to the relative importance of "reading ability" and "language proficiency" in L2/FL reading. In addition, work on the process, rather than the product, of reading has come up with reading strategies and skills "beyond language". This chapter will first review the narrow approaches to reading, then move on to the broad approaches, and we finally indicate some areas for future developments.

Topic: 099: Reading: The Narrow Perspective

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The narrow psycholinguistically-oriented research perspective into reading has been interested not only in establishing the components necessary for reading, but also with attempts to model the reading process by specifying the relations between components.

Component approaches

The proponents of simple two-component models of reading put forward what may be roughly characterised as a reading component, and language component. Prominent advocates of the two-component view of reading are Hoover and Tunmer (1993: 1) who say "this view holds that reading consists of only two components, one that allows language to be recognised through graphic representation, and another that allows language to be comprehended." In short, their intuitively appealing claim is that in order to understand a written text, the two necessary components are the ability to read, and competence in the language of the text.

Language competence in reading

Vellutino and Scanlon (1982: 196) are particularly assertive in their claim that "reading is primarily a linguistic skill [...] it is the linguistic components of printed words that imbue them with meaning and substance." A number of studies have looked at language in terms of syntax and lexis, and examined how they contribute separately to the construction of meaning in reading. Other studies have examined the effect of "language" holistically, more in accordance with our intuitions of how we read (it is rather implausible that in normal reading syntactic decoding operates in a lexical vacuum, or vice versa).

Topic: 100: Syntax in Reading

Studies of the effect of syntactic competence in the case of L1 readers are scarce, primarily because of the widespread assumption that "grammatical meanings are intuitive" (Fries 1963: 70) and therefore their effects did not need to be studied. In similar vein, Schlesinger (1968) concluded after a series of experiments that, for L1 readers, syntax did not significantly affect the reading process.

However, many psychologists working with young readers have come to the opposite conclusion. Vellutino and Scanlon (1982: 236) claim that competence in syntax facilitates the process of reading, as it provides on-the-spot feedback if a "reading" conflicts with the grammatical context, and thereby allows self-correction. They also report research which found that, in the case of sentences such as John promised Mary to shovel the driveway, poor readers tended to see Mary as doing the shovelling. Such misinterpretation is explained by the so-called "minimum distance principle", where the noun phrase closest to a preceding infinitive verb is judged as the implicit subject, possibly by analogy with sentences such as John told/wanted/asked Mary to shovel the driveway. Ten years later Rayner and Pollatsek (1989) introduced the very similar "garden path" principle, according to which weak readers structure written sentences in the most "economic" manner, by trying to relate new items syntactically to preceding items. Thus in sentences such as: (1) Because Tim always eats a whole chicken this doesn't seem much to him, as opposed to (2) Because Tim always eats a whole chicken is just a snack for him it is predicted that the first sentence is easier to process than the second, since the "default" path is to attach "a whole chicken" to "eats" as the object of a transitive verb. Although Vellutino and Scanlon's (1982) review finds that syntactic proficiency and reading ability correlate, they also point out that syntactic competence does not

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necessarily cause reading ability, and suggest that syntactic weaknesses could be signs that readers have difficulties in other areas of language.

In L2 studies of syntax in reading, there is universal acceptance of the view that adequate competence in L2 syntax is necessary. Berman (1984) for example, after conducting a series of studies looking at Israeli students reading English concludes that "efficient FL readers must rely - in part, though not exclusively - on syntactic devices to get at text meaning". However, Berman's note of reserve is in order. It may well be possible for successful reading to be achieved with less than perfect competence in syntax, through a combination of lexical knowledge and background knowledge. In other words, readers may "guess" at a structural meaning, as they "guess" at lexical meaning.

Topic: 101: Vocabulary and Background Knowledge

Vocabulary

Much research with L1 English primary schoolchildren provides support for the relationship between lexical development and reading ability. A number of studies cited by Vellutino and Scanlon (1982) find substantial correlations between measures of vocabulary and reading. In addition, research into L2 reading has highlighted the crucial importance of vocabulary (see Grabe; Field this volume), while surveys among L2 learners invariably reveal vocabulary to be an important concern for L2 readers. In deciding which vocabulary to teach language learners, an important and justifiable criterion has been frequency. A finding repeated over several decades (Richards 1974; Nation and Waring 1997) is that the 2,000 most common words (including grammatical function words) account for approximately 80% of the total number of words in most prose texts. However, the other 20% of these texts, that is, one word in every five, roughly two words per line, is made up of the remaining words of the English language (several hundred thousand, according to McArthur 1992: 1091). Thus we have a "frequency paradox", namely that, since the 2,000 most frequent words are common to most texts, the crucial contribution to the message uniqueness of texts is not the 2,000 most common words, but rather the words that constitute the remaining 20%, some of which may be extremely infrequent. Poor vocabulary knowledge, especially in the case of L2 readers, has implications for the advice that readers should guess the meanings of unknown words from context: in order to be able to do this, it has been estimated that readers need to know over 95% of the other words in a text (Hirsh and Nation 1992).

Background knowledge

In recent decades a great deal of attention in the applied linguistics view of reading has been devoted to "background knowledge", particularly under the label "schema theory" (the terms "script" and "framework" are also used for what is essentially the same notion). Whatever labels may be used, the effects of prior knowledge have been frequently demonstrated in both L1 reading (Anderson et al. 1977), and L2 reading, where Steffensen and Joag Dev (1984) have demonstrated the importance of "general" or "cultural knowledge, while Alderson and Urquhart (1988) have done so for academic knowledge.

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Topic-102: Reading Ability in L2 Reading

While there is general agreement that language proficiency is important for reading, there has been a great deal of debate about the relative contributions to L2 reading of, on the one hand, reading ability, as manifested in L1 reading, and on the other, general proficiency in the L2. Some have argued that L2 reading depends crucially on L1 reading, that "reading is only learned once" and that poor L2 reading is in part due to poor L1 reading skills or failure to transfer such skills. However, it is obvious that many people, especially minority groups whether indigenous or immigrant, only learn to read in their chronological L2 or learn to read in L2 first. The view that L2 reading depends on L1 reading therefore cannot be taken too literally.

The opposing view is that L2 reading is largely a function of proficiency in L2, and that a minimal level of proficiency in L2 is needed before L1 reading skills will transfer. We may note at this point, however, that the terms "first language" or "mother tongue" may be inappropriate in cases where learners have "bilingualism as an L1", or undergo a shift in language dominance (such that their chronologically L1 atrophies and they achieve greater fluency in their L2).

A number of studies have investigated the relative contributions of "reading ability" and "language proficiency" to reading: Bernhardt and Kamil (1995) administered reading tests in English and Spanish to 187 English L1 speakers at 3 levels of Spanish instruction, and concluded that both factors were important, although they found that language proficiency played a greater part than did ability in L1 reading. Carrell (1991) administered reading tests in English and Spanish to 45 native speakers of Spanish and 75 native speakers of English. She concluded that while both L1 reading ability and L2 proficiency level are significant in L2 reading ability, the relative importance of the two factors varied: for the Spanish group reading English texts, differences in reading ability in the L1 (Spanish) appeared to be more important than differences in proficiency in English. However, for the English group reading Spanish texts, the position was reversed, with proficiency levels in the L2 (Spanish) being more important than were differences in reading ability in their L1 (English). Thus the results of the Spanish group tend to support the transfer of skills hypothesis, while the results of the English group support the language proficiency hypothesis. The reason advanced for this is that the English group was below the "language

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threshold" required by the Spanish test, and not in a position to utilise their reading skills; the Spanish group, on the other hand, were above the level required by the English texts, and accordingly the "language threshold" was not in evidence in their results.

The effect of differential language proficiency was also explored by Lee and Schallert (1997). They investigated 809 Korean middle-school students, and concluded that the contribution of L2 proficiency is greater than the contribution of L1 reading ability in predicting L2 reading ability. They also found that there was a much stronger relationship between L1 and L2 reading at higher levels of L2 proficiency. The importance of language proficiency in reading was confirmed by Verhoeven's (1990) longitudinal study of Dutch and Turkish children. Verhoeven (1990: 90) found that in the first 2 grades, Turkish children were less efficient in reading Dutch than their monolingual Dutch peers, and concludes that at this level reading comprehension appears to be most strongly influenced by "children's oral proficiency in the second language." These findings support the conclusion that in L2 reading, L2 knowledge plays a more significant role at low levels of proficiency, while L1 reading is more influential at high levels of L2 proficiency.

Educational surveys confirm the experimental findings that using an L2 in reading tends to produce poor results. Elley (1994) reports on a survey of 32 countries which found that children whose home language differed from the school language performed less well on reading tests than those who were tested in their home language. In sub-Saharan Africa where excolonial languages (mainly English,

French and Portuguese) dominate the education system, there is special cause for concern: in Zambia most primary school pupils are not able to read adequately in the official language of instruction, English (Williams 1996; Nkamba and Kanyika 1998), while in Zimbabwe, Machingaidze, Pfukani, and Shumba (1998: 71) claim that at year 6 over 60% of pupils did not reach "the desirable levels" of reading in English.

Topic-103: Reading for Language Learning

While adequate language proficiency is important for "successful" reading, much language pedagogy has focused on reading as an important way of improving language proficiency, through intensive classroom reading, and also through extensive reading (i.e., independent reading of relatively long self-selected texts with minimal teacher intervention). "The best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live amongst its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it" maintains Nuttall (1996: 128). The rationale for extensive reading comes from the input hypothesis (Krashen 1989) which claims that the crucial factor in L2 acquisition is that learners be exposed to adequate amounts of comprehensible input (see also Day and Bamford 1998). Although the theoretical argument is persuasive, research suggests that extensive reading has not always produced positive results.

There have been many studies of incidental vocabulary learning through extensive reading (see Coady 1997). While a number have produced positive results (Hafiz and Tudor 1990; Day, Omura and Hiramatsu 1991; Horst, Cobb, and Meara 1998), others have revealed little vocabulary learning (Pitts, White, and Krashen 1989), and the view that extensive reading will enhance learners' vocabulary is clearly affected by other factors.

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As regards general language development, research results are again uneven. Some, (including Hafiz and Tudor 1989; Mason and Krashen 1997; Walker 1997) claim that extensive reading lead to an improvement in language proficiency. Less positive findings come from Lai (1993) who carried out an investigation into 18 schools in Hong Kong. Lai does, however, suggest that extensive reading benefits 1) those students who might otherwise have little exposure to English, and 2) high ability students with high motivation.

Other research findings on the effect of extensive reading on writing are generally positive: a number of studies claim it improves writing (Hafiz and Tudor 1990), but there is, surprisingly, no strong evidence that it improves spelling. The view that extensive reading promotes positive attitudes to reading is widespread (Elley 1991), although attitude assessment does not seem to have been carried out in a rigorous manner.

Although claims for the potential of extensive reading are intuitively appealing, meeting all the conditions necessary for the "success" of a programmes is difficult. At the cultural level, for example, extensive reading presupposes a society which accepts reading for pleasure as a leisure activity, while at the linguistic level, the vocabulary demands of the text relative to the vocabulary knowledge of the reader is a crucial factor. The traditional answer to learners being frustrated by unknown vocabulary or syntax has been the production of simplified and simple reading texts (Davies 1984); however, "matching" of individual texts and readers in terms of language and interest can be problematic.

Topic-104: Process Models of Reading

These models attempt not only to specify relevant components, but also to specify the relationships between them. Reviews of reading often give separate treatment to three psycholinguistic process models, labelled "bottom- up", "top-down" and "interactive". Although the order of presentation implies an historical evolution, with each succeeding view replacing its predecessor, the prototypical representative of the "bottom-up" model (Gough 1972), appeared five years later than Goodman's "psycholinguistic guessing game" approach to reading (Goodman 1967), generally regarded as the champion of the "top-down" view.

However, rather than embrace the unidirectionality suggested by the terms bottom-up and topdown, it might be more accurate to employ the terms data-driven and concept-driven, and see the debate in terms of differing foci of interest, the data-driven focus being on text as a point of departure, the concept-driven on the reader's cognitive state and capacities. The interactive model, of course, views reading as a process whereby the reader is engaged in the continuous construction of meaning based on input from the text. The debate has a long history: in ancient Greece, Aristotle's "intromission" theory maintained that letters sent out rays that entered the reader's eyes, while the "extromission" theory, championed by Euclid, claimed that the reader reached out to the page by means of a "visual spirit". It was left to the eleventh century Iraqi scholar al-Hasan ibn al- Haytham (Alhazen) to propose an interactive view (see Manguel 1996: 28- 32).

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Lesson-19

TEACHING READING: INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE II

Topic-105: Data Driven Models

The bottom-up model of reading (Gough 1972) holds that the reader takes in data from the page in sequence, and that reading involves a letter-byletter, and word-by-word analysis of the orthographic words, processed through various nodes. The crucial feature of this model, is that the processing moves in one direction, from "bottom" (the perception of letters on the page), to the "top" (cognitive processes to do with the construction of meaning), but that the higher level processing does not affect the lower level processing. In pedagogy, the model justified a phonics-based approach to initial reading which stressed letter-by-letter "sounding out", and included decontextualised exercises where learners had to distinguish minimal pairs such as "park/bark", "tap/top". However, experimental evidence and informal observation produce the same criticism of data-driven models, namely that they cannot account for context effects. For example, initial readers reading in their L1, make miscues (i.e., mistakes or deviations from what is actually written on the page) which would appear to be generated by their knowledge of language, and are only partially explicable by bottom-up processing e.g., an English native- speaker child aged 5 reading aloud Rabbit went for Rabbit won't or He won't bother about... instead of He won't bother today...

Topic-106: Concept-Driven Models

Goodman's psycholinguistic approach to reading can be seen as a reaction against phonics-based pedagogic methods in the teaching of initial reading, rather than against the bottom-up model proposed by Gough (1972). The proponents of concept-driven (or "top-down) models hold that text is sampled and that predictions which are meaningful to the reader are made on the basis of their prior knowledge, especially, although not exclusively, their language knowledge. Hence the "psycholinguistic guessing game" in the words of Goodman's well-known title (Goodman 1967). Although Goodman's account lacks detail compared with that of Gough, the view of reading as a process of "guessing" based on the reader's state of knowledge clearly does account for context effects, of the type common when initial readers read aloud in their L1. The model exerted considerable influence in applied linguistics and the teaching of initial reading in the USA and the UK, particularly through the support of Smith (Smith 1978).

Topic-107: Interactive Models

This interactive model was first elaborated by Rumelhart (1977), and it proposes that graphemic input (i.e., the marks on the page) passes to a visual information store, where "critical features" are extracted. The information extracted is then operated upon by what the reader knows about language, syntactic knowledge, semantic knowledge, lexical knowledge, orthographic knowledge as well as pragmatic information "about the current contextual situation". The crucial point about this interactive model is that the knowledge sources operate in parallel: the information in the pattern synthesiser is scanned to yield the "most probable interpretation", and the higher level processing of meaning may affect the lower level processing of the orthographic word (i.e., there is "top-down" as well as "bottomup" processing). The compensatory interactive model (Stanovich 1980) likewise represents

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reading as involving interaction between bottom-up and top-down processing. The compensatory element in Stanovich's model claims a reader's lack of ability at one level may be compensated for by proficiency at another. Thus a reader may compensate for weakness at word meaning level by drawing on appropriate background knowledge. There are clear advantages of such a view for L2 reading.

Topic-108: Reading: The Broad Perspective

Reading in the broad perspective, is, as previously mentioned, concerned not with the psycholinguistic process of reading, nor with how well the reader comprehends, but rather with literacy as social practice, in other words social patterns of activities involving reading (and writing), as well as the social values attaching to these activities. An important distinction in the broad approach is between the "autonomous literacy" model and the "ideological literacy" model (Street 1984). The autonomous model sees literacy as a value-neutral set of skills, detached from social context, the possession of which is assumed to bring certain cognitive and social results. Much of what has been described above as the "narrow" approach to literacy is in the "autonomous" tradition. The "autonomous" nature of schooled literacy has long been an issue of concern, as shown in W.B. Hodgson's essay of 1867 (see Graff 1995), where Hodgson questions the value of the ability to read with no consideration given to the value of what is read.

Much of the impetus for literacy studies in the broad perspective comes from the view that literacy in formal education is a restrictive attempt to "teach literacy" without reference to society. In contrast the "ideological" model of literacy is concerned with literacy practices in relation to specific social contexts; the multiplicity of contexts generates a multiplicity of literacies, which are not simply neutral, but are associated with power and ideology. The ideological model, it is claimed, leads to a better understanding of how literacy is embedded in other human activity - in brief "literacy" does not exist outside of human action, and the strong may manipulate institutions concerned with literacy in ways that disadvantage the weak.

Supporters of the ideological model of literacy have claimed that a number of invalid claims are made for "autonomous literacy", two of the main ones being 1) that literacy, as an "autonomous agent", leads to logical and scientific thinking 2) that literacy leads to social and economic development.

The first claim (made by the anthropologist Goody) is challenged by the research of Scribner and Cole (1981), who studied the Vai people in Liberia, where one group were literate in the Vai script, a second group had literacy in reading the Koran, and a third group was literate in English, the medium of education. The conclusions that Scribner and Cole drew from their test results are frequently cited to claim that it is not literacy (in this case "the ability to read") itself, that produces cognitive changes, but schooling, since the schooled group, literate in English, were superior in reasoning power. Although this work is presented as a naturally occurring experiment, there are doubts as to whether the researchers had managed to isolate literacy as a variable; nonetheless it may well be that little cognitive advantage comes from simply being able to read and write, irrespective of what is read and written, by whom and for what purpose.

As far the relationship between literacy and economic development is concerned, there has long been a belief that investment in education would have a beneficial effect in developing countries, similar to that claimed for developed countries – Denison (1962), for example, claimed that between 1930 and

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1960, 23% of annual growth in the US national income could be attributed to education. As to how literate the population of a country should be, Anderson (1966) estimated that an adult literacy rate of about 40% of was needed for economic development, although he adds that that level would not be sufficient if societies lacked other support systems. Indeed, the failure of the Experimental World Literacy programme, (organized by UNESCO in 11 countries from 1967 to 1972) to generate economic growth in those countries, proved that literacy alone cannot be a causal factor in development. In their evaluation of the programme, UNESCO concluded that, if development is to occur, then the literacy programme should be integrated with economic and social reforms (Lind and Johnson 1990: 71-75).

However, although literacy may not be a sufficient condition for economic development, there is ample evidence that it is a necessary one: Azariadis and Drazen (1990), who looked at the development history of 32 countries from 1940 to 1980, concluded that none of the countries where the level of education, including literacy, was inadequate managed to achieve rapid growth. Moock and Addou (1994) suggest that an adequate level of education occurs when literacy and numeracy skills which have been learned in school, are retained, so that they can be rewarded in later life. The current consensus of opinion is that literacy is a necessary contributory factor in development, but that it is not an independent causal factor.

Topic-109: Literacy and Reading

In examining the social role of literacy, the new literacy studies have carried out detailed ethnographic work on reading and writing practices in specific communities, such as Heath's (1983) seminal work on literacy in three communities in the US, Barton and Hamilton's (1998) description of various literacy practices in Lancaster, and Martin-Jones and Jones's (2000) documenting of a variety of bilingual literacies. While there are a variety of locations for this research, the focus is consistently upon practice and value. For example, Street's (1984) research on literacy in Iranian villages identifies three sets of literacy practices: traditional literacy associated with the primary Quranic school; schooled literacy from the modern state school; commercial literacy associated with selling fruit. He notes that, contrary to expectation, commercial literacy was mainly undertaken by those who had Quranic literacy, since they had the social status within the village that people who only had schooled literacy, lacked. Work such as Street's attempts to relate literacy to notions of identity, of power and of solidarity, rather than attempting to identify components of literacy as in a psycholinguistic approach, or to discuss methods of improving literacy, as in an educational approach.

A second concern of the broad approach to literacy is critical reading, deriving from critical discourse analysis, which attempts not only to describe texts, but also to interpret and explain them. Critical readings of texts typically examine one or more of the following: 1) linguistic issues, such as choice of vocabulary, or the manipulation of grammar (e.g., the expression or suppression of agency in verb phrases); 2) rhetorical issues such as the overall text structure and organisation; 3) issues of text type and discourse convention (e.g., an advertisement for a beauty product, or a newspaper report on migration into the UK).

The approach may critique not only the language and sentiments expressed in texts, but also the ideological and/or the historical assumptions underpinning them as revealed through the writing, whether these assumptions were intended or not by the writer. This type of analysis is socially engaged in that it claims to reveal how readers may be unwittingly manipulated by powerful political or economic forces.

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Critical reading claims to "look beyond the classroom to the way in which reading [….] practices are carried out and perceived in the wider society" (Wallace 1996: 83). Critical reading, while probably not suited to low level EFL learners, is claimed to be both possible and desirable for learners with adequate English: in some respects the teaching of critical reading resembles the teaching of literature, for it involves close reading of, and reflection upon, the text. A range of texts and procedures for teaching critical reading in EFL classes is provided in Wallace (1992: 102-124).

Although the broad approach to literacy presents a strong moral argument, in a socialist tradition, the enthusiasm of its proponents occasionally leads to incomplete representations of the psycholinguistic tradition. Gee (1996), for example, one of the chief protagonists of critical literacy, claims that the psycholinguistic position is that there is a "right" interpretation for texts that "is (roughly) the same for all competent readers" (Gee 1996: 39). In fact this notion had been widely disputed by applied linguists (Urquhart 1987; Cohen et al. 1988). Likewise Gee's point that readers from different cultures interpret texts differently had long been accepted as a result of research into background knowledge (Steffenson and Joag Dev 1984). However, if one cannot read – in the psycholinguistic sense – one will not be able to make any kind of interpretation any written text. There is therefore an argument that the "autonomous literacy" model is valid, in the sense that if one cannot read, then clearly one cannot read anything. Equally, the "ideological literacy" model is valid in the sense that the converse proposition "If one can read, then one can read everything" is incorrect.

One of the chief merits of the new literacy studies is that they have focussed attention upon the social dimension. It has made the point that literacy practices are ideologically laden, and often manipulated by powerful institutions. To date, however, most work in the broad approach has not generated practical pedagogy, but has investigated the relationship between literacy practices and school literacy teaching. In the UK, Gregory and Williams (2000) document a range of home and school practices in a multicultural urban area of London, and found that children from backgrounds that are economically poor draw on home literacy practices, as well as those of the school, in learning to read, and that older siblings and grandparents as well as parents, can be important mediators of literacy. Snow et al. (1991) report on work in the US which also looked at home-school literacy in poor families, and came to the conclusion that there was a need for holistic family literacy programmes involving "bridge building" support for both caregivers and children.

Topic-110: Literacy and Implications for Teaching Reading

A proposal for implementing a pedagogy drawn from social literacies has come from the New London Group (a group of educationists who first met in New London, US: see Cope and Kalantziz 2000). Having developed the basic concept of "Design", which refers to conventions of meaning (linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial), the group proposes the following four sequential components of pedagogy: - Situated Practice, which draws on the students' experience of meaning-making in their lives - Overt Instruction, through which students develop an explicit metalanguage of Design - Critical Framing, which interprets the social context and purpose of Designs of meaning - Transformed Practice, in which students, as meaning makers, become "designers of social futures" (Cope and Kalantziz 2000: 9).

A very direct attempt to take account of L2/FL learning through this approach to literacy is provided by Kern (2000: 129-170), who takes the four components listed above and applies them to

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reading, giving many examples of activities within each component: for Kern, "situated practice" is largely student-centered activity, with group predictions and negotiations about the meaning of texts; overt instruction consists of work on lexical choices, syntactic relations and discourse structure of texts; critical framing involves the students distancing themselves from the text through critical questioning and summarising work; transformed practice is essentially a matter of writing, and Kern suggests translation and the transforming of a text into a dialogue as possible activities. Although these activities are reasonably well-known to EFL teachers, what the approach stresses is the critical perspective through comparing and discussing the interpretations of students and teachers, rather than extracting fixed meanings from text, and through encouraging students to be aware of the social context in which the text was produced, as well as the social context in which they as L2 readers are interpreting the text.

There are, however, relatively few practical examples of EFL work in this framework, possibly because, since its proponents eschew the psycholinguistic, the approach has no obvious theory of learning. Street (2003: 85) suggests that the emphasis from the ideological view of literacy should be "on appropriateness, a key concept in the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1977)." This implies that students should explore "the various uses and meanings of literacy in the social context of the school and its surrounding communities" (Street (2003: 85), and after briefly reviewing literacy projects in the US, South Africa, Nepal, Australia and the UK, Street (2003: 86) advocates a "combination of ethnographicstyle research into everyday literacy practices and constructive curriculum development and pedagogy."

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Lesson-20

RESEARCH INFORMING L2 READING I

Topic-111: Introduction to Research Informing L2 reading

Reading is a complex cognitive activity, almost a miraculous one, in fact, since it involves the secondary uses of cognitive skills in relatively new ways, at least in terms of evolutionary development.1 Reading is not an inherently natural process in the same way that speaking and listening are in a first language (L1). Unlike our first spoken language, which one might say "comes for free," nothing is free with respect to reading. Learning to read requires considerable cognitive effort and a long learning process, whether one is learning to read in the L1 or in a second language (L2). If a person is not taught to read, in one way or another (e.g., by a teacher, a parent, a sibling), that person will not learn to read (Grabe and Stoller 2002).

As a consequence, the teaching of reading is also a complex matter. Obvious variables such as student proficiency, age, L1/L2 relations, motivation, cognitive processing factors, teacher factors, curriculum and materials resources, instructional setting, and institutional factors all impact the degree of success of reading instruction. One could easily come to the conclusion that reading is too complex a process for one to make straightforward connections between research and instructional practices. However, we know that many learners become quite fluent L2 readers. There are, in fact, good reasons for optimism in exploring research on reading instruction and effective instructional practices.

One reason for optimism is that research on English L1 reading has made remarkable advances in the past 15 years, and it is possible to synthesize this research in ways that generate major implications for reading instruction. Second, research on reading instruction in L2 settings has provided additional insights that often converge with the L1 reading research literature. Third, the real distinctions between L1 reading and L2 reading (Grabe and Stoller 2002; Bernhardt 2003; Koda 2004) do not prevent researchers and practitioners from drawing major implications from L1 research findings in general, and especially from research on many academically- oriented instructional issues. At the same time, it is essential to recognize that instruction will need to vary in important ways for L2 learners depending on context, learner needs, and language proficiency levels.

This overview will focus specifically on learners with a need to develop academic reading abilities in school settings. The purpose of the overview is to link research findings to a set of key implications for instruction. These implications can also be addressed as applications for reading instruction, taking the next step to actual teaching practices that provide the basis for an effective reading curriculum. There is little space in this chapter for such a direct linkage to application. However the interested reader should see (Aebersold and Field 1997; Anderson 1999, 2002-2003; Grabe and Stoller 2001; Field this volume).

This review will not separate L1 research from L2 research with regard to possibilities for reading instruction; however, it will refer specifically to L2 research whenever recent L2 studies apply to instructional practices. For a number of the sub-sections that follow, the review will focus on instructional research in L1 settings because there is a reasonable expectation that the same instructional principles hold for L1 and L2 learners in these cases and there is relatively little controlled empirical research done

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with L2 learners. Before turning to implications for instruction, it is important to establish the rationale for these implications through a description of the reading ability itself.

Topic-112: Implications for Reading Instruction from Reading Research

Over the past 10 years, a set of implications for L2 reading instruction has emerged from overviews of the research literature (see Grabe 2000; Grabe and Stoller 2002). These implications provide a way to examine how research supports effective reading-instruction practices, and how teaching, materials development, and curriculum design could become more effective. Drawing on extensive and still accumulating research, the following implications for academic reading instruction and curriculum design are reasonably well supported. Although stated as instructional implications, they also represent component abilities of learners that need to be developed for effective reading comprehension.

1. Ensure word recognition fluency
2. Emphasize vocabulary learning and create a vocabulary-rich environment
3. Activate background knowledge in appropriate ways
4. Ensure effective language knowledge and general comprehension skills
5. Teach text structures and discourse organization
6. Promote the strategic reader rather than teach individual strategies
7. Build reading fluency and rate
8. Promote extensive reading
9. Develop intrinsic motivation for reading

A long list of instructional implications does not, in and of itself, represent a ready-made curriculum for reading instruction, and such a claim is not being made here. In fact, any instructional setting and any group of curriculum developers must determine priorities based on student needs, institutional expectations, and resource constraints. The major discussion in this paper focuses on each implication in terms of empirical support for reading and possible instructional application. It does not say how such abilities or instructional practices should be combined most effectively in a single curricular approach (Anderson 1999, 2002-2003; Grabe and Stoller 2001). At the same time, many of these implications should be considered, in one form or another, in any effective reading curriculum. The choices of which factors finally to emphasize rest with local contexts and goals, and with the relevance and persuasiveness of supporting research.

Topic-113: Ensure Word Recognition Fluency

Word recognition fluency has been widely recognized in L1 reading research as an important factor in explaining reading comprehension abilities, particularly at earlier stages of reading development (Stanovich 2000; Perfetti and Hart 2001). In general, word recognition fluency has not been a major focus of L2 research. However, in the early 1990s, research by Segalowitz (1991) demonstrated that word recognition automaticity was an important factor in distinguishing proficiency levels of very advanced L2 readers (in terms of overall reading fluency). There are a number of more recent studies that are also suggestive in this regard. For example, Segalowitz, Segalowitz, and Wood (1998) demonstrated that L2 university students who were more fluent readers overall had better word recognition automaticity skills. In addition, they showed that less fluent students improved their L2 word recognition automaticity through L2 instruction over the course of an academic year. Their results argue that increased word

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recognition automaticity results from incidental exposure to vocabulary through instruction and practice over extended periods of time. In a more recent training study, Fukkink, Hulstijn, and Simis (2003) report fluency gains through word recognition training for eighth grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Holland. Students showed significant gains in word reading fluency with just two training sessions.

The second issue for word recognition fluency is whether or not fluency can be taught in normal instructional settings, and whether or not fluency instruction would also improve reading comprehension. It is generally assumed that repeated exposures to high frequency words through extended print exposure (e.g., extensive reading of level-appropriate texts) would contribute to automatic word recognition and comprehension gains. However, no causal connection between word recognition improvement and reading improvement in L2 settings has yet been demonstrated. In L1 reading research, such a connection was explored by Tan and Nicholson (1997). In their study, they trained below-average grade 3-5 students to develop word recognition automaticity through flash card practice. Results of the training showed that experimental students outperformed a control group not only in fluency but also in passage comprehension. In another study, Levy, Abello, and Lysynchuk (1997) carried out training studies with fourth grade students and demonstrated that both word recognition training and repeated readings of texts had a positive impact on comprehension of texts which included all the words used in the fluency training.

A final issue involves how best to teach word recognition fluency effectively as part of a reading curriculum (e.g., through timed word recognition practice, greater phonological awareness, morphological awareness training, extended reading practice, assisted reading activities). Instructional recommendations have been made along this line by Anderson (1999), Hulstijn (2001) and Nation (2001).

Topic-114: Creating Vocabulary Rich Environment

The relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension has been powerfully demonstrated in both L1 and L2 contexts. Anyone who wants to be a fluent reader must have a large vocabulary. In L1 reading research, there have been many studies that demonstrate the strong relationship between vocabulary and reading. In an early large-scale study, Thorndike (1973) surveyed reading in 15 countries (with over 100,000 students) and reported median correlations across countries and age groups of between r = .66 and r = .75 for reading and vocabulary. In a set of unusual research studies, Carver (2003) has argued that the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge is so strong that they can produce almost perfect correlations. When reliable vocabulary tests are converted to grade-level equivalent scores, and when reliable reading comprehension measures are also converted to grade-level equivalent scores, Carver predicts that the corrected correlations between the two measures will be almost perfect. The argument is extraordinary, but Carver presents extensive evidence from multiple sources of assessment data to support his position. For purposes of this review, it is safe to claim that there is a strong and reliable relationship between L1 vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

In L2 settings, Droop and Verhoeven (2003) demonstrate a powerful relation between vocabulary knowledge and later reading ability with 3rd and 4th grade language minority children in Holland. Pike (1979) reported corrected correlations between vocabulary and reading on a TOEFL administration on the

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order of .84 to .95. Laufer (1997) cited several assessment studies with strong correlations between reading and vocabulary knowledge (.50 to .75). Qian (2002) found strong correlations, from .68 to .82, between TOEFL reading sub-section scores and three vocabulary measures. Clearly, the powerful relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension also applies to the L2 reader. Of course, how to teach most effectively to build a large store of vocabulary knowledge over time is a question deserving its own chapter.

Topic-115: Activate Background Knowledge in Appropriate Ways

Almost all reading researchers agree that background knowledge plays an important role in reading comprehension. It is clear that readers comprehend texts better when texts are culturally familiar or when they relate to well-developed disciplinary knowledge of a reader. More generally, background knowledge is essential for all manner of inferences and text model construction during comprehension. It is also important for disambiguating lexical meanings and syntactic ambiguities. The complications appear to arise with texts that present relatively new information or information from fields for which readers have no special expertise. In many cases, these are informational texts that require students to learn new information. The limited role of background knowledge for comprehending new topics was documented by Bernhardt (1991), and additional studies reviewed in Alderson (2000) present conflicting evidence on the role of background knowledge on reading assessment. Nonetheless, background knowledge appears to provide strong support for comprehension in many contexts.

From an instructional perspective, the issue becomes whether or not there are specific benefits for promoting appropriate background knowledge for students encountering new information in instructional texts. Will the activation of background knowledge lead to better comprehension? Chen and Graves (1995) conducted one of the few L2 studies to pursue this issue directly. They demonstrated that the use of text previewing led to significantly better comprehension in comparison with both a control group and a group that activated general background knowledge. The finding can be interpreted straightforwardly as support for the activation of specific information that is relevant to the text as opposed to activating more general background knowledge.

Topic-116: Language Knowledge and General Comprehension Skills

Text comprehension requires both a) language knowledge and b) recognition of key ideas and their relationships (through various comprehension strategies). Language knowledge, for purposes of this review, primarily involves vocabulary knowledge (see above) and grammar knowledge. There is a range of research that argues for a strong relation between grammar knowledge and reading. Furthermore, research on syntactic processing, or word integration processes (integrating lexical and syntactic information into clause-level meaning units), also suggests significant relations between syntactic processing abilities and comprehension abilities (Fender 2001).

While relatively few research studies of reading development include grammar measures, a recent L2 study by Van Gelderen et al. (2002) examined the relations between linguistic knowledge, metacognitive knowledge (what we know about how we use language and how we read), and word processing speed, on the one hand, and reading comprehension on the other. They reported a very strong correlation between EFL L2 (Dutch students) grammar knowledge and reading abilities (correlation of .73) and an even stronger correlation between EFL L3 (Turkish students in Holland) grammar knowledge

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and reading (correlation of .78). As further support for this relationship, Alderson (1993) reported correlations between reading and grammar of .80. Pike (1979) reported corrected correlations among subsections of a TOEFL test of (.80 to .85). Enright et al. (2002) reported a very strong relationship between the structure and reading subsections of the current TOEFL (r=.91) and a strong relationship between the structure section of the current TOEFL and the piloted reading section of the New TOEFL (r=.83).

The strong relationship between grammar and reading has not led to a call for extended grammar instruction as a direct support for L2 reading comprehension. Especially at advanced levels of instruction, grammar is better seen as an indirect support system that is developed through comprehension instruction and strategy training (e.g., establishing the main idea, summarizing information, recognizing discourse structure, monitoring comprehension). Some of the strategies that are important for comprehension involve grammatical knowledge while others focus on processing skills and background knowledge.

A number of individual comprehension strategies have been shown to have a significant impact on reading comprehension abilities. In L1 settings, the report of the National Reading Panel (2000) and the follow-up overview by Trabasso and Bouchard (2002) identified nine individual reading strategies as having a significant influence on reading comprehension:

- Prior knowledge activation
- Mental imagery
- Graphic organizers
- Text structure awareness
- Comprehension monitoring
- Question answering
- Question generating
- Mnemonic support practice
- Summarization

There is relatively little recent L2 research demonstrating the effectiveness of specific comprehension strategies or synthesizing prior research (; Tang 1992; Carrell et al. 1989; Chen and Graves 1995; Hulstijn 1997), and more research of this type should be encouraged. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to extrapolate from L1 research results and earlier supporting L2 research to argue that certain comprehension strategies and instructional practices are useful for developing student reading comprehension.

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Lesson-21

RESEARCH INFORMING L2 READING II

Topic-117: Teach Text Structure and Discourse Organization

In many instructional settings, when considering older students and more advanced L2 students, a strong emphasis is typically placed on expository prose processing for learning purposes. Students need to understand the more abstract patterns of text structuring in expository prose that support readers' efforts at comprehension. While advanced learning texts are typically denser and present more complex information than texts of a more general nature, they are, nevertheless, assumed to be understandable with relatively little ambiguity when assigned in school settings (this assumption is often mistaken, however.)

Texts have numerous signaling systems that help a reader to interpret the information being presented. Most importantly, texts incorporate discourse structures, sometimes understood as knowledge structures or basic rhetorical patterns in texts (Mohan 1986; Meyer and Poon 2001). Discourse structures have functional purposes (e.g., to compare two ideas, to highlight a cause and effect relationship), and these purposes are recognized by good readers and writers, if only implicitly in some cases. These functional purposes are supported by well recognized conventions and systems that lead a reader to preferred interpretations (Tang 1992). Moreover, these discourse mechanisms extend to the level of genre and larger frames of discourse structure that organize textual information for the reader.

A major issue concerning the influence of text structure on reading is the extent to which such knowledge can be directly taught to students so that it will lead to improved comprehension. There are three major lines of research (mostly L1) on the effect of text structure instruction. One line of research involves the impact of direct instruction which explicitly raises student awareness of specific text structuring. A recent study by Meyer and Poon (2001) demonstrated that structure strategy training significantly improved recall from texts for both younger adults and older adults. A second line of research develops student awareness of text structure through graphic organizers, semantic maps, outline grids, tree diagrams, and hierarchical summaries (Tang 1992; Trabasso and Bouchard 2002). This research demonstrates that students comprehend texts better when they are shown visually how text information is organized (along with the linguistic clues that signal this organization). A third line of instructional training follows from instruction in reading strategies. Because a number of reading strategy training approaches include attention to text structure, main idea identification, and text study skills, this line of instructional research is also a source of studies supporting text structure instruction. Thus, strategy training which includes summarizing, semantic mapping, predicting, forming questions from headings and sub-headings, and using adjunct questions appears to improve awareness of text structure and text comprehension (Duke and Pearson 2002; Trabasso and Bouchard 2002).

In L1 settings, multiple studies have demonstrated the importance of text structure awareness on comprehension and learning from expository texts (Goldman and Rakestraw 2000). There is relatively little recent L2 research on this area of text structure and comprehension, and more research is needed in L2 contexts. It is very likely, however, that the L1 research on instructional practices with different types of text structure knowledge applies well to L2 students developing their reading comprehension abilities.

Topic-118: Promote the Strategic Reader rather than Teach Individual Strategies

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In L1 settings, reading comprehension instruction today is equated with strategic reading development. There is now considerable research to show that reading comprehension is strongly influenced by instruction that emphasizes the coordinated use of multiple strategies while students actively seek to comprehend texts (National Reading Panel 2000; Block and Pressley 2002; Trabasso and Bouchard 2002). Such instruction involves direct teaching of several strategies while students are reading and comprehending a text. The teacher and students engage in discussions about the text while also learning to use key strategies in effective combinations. Students learn to engage with texts strategically through a process of teacher modeling, teacher scaffolding and support, and gradual independent use of strategies to comprehend text better. There is general agreement among L1 researchers that instruction that focuses on students learning repertoires of strategies over an extended period of time is more effective than individual strategy instruction.

Many approaches involving multiple strategies tend to focus on 4-8 major strategies, though other approaches may incorporate up to 20-30 distinct strategies over a longer period of time. Grabe (2004) reviews these approaches to combined-strategies instruction that improve reading comprehension. Two L1 approaches deserve specific mention for their proven effectiveness and their potential application in L2 settings: Transactional Reading Instruction (TSI) and Concept-Orientied Reading Instruction (CORI). Both provide curricular frameworks for strategic comprehension instruction, but also incorporate comprehension instruction activities that go beyond strategy development (e.g., vocabulary development, fluency practice, extensive reading). Both have been validated through multiple studies and both represent approaches that fully engage students in all aspects of strategic reading instruction (Guthrie et al. 1999; Guthrie, Wigfield, and von Secker 2000; Guthrie 2003; Pressley 2002).

L2 reading research has not been developed as extensively in the direction of curricular frameworks for strategic engagement with texts. Janzen (2001) reports results of an L2 adaptation of Transactional Strategies Instruction and provides instructional descriptions. Klingler and Vaughn (2000) report on an approach they named Collaborative Strategies Instruction. Anderson (1999) and Cohen (1998) both discuss the effectiveness of direct teacher modeling of strategies for reading. Two L2 strategy instruction approaches, Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, (CALLA; Chamot and O'Malley 1994), and Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI; Cohen 1998) could be adapted more specifically to an extended academic reading curriculum. Most of the L2 efforts to develop strategic engagement with texts have yet to be researched carefully for their effectiveness in promoting reading comprehension skills.

Most contemporary discussions among L1 researchers center on the use of, and training in, multiple strategies to achieve comprehension (commonly including summarizing, clarifying, predicting, imaging, forming questions, using prior knowledge, monitoring, and evaluating). As the multi-strategy research suggests, most researchers now see the real value in teaching strategies as combined-strategies instruction rather than as independent processes or as processes taught independently of basic comprehension with instructional texts.

Topic-119: Building Reading Fluency and Rate

The importance of reading fluency has taken on much greater importance in the past few years, particularly in L1 settings. Because reading fluency, as opposed to automatic word recognition, is not a commonly discussed factor in reading development, it is useful to provide a careful definition. Reading

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fluency involves both word recognition accuracy and automaticity; it requires a rapid speed of processing across extended text (i.e., reading efficiency); it makes appropriate use of prosodic and syntactic structures; it can be carried out for extended periods of time; and it takes a long time to develop (National Reading Panel 2000; Segalowitz 2000; Kuhn and Stahl 2003).

The National Reading Panel (2000) devoted a major section of its report to research on fluency development and fluency instruction. Its metaanalysis demonstrates that fluency can be taught and that it has a positive impact on reading comprehension abilities. Kuhn and Stahl (2003), reporting on a more inclusive meta-analysis, came to similar conclusions. In L1 settings, almost any kind of independent or assisted repeated reading program, done carefully and appropriately, will have a direct positive effect on reading fluency and an indirect positive effect on comprehension improvement. There are many ways to develop re-reading instruction for fluency purposes and they are well reviewed in Kuhn and Stahl (2003), National Reading Panel (2000) and Samuels (2002).

There is relatively little L2 reading research on reading fluency training, though this issue has recently emerged as a goal for instructional practices in L2 settings (Anderson 1999; Hulstijn 2001; Nation 2001). The best ongoing exploration of Fluency development is the work of Taguchi (1999,

Taguchi and Gorsuch 2002). Both studies have shown that the practice of repeated reading of short graded readers leads to improvement in reading fluency. The more recent study, in particular, showed that students read significantly faster in the post-reading test than the pre-reading test while demonstrating the same levels of comprehension.

Topic-120: Promote Extensive Reading

The true experimental research on extensive reading is seemingly contradictory, but the preponderance of non-experimental research is overwhelmingly in favor of extensive reading as a support for both reading comprehension development and reading fluency (as well as incidental learning of a large recognition vocabulary and word recognition fluency). The L1 research reviewed by the National Reading Panel (2000) did not find a single experimental study (i.e., pre and post measures for an experimental and control group) that demonstrated significantly better reading comprehension abilities for an extensive reading group. However, Kuhn and Stahl (2003), among others, have pointed out that the restricted range of studies reviewed by the National Reading Panel ruled out much persuasive research.

In L1 settings, Kuhn and Stahl (2003), point out that there is good evidence for a strong relationship between reading comprehension abilities and extensive reading over a long period of time. This view is strongly supported by two specific research programs. Over a decade from 1990 to 2000, Stanovich (see Stanovich 2000) and his colleagues have demonstrated in multiple studies that the amount of overall exposure to print by readers has a direct relation to vocabulary knowledge and comprehension abilities. Strong arguments have also been made by Guthrie et al. (1999). In an important study, they demonstrated that, for students from grades 3 to 10 (grades 3, 5, 8, and 10), amount of reading significantly predicted text comprehension.

In L2 settings, Elley (2000) provides the strongest on-going evidence for the effect of extensive reading (and fluency training), although he reviews book flood approaches that also include a range of additional instructional practices, and not just the effect of extensive reading. Reporting on a series of

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large-scale curricular research studies, he has demonstrated that modified book floods – along with careful attention to training teachers to use the books effectively in class – lead consistently to significant results in comprehension development (reporting on major studies in Niue, Fiji, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and Solomon Islands, 1977-1998). There are a number of additional brief reports and smallscale studies on the effectiveness of extensive reading, but there are no other major research studies that provide strong evidence for the influence of extensive reading on reading comprehension abilities (see Day and Bamford 1998).

Topic-121: Develop Intrinsic Motivation for Reading

In L1 settings, the strongest evidence of the direct impact of positive motivation on reading comes from Guthrie and his colleagues. In two studies, they demonstrated the impact of reading engagement on both reading amount (reading extensively) and reading comprehension. First, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) demonstrated that motivation and engagement with reading were significantly related to amount of reading. More highly motivated fourth and fifth grade students engaged in significantly more reading. In a further study, Guthrie et al. (1999) demonstrated that higher motivation among third and fifth grade students significantly increased their amount of reading and their text comprehension. In examining related questions of whether or not motivation (defined as reading engagement) could be taught directly through classroom instruction, Guthrie et al. (1998) demonstrated that Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) developed significantly higher levels of student motivation than control classes among third and fifth grade students.

In L2 settings, there is little research specifically on the relation between motivational variables and reading comprehension. Most L2 motivation research focuses more generally on language abilities. Dörnyei (2001) provides an excellent overview of motivational factors and their influences on L2 learning. In addition to covering L2 motivation research for the past decade, he devotes serious attention to motivation instruction and teacher motivation.

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Lesson-22

ASSESSING READING I

Topic-122: Introduction to Assessing Reading

There are several reasons for assessing reading and the skills and knowledge that are involved in reading. They include assessing to encourage learning, assessing to monitor progress and provide feedback, assessing to diagnose problems, and assessing to measure proficiency. The same form of assessment may be used for a variety of goals. Table 6.1 lists these reasons and their applications, and they are expanded on in the rest of the chapter.

Good assessment needs to be reliable, valid and practical. Reliability is helped by having a high number of points of measurement, by using a test format that the learners are familiar with, and by using consistent delivery and marking procedures. Validity is helped by using reliable measures, and by being clear about what is being measured and why. The practicality of a test can be helped by giving very careful thought to how the learners will answer the test and how it will be marked. The ease of making a test is also part of its practicality.

Topic-123: Motivation as an Informal Assessment

A very common use of informal assessment is to make learners study. At the worst they study because there will be a test, but preferably success in the test maintains their interest in study. Regular comprehension tests can do this, but there are other ways as well which do not involve formal testing.

Table 6.1: Goals, Purposes and Means of reading assessment

Goals of assessment	Purposes	Ways of assessing
Motivate	Encourage learning	Reading logs Book reports Comprehension tests Speed reading graphs
Measure achievement	Monitor progress Guide teaching Provide feedback to the learner Award a grade	Comprehension tests Speed reading graphs
Diagnose problems	Isolate reading difficulties Provide focused help	Reading aloud Vocabulary tests Receptive grammar tests Translation Speed reading tests
Measure proficiency	Award a grade See if standards are achieved	Comprehension tests Cloze tests Speed reading tests

Topic-124: Measuring Achievement

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Measures of achievement focus on the learning done in a particular course. If a course has focused on speed reading, then the achievement measure would be a speed reading measure even though speed of reading is only a part of the larger picture of reading proficiency. Similarly, if the course has focused on reading academic texts, the achievement measure could be a comprehension measure using academic texts. Achievement measures are thus closely related to the course of which they are part. They need to have a high level of face validity; that is, they should clearly look like what they are supposed to be measuring. Since reading comprehension is a common goal of reading courses we will focus on that in this section. Achievement tests, however, could test various reading strategies, speed of reading, word recognition, reading aloud, or note-taking from reading, depending on the goals of the course.

Comprehension tests can use a variety of question forms and can have a variety of focuses. Here we will look at the various forms and consider their reliability, validity, and practicality.

Pronominal Questions, Imperatives

These questions require learners to make a written answer which can range in length from a single word to several paragraphs. Usually for comprehension, short answers are required and these forms of questions are called short answer questions. If the answers the learners have to make are short, then more questions can be answered, thus increasing the reliability and validity of the test. These questions can be used for all focuses of comprehension. They are suited to checking literal comprehension because it is not difficult to write the questions avoiding the same words that are used in the reading text. They are suited to inferences, application and responding critically because the learners have to search for and construct their own answers using what is found in the text. Another positive feature of these types of questions is that they can be marked using a grading scale, for example 0, ½, 1 or 0, 1, 2, 3 marks for each question depending on the completeness and accuracy of the answer. This allows credit to be given for partial comprehension and credit to be given for high quality comprehension.

These positive features have their corresponding disadvantages. When learners write their own answers, a range of differently worded answers is likely to occur. Markers then have to be consistent and fair in the way they score these answers. This is primarily an issue of reliability. It is best dealt with by making and adding to a list of possible answers with their corresponding marks, and getting another teacher or highly proficient reader to answer the test and then afterwards to check the list of possible answers. This prechecking by another teacher may result in changes to the questions to limit the answers that are possible. The answer sheet where the learners write their answers can have a set space for each answer and learners have to keep their answers within the limits of that space.

Topic-125: Multiple Choice Questions

These question forms are all grouped together because the answer to the question is contained within the question or instructions, and thus the learners do not have to compose their answer. This simplifies marking. In the following discussion we will focus on multiple-choice questions because these are the most difficult to make. Typically there is a stem with four choices, one of which is correct. In order to produce a large number of questions to make the test reliable, quite a long text or several short texts are needed. Marking is usually very easy, and most learners are familiar with multiple-choice tests, although they may not have good strategies for sitting them. Good multiple-choice tests tend to be very reliable.

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Multiple-choice questions can focus on details (microstructure) and on more general aspects (macrostructure) of the text, although some researchers have found difficulty in using multiple-choice to measure global comprehension. Multiple-choice tests only involve reading and so the measurement is less likely to be affected by writing skill than it is in a short answer test. If a multiple-choice test has not been well prepared, learners may be able to get a reasonable score without reading the text, and part of the preparation of a good test involves checking this. Multiple choice questions can be checked by checking the length of the answers to make sure that the correct answer is not always shorter or longer than the distractors, asking a native speaker to answer the test to see if they get all of the answers correct, getting a colleague to look critically at the items to see if they can see any problems with them, and looking at learners' answers to the items to see if some items are too easy or too hard or if the learners are all choosing the same wrong choice.

To make marking easier, a special answer sheet and an answer key may be used. Learners circle the correct answer. Because of the ease of marking, multiple-choice is useful when there are very large numbers of tests to mark. Computer marking is possible. Practicality is strength of using multiple-choice tests. However, making multiple-choice tests is not easy. Making four plausible choices is usually a challenge and good multiple-choice questions require a lot of trialling.

Information Transfer

Incomplete information transfer diagrams can be used to measure comprehension of a text. See Figure 6.1 later in this chapter for an example. The learners read the text and fill in the diagram with

short notes. The advantages are that the information the learner produces can cover a lot of points and yet need not involve a lot of writing. The disadvantage is in gaining consistency in marking.

Topic-126: Diagnosing Problems

If a learner is having problems with reading, it is very useful to be able to see where the problems lie. As reading is a complex skill, there are many possible sources of difficulty. So if a learner performs badly on a proficiency measure such as a cloze test or a comprehension test, it is useful to have a procedure which can be followed to find the reasons for the poor performance.

There are four general principles that should be followed. First, diagnosing problems should be done on an individual basis. That is, diagnostic testing should be done with the teacher sitting next to the individual learner and carefully observing what happens. There are several reasons for this. If testing is done with the whole class, individual learners may not give their best effort. In addition, a teacher needs to be able to observe what aspects of the diagnostic task are causing difficulty, and should be able to adjust the testing procedure during the process to get the best information about an individual's problems. Second, diagnosing problems should begin with the smallest units involved and go step by step to the larger units. From a reading perspective, this means starting with word identification, moving to vocabulary knowledge, then to comprehension of single sentences, and then to text comprehension and reading speed. The assumption behind this progression is that the various smaller units combine to contribute to the larger units. Third, as much as possible, learners should feel comfortable with and relaxed during diagnostic testing. This is a difficult principle to apply because in such testing it is obvious to the learner that they are being evaluated in some way. The principle, however, can be applied by the

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teacher beginning with very easy tasks where the learner can be successful, giving praise for effort and success, being friendly, and frequently taking small breaks to help the learner relax. Fourth, do not rely on only one test. Even where it seems obvious where the problem lies, use a different kind of test possibly at a different level of unit size to double check. Decisions about a learner's level of skill can have far-reaching effects on their learning. It is worth spending time to get the best possible information.

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Lesson-23

ASSESSING READING II

Topic-127: Reading Aloud

Reading aloud can be used to check the learner's skill at word recognition. As a very cautious first step it is worth observing carefully to see if the learner's eyesight is good. This could be done by getting them to look at a picture and then asking them questions about it. Quite a large proportion of males are color-blind to some degree, but that should not affect reading. If the learner seems to have eyesight problems, it is worth getting their eyesight tested by a specialist.

Reading aloud should begin with a very easy short text. If the learner has problems in reading aloud very early in the text, it may be worthwhile pausing and talking about the context of the story with the learner, discussing some of the ideas that will occur in the text and predicting what might happen in the story. It is probably not worth keeping a running record of errors for the first text, but if it becomes clear that word recognition is a major problem, then keeping such a record would be useful. If the learner has some problems with word recognition these could be checked against the correspondences in Appendix 1 to see if they are irregular items or if there is some pattern to the errors.

A difficulty with reading aloud for second language learners is that their skill in reading may be greater than their skill in speaking and so their spoken production may be a poor representation of their reading. Talking to the learner before the reading begins is one way of checking this.

Topic-128: Vocabulary Tests

Learners may have difficulty reading because they do not know enough vocabulary. Note that word recognition during reading aloud is affected by vocabulary knowledge and so very easy texts need to be used at first when testing reading aloud. Similarly, if the vocabulary test is a written test which requires the learners to read the test items, then the measure of vocabulary knowledge will be affected by word recognition skills. Learners may have a large spoken vocabulary but be unable to read the words they know. The following vocabulary tests can be used with learners of English.

The Bilingual Levels Tests

Here is an item from the Indonesian version of the test (available in Nation, 2004b).

1 could

2 during dapat, bisa

3 this selama

4 piece supaya

5 of

6 in order to

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These are tests of the first and second 1,000 words of West's (1953) General Service List. They are available in the following languages—Japanese, Indonesian, Thai, Korean, Chinese (traditional and simplified), Tagalog, Samoan, Tongan, Russian, and Vietnamese. The test is easily marked with a marking key. Each of the two levels has 30 items, which is enough for a good level of reliability. The validity of the test is strengthened for low proficiency learners by the use of the first language to represent the meanings of the words. The learners do not have to deal with the more complex language of English definitions. The words are tested out of context and this can cause problems for words that can have different meanings, such as seal which can mean "to close **tightly**" or "the marine mammal", or bear which can mean "to carry" or "to put up with". The teacher should sit next to the learner while the test is being done to make sure that the learner takes the test seriously, follows a sensible test-taking strategy, knows how to handle the slightly unusual test format, and is not experiencing reading problems which might interfere with the sitting of the test. It is very important that the teacher does this because it has happened that a whole class of learners sitting a test has not taken it seriously and has got low marks. In this case, the teacher then set up a programme to teach the vocabulary which the learners actually already knew.

The True/False Vocabulary Test

Here are three sample items (available in Nation, 2001: 412–415; Nation, 2004b; Nation, 1993).

When something falls, it goes up.

Most children go to school at night.

It is easy for children to remain still.

There are two versions of this 40-item test of the first 1,000 words of West's (1953) General Service List. The test can be given in a written form or, if necessary, it can be given orally. There are enough items to get a good level of reliability. The words are tested in sentences and learners need to understand the sentence and apply it to their knowledge of the world in order to make a decision about whether the sentence is true or false. As there are factors other than vocabulary knowledge involved in the test, this affects the validity of the test. Whether this effect is positive or negative depends on what you want to test, words alone or words in use. Other possible tests include the yes/no test, and the monolingual levels test (Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham, 2001).

Topic-129: Tests of Grammatical Knowledge

If the teacher speaks the first language of the learners, the most straightforward test of grammatical knowledge is to get the learners to translate sentences from reading texts, starting with a very simple text. A validity issue with this is that such translation may encourage word by word reading and as a result mistranslation. This can be discouraged by asking the learner to read the whole sentence first before beginning the translation. An example of mistranslation is "He made the theory useful" being translated as "He made the theory which was useful". If the teacher does not speak the learners' first language, sentence completion tests could be used, for example,

I was very surprised by _____.

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It made me_____.

I _____waiting for at least an hour.

Note that grammar tests, both translation and completion, involve word recognition skills and vocabulary knowledge as well as grammatical knowledge. It is thus important that the learners' word recognition skills and vocabulary knowledge are tested before grammar knowledge is tested.

Topic-130: Measuring Reading Proficiency

A proficiency test tries to measure a learner's skill not in relation to what has been taught on a particular course but in relation to a wider standard. Tests like the TOEFL test and IELTS test are proficiency measures. New Zealand has reading proficiency tests for school-age native speakers of English in the Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) series.

Typically such tests use multiple-choice questions with several texts. In some tests, cloze tests may be used but these are not so popular, probably for reasons of face validity rather than because of the effectiveness of the tests.

We have looked at multiple-choice tests in the section on achievement tests. We will look at cloze tests first in detail in this section.

Cloze Tests

Here is an example of a cloze test. The complete text is given in Figure 6.1 later in this chapter.

Return Ticket, Please!

By David Hill

The first person ever to stand on the moon was Neil Armstrong on 20 July 1969.

As he stepped out (1) _____ his spacecraft, he said, "(2)_____'s one small step (3) a man; one giant (4)_____for mankind." What would (5) _____say if you were (6) first person ever to (7) _____ onto another planet? The (8) _____ States, working with other (9)_____ , is planning a new (10) _____ to Mars by the (11) _____ 2020. And this time, (12) 'll be people on (13) _____ . Spacecraft without crews have (14) _____ landing on Mars since (15)_____1970s. In 1997, the (16) _____ Pathfinder landed on Mars, (17) a small, six-wheeled (18) _____ called Sojourner trundled around, (19) rocks and measuring the (20)_____ speed. A trip to (21) _____takes a long time. (22) _____Astronauts who walked on (23) _____ moon took three days (24) get there, travelling at (25) ____km/h in their Apollo (26) _____. At the same speed, (27) would take them twenty (28)_____to reach Mars. Even (29)_____today's more powerful rockets, (30)_____could take at least seven months to reach Mars. (Adapted from The School Journal 2000: Part 2) (These are the straight lines which are joining these points; they are misplaced due to writing font. Best of luck!)

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Every fifth word has been taken out of a reading passage that the learners have never seen before. The learners must fill in the missing words by guessing. They look at the words before and after the empty space to help them guess the missing words. The test measures how close the reader's thought is to the writer's thought.

Usually in a test like this, there need to be 40–50 empty spaces to reach a good level of reliability. The words must be taken out according to a plan. Every fifth word can be left out, or every sixth or seventh, etc., but it must be done in a regular way. A line is drawn to show each missing word. Usually the first sentence in the text has no words removed. There are two ways of marking. One way is to accept any sensible answer (acceptable alternative). Another way is to accept only the words that are exactly the same as the ones left out (exact replacement). This last way is the easiest for the teacher and gives the same result. That is, the marks of the learners will be different when you mark in the two different ways, but the learners in a class will be ranked in the same order. The cloze test does the same job as a multiplechoice test and is much easier to make. According to Anderson (1971) the relationship between the results of a cloze test and the results of a multiple-choice test on the same passage is as follows. Note that good scores on the cloze test are 53 percent or above. In exact replacement marking, learners are not expected to be able to get every item correct.

Cloze score	Multiple-choice score	Difficulty of passage
above 53%	90%	good for reading alone (independent level)
44%–53%	75%	good for learning (instructional level)
below 44%	below 75%	too difficult (frustration level)

When marking the test, mis-spellings do not lose marks, but the words must be grammatically correct. That is, the words should be the correct part of speech and the correct tense, and should show if they are singular or plural.

The cloze test makes the learner use the information available in the passage to predict what the missing parts are. Radice (1978) suggests that when the cloze exercise is used for teaching, a marking system can be used.

For example, seven marks for the correct answer, six marks for a suitable word of similar meaning, five for a reasonable word with the same meaning, four for the correct content but wrong part of speech, three for the correct part of speech and wrong content, and so on.

A **cloze test** can be marked very quickly using a test paper with holes in it that fits over the test paper, with the correct answer written above each hole. If every fifth word is deleted two templates need to be used, otherwise there are too many holes. Typically one mark is given for every correct answer. Just under 50 percent of the words in a fixed deletion cloze test are likely to be function words. Most of the focus of the test is on local comprehension. Studies show that less than 10 percent of a cloze test score is dependent on reading across sentence boundaries (Rye, 1985).

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The cloze test was originally designed not to measure learners but to measure the readability of texts (Taylor, 1953) and is still used for that purpose (see Brown, 1997).

Brown (1980) tested four ways of scoring the cloze test—exact replacement, acceptable alternative, clozentropy, and multiple-choice. He used a variety of reliability and validity measures as well as assessing practicality. His results showed that all had high validity compared with each other and with a language placement test. All were highly reliable. Considering all criteria, the acceptable alternative was the best, closely followed by exact replacement.

Selective Cloze

A cloze test can be made by leaving out any word that the teacher wants to, instead of every fifth word, etc. This test is more difficult if the empty spaces are not shown. Here is an example.

The easiest way is always the best way. Often because is difficult to do, we value much more . . .

In this example, one word is missing from each line. The learners must find the place and write the missing word (George, 1972).

Two old men lived near small town.

They were friends they were small children. But

one man bought a car, his friend bought

one too. He was not if his friend was

better him.

Topic-131: Issues in Making and Using Reading Comprehension Tests

There are several issues that are of concern in the construction and use of reading comprehension tests.

Should the Test Consist of One Text or Several Shorter Texts?

A major reason for using several texts is to try to reduce the effects of background knowledge on the test. If a learner happens to know a lot about the topic of the text, they are much more likely to do better on a comprehension test on that text. If several texts on different topics are used, this reduces the likely effect of background knowledge because any one learner is unlikely to have good background knowledge of all the texts in the test.

A second reason for using a range of texts is to make the test more representative of the different genres of texts that the learners will have to read in their normal use of the language. A third reason is so that there can be several questions each focusing on the same kind of information. For example, if the test is to measure skill in finding the main idea of a text, the test will be more valid if there are several texts each with its own main idea question.

Should the Time Allowed to Sit a Reading Comprehension Test be Limited?

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Obviously, tests cannot be allowed to go on hour after hour, but in general if the aim of the test is to measure skill, it is best if learners have plenty of time to demonstrate this skill. Sometimes the distinction is made between a power test and a speed test. In a power test, learners have largely unrestricted time to show what they can do. A power test where many learners do not have enough time to answer every question is not going to provide a meaningful result.

Should Learners be Allowed to Look Back at the Text when they Answer the Questions?

If learners are not allowed to look back at the text, then the test involves a strong element of skill in remembering. When looking at the results of such a test, we do not know if a poor score is the result of poor comprehension, poor memory or both. It could be argued that for some kinds of reading it is important to be able to remember the main ideas of what has been read. If a teacher wants to include this skill in a test, then there should not be too many questions on each text, probably no more than four or five. The questions should also focus on what someone could sensibly be expected to remember, such as the main idea and main points rather than very detailed parts of the text.

Should Learners be Allowed to Use Dictionaries?

Studies of the factors involved in reading usually show that vocabulary knowledge is the major component in reading comprehension. Thus, as a general rule, dictionary use should not be allowed during a reading comprehension test. Passages which are appropriate to the level of the learners need to be used. However, if the aim of the test is to find out how well learners can read a particular type of difficult text with assistance, then dictionaries could be allowed. Studies of dictionary use in writing have shown that quite a large proportion of the time is spent consulting the dictionary. If dictionary use takes a lot of time away from reading and considering the questions, dictionary use may interfere with measuring comprehension.

Should the Questions be in the First Language and should the Learners be Allowed to Answer in the First Language?

The idea behind allowing learners to use the first language to answer questions is that this is more likely to directly measure comprehension. When the learners have to read second language questions and write their answers in the second language, comprehension of questions and second language writing skill are playing a part in measuring comprehension. Do the learners make poor answers because of poor reading comprehension of the text, poor comprehension of the questions, poor skill in writing answers in the second language, or any combination of these? If the learners feel comfortable with first language questions they could be worth using.

When Marking Comprehension Questions Requiring Written Answers, should Learners be Penalised for Poor Spelling, Poor Punctuation, and Poor Grammar?

Reading comprehension tests are supposed to measure reading comprehension. Other skills and knowledge, particularly skill in writing, should not get in the way of this measurement. If they do, the validity of the test is affected. It is no longer a true measure of reading comprehension. For this reason, learners should not be penalized for poor written production as long as what they write can be understood.

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Lesson-24

TEACHING WRITING I

Topic-132: Introduction to Teaching Writing

Most students who come for help with literacy will have difficulties with writing. It may be something they have avoided for years, after negative experiences at school. They feel they cannot express clearly what they wish to write. Many are embarrassed about their handwriting or spelling and don't want to appear foolish in front of family and friends. Others may be reluctant to seek employment, promotion or embark on further education and training for fear it will involve writing.

Writing is a complex process that requires a different range of skills from reading. As well as the skill of visual recognition, so important in reading, it requires recall and reproduction. The process ranges from writing with traditional pen and paper to writing an email, writing details when booking a flight on the internet or sending text messages on a mobile phone. Many students find it a daunting task precisely because it demands the co-ordination of so many elements: from clarifying their purpose, planning and sequencing their thoughts, to the technical aspects, such as handwriting or word processing, spelling, structure, layout and understanding information technology. In addition, they may find it takes longer to see progress in writing than in reading.

Writing should always arise from the student's needs and interests. In the early stages these are often functional, for example letters, application forms, notes to school. However, as tuition progresses, it is worth giving time to encouraging expressive or imaginative writing. This is often the area that students have most difficulty with, but expressive writing has the potential to radically change the student's relationship with the written word. By seeing their own words in print, students can develop a sense of mastery and ownership of the resulting piece. In addition, many adult learning centers regularly celebrate student achievements through publishing collections of student writings. These provide a rich source of ideas, as well as encouragement and inspiration for other learners.

Topic-133: Principles for Teaching Writing

The following principles can be used to evaluate teaching and learning activities so that the best are chosen for use. The principles can also be used to evaluate a writing course or the writing section of a language course to make sure that learners are getting a good range of opportunities for learning. Within each strand the principles are ranked with the most important principle first.

Meaning-focused Input

- Learners should bring experience and knowledge to their writing. Writing is most likely to be successful and meaningful for the learners if they are well prepared for what they are going to write. This preparation can be done through the choice of topic, or through previous work done on the topic either in the first or second language.

Meaning-focused Output

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- Learners should do lots of writing and lots of different kinds of writing. There are many elements of the writing skill which are peculiar to writing and so time spent writing provides useful practice for these elements. This is a very robust principle for each of the four skills. Different genres use different writing conventions and draw on different language features (Biber, 1989) and so it is useful to make sure that learners are getting writing practice in the range of genres that they will have to write in.
- Learners should write with a message-focused purpose. Most writing should be done with the aim of communicating a message to the reader and the writer should have a reader in mind when writing. In the following chapters we will look at ways of doing this.
- Writing should interest learners and draw on their interests.
- Learners should experience a feeling of success in most of their writing.
- Learners should use writing to increase their language knowledge. The section on guided tasks in this chapter focuses on this.
- Learners should develop skill in the use of computers to increase the quality and speed of their writing. As we shall see, computers provide very useful ways of providing feedback, especially when the learners submit their writing as a computer file.
- Writing instruction should be based on a careful needs analysis which considers what the learners need to be able to do with writing, what they can do now, and what they want to do.

Language-focused Learning

- Learners should know about the parts of the writing process and should be able to discuss them in relation to their own and others' writing. .
- Learners should have conscious strategies for dealing with parts of the writing process.
- Where the L1 uses a different script or where learners are not literate in their L1, the learners should give attention to clarity and fluency in producing the form of the written script. Such activities can include careful writing, copying models, and doing repetitive writing movements
- Spelling should be given an appropriate amount of deliberate attention largely separated from feedback on writing.
- Teachers should provide and arrange for feedback that encourages and improves writing. Chapter 10 looks at responding to written work.
- Learners should be aware of the ethical issues involved in writing.

Fluency Development

- Learners should increase their writing speed so that they can write very simple material at a reasonable speed. Fluency development can occur through repetitive activities and through working with easy, familiar material.

Topic-134: Designing Tasks

Imagine that a teacher wishes to help learners in her class improve their writing skills. To do this she will get them to work on writing tasks that will take them beyond their present level of proficiency. But to make sure that the learners are successful in doing the tasks, she may have to provide some help. There are several ways in which she could do this.

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1. She could think of a topic that the learners are very familiar with, such as a recent exciting event. She then gets the learners talking about the event so that the ideas and the organization of the ideas are clear and so that the learners have an oral command of the language needed to describe the event. When all this previous knowledge has been stimulated, the learners are then told to put it in writing. As the ideas, organization and necessary language are all familiar to them, the learners have only to concentrate on turning these ideas into a written form.
2. The teacher could think of a topic and then put the learners into groups of three or four. Each group has to plan and produce one piece of writing. By helping each other, the learners in each group are able to produce a piece of writing that is better than any one of them could have produced by working alone.
3. The teacher finds or makes a guided composition exercise, such as a series of pictures with accompanying questions and useful language items.
4. The teacher chooses a topic and then lets the learners get on with their writing. They may ask for help if they need it, but they are mainly left to work independently.

These four kinds of tasks are called experience tasks, shared tasks, guided tasks, and independent tasks.

One way to look at these types of tasks is to see their job as dealing with the gap which exists between learners' present knowledge and the demands of the learning task. Experience tasks try to narrow the gap as much as possible by using or developing learners' previous experience. Shared tasks try to get learners to help each other cross the gap. Guided tasks try to bridge the gap by providing the support of exercises and focused guidance. Independent tasks leave learners to rely on their own resources.

Experience Tasks

A very effective way of making a task easier is to make sure that the learners are familiar with as many parts of it as possible. This has several effects. First, it makes sure that learners are not overloaded by having to think about several different things at the same time. Second, it allows the learners the chance to concentrate on the part of the task that they need to learn. Third, it helps the learners perform a normal language activity in a normal way with a high chance of success.

Topic-135: Bringing Tasks within the Learners' Experience

One of the most common examples of an experience task in foreign language learning is the use of graded readers. Once learners have a vocabulary of 300 words or more, they should be able to read Stage 1 graded readers because these are written within that vocabulary level. Normally, such learners would not be able to read books written in English because unsimplified texts would be far too difficult for them. However, because Stage 1 graded readers use vocabulary that is familiar to the learners, use familiar sentence patterns, and involve simple types of stories, elementary learners are able to read Stage 1 readers without too much difficulty and with a feeling of success. The task of reading a graded reader is made easier because the writer of the graded reader has brought many of the parts of the task within the learners' experience.

In Chapter 2 we saw another way of doing this for reading which is often used in New Zealand primary schools. The teacher sits with a learner who has just drawn a picture. The learner tells the teacher the story of the picture and the teacher writes down the learner's story in the learner's words. This story

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then becomes the learner's reading text. It is not difficult for the learner to read because the language, the ideas in the story and the sequence of ideas in the story are all within the learner's experience. The unfamiliar part of the task, which is also the learning goal of the activity, is the decoding of the written words.

Here is an example of how a writing task could be brought within the learners' experience. The learners are given a task to do which involves some reading and a following problem-solving activity that they have to write up. After doing the reading, the learners get together in first language groups and discuss the reading and the activity they will have to do in their first language. When they are satisfied that they have a clear understanding of what needs to be done, they then individually do the activity and write it up in English. The discussion in the first language makes sure that they truly understand the knowledge needed to do the task and the nature of the task.

Topic-136: Making Sure Learners Have the Experience to Do a Task

If learners do not have enough experience to do a task, then either the task can be changed so that it is brought within their experience, or the learners can be provided with the experience which will help them do the task. A common way of providing learners with experience is to take them on a visit or field trip. For example, the teacher may take the class to a fire station. While they are there, they find out as much as they can about the fire station. They may even have a set of questions to answer. After the visit the writing task should be easier because the learners have experienced the ideas that they will write about, they have used or heard the language items that they need in the writing task, and they can choose how they will organize the writing. Their only difficulty should be putting the ideas into a written form and this is the learning goal for the task.

Learners may already have experience that they can draw on, but they are not aware of the relevance of this experience or their knowledge of the experience is largely unorganized. By discussing and sharing experience, learners can prepare themselves for certain tasks.

A more formal way of providing learners with experience to do a task is by pre-teaching. For example, before the learners read a text, the teacher can teach them the vocabulary they will need, can give them practice in finding the main idea, or can get them to study some of the ideas that will occur in the text.

Table 7.1 shows the three main ways of making sure learners have the experience needed to do a particular task.

Table 7.1 Ways of Providing Experience

Control through selection or simplification	Using simplified material Using carefully graded material Using learner produced material Using material based on first language material
Recall or sharing of previous experience	Discussions and brainstorming Questioning peers
Pre-teaching or experiencing	Direct teaching of sounds, vocabulary, grammar, text types . . .

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Visits and field trips
Direct teaching of content

Experience tasks are ones where the learners already have a lot of knowledge needed to do the task. Preparation for experience tasks thus involves choosing topics that the learners already know a lot about, providing learners with knowledge and experience to use in their writing and, through discussion, stimulating previous knowledge relevant to the writing task. Here are some experience tasks for writing.

In **draw and write** the learners draw a picture about something that happened to them or something imagined, and then they write about it, describing the picture. The picture provides a way of recalling past experience and acts as a memory cue for the writing.

Linked skills tasks are the commonest kinds of fluency task. The writing task is set as the final activity in a series that involves speaking about, then listening to and then reading about the topic. By the time they get to the writing task, the learners have a very large amount of content and language experience to draw on. Such linked skills activities fit easily into theme based work (Nation and Gu, 2007).

In **partial writing**, working together the learners list useful words that they will need in the following writing task.

Ten perfect sentences involves the teacher showing the learners a picture or suggesting an easy subject like my family, cars, etc., and the learners must write ten separate sentences about that. They are given one mark for each correct sentence.

At the beginning of a course, each learner chooses a topic that they will research and keep up-todate each week during the course. This recording of information is their issue log. At regular intervals they give talks to others about their topic and prepare written reports.

Setting your own questions is an amusing activity. Each student produces the question they want to write about. This is then translated into good English and is made into an examination question which the students answer under examination conditions (McDonough, 1985).

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Lesson-25

TEACHING WRITING II

Topic-137: Shared Tasks

A task which is too difficult for an individual to do alone may be done successfully if a pair or group does it. A well-known example is group composition where three or four learners work together to produce a piece of writing that is superior to what any one of the group could do alone. There are several reasons why this happens, particularly in second language learning. First, although learners may be of roughly equal proficiency, they will certainly have learnt different aspects of the language (Saragi et al., 1978). Second, although learners may know a particular language item, they may find difficulty in accessing it. The prompting and help of others may allow them to do this. Third, where groups contain learners of differing proficiency, there is the opportunity for more personalized teaching to occur with one learner working with another who needs help.

Many experience tasks and guided tasks can be done in a group, thus increasing the help that learners are given with the tasks. Most shared tasks have the advantages of requiring little preparation by the teacher, reducing the teacher's supervision and marking load, and encouraging the learners to see each other as a learning resource.

When doing a reproduction exercise the learners read or listen to a story and then they retell it without looking at the original. This type of composition is easier if the learners are allowed to read or listen to the story several times, before they write it. The teacher can tell the learners to try to write the story so that it is very similar to the original, or to add extra details and make changes if they wish. The same technique can be used with spoken instead of written input. The teacher reads a story to the class. After they have listened to the story, they must write it from their memory. If the teacher wants to give the learners a lot of help, the teacher reads the story several times, but not so many times that the learners can copy it exactly. As the learners cannot remember all the words of the story, they have to make up parts of it themselves. This gives them practice in composition. This exercise is sometimes called a dicto-comp (Ilson, 1962; Riley, 1972; Nation, 1991), because it is half-way between dictation and composition. Marking is easy.

The exercise can be made more difficult to suit the abilities of the learners. Here are three different ways of doing this, the second way is more difficult then the first, and the third is more difficult than the second.

1. The teacher reads a short passage several times.
2. The teacher reads a long passage once or twice. The learners can take notes while the passage is being read.
3. The learners listen to the passage once. When they write they must try to copy the style of the original (Mitchell, 1953).

This activity is called a **dicto-gloss** (Wajnryb, 1988 and 1989) if it is done as group work and if the learners take notes during two listening sessions.

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To make a **blackboard composition** the whole class works together. The teacher or the learners suggest a subject and a rough plan for the composition. Members of the class raise their hands and suggest a sentence to put in the composition. If the sentence is correct it is written on the blackboard. If it is not correct, the class and the teacher correct it and then it is written on the board. In this way the composition is built up from the learners' suggestions and the learners' and the teacher's corrections. When the whole composition is finished, the learners read it and then it is rubbed off the blackboard. The learners do not copy it in their books before this. Then the learners must rewrite it from memory. This last part can be done as homework (Radford, 1969). The teacher has only to prepare a subject. Marking is easy as the learners usually make very few mistakes when rewriting.

The learners are divided into groups for **group-class composition**. The teacher gives the subject of the composition and then the learners in their groups discuss and make a list of the main ideas that they will write about. Then the teacher brings the class together and, following the learners' suggestions, makes a list of the main ideas on the blackboard. After this is discussed, the learners return to their groups and write a composition as a group. When the composition is finished each member of the group makes a copy of the composition. Only one copy is handed to the teacher for marking. The learners correct their copies by looking at the marked copy when the teacher gives it back to them. It is useful if they discuss the teacher's corrections in their groups.

In **group composition**, the learners are divided into groups or pairs. Each group writes one composition. Each learner suggests sentences and corrects the sentences suggested by the other learners. When the composition is finished, each learner makes a copy but only one composition from each group is handed to the teacher to be marked. When the composition has been marked, the learners correct their own copy from the marked one. The teacher just has to suggest a subject. Marking is usually easy because the learners correct most of the mistakes themselves before the composition is handed to the teacher. The teacher marks only one composition for each group.

When **writing with a secretary**, the learners work in pairs to do a piece of writing. One member of the pair has primary responsibility for the content and the other has to produce the written form.

Topic-138: Guided Tasks

Most course books make tasks easier by using exercises that carefully guide the learners. This usually has the effect of narrowing the task that the learners have to do. For example, guided composition exercises, such as picture composition, provide the ideas that the learners will write about. The exercises often provide needed vocabulary and structures and determine how the piece of writing will be organised. The learners' job is to compose the sentences that make up the composition. Guided tasks provide a lot of support for the learners while they do the task. This has several effects.

1. 1. First, as we have seen, the task is narrowed. That is, the learners only do a part of the work that would normally be required in such an activity. This is good if that part of the task is worth focusing on and helps learners achieve a useful learning goal. It is not good if the narrowed task results in learners doing things that bear little relation to the normal wider task. Substitution exercises have often been criticised for this reason.
2. A second effect of the support given during guided tasks is that it allows grading and sequencing of tasks. Experience tasks require the teacher to be sensitive to learners' familiarity with parts of a

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task and to provide and stimulate previous experience where necessary. Guided tasks, on the other hand, are designed so that guidance is provided as a part of the activity. It does not have to be provided by the teacher. For this reason, most course books for English language teaching contain a lot of guided tasks. For the same reason, teachers may be reluctant to make their own guided tasks because of the amount of skill and work that has to go into making them.

3. A third effect of the support given during guided tasks is the high degree of success expected. If learners make errors in guided tasks this is often seen as a result of a poorly made task; that is, the guidance was not sufficient.

There are several types of guided tasks which can work at the level of the sentence, paragraph or text.

Identification

In identification techniques the learners are guided by being presented with an item which they must repeat, translate, or put in a different form with a related meaning to show that they have understood or correctly perceived the item, or to show that they can produce the related foreign language item. Dictation, copying, and writing from information transfer diagrams are identification techniques. Identification techniques can also include translation from the first language.

In **translation** the learners translate sentences or a story into English. This exercise is easier if the story is specially prepared by the teacher so that it contains very few translation problems.

With **look and write** the teacher performs an action, or shows the learners a picture of a real object, and the learners write a sentence to describe what they see. This is easier for the learners if the teacher gives them an example of the sentence pattern.

For **picture composition** the teacher shows the learners a picture or a series of pictures. Under the picture there are several questions. By answering the questions with the help of the picture, the learners can write a composition. If the teacher wishes to make it easier for the learners, the learners can answer the questions aloud around the class before they do any writing.

The **delayed copying** technique is designed to help learners become fluent in forming letters and words, especially where the writing system of the second language is different from that of the first language. It also helps learners develop fluent access to phrases. The learners have a paragraph on a piece of paper next to them. They look at a phrase, try to remember it, then look away and write it. They should only look at each phrase once, and they should try to break the work into phrases that are as long as they can manage (Hill, 1969). This exercise is even better if the learners pause while not looking at the passage before they write the phrase. This delay accustoms them to holding English phrases in their head. This technique is similar to the read-and-look-up technique (West, 1960: 12–13) and could be called the lookup and write technique. Copying letter by letter, or word by word is of little value in improving a learner's knowledge of English. Any passage that contains known words and sentence patterns can be used for delayed copying.

Understanding Explanations

In some techniques the learners follow explanations and descriptions and act on them. Here are some examples. (1) The teacher explains a grammar rule to help the learners make correct sentences

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following a rule. The teacher says, "When we use going to talk about the future, going to is followed by the stem form of the verb, for example, I am going to see it. The subject of the sentence should agree with the verb to be which comes in front of going to. Now you make some sentences using going to." (2) The teacher tells the learners a rule, for example a spelling rule or a rule about singular countable nouns, and the learners apply the rule to some material.

Writing with grammar help involves guided compositions which are based on special grammar problems. Usually the rules are given first for the learner to study and then they must use the rules when doing the composition. Here is an example based on countable and uncountable nouns. The first part just deals with countable nouns. The second part deals with uncountable nouns and the third part mixes both together. Only part one is shown here. Other exercises like this can be made for verb groups, joining words, a and the, and so on.

Countable nouns

1. Countable nouns can be singular or plural.
2. A singular countable noun must have a, or the, or a word like this, my, each, every, Fred's in front of it.
3. Many, several, both, a few, these, those, two, three, etc. are only used in front of plural countable nouns.
4. Each, every, a, another, one are only used in front of singular countable nouns.
5. People is a plural countable noun.

Uncountable nouns

1. Uncountable nouns cannot be plural.
2. Sometimes an uncountable noun does not need the, this, etc. in front of it.
3. Much is only used in front of uncountable nouns.

Part 1

All these words are countable nouns. Put them in the correct place in the story. You must use some of the words more than once. Follow the rules for countable nouns.

Language, country, word, kind, world, people, dictionary.

_____living in different_____ use different_____ of words. Today there are about 1,500 different _____ in the_____ . Each_____ has many_____ . A very big English dictionary has four or five hundred thousand words. Nobody knows or uses every _____ in a dictionary like this. To read most books you need to know about five or six thousand words. The words that you know are called your vocabulary. You should try to make your vocabulary bigger. Read as many _____as you can. There are many _____ in easy English for you to read. When you meet a new_____ , find it in your _____ .

To make this exercise, the teacher finds a story that is not too difficult for the learners, and takes out certain words.

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Answering Questions

In some guided tasks the guidance comes through questions. True/false statements are included in this type. Questions can be asked or answered in the first language. For example, in some reading courses where writing is not taught, questions on the reading passage are written in English but the learners answer in their first language. The questions can also be asked or answered by means of pictures and diagrams. Learners can take the teacher's place and ask the questions while the teacher or other learners answer them. There is a wide variety of question forms and types. Stevick's (1959) excellent article on teaching techniques describes some of these.

In **answer the questions** the teacher writes several questions on the blackboard. These questions are based on a story that the learners have just heard or read, or have heard or read several days ago. The answers to the questions give the main ideas of the story. The learners answer the questions and add extra ideas and details if they are able to. The composition is easier if the learners have heard or read the story recently and if there are many questions. It is easy for the teacher to make the questions because they can be closely based on the original story. When marking the teacher should allow the learners to change and add things as they wish. The composition can be based on the learners' own experience or can ask them to use their imagination. The more questions there are, the easier the composition is. Here is an example.

Good and Bad Guests

Do people sometimes visit your house? Who are they? Do they sometimes stay at your house for several days? Do you sometimes stay at other people's houses? Do you find that you enjoy having some guests, but that you do not enjoy having certain others? What sorts of people do you like as guests? What sorts of people do you dislike as guests? What sorts of things make a person a good guest? What ones make a person a bad guest? (From Hill, 1966, p. 35).

Correction

In correction techniques the learners look for mistakes either in ideas or form and describe them or correct them. They include techniques like finding grammar mistakes in sentences, finding unnecessary and unusual words which have been put in a reading passage, finding wrong facts in a reading passage, finding the word that does not go with the others in a group of words, describing inappropriate items in pictures, and so on. Learners show that they have found mistakes by

- underlining or circling them
- writing the corrected item.

Completion

In completion techniques the learners are given words, sentences, a passage, or pictures that have parts missing or that can have parts added to them. The learners complete the words, sentences or passage by filling in the missing parts, or by saying what is missing from the picture.

For **complete the sentences** the learners are given sentences with words missing. They must put the correct words with the correct form in the empty spaces. A few words can fill all the empty spaces.

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This type of exercise is used to practice a or the; some, any, etc.; prepositions, etc. The missing words can be given at the beginning of the exercise.

Put at, on, or in in the empty spaces.

1. He arrived ten o'clock.
2. The meeting begins Friday.
3. My uncle died July.
4. My birthday is 21st January.
5. It begins midnight.

In another form of the exercise each missing word is given but the learners must use the correct form. This type of exercise is used to practise tense, verb groups, singular/plural, pronouns, questions, etc.

1. One of the was there. (boy)
2. Every tried to get as many as possible. (person)

When verb groups are being practised the learner sometimes has to add other words.

1. you to leave now? (want)
2. you him last week? (meet)

Some explanation of the grammar can be given at the beginning of the exercise.

In **backwriting** the learners read a passage. After they have understood the text, they copy some of the key words from the passage onto a sheet of paper. Only the base form of the word is copied (i.e. walk not walking). The learners then put the text away and write what they remember of the passage filling in around the key words that they copied.

Ordering

In ordering techniques the learners are presented with a set of items in the wrong order which they must rearrange in the desired order. For example, the learners are presented with a set of letters o k o b. They must rearrange these letters to make a word, book. Words can be rearranged to make a sentence, sentences to make a passage, pictures to make a story, and so on. Ordering techniques can easily be combined with other types of actions. For example, the learners are presented with a set of letters that can be rearranged to make an English word. The learners respond by giving the first language translation of the word.

With **put the words in order** the learners are given sentences with the words in the wrong order. They must rewrite them putting the words in the correct order.

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Follow the model shows the learners a pattern and gives them a list of words. They must use the words to make sentences that follow the same pattern as the model.

He made them cry.

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saw I laugh let she go her fight heard him

Instead of all the words, just the content words can be provided.

Some ordering techniques, like the examples given above, can be done without the learners referring to any other clues. Other ordering techniques contain extra information so that the learners can do the ordering correctly. For example, the learners are given a set of words. The teacher reads the words quickly in a different order and while listening to this information the learners number or put the words in the same order as the teacher says them. Here is another example. After the learners have read a passage, they are given a set of sentences containing the main points in the message. The learners must put these sentences in the right order so that the order of the main points in the sentences is the same as the order in the passage.

Substitution

In substitution techniques the learners replace one or more parts of a word, sentence, passage, picture, story, etc. So, the input of a substitution technique has two parts, the frame which contains the part where the substitution must be made, for example a word, sentence, etc., and the item which fits into the frame. So, if the frame is a sentence, He seldom goes there. The teacher can give the item often which is substituted for seldom in the frame to give the response He often goes there.

The learners can write sentences from a **substitution table.**

1	2	3	4
He	said		it was not a problem.
They	agreed	that	it was the right time.
I	decided		nothing could be done.
We	pretended		

The substitution table gives the learners the chance to practice making correct sentences, and to see different words that can be in each place in the sentence (George, 1965).

In **What is it?** The teacher writes some sentences on the blackboard. The sentences describe something or someone.

Transformation

In transformation techniques the learners have to rewrite or say words, sentences, or passages by changing the grammar or organization of the form of the input. This type of technique also includes rewriting passages, substitution where grammar changes are necessary and joining two or more sentences together to make one sentence.

In **change the sentence** the learners are given some sentences and are asked to rewrite them making certain changes. Here are some examples.

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Rewrite these sentences using the past tense.

1. He wants to see me.
2. Do you like it?

Make these sentences passive. Do not use the subject of the active sentence in the passive sentence. The arrow wounded him. He was wounded.

1. Some people pushed her over the bank.
2. The noise frightened her.

For **join the sentences (sentence combining)** the learners are given pairs of sentences. They must join together the two sentences to make one sentence. This type of exercise is used to practise conjunctions, adjectives + to + stem, relative clauses, etc. Here are some examples.

This coffee is hot. I can't drink it.

This coffee is too hot to drink.

1. She is still young. She can't marry you.
2. He is tired. He can't go.

I met the man. You talked about him before.

I met the man who you talked about before.

1. Your friend is waiting near the shop. The shop is next to the cinema.
2. I will lend you the book. You wanted it.

There has been a lot of first language research on sentence combining generally showing positive effects (Hillocks, 1984; Hillocks, 1991). The motivation for sentence combining for first language learners is that the most reliable measure of first language writing development is a measure related to the number of complex sentences (the T-unit). Sentence combining is thus seen as a way of focusing directly on this aspect of writing development.

In **writing by steps** the learners are given a passage. They must add certain things to it, or make other changes. Here is an example from Dykstra, Port and Port (1966). The same passage can be used several times for different exercises at different levels of difficulty

In guided activities a large part of the writing has already been done for the learners and they focus on some small part that they must do. The activity provides support while learners do the writing.

With **marking guided writing** guided compositions can be marked by a group of learners using model answers before they are handed to the teacher. The teacher just checks to see that the learners have done the marking correctly.

Topic-139: Independent Tasks

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Independent tasks require the learners to work alone without any planned help. Learners can work successfully on independent tasks when they have developed some proficiency in the language and when they have command of helpful strategies. These strategies can develop from experience, shared, or guided tasks. Let us look at learners faced with a difficult independent reading task, such as writing an assignment.

1. **An experience approach**. The learners could write several drafts. During each rewriting, the learners have the experience gained from the previous writings and preparation.
2. **A shared approach**. The learners could ask the teacher or classmates for help when they need it.
3. **A guided approach**. The learners could guide their writing by asking questions, by using an information transfer diagram or a well worked out set of notes that they have prepared, or by finding a good example of the kind of writing they want to do.

A good independent task has the following features:

(1) it provides a reasonable challenge, i.e. it has some difficulty but the learners can see that with effort they can do it;
(2) it is a task that learners are likely to face outside the classroom.

The difference between an experience and independent task lies in the control and preparation that goes into an experience task. Experience tasks are planned so that learners are faced with only one aspect of the task that is outside their previous experience. Independent tasks do not involve this degree of control and learners may be faced with several kinds of difficulty in the same task.

Topic-140: Using the Four Kinds of Tasks for Teaching Writing

The aim in describing the four kinds of tasks is to make teachers aware of the possible approaches to dealing with the gap between the learners' knowledge and the knowledge required to do a task, and to make them aware of the very large number of activities that can be made to help learners. When teachers are able to think of a variety of ways of dealing with a problem, they can then choose the ones that will work best in their class. Let us end by looking at another example of the range of tasks available in a particular situation.

Your learners need to write about land use in the Amazon basin. For several reasons this task will be difficult for them. There are new concepts to learn, there is new vocabulary, and the text should be written in a rather academic way. What can the teacher do to help the learners with this task?

The first step is to think whether an experience task is feasible. Can the teacher bring the language, ideas, needed writing skills, or text organization within the experience of the learners? For example, is it possible to bring the language within the learners' proficiency by pre-teaching vocabulary or discussing the topic before going on to the writing? Is it possible to bring the ideas within the learners' experience by getting them to collect pictures and read short articles about the Amazon basin? Can the possible organization of the text be outlined and explained to the learners? If these things are not possible or if more help is needed, then the teacher should look at making the writing a shared task.

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The writing could be made into a shared task in several ways. The class work together doing a blackboard composition, or they form groups with each group working on a different aspect of the content. If this is not possible or further help is needed, guided help can be given.

Some of the simpler guided tasks could involve answering a detailed set of questions to write the text, completing a set of statements, adding detail to a text, writing descriptions of pictures of the Amazon, and turning an information transfer diagram into a text.

The distinctions made here between experience, shared and guided tasks are for ease of description and to make the range of possibilities clearer. Experience or guided tasks can be done in small groups as shared tasks, just as experience tasks may have some guided elements.

One purpose of this chapter is to make teachers aware of the variety of ways in which they can support learners in their writing. Another purpose has been to describe some major task types that teachers can use to give them access to the large range of possibilities that are available to them when they try to close the gap between their learners' proficiency and the demands of the learning tasks facing them. The job of these tasks is to help learners gain mastery over the language, ideas, language skills and types of discourse that are the goals of their study.

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Lesson-26

TEACHING WRITING IN AN L2 CLASSROOM I

Topic-141: Introduction to Teaching Writing in an L2 classroom

"Most of the people won't realize that writing is a craft. You have to take your apprenticeship in it like anything else" Katharine Ann Porter.

- Writing for learning
- Writing for writing
- The tasks of the teacher in writing

Topic-142: Writing For Learning

Writing (as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing) has always formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English. However, it can be used for a variety of purposes, ranging from being merely a 'backup' for grammar teaching to a major syllabus strand in its own right, where mastering the ability to write effectively is seen as a key objective for learners.

The importance given to writing differs from teaching situation to teaching situation. In some cases it shares equal billing with the other skills; in other curricula it is only used, if at all, in its 'writingfor-learning' role where students write predominantly to augment their learning of the grammar and vocabulary of the language.

Partly because of the nature of the writing process and also because of the need for accuracy in writing, the mental processes that a student goes through when writing differ significantly from the way they approach discussion or other kinds of spoken communication. This is just as true for single-sentence writing as it is with single paragraphs or extended texts. As we saw in Chapter 1 of the book 'How_to_Teach_Writing' by Jeremy Harmer, writing is often not time-bound in the way conversation is. When writing, students frequently have more time to think than they do in oral activities. They can go through what they know in their minds, and even consult dictionaries, grammar books, or other reference material to help them, Writing encourages students to focus on accurate language use and, because they think as they write, it may well provoke language development as they resolve problems which the writing puts into their minds. However, this is quite separate from the issues of writing process and genre that we discussed in the first two chapters, since here students are not writing to become better writers. They are writing to help them learn better.

Topic-143: Reinforcement Writing

Reinforcement writing has always been used as a means of reinforcing language that has, been taught. In its simplest form, teachers often ask students to write sentences using recently learnt grammar Suppose, for example, that intermediate students have recently been practicing the third conditional (If + had (not) done + would (not) have done), they might be given the following instruction:

Write two sentences about things you wish had turned out differently, and two sentences about things you are pleased about.

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'The teacher hopes, then, that students will write sentences such as:

(things you wish had turned out differently)

If I hadn't failed my exams, I would have gone to university.

(things you are pleased about)

If I hadn't gone to that party, I wouldn't have met my boyfriend.

The same kind of sentence writing can be used to get students to practice or research vocabulary, as the following exercise shows:

Write a sentence about a friend or a member of your family using at least two of these character adjectives: proud, kind, friendly, helpful, impatient...

Reinforcement writing need not be confined to sentence writing, however. Students can also be asked to write paragraphs or longer compositions to practice certain recently focused-on aspects of language or paragraph and text construction, Students might be asked to write a story about some' that happened to them (or that is based on a character or events in their course book) as a good way of having them practice past tenses, They could be asked to write a description of someone they know because this is a good way of getting them to use the character and physical description vocabulary they have been studying.

Topic-144: Preparation Writing

Writing is frequently useful as preparation for some other activity, in particular when students write sentences as a preamble to discussion activities. This gives students time to think up ideas rather than having to come up with instant fluent opinions, something that many, especially at lower levels, find difficult and awkward. Students may be asked to write a sentence saying what their opinion is about a certain topic. For example, they may be asked to complete sentences such as:

I like/don't like going to parties because...

This means that when the class as a whole is asked to talk about going to parties they can either read out what they have written, or use what they thought as they wrote, to make their points. Another technique, when a discussion topic is given to a class, is for students to talk in groups to prepare their arguments. They can make written notes which they may use later during the discussion phase. In these cases, where writing has been used as preparation for something else, it is an immensely enabling skill even though it is not the main focus of an activity.

Topic-145: Activity Writing

Writing can also, of course, be used as an integral part of a larger activity where the focus is on something else such as language practice, acting out, or speaking. Teachers often ask students to write short dialogues which they will then act out. The dialogues are often most useful if planned to practice particular functional areas, such as inviting or suggesting. Students work in pairs to make the dialogue

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and, where possible, the teacher goes to help them as they write. They now have something they can read out o act out in the class.

'Writing is also used in questionnaire-type activities. Groups of students may be asked to design a questionnaire, for example about the kind of music people like. The teacher then asks them all to stand up and circulate around the class asking their colleagues the questions they have previously prepared. They write down the answers and then report back to the class on what they have found out.

Once again, writing is used to help students perform a different kind of activity (in this case speaking and listening). Students need to be able to write to do these activities, but the activities do not teach students to write.

It will be clear from the above that not all writing activities necessarily help students to write more effectively, or, if they do, that is a by-product of the activity rather than its main purpose. However, the 'writing-for-learning' activities we have discussed so far do depend on the students' ability to write already. There is no attempt to teach a new writing skill or show students how to work in unfamiliar genres, for example.

Teaching 'writing for writing' is entirely different, however, since our objective here is to help students to become better writers and to learn how to write in various genres using different registers. General language improvement may, of course, occur, but that is a by-product of a 'writing- for-writing' activity, not necessarily its main purpose. The kind of writing teaching with which this book is mostly concerned is quite separate and distinct from the teaching of grammatical or lexical accuracy and range, even though both may improve as a result of it.

Although, as we shall see in the next chapter, it is important to help students with matters of handwriting, orthography (the spelling system), and punctuation, teaching writing is more than just dealing with these features too. It is about helping students to communicate real messages in an appropriate manner.

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Lesson-27

TEACHING WRITING IN AN L2 CLASSROOM II

Topic-146: Writing Purposes (I)

When teaching 'writing for writing' we need to make sure that our students have some writing aim. As we saw previously, effective writers usually have a purpose in mind and construct their writing with a view to achieving that purpose.

The most effective learning of writing skills is likely to take place when students are writing real messages for real audiences, or at least when they are performing tasks which they are likely to have to do in their out-of-class life. The choice of writing tasks will depend, therefore, on why students are studying English. 'There are three main categories of learning which it is worth considering:

- **English as a Second Language (ESL)** - this term is normally used to describe students who are living in the target language community and who need English to function in that community on a day-to-day basis, Recent immigrants and refugees, for example, will have specific writing needs such as the ability to fill in a range of forms, or write particular kinds of letters (depending upon their exact needs and circumstances), alongside the need for general English development.
- **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)** - many students study English for a particular (or specific) purpose. People who are going to work as nurses in Britain or the USA, for example, will study medical English. Those who are going to study at an English-medium university need to concentrate on English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Business students will concentrate on the language of management and commerce, and so on,

'The choice of topics and tasks for such students should not only develop their general language competence but also be relevant to their reason for study. For example, writing tasks for business students can have a high face validity if the students can see that they are writing the kind of letters and documents which they will be writing in their professional life. Likewise nurses in training, when asked to write up a simulated patient record in their English class, will clearly see the value of such a task.

- **English as a Foreign Language (EFL)** - this is generally taken to apply to students who are studying general English at schools and institutes in their own country or as transitory visitors in a target-language country. 'Their needs are often not nearly so easy to pin down as the two categories we have mentioned above.

While it is perfectly possible to ask school students what their needs are or will be it is unlikely that it will be easy to make a list of any but the most general aims. In the case of adult students, it is often hard to find writing tasks that are directly relevant to the varying needs of a class full of students from different backgrounds and occupations, Nevertheless, it may well be possible to arrive at a set of tasks that are a useful compromise between the competing claims of the individuals in a class.

Topic-147: Writing Purposes (II)

'The best thing we can do is to concentrate on a repertoire of writing tasks that it is reasonable to assume that most speakers of English may have to take part in at some stage in their English-speaking

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lives. Most of such writing activities fall on a cline somewhere between real purpose versus invented purpose tasks. Real purpose tasks are precisely the ones that we can predict our students will probably need to perform at some stage. The letters we looked at in this chapter (on pages 35-38) fall near the 'real purpose' end of our cline since it is likely that our students will, at some stage, have to write formal and semi-formal letters of the same type. Similarly, we might well get our students to look at the language of e-mails and have them practice writing their own, or get them to write a report of a process or situation.

Invented purposes, on the other hand, are those which, however engaging, are unlikely to be directly relevant to our students' future needs. A popular activity in many classrooms is to have students write letters to imaginary magazine problem pages and then have other students reply in the guise of 'agony aunts'. Students will probably never need to write 'agony' letters in English, but such an activity will provoke them into thinking about how to best express themselves in writing, and how to format a letter, for example. In the same way, we might have students look at the kind of lonely hearts' advertisements that appear in many newspapers and magazines, not because our students will need to write such advertisements, but because by looking at them with a quizzical eye they can develop their genre-analyzing habits. This, in turn, may help them to write the kind of telegraphic writing that is common in advertisements and newspaper headlines. On top of that, if students find the activity amusing and engaging it will help to build in them a positive attitude to writing (a skill often viewed with less enthusiasm than, say, speaking)

One other skill needs to be discussed here, and that is exam writing. Although many tests are becoming computerized and heavily reliant on multiple-choice questions, many still have a writing component designed to discover the candidate's integrative language abilities ~ that is, their ability to write texts displaying correct grammar, appropriate lexis, and coherent organization, Integrative test items (which ask students to display all these skills) are different from discrete test items where only one thing, for example a grammar point, is tested at one time. Whereas the former test 'writing for writing', the latter use writing only as a medium for language testing.

Topic-148: Creative Writing

Creative writing is one area (like painting and composing) where the imagination has a chance to run free. The world is full of people who achieve great personal satisfaction in this way. In their book Process Writing, the authors Ron White and Valerie Arndt describe an approach that 'views all writing — even the most mundane and routine ~ as creative'. Such an approach would even include, at some level, the putting together of a shopping list, But we are concerned here with tasks that provoke students to go beyond the everyday, and which ask them to spread their linguistic wings, take some chances, and use the language they are learning to express more personal or more complex thoughts and images. 'We can ask them to write stories or poems, to write journals, or to create dramatic scenarios. This will not be easy, of course, because of the limitations many students come up against when writing in the L2. Nor will all students respond well to the invitation to be ambitious and to take risks, but for some, the provision of genuinely creative tasks may open up avenues, they have not previously travelled down either in the L1 or the L2.

Creative writing tasks are nearer the 'invented purpose' end of our purpose cline, but they can still be very motivating since they provide opportunities for students to display their work - to show off, in other words, in a way that speaking often does not. The writing they produce can be pinned up on

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notice-boards, collected in class folders or magazines, or put up as a page on a class site on a school intranet or on the World Wide ‘Web itself, Nor should we forget that this use of writing is one of the few occasions that students write for a wider audience; for once it may not just be the teacher who will read their work.

Topic-149: The Tasks of Teacher in Writing (I)

‘When helping students to become better writers, teachers have a number of crucial tasks to perform. This is especially true when students are doing ‘writing-for-writing’ activities, where they may be reluctant to express themselves or have difficulty finding ways and means of expressing themselves to their satisfaction. ‘Among the tasks which teachers have to perform before, during, and after student writing are the following:

- **Demonstrating** — since, as we have said, students need to be aware of writing conventions and genre constraints in specific types of writing, teachers have to be able to draw these features to their attention. In whatever way students are made aware of layout issues or the language used to perform certain written functions, for example, the important issue is that they are made aware of these things - that these things are drawn to their attention.
- **Motivating and provoking** — student writers often find themselves ‘lost for words’, especially in creative writing tasks. This is where the teacher can help, provoking the students into having ideas, enthusing them with the value of the task, and persuading them what fun it can be. It helps, for example, if teachers go into class with prepared suggestions so that when students get stuck they can immediately get help rather than having, themselves, to think of ideas on the spot. Time spent preparing amusing and engaging ways of getting students involved in a particular writing task will not be wasted. Students can be asked to complete tasks on the board or reassemble jumbled texts as a prelude to writing; they can be asked to exchange ‘virtual’ e-mails or discuss ideas before the writing activity starts. Sometimes teachers can give them the words they need to start a writing task as a way of getting them going.

Topic-150: The Tasks Of Teacher in Writing (II)

- **Supporting** — closely allied to the teacher's role as motivator and provoker is that of supporting. Students need a lot of help and reassurance once they get going, both with ideas and with the means to carry them out. Teachers need to be extremely supportive when students are writing in class, always available (except during exam writing of course), and prepared to help students overcome difficulties.
- **Responding** — the way we react to students’ written work can be divided into two main categories, that of responding and that of evaluating, When responding, we react to the content and construction of a piece supportively and often (but not always) make suggestions for its improvement. When we respond to a student's work at various draft stages, we will not be grading the work or judging it as a finished product. We will, instead, be telling the student how well it is going so far. ‘When students write journals (see Chapter 8) we may respond by reacting to what they have said (e.g. ‘Your holiday sounds very interesting, Silvia. I liked the bit about running out of petrol but I didn't understand exactly who went and got some petrol. Could you possibly write and tell me in your next journal entry?’) rather than filling their journal entry full of correction symbols. We might also make comments about their use of language and suggest

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ways of improving it (e.g. 'Be careful with your past tenses, Nejati, Look at the verbs I've underlined and see if you can write them correctly.' but this is done as part of a process rather than part of an evaluation procedure.

- **Evaluating** — there are many occasions, however, when we do want to evaluate students' work, telling both them and us how well they have done. All of us want to know what standard we have reached (in the case of a progress/achievement test). When evaluating our students' writing for test purposes, we can indicate where they wrote well and where they made mistakes, and we may award grades; but, although test-marking is different from responding, we can still use it not just to grade students but also as a learning opportunity. When we hand back marked scripts we can get our students to look at the errors we have highlighted and try to put them right — rather than simply stuffing the corrected pieces of work into the back of their folders and never looking at them again.

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Lesson-28

THE WRITING PROCESS I

Topic-151: Introduction to the Writing Process

The Parts of a Writing Program

With writing, as with the other skills of listening, speaking and reading, it is useful to make sure that learners are involved in meaning-focused use, language-focused learning, and fluency development. It is also important to make sure that the uses of writing cover the range of uses that learners will perform in their daily lives. These can include filling forms, making lists, writing friendly letters and business letters, note-taking and academic writing. Each of these types of writing involves special ways of organizing and presenting the writing and this presentation also deserves attention.

Meaning-focused Writing

Writing is an activity that can usefully be prepared for by work in the other skills of listening, speaking and reading. This preparation can make it possible for words that have been used receptively to come into productive use. For example, in English for academic purposes programme, learners can be involved in keeping issue logs which are a kind of project work. At the beginning of the programme each learner chooses a topic or issue that they will follow through the rest of the program — for example, terrorism, rugby, or Burmese politics. They become the local expert on this topic. Each week they seek information on this subject, getting information from newspapers, TV reports, textbooks and magazines. They provide oral reports on latest developments to other members of their group, and make a written summary each week of the new information. The reading, listening and spoken presentation provide good support for the writing. Writing is easier if learners write from a strong knowledge base.

Topic-152: The Parts of Writing Process

The Parts of the Writing Process

One way of focusing attention on different aspects of writing is to look at writing as a process. One possible division of the writing process contains the following seven subprocesses.

- considering the goals of the writer
- having a model of the reader
- gathering ideas
- organizing ideas
- turning ideas into written text
- reviewing what has been written
- editing.

There are several important points that can be made about these subprocesses.

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1. They do not necessarily occur in a certain order. For some writers, organizing ideas may occur after they have been written. For many writers there is movement from one stage to another in a continuous cycle.
2. The effects of these subprocesses can be seen in learners' writing and in their spoken comments while and after they write. Several studies (Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1983; Arndt, 1987) have observed and analyzed the performance of second language teachers' writing and have described typical behavior of experienced and inexperienced writers in relation to the parts of the process.
3. Help and training can be provided for any of the subprocesses. The main goal of a process approach is to help learners improve their skills at all stages of the process. In this chapter, the descriptions of the techniques to improve skill in writing make use of the subprocesses to describe the subskills.
4. Awareness of the subprocesses can help teachers locate sources of difficulty that learners face in their writing. A learner may have no difficulty in gathering ideas but may experience great difficulty in turning these ideas into written text. Another learner may have difficulty in organizing ideas to make an acceptable piece of formal writing but may have no difficulty in getting familiar and well-organized ideas written in a well-presented form.
5. There are many ways of dividing the process into subprocesses. From the point of view of teaching techniques, the best division is the one that relates most closely to differences between teaching techniques.

The main idea behind a process approach is that it is not enough to look only at what the learners have produced. In order to improve their production, it is useful to understand how it was produced. Let us now look in detail at each of the seven subprocesses.

Topic-153: Considering the Goals of the Writer and Model of the Reader

Written work is usually done for a purpose and for a particular audience. For example, a friendly letter may be written to keep a friend or relative informed of you and your family's activities. When a letter like this is written, the writer needs to keep the goal in mind as well as suiting the information and the way it is expressed to the person who will receive it.

Once again, an important way of encouraging writers to keep their goals and audience in mind is to provide them with feedback about the effectiveness of their writing. This feedback can be direct comment on the writing as a piece of writing or it can be a response to the message. For example, Rinvolucri (1983) suggests that the teacher and learners should write letters to each other with the teacher responding to the ideas rather than the form of the letter.

Teachers should also check their writing programme to make sure that learners are given practice in writing for a range of purposes to a range of readers. The following list, adapted from Purves, Sofer, Takala and Vahapassi (1984), indicates how wide this range can be.

Purpose

- to learn
- to convey, signal
- to inform

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- to convince, persuade
- to entertain
- to maintain friendly contact
- to store information
- to help remember information

Role

write as yourself

write as some other person

Audience

- self specified individual
- specified group
- classmates
- general public

Type of writing

- a note or formal letter
- a formal letter
- résumé, summary, paraphrase
- narrative
- description
- exposition, analysis, definition, classification
- narrative, description, with evaluative comment
- argument
- literary
- advertisement, media
- journal writing

Topic-154: Gathering Ideas

Leibman-Kleine (1987) suggests that techniques for gathering ideas about a topic can be classified into three groups. The first group consists of open-ended, free-ranging activities where all ideas are considered or the learners follow whatever path their mind takes. Typical of these are brainstorming and quickwriting. These activities could be preceded by relaxation activities where learners are encouraged to use all their senses to explore a topic. The second group consists of systematic searching procedures such as questioning (who, why, where, when . . .) or filling in an information transfer diagram. In all cases the learners have set steps to follow to make sure they consider all the important parts of the topic. Research by Franken (1988) has shown that when learners are in command of the ideas in a topic, the grammatical errors are significantly reduced in their writing. The third group consists of techniques which help learners gather and organize ideas at the same time. These include using tree diagrams and concept diagrams or maps. These all involve arranging ideas into relationships, particularly according to

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importance and level of generality. One of the biggest blocks in writing is a lack of ideas. Techniques which help learners gather ideas will have good effects on all other aspects of their writing.

For group brainstorming the learners get together in small groups and suggest as many ideas about the writing topic that they can think of. At first no idea is rejected or criticized because it may lead to other ideas. One person in the group keeps a record of the ideas.

With list **making** before writing, each learner makes a list of ideas to include in the writing. After the list is made then the learner attempts to organize it and this may lead to additions to the list.

Looping is when each learner writes as quickly as possible on the topic for 4 or 5 minutes. Then they stop, read what they have written, think about it and write one sentence summarizing it. Then they repeat the procedure once more.

Cubing is when the learners consider the topic from six angles: (1) describe it; (2) compare it; (3) associate it; (4) analyse it; (5) apply it; (6) argue for and against it. They note the ideas that each of these points of view suggest and decide which ones they will use in their writing. Other similar procedures include asking, "who, what, when, where, how, why". So, for the topic "Should parents hit their children?",the learners work in small groups and

(1) describe what hitting involves,
(2) compare it with other kinds of punishment,
(3) associate it with other uses of physical force such as capital punishment,
(4) analyze what cause–effect sequences are involved in hitting,
(5) apply the idea of hitting to various age levels, and
(6) make a two-part table listing the pluses and minuses of hitting.

After doing this the learners should have a lot of ideas to organize and write about.

Using topic type grids. Information transfer diagrams based on topic types (Chapter 9) are a very useful way of gathering information before the writing is done (Franken, 1987). They can also be used as a checklist during writing.

Reading like a writer is when the learner reads an article or text like the one they want to write. While reading the learner writes the questions that the writer seemed to be answering. These questions must be phrased at a rather general level. For example, the first question that might be written when reading an article might be "Why are people interested in this topic?" The next might be "What have others said about this topic before?". After reading and making the questions, the learner then writes an article or text by answering those questions. The learners make concept diagrams or information trees to gather, connect and organize ideas about the topic they are going to write about.

With **add details** the teacher gives the learners several sentences that contain the main ideas of a story. Each sentence can become the main sentence in a paragraph. The learners add description and more detail. The learners can explain the main sentence in a general way and then give particular examples of the main ideas.

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Quick writing (speed writing) is used with the main purpose of helping learners produce ideas. It has three features, the learners concentrate on content, they do not worry about error or the choice of words, and they write without stopping (Jacobs, 1986). They can keep a record of their speed in words per minute on a graph.

For **expanding writing** the learners write their compositions on every second line of the page. When they have finished writing they count the number of words and write the total at the bottom of the page. Then they go over their writing using a different coloured pen and add more detail. They can make use of the blank lines while they do this. They then count the total number of words again. Further additions can be made using yet another coloured pen. The teacher can then check the work and get the learners to write out their final draft (Chambers, 1985).

Topic-155: Organizing Ideas

The way learners organize ideas gives them a chance to put their own point of view and their own thought into their writing, particularly in writing assignments and answering examination questions. Often the ideas to be included in an assignment do not differ greatly from one writer to another, but the way the ideas are organized can add uniqueness to the piece of writing. Two possible ways of approaching the organization of academic writing is to rank the ideas according to a useful criterion or to classify the ideas into groups. The use of sub-headings in academic writing is a useful check on organization.

With **projection into dialogue** the learners look at a model letter and list the questions that the writer of the letter seemed to be answering. They then use these questions to guide their own writing. After the learners can do this with model texts, they can apply the same procedure to their own writing to see if it is well organized (Robinson, 1987).

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Lesson-29

THE WRITING PROCESS II

Topic-156: Ideas to Text and Reviewing

Some learners are able to say what they want to write but have difficulty in putting it into written form. That is, they have problems in translating their ideas into text. Some learners can do this but are very slow. That is, they lack fluency in turning ideas to text. A possible cause is the difference between the writing systems of the learners' first language and the second language. Arab learners of English have greater difficulty in this part of the writing process than Indonesian or French learners do because of the different written script. If the learners' first language uses a different writing system from English, then there is value in practising the formal skills of forming letters of the alphabet and linking these letters together. There is also value in giving some attention to spelling. Some learners will find problems even in saying what they want to write. One cause may be lack of practice in writing in any language. Each cause requires different techniques to deal with it and teachers need to consider how to discover the causes and how to deal with them.

Reviewing

An important part of the writing process is looking back over what has been written. This is done to check what ideas have already been included in the writing, to keep the coherence and flow of the writing, to stimulate further ideas, and to look for errors. Poor writers do not review, or review only to look for errors. Chapter 10 looks at responding to written work. One way of encouraging learners to review their writing is to provide them with **checklists** (or scales) containing points to look for in their writing. Research on writing indicates that such scales have a significant effect on improving the quality of written work (Hillocks, 1984).

In **peer feedback** learners read their incomplete work to each other to get comments and suggestions on how to improve and continue it. The learners can work in groups and read each other's compositions. They make suggestions for revising before the teacher marks the compositions (Dixon, 1986). Learners can be trained to give helpful comments and can work from a checklist or a list of questions (Pica, 1986).

Topic-157: Editing I

Editing involves going back over the writing and making changes to its organization, style, grammatical and lexical correctness, and appropriateness. Like all the other parts of the writing process, editing does not occur in a fixed place in the process. Writers can be periodically reviewing what they write, editing it, and then proceeding with the writing. Thus, editing is not restricted to occurring after all the writing has been completed. Learners can be encouraged to edit through the feedback that they get from their classmates, teacher and other readers. Such feedback is useful if it occurs several times during the writing process and is expressed in ways that the writer finds acceptable and easy to act on. Feedback that focuses only on grammatical errors will not help with editing of content. Teachers need to look at their feedback to make sure it is covering the range of possibilities. Using a marking sheet divided into several categories is one way of doing this. Figure 8.1 is such a sheet for learners writing university

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assignments. It encourages comment on features ranging from the legibility of the handwriting to the quality of the ideas and their organization.

Topic-158: Diagnosing Control of the Parts of the Writing Process

An advantage of seeing writing as a process consisting of related parts is that a writer's control of each of the parts can be examined in order to see what parts are well under the writer's control and which need to be worked on. Poor control of some of the parts may lead to a poor performance on other parts of the process.

There are three ways of getting information about control of the parts

- looking closely at the written product, that is, the pieces of writing that the writer has already written
- questioning the writer
- Observing the writer going through the process of writing.

Here we will look at the types of information that can be gathered by looking closely at the written product. For each part of the writing process, we will look at the kinds of questions a teacher can seek answers for by analyzing a piece of writing.

Topic-159: Diagnosing from the Written Product

The Goals of the Writer

The questions try to find out if the writer is writing with a communicative purpose. Poor performance in this part of the process is signaled by the lack of a cohesive purpose.

- Does the piece of writing have a clear goal, such as presenting a balanced picture of a situation, or convincing the reader of a point of view, or providing a clear description of a situation?
- Has the writer clearly stated the goal and is this statement a true reflection of what the piece of writing does?

A Model of the Reader

These questions try to find out if the writer has a clear and consistent picture of who he or she is writing for. Poor performance in this part of the process is signaled by inconsistent style, lack of detail where the reader needs it and too much information where the reader already knows it.

- Is the degree of formality or informality consistent throughout the piece of writing?
- Is the amount of detail suited to the knowledge that the reader will bring to the text?
- If the writing is based on a set question, does the degree of formality in the writing match the level of formality in the question?

Gathering Ideas

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These questions try to find out if the writer has included enough ideas in the piece of writing. Poor performance in this part of the process is the result of not having enough to say.

- Does the piece of writing contain plenty of relevant, interesting ideas?
- Does the range of ideas provide a suitably complete coverage of the parts of the topic?
- Does the piece of writing draw on a range of sources of information, for example personal opinion or experience, information gathered from reading, or original data?

Organizing Ideas

These questions try to find out if the piece of writing is well organized. Poor performance in this part of the process results in a piece of writing that is difficult to follow, that does not try to grab the reader's attention, and that is annoyingly unpredictable.

- Are there clear parts to the piece of writing?
- Are these parts arranged in a way that is logical and interesting?
- Are the parts clearly signalled through the use of sub-headings or promises to the reader?
- Would it be easy to add sensible, well-sequenced sub-headings to the piece of writing?

Ideas to Text

These questions try to find out if the writer is able to express his or her ideas fluently and clearly. Poor performance in this part of the process is signalled by a short piece of writing, poorly expressed sentences, a large number of spelling, grammar and vocabulary errors, and a poorly connected piece of writing.

- How much was written in the time allowed?
- Are the ideas well expressed and easy to follow?
- Are the parts of the piece of writing clearly signalled?
- Is the writing largely error free?

Reviewing

These questions try to find out if the text has gone through several drafts and if the writer has looked critically at all parts of the text and writing process. Poor performance in this part of the process is signaled by a poorly organized and poorly presented text.

- If the teacher has seen previous drafts of the text, does the present one represent an improvement over the previous drafts?
- In what aspects are there improvements? In what aspects are there no real improvements?
- Is the text clear, well organized and well presented?

Editing

These questions try to find out if the writer can systematically make corrections and improvements to the text. Poor performance in this part of the process is signalled by the failure to

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respond to feedback, repeated errors, careless errors, references in the text not in the list of references, and inconsistencies in the list of references.

- Are there signs of self-correction?
- Is the text free of spelling errors, including those that a spellchecker would not find (e.g. form– from)?
- Is the text well formatted and consistently formatted?

The idea behind all these questions is that teachers of writing should be able to look at a piece of writing and make judgments about a writer's control of each of the parts of the writing process. The teacher should also be able to give useful feedback to writers about their strengths and weaknesses in relation to these parts, and provide useful suggestions for improvement. This feedback should involve strategy training where, eventually, learners are able to question themselves about each part of the process so that they can prepare for, monitor, and evaluate their own written work and the written work of others.

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Lesson-30

ISSUES OF COHESION AND COHERENCE

Topic-160: Teaching Text Construction I

The intended reader of the letter also recognizes instantly what kind of letter it is because it is typical of its kind (both in terms of construction and in choice of language), just as the advertisement was typical of its kind for the same reasons. We call these different writing constructions advertisements, 'letters, etc.) genres, and we refer to the specific choice of vocabulary within genres as the register that the text is written

"Newspaper advertisements' and formal 'letters of notification' are not the only genres around, of course. 'Literary fiction' is a genre of English which is different from, say, 'science fiction'. The characteristics of the latter may well differ in a number of ways from the former, and a specific genre may influence the writer's choice of register. 'Newspaper letters' are recognizable genres, different from the notification letter above and different again from 'holiday postcards' or 'application letters'. 'Scientific reports' represent a genre of writing, just as film criticism' is a genre all of its own.

Knowledge of genres (understanding how different purposes are 'commonly expressed within a discourse community) is only one of the many 'knowledges' or 'competences' that a reader brings to the task of reading, which a writer assumes the reader will know. Without these 'knowledges ' a 'communication like the notification letter above would have little chance of success.

These 'knowledges' (which we can group under the general heading of schematic) comprise:

- a knowledge of
- general world
- sociocultural knowledge (that is the social and cultural knowledge which members of a particular social group can reasonably be expected to know)
- topic Knowledge (that is knowing something about the subject being discussed).

All of this is exemplified in the following newspaper headline taken from The Observer newspaper:

Move over, Big Brother. Now

politics is the latest reality TV

Because of our knowledge of genres we recognize this collection of words as, 4 newspaper headline. However, in order to make sense of them we need more than this. Someone who did not have the relevant knowledge might need to be told firstly that reality TV involves cameras watching people who have been put, on purpose, in difficult situations (as survivors on a desert island, for example) and secondly that the most successful of all these programmes was called Big Brother, where contestants were crammed into a use, filmed all the time, and voted out of the house one by one by the viewers. Of course, it might be possible to deduce some of this information: we could, for example, recognize that the capital letters of Big Brother suggest that it is the name of something. But members of the discourse community do not have to make that effort because of their shared sociocultural and topic knowledge.

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Topic-161: Teaching Cohesion

When we write text we have a number of linguistic techniques at our disposal to make sure that our prose 'sticks together'. We can, for example, use lexical repetition and/or 'chains' of words within the same lexical set through a text to have this effect. The topic of the text is reinforced by the use of the same word more than once or by the inclusion of related words (e.g. water, waves, sea, tide). We can use various grammatical devices to help the reader understand what is being referred to at all times, even when words are left out or pronouns are substituted for nouns.

'We can see lexical and grammatical cohesion at work in the extract from a newspaper article on the page opposite.

Lexical cohesion is achieved in the article by the use of two main devices:

- Repetition of words - a number of content words are repeated throughout the text, e.g. grandparents (twice), grandchildren (twice), people (five times), etc.
- Lexical set 'chains' - the text is cohesive because there are lexical sets (that is words in the same topic area) which interrelate with each other as the article progresses, e.g.

(1) grandparents, daughters, sons, grandchildren, relative, grandchild;
(2) work employers, staff employees, retired employment;
(3) two-thirds, one-third,60%, one in three, one in ten; etc.

Topic-162: Teaching Grammatical Cohesion

Grammatical cohesion is achieved in a number of different ways too:

- **Pronoun and possessive reference** — at various points in the text a pronoun or more frequently a possessive is used instead of a noun. In the first sentence (Growing pressure on people in their SOs and 60s ...) there is used to refer back to people,

Like most texts, the article has many examples of such pronoun and possessive reference. The second ¢heir in paragraph 1 refers back but this time to the noun grandparents, whereas their in paragraph 2 refers back to employers. Such anaphoric reference can operate between paragraphs too. This which starts paragraph 3 refers back to the whole of paragraph 2, whereas they in paragraph 4 refers back to researchers from the Institute of Education in the previous paragraph.

- **Article reference** - articles are also used for text cohesion. The definite article (¢he) is often used for anaphoric reference. For example, in paragraph 4 the writer refers to retired local authority staff; but when they are mentioned again in paragraph 6 the writer talks about the local authority staff, and the reader understands that he is talking about the local authority staff who were identified two paragraphs before.

However the is not always used in this way. When the writer talks about the national census, he assumes his readers will know what he is referring to and that there is only one of it. Such exophoric reference assumes a world knowledge shared by the discourse community who the piece is written for.

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- **'Tense agreement** — writers use tense agreement to make texts cohesive. In our 'grandparents' article the past tense predominates (It found) and what is sometimes called the 'future-in-the-past' (would make) also occurs. If, on the other hand, the writer was constantly changing tense, the text would not hold together in the same way.
- **Linkers** ~ texts also achieve coherence through the use of linkers — words describing text relationships of 'addition' (and, also, moreover, furthermore), of 'contrast' (however, on the other hand, but, yet), of 'result? (therefore, consequently, thus), of 'time' (first, then, later, after a while), etc.
- **Substitution and ellipsis** — writers frequently substitute a short phrase for a longer one that has preceded it, in much the same way as they use pronoun reference (see above). For example, in He shouldn't have cheated in this exam but he did so because he was desperate to get into university the phrase did so substitutes for cheated in his exam. Writers use ellipsis (where words are deliberately left out of a sentence when the meaning is still clear) in much the same way. For example, in Penny was introduced to a famous author, but even before she was she had recognized him the second 'clause omits the unnecessary repetition of introduced to a famous author.

Topic-163: Teaching Coherence

The cohesive devices we have discussed help to bind elements of a text together so that we know what is being referred to and how the phrases and sentences relate to each other. But it is perfectly possible to construct a text which, although it is rich in such devices, makes little sense because it is not coherent. The following example is fairly cohesive but it is not terribly coherent:

This made her afraid.

It was open at the letters page.

His eyes were shut and she noticed the Daily Mail at his side.

She knew then that he had read her contribution.

Gillian came round the corner of the house and saw her husband sitting in his usual chair on the terrace.

She wished now that she had never written to the paper.

As we can see, for a text to have coherence, it needs to have some kind of internal logic which the reader can follow with or without the use of prominent cohesive devices. When a text is coherent, the reader can understand at least two things:

- **The writer's purpose** - the reader should be able to understand what the writer's purpose is. Is it to give information, suggest a course of action, make a judgment on a book or play, or express an opinion about world events, for example? A coherent text will not mask the writer's purpose.
- **The writer' line of thought** - the reader should be able to follow the writer' line of reasoning if the text is a discursive piece. If, on the other hand, it is a narrative, the reader should be able to follow the story and not get confused by time jumps, or too many characters, etc. In a descriptive

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piece the reader should know what is being described and what it looks, sounds, smells, or tastes like.

Good instruction manuals show coherence at work so that the user of the manual can clearly follow step-by-step instructions and therefore complete the assembly or procedure successfully. Where people complain about instruction manuals it is often because they are not written coherently enough.

Coherence, therefore, is frequently achieved by the way in which a writer sequences information, and this brings us right back to the issue of genre and text construction, It is precisely because different genres provoke different writing (in order to satisfy the expectations of the discourse community that is being written for) that coherence is achieved. When writers stray outside text construction norms, coherence is one of the qualities that is most at risk. Indeed our description of paragraph constructions on page 21 is, more than anything else, a demonstration of how coherence is achieved.

However, it must not be assumed that genre constraints serve to stifle creativity — or that the need for coherence implies a lack of experimentation. Whether or not writers choose to accept or violate genre constraints (and thereby, perhaps affect the coherence of their texts) is up to them.

Topic-164: Implications for Learning and Teaching

We have seen that writing in a particular genre tends to lead to the use of certain kinds of text construction. This must have implications not only for the way people write in their first or main language, but also for the ways in which we teach people to become better writers in a foreign language. Since people write in different registers depending on different topics and on the tone they wish to adopt for their intended audience, then students need to be made aware of how this works in English so that they too can choose language appropriately. If, for example, a class of people studying business English need to learn how to write job application letters, then clearly they will need to know how, typically, such application letters are put together and what register they are written in ~ something that will depend, often, on the kind of job they are applying for. If our students wish to learn how to write discursive essays for some exam, then it follows that they will benefit from knowing how, typically, such essays are constructed.

Students will also benefit greatly from learning how to use cohesive devices effectively and from being prompted to give a significant amount of attention to coherent organization within a gente. It would be impossible to explain different genre constructions or to demonstrate text cohesion devices without letting students see examples of the kind of writing we wish them to aim for. Writing within genres in the language classroom implies, therefore, a significant attention to reading.

- **Reading and writing** — students might well enjoy writing ‘lonely hearts’ advertisements for example. It would, anyway, provide vocabulary practice but it might also allow them to be imaginative and, hopefully, have some fun. However, the only way to get them to do this is to let them read examples of the kind of thing we want them to do before we ask them to write. If we ask our students to read ‘lonely hearts’ advertisements (because, later, we are going to ask them to write their own versions), we can ask them to analyze the texts they have in front of them. In order to draw their attention to the way the texts are structured, we might ask them to put the following genre elements in the order they occur in the texts:

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Contact instruction (e.g. Write Box 2562) Description of advertiser (e.g. Good-looking 35-yearold rock climber and music lover) Description of desired responder (e.g. young woman with similar interests) For (description of activities/desired outcome) (e.g. for relaxation, fun, friendship) 'Would like to meet' (e.g. WLTM)

We can then ask them to find the language which is used for each element. Now, as a result of reading and analyzing a text (or texts ~ e.g. a number of different advertisements of the same type) they are in a position to have a go at writing in the same genre themselves. Obviously, we would only ask students to write 'lonely hearts' advertisements for fun. When we ask them to write a business letter, however, we will do so because we think they may need to write such letters in the future. Thus we will let them read a variety of letters, drawing their attention to features of layout (e.g. where the addresses go, how the date is written). We will make sure they recognize features of text construction (e.g. how business letters often start, what the relationship between the paragraphs is, how business letter writes sign off) and language use (e.g. what register the letters are written in). We may also have students analyze the letters to spot examples of cohesive language. 'They will then be in a position to write their own similar letters obeying the same genre constraints and employing at least some of the same language. 'We do not have to tell the students everything. We can, for example, get them to look at five or six versions of the same news story. It will be their job to identify any similarities of construction and to find the vocabulary items and phrases which occur on more than two occasions. 'They will then be able to use these when writing their own similar newspaper articles.

At lower levels (e.g. beginners and elementary), we may not be able to expect that students can analyse complete texts and then go on to write imitations of them, But we can, through parallel writing, get them to look at a paragraph, for example, and then, having discussed its structure, write their own similar ones. By using the same paragraph construction (see page 21) and some of the same vocabulary, they can, even at this early stage, write well-formed paragraphs in English. In other words, where students are asked to write within a specific 'genre, a prerequisite for their successful completion of the task will be to read and analyse texts written within that same genre. However, there is a danger in concentrating too much on the study and analysis of different genres. Over-emphasis may lead us into the genre trap.

- **The genre trap** - if we limit students to imitating what other people have written, then our efforts may end up being prescriptive (you must do it like this) rather than descriptive (for your information, this is how it is often done). Students may feel that the only way they can write a text or a paragraph is to slavishly imitate what they have been studying. Yet writing is a creative undertaking whether we are designing an advertisement or putting up a notice in school. Unless we are careful, an emphasis on text construction and language use may lead to little more than text 'reproduction'.

A focus on genre can avoid these pitfalls if we ensure that students understand that the examples they read are examples rather than models to be slavishly followed. This is more difficult at beginner level, however, where students may well want to stick extremely closely to paragraph models.

A way out of this dilemma is to make sure that students see a number of examples of texts within a genre, especially where the examples all have individual differences. This will alert students to the descriptive rather than prescriptive nature of genre analysis. Thus when students look at newspaper

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advertisements, we will show them a variety of different types. We will make sure they see a variety of different recipes (if they are going to write recipes of their own) so that they both recognise the similarities between them, but also become aware of how, sometimes, their construction is different. For each genre that they encounter, in other words, we will try to ensure a variety of exposure so that they are not tied to one restrictive model.

'We will also need to accept that genre analysis and writing is not the only kind of writing that students (or teachers) need or want to do. On the contrary, we may often encourage students to write about themselves, including stories about what they have done recently. Sometimes, in our lessons, we should get students to write short essays, compositions, or dialogues straight out of their heads with no reference to generate at all.

'We need to remind ourselves that understanding a genre and writing within it is only one part of the picture for our students, As we saw in Chapter 1, we can help them enormously if we focus on the actual process of writing. Reconciling a concentration on genre with the desirability of involving students in the writing process.

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Lesson-31

TEACHING THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF WRITING I

Topic-165: Introduction

Writing is a medium of human communication that represents language with signs and symbols. For languages that utilize a writing system, inscriptions can complement spoken language by creating a durable version of speech that can be stored for future reference or transmitted across distance. Writing, in other words, is not a language, but a tool used to make languages readable. Within a language system, writing relies on many of the same structures as speech, such as vocabulary, grammar, and semantics, with the added dependency of a system of signs or symbols. The result of writing is called text, and the recipient of text is called a reader.

Topic-166: Teaching Mechanics of Writing

'Writing, like any other skill, has its 'mechanical' components. These include handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and the construction of well-formed sentences, paragraphs, and texts. Such things are the nuts and bolts of the writing skill and they need to be focused on at certain stages of learning to write in English. The greater the difference between the student's L1 and English, in some or all of these areas, the bigger the challenge for student and teacher alike.

'The activities in this chapter - which are designed to help students overcome problems with handwriting and spelling, for example — are enabling exercises on the way to developing an overall writing ability. Similarly, the techniques which are described here, such as copying and parallel writing (imitating a written model), help to give students a basic mechanical competence which they can then put to use when they write more creatively.

Topic-167: Teaching Handwriting

Although a lot of writing is typed on computer keyboards, handwriting is still necessary and widespread, whether in exam writing, postcards, forms (such as application forms), etc. It should be remembered too, that however fast computer use is growing it is still, in world terms, a minority 'occupation.

Handwriting can be particularly difficult for some students. For those who are brought up using characters such as in Chinese or Japanese or using very different scripts as in Arabic or Indonesia, writing in Roman cursive or joined-up lettering presents a number of problems. Areas of difficulty can include producing the shapes of English letters, not only in upper case (capitals) but also in their lower case (noncapital) equivalents. The relative size of individual letters in a word or text can cause problems, as can their correct positioning with or without ruled lines.

For students accustomed in their L1 to from right to left, 'Western script, which of course goes in the opposite direction, can involve not only problems of perception but also nictitates a different angle and position for the writing arm. For students who have trouble with some or all of the above aspects of English handwriting, teachers can follow a two-stage approach which involves first the recognition and

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then the production of letters. If students are to form English letters correctly, they have to recognize them first. For example, they can be asked to recognize specific letters within a on sequence of letters.

Topic-168: The Spelling Challenge

Many people say that English spelling is irregular and therefore difficult, and they make a feature of the lack of spelling-sound correspondence which, although not unique, is a feature of English. They point out that the same sounds can be spelt differently, as in threw and through which both sound as; and the same spelling can be pronounced differently, as in threw and sew or through and through which are said with completely different vowel sounds. English spelling is complex but it is not completely random and is, in fact, fairly regular, there are usually clear rules about when certain spellings are and are not acceptable.

English spelling rules do often have exceptions but these usually only apply to a small number of individual words. A standard regularity such as the fact that gd at the end of words is silent, for example, is broken by words like enough; yet enough is only one of seven words that behave in such a way. In the same way many English language spellers know the rule 'i before ¢ except after ¢ to explain the spelling of believe vs. conceive, but there are exceptions to this familiar rule (e.g. seize, weird, species, Neil). However, it is worth remembering that exceptions which cause confusion are just that ~ exceptions.

Learners of English need to be aware about how we use different spellings to distinguish between homophones (words that sound the same but are spelt differently) such as threw and through, Pairs of words that sound identical — like sun and son, sew and so, threw and through — are immediately differentiated in writing. What can be seen as a disadvantage in terms of sound and spelling correspondence, in other words, is actually serving an important and useful purpose.

Spellings make English relatively easy to read. Word roots, for example, are always recognizable even when we add affixes: prefixes (like wn-, dis-) or suffixes (like -ist, -able, and -ed). It is easy to perceive the connection between sing and singing, or between art and artist, or rule and ruler. And similarly, the function of affixes is reflected in their spelling. For example, the -ist and -est endings are pronounced the same (/ist/) in the words artist and fastest; it is the spelling that makes it clear that whereas the first ending denotes someone who does something (ar4) the second gives a one-syllable adjective its superlative form.

Topic-169: Teaching Spelling

The best way of helping students to learn how to spell is to have them read as much as possible. Extensive reading (reading longer texts, such as simplified readers, for pleasure) helps students to remember English spelling rules and their exceptions, although many students may need some encouragement to do this kind of reading.

However, as teachers we can be more proactive than this. We can raise the issue of sound and spelling correspondence, give students word formation exercises, get them to work out their own spelling rules, and use a number of other activities to both familiarize themselves with spelling patterns and also practise them. Here are some ideas:

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- Students hear words and have to identify sounds made by common digraphs (pairs of letters commonly associated with one sound, e.g. ck pronounced /k/) and trigraphs (three letters usually pronounced the same way, e.g. tch pronounced as (/ʧ/)
- Although reading aloud may have some disadvantages (without preparation students tend to read falteringly), nevertheless it can be very useful when the teacher takes students through a short text, getting them to listen to words and then repeat them correctly, and then coaching them in how to read the passage 'with feeling'. If the text has been chosen to demonstrate certain spellings (as well as being interesting in itself), it can focus the students' minds on how specific spellings sound or indeed on how specific sounds are spelt. (/ɔ:/)
- Students can read and listen to a series of words which all share the same sound (e.g. small, always, organised, four, sort, and more) and then identify what the sound is They can go on to see if the sound is present or not in other similarly spelt words (e.g. call, our, work, port). Such an activity raises their awareness of the convergence and divergence of sounds and their spellings.

The same effect can be achieved by focusing on a particular letter rather than on a particular sound, Students can be asked to listen to a number of different words containing the same letter and they then have to say what the sound of the letter is in each case. If the letter in question is a, for example, students can say for each word they hear whether a sounds like the a in cat, or in a bottle, or in many, or in say, or whether it sounds like the o in or. They then read sentences such as the following:

Tony loves playing golf much more than other games.
He thinks it's absolutely fascinating.
He thought Saturday's game on TV was amazing.
I thought it was rather boring when I saw it.
When he starts, Has anybody seen that film about golf?',
everybody begs him not to go on!

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TEACHING THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF WRITING II

Topic-170: Teaching Punctuation (I)

Using punctuation correctly is an important skill. Many people judge the quality of what is written not just on the comment, the language and writers handwriting but also on their use of punctuation. If capital letters, Commas, full stops, sentence and paragraph boundaries, etc are not used correctly, this can not only make a negative impression but can, of course, also make a text difficult to understand.

Where writers are using e-mail communication, the need for accurate punctuation (or spelling) does not seem to be so great. Features such as capital letters and apostrophes are frequently left out. However, even emails can sometimes be more formal or official and then such careless use of the computer keyboard may make a poor impression. If we want our students to be good writers in English we need to teach them how to use punctuation conventions correctly (see Appendix A). This 'means teaching aspects of the system from the very beginning so that by the time they have reached upper intermediate level, students can do a revision exercise such as this one with ease.

Topic-171: Teaching Punctuation (II)

Here are some ideas for getting students to recognize aspects of punctuation and be able to use them:

- Students at elementary level can study a collection of words and identify which ones are written with capital letters, e.g.

Anita, and, apple, April, Argentina, art, Australian, Andrew, act, at, in, island, I, ice, Iceland

They then work out why some words have capital letters and some do not.

- Once students have had full commas, and capital letters explained to them, they can be asked to punctuate a short text such as this:

they arrived in Cambridge at one o'clock in the morning was cold with a bright moon making the river cam silver andrew ran to the water's edge angela hurrying to keep up with him ran straight into him by mistake and pushed him into the river

- Students can be shown a and asked to identify what Tease ee res ee tal sad aye a procedure for helping students to write direct reported speech.

The teacher gives the students an extract like this one (preferably from a book (renders) they are currently reading):

'I'm sorry to keep you waiting,' a voice said. The speaker was a short man with a smiling, round face and a beard. 'My name's Cabinda,' he said. 'Passport police.'

'I can explain,' Monika said quickly. 'My hair. It's not like the photograph. I know. I bought hair color in South Africa. I can wash it and show you."

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Cabinda looked carefully at Monika and then at the photo. 'No, that's OK. I'can see that it's you," Cabinda said. "There's one more thing. You need a visa. It's ten dollars. You can pay the passport officer. Welcome to Mozambique!"

Topic-172: Copying

The copying activities we have looked at so far in this chapter have involved copying single and 'joined-up' letters, copying words from a list, and rewriting words in different columns. The intention in each case was to have students learn how to form letters and words from a given model.

Quite apart from its potential for helping students to learn (as we have seen with handwriting and spelling), copying is an important skill in real life too. Some students, however, are not very good at it. In part this may be due to an inability to notice key features of English spelling or to a general difficulty with attention to detail. Matters are not helped by the computer: the ability to copy and paste chunks of text into any document means that there is no need to take account of the ways the words themselves are formed. Graeme Porte, who was working at the University of Granada in Spain, found that some of his 'underachieving' students had great difficulty copying accurately when making notes or when answering exam questions, for example. As a result he had these same students, under time pressure, copy a straightforward text which was set out in fairly short lines. They copied line by line, but at any one time they covered the whole text apart from the line they were working on. This meant that they could give their whole concentration to that one line. Their ability to copy accurately improved as a result of this activity.

Topic-173: Teaching Sentence Writing

Students need to learn and practice the art of putting words togethe1 well-formed sentences, paragraphs, and texts. One way of doing this is parallel writing where students follow a written model, as the following examples will show:

- Sentence production (elementary) the most basic form of parallel writing is the kind of sentence writing that is often used for grammar reinforcement. Students are given one 'or two model sentences and then have to write similar sentences based on information they are given or on their own thoughts. In this topic, students are given information about a particular character. They then see how this information can be combined in sentences with and and but. They have to write similar sentences about themselves.

Topic-174: Teaching Paragraph Construction

Paragraph construction can be done through a practice drill. This example employs a 'substitution-drill' style of procedure to encourage students to write a paragraph which is almost identical to one they have just read. This is like a substitution drill in that new vocabulary is used within a set pattern or patterns, Students read the following paragraph:

William Shakespeare is England's most famous playwright. He was born in Stratford-on-Avon in 1564, but lived a lot of his life in London; He wrote 37 plays including Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Henry V, and Twelfth Night. He died in Stratford-on-Avon in 1616.

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After the teacher has made sure they have understood the information about Shakespeare, students are given the following table of information and asked to write a similar paragraph about Jane Austen:

Name: Jane Austen

Occupation: one of England's most famous writers

Date of birth 1775

Place of birth: Steventon, Hampshire

Lived: Bath and Southampton (cities in the south of the UK)

Examples of work: six novels, including Emma and Mansfield Park

Died: 1817, Winchester

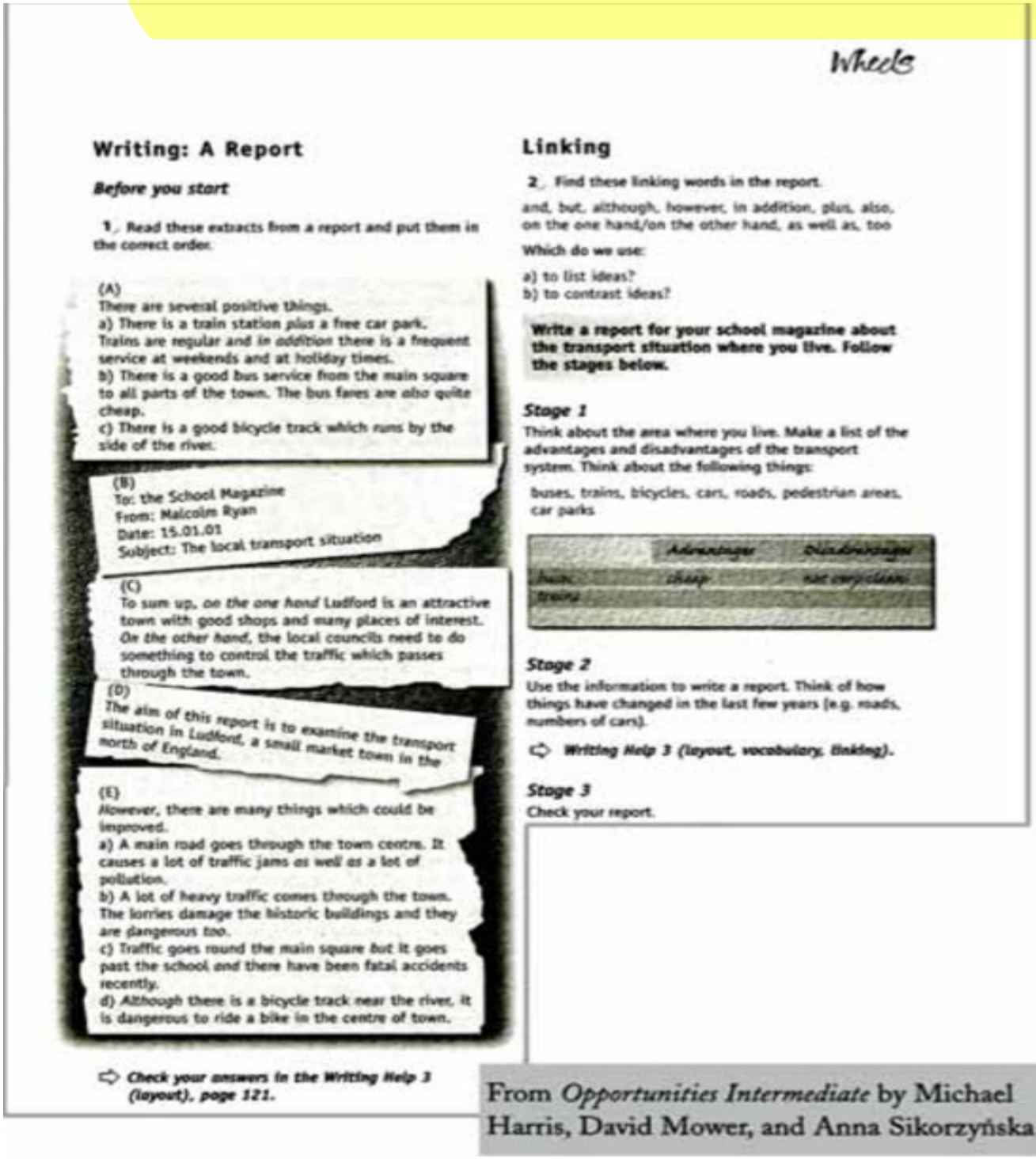
Topic-175: Teaching Text Construction II

Controlled text construction

The logical organization of ideas (coherence) applies not just to paragraphs but to whole texts as well.

In this example the students focus on the genre of 'report writing'. In Activity 1 they work out the appropriate sequence for a report's five elements. This raises their awareness about a typical organization for such a report. In Activity 2 they look at a particular language issue (linking words) before moving on to Stages 1-3 to write a similar report to the one they first put in sequence.

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Wheels

Writing: A Report

Before you start

1 Read these extracts from a report and put them in the correct order.

(A)
There are several positive things.
a) There is a train station *plus* a free car park. Trains are regular and *in addition* there is a frequent service at weekends and at holiday times.
b) There is a good bus service from the main square to all parts of the town. The bus fares are *also* quite cheap.
c) There is a good bicycle track which runs by the side of the river.

(B)
To: the School Magazine
From: Malcolm Ryan
Date: 15.01.01
Subject: The local transport situation

(C)
To sum up, *on the one hand* Ludford is an attractive town with good shops and many places of interest. *On the other hand*, the local councils need to do something to control the traffic which passes through the town.

(D)
The aim of this report is to examine the transport situation in Ludford, a small market town in the north of England.

(E)
However, there are many things which could be improved.
a) A main road goes through the town centre. It causes a lot of traffic jams *as well as* a lot of pollution.
b) A lot of heavy traffic comes through the town. The lorries damage the historic buildings and they are dangerous too.
c) Traffic goes round the main square *but* it goes past the school *and* there have been fatal accidents recently.
d) *Although* there is a bicycle track near the river, it is dangerous to ride a bike in the centre of town.

➪ ***Check your answers in the Writing Help 3 (layout), page 121.***

Linking

2 Find these linking words in the report.

and, but, although, however, in addition, plus, also, on the one hand/on the other hand, as well as, too

Which do we use:

a) to list ideas?
b) to contrast ideas?

Write a report for your school magazine about the transport situation where you live. Follow the stages below.

Stage 1

Think about the area where you live. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of the transport system. Think about the following things:

buses, trains, bicycles, cars, roads, pedestrian areas, car parks

	Advantages	Disadvantages
buses	cheap	not very clean
trains		

Stage 2

Use the information to write a report. Think of how things have changed in the last few years (e.g. roads, numbers of cars).

➪ ***Writing Help 3 (layout, vocabulary, linking).***

Stage 3

Check your report.

From *Opportunities Intermediate* by Michael Harris, David Mower, and Anna Sikorzyńska

Free text construction

This final example uses the technique of parallel writing but it leaves the students free to decide how closely they wish to follow the original model. Instead of being bound by the layout and construction of the original they use it as a springboard for their imagination.

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Students first read the following story about Stig, a large Alsatian dog:



A lucky escape

Stig was a big Alsatian dog who was becoming a bit of a problem. He lived with the Svensson family in their eighth-floor flat in Malmo in Sweden, but he was growing too big for the flat. The Svenssons were also worried that Stig was a danger to their two-year-old daughter, Mariette.

Then one day something extraordinary happened. Leif Svensson walked into the bedroom and noticed that the window was open. To his horror he saw that Mariette was crawling along the narrow ledge outside and Stig the Alsatian was following her along the ledge, only centimetres away.

Leif shouted for his wife. When she arrived, Stig was next to Mariette. Leif and his wife were beginning to fear the worst when suddenly the dog took the little girl's trousers in his teeth and started to walk slowly backwards along the ledge. Stig carried the child back to the open window and Leif pulled them both inside.

'We can never repay Stig,' said Leif later. 'He saved Mariette's life. From now on we're going to feed him the best steak money can buy!'

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Lesson 33

Building the writing habit

Topic: 176: Introduction Building the Writing Habit

'Begin at the beginning, 'the King said, very gravely, 'and 'go on till you come to the end; then stop.'

From 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' by Lewis Carroll

- Building Confidence and enthusiasm
- Instant writing
- Collaborative writing
- Writing to each other
- What to do with 'habit-building' writing

Topic: 177: Building Confidence and Enthusiasm (I)

Although some students are always happy to have a go at writing in English, others can be lees keen. This unwillingness may derive from anxieties they have about their handwriting, their spelling, or their ability to construct sentences and paragraphs. And if these insecurities are reinforced because they are unable to complete writing tasks successfully, then the students' attitude to writing is likely to become more and more negative.

The students' reluctance to write can also be because they rarely write even in their own language, and so the activity feels alien. Another powerful disincentive is the fear that they have 'nothing to say' – a common response of many students when asked to write. Finally, writing just does not interest some students; such people seem to be unwilling to invest the time and effort that they think a writing task demands.

With student like this who lack familiarity or confidence with writing (or indeed enthusiasm for it) we need to spend some time building the **writing habit**- that is making students feel comfortable s writers in extended activities. This will involve choosing the right kinds of activity- with appropriate levels of challenge- and providing them with enough language and information to allow them to complete writing tasks successfully.

Choosing writing tasks and activities:

It is important that we choose writing activities which have a chance of appealing to our students- and which have, if possible, some relevance for them. Writing fairy stories might appeal to children but could fail to inspire a group of university students (though that is not necessarily the case, of course, as we will see in further topics).

If we are lucky we will have a good idea of not only what kind of writing students are likely to have to do in English in the future, but also what kind of subjects and tasks they will enjoy-or have enjoyed in the past. This will help us choose writing tasks either because students need them or because they are likely to be motivated by them because the tasks are engaging I themselves.

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An **engaging** writing is one that involves students not just intellectually but emotionally as well; it amuses them, or makes them feel good. When students are 'switched on' by engaging tasks there is a good chance that some of their doubts about writing will disappear.

What engages people may be different for different students, but clearly the stimulus we provide (to encourage them to write) will make a difference. Music, for example, can be used to awaken the students' creativity, especially if they respond particularly well to **auditory** input. Pictures can have the same effect for those who are stimulated by **visual** input. Having students write jointly on the board or swap papers around caters for those who respond **kinaesthetic** stimulation (to movement and physical activity). Writing tasks can be initiated and conducted in a number of different ways, in other words, and if we are to build the writing habit in the greatest number of our students we need to be aware of the variety of tastes and interests they have.

Except in the most goal-focused ESP classes, students are likely to respond best to a wide variety of tasks, topics, and genres over a period of time. Though we may want to revisit a writing genre-so that students can apply what they learned first time round for this second try-we will want to give students the widest range possible. Variety is as important in writing tasks and the activities that go with them as it is for other areas of language learning such as speaking; listening; and reading.

Topic: 178: Building Confidence And Enthusiasm (II)

What students need?

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, there are many reasons why students may not be confident or willing writers. In order to counteract these potential problems we have to identify what our students need if they are to have a reasonable chance of success:

- **Information & task information**- students need to have the necessary information to complete the task. This means that they need to understand clearly what we want them to do and they need, also, to be absolutely clear about any of the topic detail that we give them. If we ask them to respond to an invitation, who they are writing to, and what it is they are trying to achieve. If we ask them to write a poem, they need to have a clear understanding of the topic(s) they will be dealing with. If they are involved in a collaborative writing activity they need to know what they are writing about, who writes what, and how the writing sequence is going to progress.
- **Language**- if students need specific language to complete a writing task we need to give to them (or help them to find it). This may involve offering those phrases, parts of sentences, or words.

  Of course there are times when we just get students to write 'without thinking', to provoke their use of all and any of the language they know. But where a task depends on certain written formulate it would be pointless not to offer these to the students.
- **Ideas**- teachers need to be able to suggest ideas to help students when they get stuck. For some this may be just a word or two. For others we may need to dictate a half sentence or even something more substantial. One of the skills of a

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good writing teacher is to able to throw out suggestions without crowding out the individual students with too much oppressive detail. In order to do this we have to be aware of which students need more or less help and stimulation, especially where students are working on their own rather than collaboratively (see below).

- **Patterns & schemes**- one way of helping students to write even when they may think they do not have many idea, is to give them a pattern or a scheme to follow. In 'worked-on' writing this will frequently happen when students first study a writing genre and then create their examples of the same genre (e.g. 'an advertisement', 'a postcard', 'a curriculum vitae', etc.). even with more instant writing, however, the students' lives will be made much easier if there is a pattern and scheme to follow. The poetry activities we will look at in this chapter bear this out, as do some of the collaborative writing procedures. In these cases students are given a frame to wrote support. It is often easier to write when constrained than it is when there is nothing in front of you except for a blank piece of paper or a blank screen.

When students are involved I the kind of process writing or genre-based construction we talked about in the first chapters, the identification of suitable topics and tasks successfully are both absolutely vital. They are important too, for task which aims to build the writing habit- that is tasks whose principal aim is to have students writing fluently and enthusiastically, genre approaches. Two such areas of habit building are **instant writing** and **collaborative writing**.

Topic: 179: Instant Writing

There are stages in any lesson where students can e asked to write on the spot, without much in the way of preparation or warning; this is **instant writing**.

Because instant writing is not part of a long writing process, it can be used whenever the teacher feels it appropriate. The tasks may each take only ten or fifteen minutes or be even shorter; but a regular diet of such tasks will boost students' confidence, if they are appropriate, since each time they will have something worthwhile and interesting to show for their efforts.

The following activities provide some example of instant writing.

Sentence writing:

As we have seen, students can be asked to write sentences either as language reinforcement or in preparation for a forthcoming activity. The following activities could also be used for such purposes, but their purpose here is to make reluctant writers feel more comfortable and to remove the problems of those who think they have nothing to say:

- **Dictating sentences for completion**: a very simple way of getting students to write creatively is to dictate part of a sentence which they then have to complete about themselves. For example, we can dictate the following:
  'My favorite time of day is….'

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And students have to write the morning, or the evening, etc. this can be extended of course. The teacher can say: 'Now write one sentence saying why you have chosen your time day.'

Just about any incomplete sentence can be used in this way, as the following examples demonstrate:

'The one thing I would most like to learn is how to…'

'The best film I have ever seen is…'

'One of the most exciting things that have ever happened to me is…'

Teacher can also dictate sentence frames (or write them up on the board). If the topic is 'animals', we can say:

'Although I like…, I'm not very keen on…'

- **Writing sentences**- students can be asked to write two or three sentences about a certain topic. For example, suppose students have been working on the topic of 'hopes and ambitions', they can write three sentences about how they would like their lives to change in the future. If they are discussing education, they can write sentences about why exams are good thing or a bad thing. If they have been discussing anti-social behavior, the teacher can ask them to write three don't sentences (e.g. *don't listen to loud music after eleven o' clock*).
- **The weather forecast**- at the beginning of the day the teacher asks students to write about themselves and their day as if they were writing a weather forecast: 'What's the 'weather' like now? Are you happy or tired, listless or energetic? How are you likely to feel later on, in the afternoon?'

Activities like this work extremely well for some students, because they allow them to be creative in sn amusing and thought-provoking way. Sentence writing is one way of getting students to write quickly while at the same time allowing them to write things that mean something to them personally.

Using Music:

Music can be a very effective way to stimulate a writing activity since it often provokes strong feelings and ideas. There is universality about music which means that much of it is easy for everyone to understand. You don't have to be a musical expert for a piece of music to make you feel happy, or sad, or wistful.

Choosing the right music is vitally important. Much of the best music (for writing purposes) is instrumental. We don't want students to be distracted by listening out for words. On the contrary, we want the music to speak to them directly. We need music they can respond to. A lot of classical music from around the world is very descriptive both in terms of mood and also because composes, both past and present, have tried to describe events and people with their compositions.

Among the many ways music can be used to stimulate instant writing are the following:

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- Words- one activity is to play a piece of music and have students write down any words that come into their heads as they listen. Any emotive piece of music will do for this, such as- in the Western Classical- *Mars*: *the god of war* from Holst's *The planets,* Barber's *Adagio for strings.* We can also use music from films such as that in *The Piano* by Michael Nyman, in *The mission* by Ennio Morricone, or just about anything by John Williams.

When students have written down the words which the music has suggested to them, they can share their words with the rest of the class to see how others have reacted.

- **What is the composer describing? -** a lot of music is written to describe particular scenes or places. The piece *Vltava* by the Czech composer Smetana describes a river. Rachmaninov's *Isle of the Dead* describes a bleak and desolate island. Vivaldi famously describes the seasons. Maxwell Davies in his piece *Highland Wedding* describes a drunken party with a dawn hangover. The music in *The Lord of the Rings* by Howard Shore is highly descriptive.

  Students are told that in the piece- or pieces- of music they are about to hear the composer is trying to describe something specific. As they listen to the music they should write down whatever they 'hear' in the music.

  When they have finished they can read out what they have written (or show it to their classmates). The teacher can then say what the music was intended to describe.

  This activity can be made more specific by the teacher asking for example: 'What animal is the music describing?' (Saint-Seaens' Carnival of the Animals is useful for this.) 'What kind of a person is the composer writing about?' (E.g. Juliet in Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet).

  'How do you think the composer was feeling when he or she was composing this? (The last movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathetique* symphony is useful for this.)

- **Film scores**- in these activity students listen to a piece of music and then create the opening scenes for a film that the music suggests to them- they should describe the scenes before the dialogue starts. They can write in note form if they wish.

  Film music can be used for this, but so too can any piece of evocative music such as the third movement from Debussy's string quartet, show saxophone music solo violin or cello music by Bach, or rock, trance, or folk music, for example.

  Once again, when students have written the scene they imagined, they can compare what they have written with their classmates.

- **How does it make me feel?** – Teacher can play students musical excerpts and get them to write their reactions as they listen. They can be given prompts which will help them to do this, such as: 'What color do you think the music is?' 'Where would you most like to hear it, and who would you like to have with you when you do?'

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- **Musical stories-** students can write stories on the basis of music they listen to. If the music conveys a strong atmosphere it will often spark the students' creativity and almost 'tell' them who to write.

  One way of showing students this is an amusing way is for the teacher to dictate the first line of a story (e.g. he turned and looked at her). Students are told that they should continue the story when the music starts. "The music will tell you what to write." Students then hear a piece of music which is particularly nostalgic, or sad, or frenetic, for example.

  When all students have written their two stories, they show them to colleagues who then read out one of the stories. The class have to decide which bit of music it was written to.

Teachers should use musical activities sparingly, for two reasons. First, the activities mentioned here work best when they unusual-something which gives them their special quality and which, as a result, allows them to provoke students' creativity. Second, not all students can respond immediately to music.

We need to be careful, also, not to play too long a piece of music. Students may well get something out of an excerpt which lasts for between two and three minutes but they may well lose interest in an excerpt which goes on for much longer than that.

Topic: 180: Collaborative Writing

The car designer Sir Alec Issigonis is credited as the originator of the phrase 'a camel is a horse designed by a committee', and it may well be that in that in the world of design too many people do, indeed, get in the way of sensible decision making. Yet group activities in language classroom writing allow students to learn from each other. It gives each member of the collaboration access to others' minds and knowledge, and it imbues the task with a sense of shared goals which can be very motivating. And in the end, although the collaborators may have to share whatever glory is going (rather than keep it for them individually), still, any less-than-successful outcome is also shared so that individuals are not held solely responsible for any shortcomings in what they produce. For these reasons **collaborative writing**, as exemplified in the following activities, has the power to foster the writing habit in a unique way.

Using the board:

One way of making collaborative writing successful is to have students write on board. This gets them out of their chairs; it is especially appropriate for those who respond well to kinesthetic stimuli. It also allows everyone to see what is going on. Two activities show how the board can be used in this way:

Sentence by sentence- in the activity on previous pages we saw how student built up a letter in reply to an invitation on the board, sentence by sentence. Each time a new student goes up to the board in such activities, the rest of the class (or the group that student represent) can help by offering suggestions. Corrections, or alternatives.

This kind of writing activity has the great advantage of creating a clear focus for everyone in the room, and can create a feeling of shared achievement.

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Dictogloss- in his book *how to teach grammar,* Scott Thornbury describes a procedure called dictogloss, in which students re-create a text or story that the teachers read to them. One purpose of the activity is to focus the students' attention on specific items of language by getting them to analyse the difference between their written re-creations and the original which they have heard.

Dictogloss is useful for vocabulary acquisition too in very much the same way. And on top of that it is especially appropriate for building the writing habit.

In the following example the teacher uses their own words to tell students the story of a boy called Jesse Arbogast who was attacked by a shark. The first time they hear the story students are told just to listen and not to make notes. The teacher uses whatever language, mime, or gesture necessary to ensure that the students understand the main facts of the story.

In pairs, the students now discuss what they have heard and try to establish the main facts of the story. One this has been done the teacher tells them that they are going to hear the story again, and that this time they should make notes-although they are advised not to try and write down too much. Now they will be able to concentrate not only on the facts, but also the language. This is what the students hear:

How Jesse got his arm back

Eighty-year-old Jesse Arbogast was playing in the sea late one evening in July 2001 when a 7-foot bull shark attacked him and tore off his arm. Jesse's uncle leapt into the sea and dragged the boy to shore. The boy was not breathing. His aunt gave him mouth-to mouth resuscitation while his uncle rang the emergency services. Pretty soon, a helicopter arrived and flew the boy to hospital. It was a much quicker journey than the journey by road.

Jesses's uncle, Vance Folsenzir, ran back into the sea and found the shark that had attacked his nephew. He picked the shark up and threw it onto the beach. A ranger shot the fish four times and although this did not kill it, the shark's jaws relaxed so that they could open them, and reach down into its stomach, and pull out the boy's arm.

At the Baptist Hospital in Pensacola a plastic surgeon, Dr Ian Rogers, spent eleven hours reattaching Jesses's arm. It was a complicated operation,' he said , 'but we were lucky. If the arm hadn't been recovered in time, we wouldn't have been able to do the operation at all. What I mean is that if they had't found the shark, well then we wouldn't have had a chance.'

According to local park ranger Jack Tomosvic, shark attacks are notthat common. 'Jesse was just unlucky,' he says, 'evening is the shark's feeding time. And Jesse wasn't in a lifeguard area. This would never have happened if he had been in a designated swimming area. '

When reporters asked Jess's uncle how he had the courage to fight a shark, he replied, 'I was mad and you do some strange things you're mad.'

Students once more discuss in pairs what they have heard and then, for the last time, the teacher reads exactly the same text again, while the students make more notes.

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The class is now divided, randomly, into groups of 3 or 4. Each group is given marker pens and rolls of paper. Their only task is to recreate the story in writing-as far as possible using the words and language they have heard. They only help the teacher needs to give them is to write some names (Jesse Arbogast, Vance Folsenzier, etc.) up on the board.

When the groups have finished, their versions can be stuck up on the board or the walls. Here are two versions that were written by students (in a significantly mixed ability group) doing this activity:

How Jesse got his arm back

There was an 8-year boy named Jesse Arbogast. In July 2001, he was playing on the beach with his uncle's family in Florida. He paddled in the sea, suddenly the shark ~~attacted~~ attacked him and ~~took~~ tore off his arm.

His uncle ~~draged~~ dragged him to the shore, meanwhile the boy ~~couldn't~~ was not breathing His ~~an~~ aunt gave him CPR, and called 911, Luckily, there ~~is~~ was a ~~hand~~ helicopter near ~~their are~~ this area. Before Jesse went to hospital, The ranger ha shot the shark and the mad uncle took the shark and p threw it on the beach, opened its mouth, reached it to the stomach, and took Jesse's arm.

The helicopter took them to the Pensacda Hospital. There ~~were~~ was an 11 hours operation, they a reattched Jassis's arm, He was a very lucky boy.

According to the n local news "Jack Tomosvic" evening is shark's e feeding time, and the area where Jesse went is not designated swimming area. Jesse's uncle said "I was mad. When you were mad, you do strange things."

Students' versions of *Jesse's story*
Group A

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How Jesse got his arm back

In July 2001 a boy named Jesse was attacked by a bull shark at the beach while he was paddling. The shark tore off his arm. When his uncle and aunt found him, he was not breathing at all. His aunt gave him the mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Luckily, there was a helicopter hovering around, and it came along as soon as the crew heard the news. The boy was sent to the Pensacola Hospital right away. And his uncle was so mad that he went back to the beach and saw the shark that attacked his nephew, he picked it up and threw it onto the beach. The ranger came and shot the shark 4 times. And the shark's mouth was relaxed. They opened its mouth, ~~and~~ reached down the stomach and pull out the boy's arm. The plastic surgeon Ian Rogers, spent 11 hours reattaching his arm. The surgery was complicated but successful. The operation wouldn't have been successful if his arm hadn't been recovered in time. One of the local park rangers said, evening is the shark's feeding time, and Jesse wasn't at the designated swimming area at that time. His uncle said, "I was so mad. And you do strange things when you are mad."

Students' versions of *Jesse's story*
Group B

The students are then shown the original; 'Jesse's story', which they had heard read to them, and are asked to amend what, they have written.

In trying to write a text collaboratively the students have been provoked into using what they have heard, and any other language they know, to help write the story. At the end of the activity they have something to display and look at, they can compare different versions, and then they have an opportunity to compare what they have written with a correct version.

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Topic: 181: Writing in Groups and Pairs

There are many activities which are suitable for students writing in pairs and groups. Some of them depend on a scribe to write the final version of the piece, while some of them involve every single person writing their own version of the text.

The advantage of having a scribe is that the other students have more chance to concentrate on the language, think about what is being written, and evaluate it in a more objective way, perhaps, than they judge their own individual efforts. The disadvantages are that not everyone is getting actual writing practice, and the scribe may make little contribution to the construction of the text but rather act only as a secretary taking dictation. One way round these problems is for the teacher to make sure that different students take on the scribe role in the course of an activity. However, the main objective of writing activities done in groups or pairs is to involve everyone in the creation of written text, whoever does the actual writing.

Although all of these activities are suitable for use with paper and pen, they can also be done at a computer with students crowded around a screen. This can be particularly motivating, because correction can be instant through the use of a grammar and/or a spell-check and because any problems with hard-to-read handwriting are removed.

Rewriting (and expanding) sentence- in one sentence-rewriting activity, students are presented with a stereotypical statement and asked to amend it to reflect the opinions of the group. This provokes discussion not only about the topic but also about how to write a consensus opinion appropriately.

Te teacher (with the class) has chosen a topic for the students to consider. The students are then presented with some examples of stereotypical statements, like these on the topic of gender differences:

Boys like football. Girls like shopping.

They have to rewrite the sentences so that they accurately reflect the views of the group. One group might think, for example, that while some boys are crazy about football others are considerably less interested. They might want to say that lots of girls like football as well, or that many boys feel pressured to like football even if, in reality, they are not that interested. Another sentence-rewriting activity is to take a sentence and put far more detail into it. For example, we can give students a short sentence like this:

The woman saw the man.

The students then have to expand the sentence with as many words as possible, e.g.

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When the pale, red-headed woman, who had arrived not less than the time they had agreed on the night before, saw the tall, bearded man learning unhappily against a poster advertising a new perfume which had just been launched onto the market, she knew at once that…

But the final elongated sentences have to make sense and be reasonably natural. In other words, a list ten adjectives before a noun is, except in highly exceptional circumstances, not natural English.

This activity can be made competitive by making the winning pair or group the one which produces the most words with the fewest mistakes.

The sentences which the students produce in both these activities will obviously depends upon the level they are writing at. But in both cases the mixture of discussion ('what do we think about the topic?' In the first activity; 'how can we add more words and clauses?' in the second) and written execution helps students build good writing habits.

First lines, last lines- just as pictures can be used to provoke story writing, so first and last lines of possible stories can also be used to get students' imaginations going.

Students can be given either the first line of a story (e.g. When she looked out of the window she saw a red car parked across the street) or the last line (e.g. He told himself that he would never go to the cinema by himself again). They then have to write a story to include one or the other. They discuss the situation in their pairs or groups and create a story which follows on from the first line or ends with the last line. A scribe writes the story they come up with.

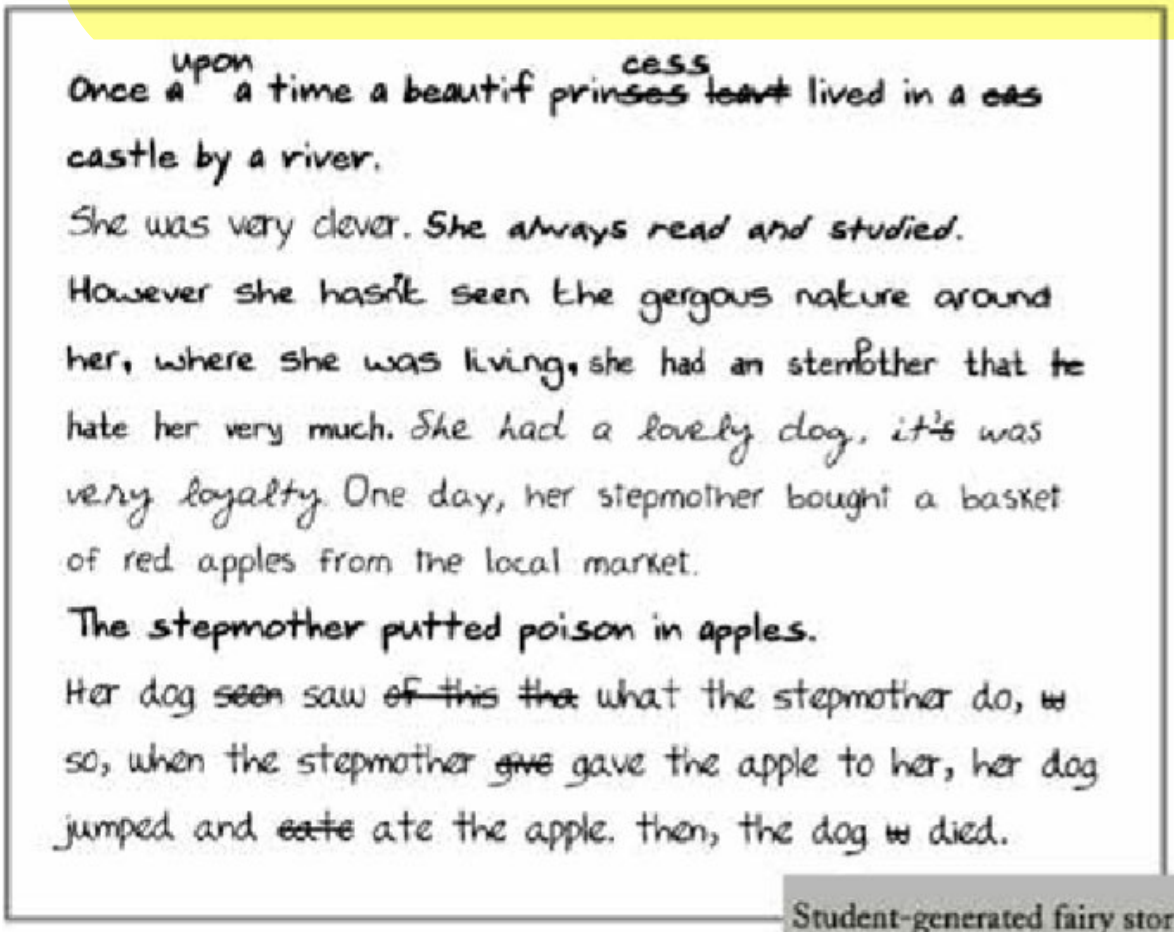
This activity need not be confined to lines, however. We can give students opening and closing paragraphs and ask them to write the middle portion of a story. We can tell a story up to a certain point and then have them develop the story from that point.

A common group-writing activity which has all the students writing at the same time is the **story circle**. This starts with all the students in a group sitting in a circle. Each student has a blank sheet of paper in front of them. The teacher dictates a sentence (for example, 'once upon a time a beautiful princess lived in a castle by a river', if the teacher and students had been talking about fairy stories and legends.) they all write it at the top of their piece of paper. Each student is told to write the next sentence of the story. Once this has been done, they all pass their piece of paper to the left and each student writes the next sentence of the story they now have in front of them (which is different from the one they started with). The paper are then passed one place to the left again. Each student writes the next sentence of the story in front of them.

This procedure continues until each student has their original piece of paper in front of them. They are then told to write the last line of the story.

Here is one such story produced by a group from a multilingual, lower intermediate class (the participating students were Chinese, Turkish, Mexican, Spanish, and Korean):

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Once ~~a~~ upon a time a beautif princess ~~leavt~~ lived in a ~~eas~~ castle by a river.

She was very clever. She always read and studied. However she hasn't seen the gergous nature around her, where she was living. she had an stemfother that ~~he~~ hate her very much. She had a lovely dog, ~~it's~~ was very loyalty. One day, her stepmother bought a basket of red apples from the local market.

The stepmother putted poison in apples.

Her dog ~~seen~~ saw ~~of this~~ ~~tha~~ what the stepmother do, ~~so~~ so, when the stepmother ~~give~~ gave the apple to her, her dog jumped and ~~eate~~ ate the apple. then, the dog ~~so~~ died.

Student-generated fairy story

This story is full of language mistakes (we will look at ways of using these mistakes in further lessons.) and as a story it has its limitations, as it was produced under considerable time pressure. But it made the rest of the class laugh when they heard it and, more importantly, it made writing enjoyable. Despite problems of expression, the participants had produced something in writing without much preparation and they had taken pleasure in doing it.

Direction, rules, and instructions- a really useful activity is to ask students to write 'instructional' text for others to follow. This could take the form of writing directions to a place (how to get to their school from the station or the airport, for example.)

Students can be asked, in groups, to write the four (or five, or six) principal rules must be as clear as they can make them so that there is no uncertainty about what is meant (though asking people to provide a clear statement of the current off-side rule in football would provide a significant challenge to anyone however good their language was!).

Groups can be asked to write instructions for an activity (anything from a dance, to assembling a piece of furniture) or computer process (how to download a document, how to use a particular software program). If possible, other groups in the class then have to follow the instructions carefully to see if they work.

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This kind of writing is clearly not suitable for beginners. However, at intermediate levels and above it forces students to think carefully about what to write and in what order. Teachers may want to offer appropriate vocabulary either before the activity starts or by going round the groups while they are writing.

Story reconstruction- we can enhance the value of the story activities which involves a sequence of pictures as described above by adding a jigsaw element. This means that each student is given a different piece of a 'jigsaw' and, by sharing what they have seen or heard; they have to resemble the bits into a coherent whole.

A classic use of jigsaw techniques is the story reconstruction activity. Here students are divided into, say, four groups (A, B, C and D). Each group is given once of this set of pictures which they have to talk about and memories as many details of a possible.



The pictures are then taken away. Students are now regrouped so that each now has a student from the original groups A, B, C, and D.

In their new groups students have to work out a sequence for the four pictures and then create a written text which tells the story of that sequence.

This activity works well. It provokes a lot of discussion which, in turn, gets students to write with enthusiasm.

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It is worth pointing out that many of the earlier activities in this lesson could also be worked on collaboratively with all the advantages we have suggested for such an approach. Nevertheless we will not want all writing tasks to be collaborative. Individual students need individual space sometimes.

Topic: 182: Writing to Each Other

A further way of provoking student engagement with writing is to get students to write to each other in class time. They can also correspond with people to write to each other in class time. They can also correspond with people outside the class. Some writing, when done in this way, becomes genuinely communicative and has a real purpose-even if it only gets going when a teacher sets the process in motion.

At its most basic level, such writing involves students writing notes to each other. The teacher can ask individual students to write a question to another student in a class. This can be anything from *where are you from?* To *what do you find most difficult about learning English?* The note is addressed to another student and the teacher delivers it.

Pen pals, e-mails, and live chat: teachers have always encouraged students to correspond with pen pals from different towns or countries. This is significantly easier and more immediate with e-mail exchanges between 'key pail' or 'mouse pals'.

Some teachers get in touch with classes from a school in a different country and, with their foreign colleagues, instigate initial exchanges to get the ball rolling. Teachers in Japan, for example, might get their English students to communicate with students of English in Colombia. They could start the process by getting their students to think of five questions about Colombia (maybe addressing stereotypes) that they would like to know the answer to. The Colombian students could do the same with questions about Japan. Alternatively they could write e-mails about their lives or their families to start with.

Setting up a 'key pal' exchange system does not guarantee its success. Whereas one or two students may really get the bug and continue to mail their opposite numbers, others will get bored by the whole thing-unless, that is, the teacher monitors the procedure and helps with suggestions, comments, and encouragement.

The 'key pal' system does need computer access, of course. But if necessary we can still simulate e-mail exchanges on paper, using the same basic techniques as the exchange of notes that we started this section with.

As with the fairy story earlier, the English in the simulated e-mails may not be especially correct, but the students participated with enthusiasm and found writing a congenial activity.

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A logical extension of e-mail exchanges is the live chat environment, where students are talking to each other in real time and writing becomes more and more like a conversation. Here students may well be extremely motivated to key in their contributions. There is still something exciting about being in communication with people who are any number of miles away. The fact that words appear on the screen (which all participants can see) lends this activity an immediate excitement that even a two-way phone call may not have.

Ken Hyland quotes an example of two Hong Kong students chatting online; here is an example of their interactions:

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Jj: hi, I just go and check e-mail and after that I will go to sleep, how about u?

Kk: so late wor!!!? I'm working ar!!

Jj: o ic in a hurry?

Kk: no really!! u?!

Jj: just to check if there is any e-mail to me

Kk: oic why so late online?! Study late?! When's ur lesson tom ar?! How's ur life (mum and siser not here wor)?!

Jj: 11;30 but have hw to work tom morning

Kk: oic till when ar?!

Kk: oh… so long… time?!

Jj: 2 hrs is vacant

Kk: oic u remember to take mobile phone ma

Jj: yeas ar, to bring my mobile phone ma

Kk: fine

Jj: I offline la, bb ☺

This extract shows both the advantages and the limitations of online chatting. It is clearly done with enthusiasm and immediacy-two of the characteristics we have identified for a successful building of a writing habit-but it also uses a 'chat' register (with all its attendant abbreviations and informalities) as well as mixing English with Cantoneses and written abbreviations to create, in Ken Hyland's words, 'a new hybrid form of discourse'. Students need, as we have said, to be aware of when and where this kind of written communication is appropriate and when it is not.

Letters backwards and forwards-we can move on from the kinds of notes and e-mails we have been looking at by getting students to write letters to each other-and reply to letters too. We have already mentioned the popular 'agony column' activity, but other letters are possible too. Students could read an article and then write a letter to an imaginary newspaper giving their opinion. The letters are then given to different classmates who each have to write to the same imaginary newspaper either agreeing or disagreeing with the letters in front of them. When the letters have been completed, the teacher can display them on the class noticeborad or, better still, the teacher and the students together, using a computer (and if possible, a page-making program), can create their own mocked-up letters page.

Such invented-purpose tasks can be extremely motivating since they give students a reason, however unreal this may appear to be, to write to each other. Just as role-playing can have immense benefits for some students in the development of their oral competence (and give them good rehearsal practice for real-life communication), so too this kind of written role-play can have the same effect.

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Any kind of letter where a reply might be expected can be used in this way. A letter of enquiry can be answered by a student who has some information (perhaps provided by the course book or the teacher) to send back. A letter of complaint can be answered by someone trying to be emollient (if they want).

Getting students to communicate with each other in writing is one way of building the writing habit in a motivating and realistic way.

Topic: 183: What to Do with Habit Building Writing

Although we will deal with response to student writing in detail in Chapter 7, we should make some comments here about what teachers can do with the results of 'habit-building' writing.

We have stressed that one of the purposes for the writing activities we have been looking at in this chapter is to give students engaging writing tasks that will help them become fluent writers. We have mentioned the benefit that successful production have for students' confidence as writers. And we have seen how students enjoy their own and each others' effort in examples like the fairy story on page 79 and the poetry activities on pages (69-73).

One answer, therefore to what we should do with the results of this kind of writing is to let students enjoy them. Let them read and see each others' work; encourage them to read out what they have done or let them put it up on a class website, for example.

Yet, as we have seen, the kind of writing fluency we have been encouraging may well bring mistakes with it. We may not be keen for our students to show work that has such mistakes (for their sake). And because quickly produced work like this presents ideal opportunities for students to have a go with the language at their disposal, it would be silly not to engage in some form of feedback which focused on more formal aspects of grammar and written style.

What teachers need to be able to do, therefore, is help students enjoy their work and take pride in it and, at the same time, use what they have produced for correction without destroying the positive atmosphere which the tasks, hopefully, have created. It is this balance between appropriate acknowledgement and language improvement.

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Lesson 34

Syllabus design and lesson planning for L2 writing

Topic: 184: Introduction Syllabus Design and Lesson Planning for L2 Writing

Questions for Reflection

- Recalling your experiences as a student, think about syllabi presented in courses you have taken. What made the ueseful syllabi useful? What was missing from the weaker ones? What elements do you consider to be essential in a course syllabus? Why?
- In what ways should the design of a writing course accommodate students' sociocultural backgrounds and educational needs? The requirements and philosophy of the educational institution?
- What features do you think makes the planning for a writing course distinct from that for other types of courses? How are composition courses like or unlike other courses in terms of how they are structured?
- In your view, what are the essential components of a successful lesson in a composition course? What activities should form the basis of such a lesson? How should they be sequenced? What skills should be practiced, and why?

On the basis of your experience as a student and as a teacher (if applicable), identify the hallmarks of effective classroom instruction and management.

The ESL/EFL writing class is perhaps best seen as a workshop for students to learn to produce academic essays through mastering techniques for getting started and generating ideas... drafting papers which they will anticipate revising, and learning to utilize feedback provided by the teacher and other students in the class to improve the writing assignment at hand. The goal of every course should be individual student progress in writing proficiency, and the goal of the total curriculum should be that student writers learn to become informed and independent readers of their own texts with the ability to create, revise, and reshape papers to meet the needs of whatever writing tasks they are assigned. (Kroll, 2001, p. 223)

SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT: PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

In keeping with the principles so clearly outlined by Kroll (2001) in the preceding excerpt, this chapter outlines a concrete yet flexible approach to planning instruction in ESL composition courses and provides tools for developing effective lessons. Rather than address global principles concerning the design of entire curricula, we concentrate chiefly on the day-to-day planning tasks of writing teachers: constructing course syllabi, sequencing components of a writing cycle, and designing lessons.1 In the first section, we address the needs assessment process in detail, because understanding the unique characteristics of ESL writers is essential to shaping effective L2 composition instruction.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: A TOOL FOR SYLLABUS DESIGN

In broad terms, needs assessment consists of "procedures for identifying and validating needs, and establishing priorities among them" (Pratt, 1980, p. 79). Because of the particular expertise required

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to teach writing to non-native speakers (NNSs) of English, we need a systematic way of inquiring into the diverse background features, skills, schemata, and expectations of ESL writers so we can take this information into account when planning instruction (Benesch, 1996; Johns & Price-Machado, 2001; Spack, 1997b). Generally, some of this information (e.g., institution type, students' target disciplines, their immigration status) is obvious to teachers and requires no data collection.

Specific demographic and proficiency-related characteristics of the learner population, however, may be available only by eliciting specific information directly from the students themselves and perhaps from institutional authorities. Although other effective needs analysis tools exist (Brown, 1995; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Graves, 2000; Reid, 1995a), we concentrate in this chapter on those that are easy to construct, practical to administer, and simple to analyze in the context of an individual program or course: written questionnaires, informal interviews, and ongoing observation. Instead of presenting a static "one-size-fits-all" survey or interview format, we offer the variables in Fig. 3.1 and the explanations that follow as elements to consider in constructing needs analysis instruments tailored to your learner population, institutional setting, and teaching style.

Topic: 185: Understanding the Learner Population

Understanding the Learner Population

Figure 3.1 provides a general starting point for identifying students' instructional requirements by requesting information about factors known to influence the effectiveness of L2 composition instruction. This information should ultimately be used to design course syllabi and classroom tasks.

Institution Type. For the same reasons that we should not make pedagogical decisions without considering the diversity of learners in our classrooms, we should be mindful of the types of students described in the research literature (Browning, 1996; Graves, 2000; Nieto, 2002; Silva, 1993). One of the most obvious characteristics to consider is the type of institution in which students receive their English-language instruction. We can generally assume, for example, that college- and university-level ESL writers have had more experience with English and have developed more extensive academic literacy skills than high school ESL writers, simply by virtue of the length of their exposure to the language through formal schooling. Likewise, postsecondary students, by virtue of having elected to continue their studies beyond compulsory secondary education, may have varied educational and career goals in mind.

Even within postsecondary institutions, we also find diverse types of students. Students at Japanese universities enrolled in EFL writing courses, for instance, may have received little or no preparation as writers of English, despite continuous study of English throughout secondary school. Meanwhile, other Japanese students, particularly those who have studied in English-medium institutions at home or abroad, may enter university EFL writing courses with rather extensive experience as writers of English. In the North American context, high schools and community colleges often serve a high proportion of immigrant students, depending on geographic location. In contrast, four-year colleges and research universities may attract a high proportion of international students. Many North American fouryear and research institutions maintain steady populations of both types of student, although it is common for institutions in some areas to be dominated by either immigrant or international students with nonpermanent resident status. Community colleges often serve higher numbers of immigrant students because these institutions offer low-cost education and opportunities for students to transfer to four-year

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colleges and research universities upon completion of basic education requirements (Ching, McKee, & Ford, 1996).

Institution type

- Secondary school
- Community college
- College- or university- based intensive E5L/EFL program
- Four-year college
  - Lower division (freshman /sophomore)
  - Upper division (junior/senior)
- Comprehensive research university

Lower division (freshman/sophomore)
Upper division (junior/ senior)
Graduate degree /diploma
Other Prior

Prior Li-Medium Educational Experience

- None
- Primary /elementary school
- secondary/high school
- Adult school
- Vocational/ technical/ trade school
- Community college degree /diploma
- College/university degree/diploma
- Graduate degree /diploma
- Other (e.?., Nondegree):

Prior English-Medium Educational Experience

- None
- Primary /elementary school
- secondary/high school
- Adult school
- Vocational/ technical/ trade school
- Community college degree /diploma
- College/university degree/diploma
- Graduate degree /diploma
- Other (e.?., Nondegree):

Prior English-Medium Educational Experience

- None
- Primary /elementary school
- secondary/high school
- Adult school
- Vocational/ technical/ trade school
- Community college degree /diploma
- College/university degree/diploma
- Graduate degree /diploma
- Other (e.?., Nondegree):

LI Literacy Skills'

Reading proficiency: High Mid Low

Writing proficiency: High Mid

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Low		
English Language Proficiency and Literacy		
ESL/EFL proficiency:	High	Mid
Low		
Reading proficiency:	High	Mid
Low		
Writing proficiency:	High	Mid
Low		
Immigration Status (For students In anglophone settings)		
▪ Im mi grant/ permanent resident		
▪ International (student visa holder)		
TraditionaI/ Non traditional Status (Check one. if annlicablel		
▪ Traditional (no interruption in secondary or postsecondary education)		
▪ Non traditional /return ing (one or more interruptions in secondary or postsecondary education)		

These crude proficiency ratings are presented only for illustrative purposes. As we suggested in chapter I, responsible treatment of learners' literacy skills requires attention to a wide range of influential sociocognitive and educational variables.

FIG. 3.1. Inventory of institutional and educational variables.

We make a distinction between immigrant and international students in this discussion because immigrant students (some of whom may be the children of immigrants or immigrants themselves) may have permanent resident status. Meanwhile, international students usually enter English-speaking countries on student visas, complete their college or university studies, and subsequently return to their home countries.

Further distinctions are to be made between students taking courses in intensive English programs (lEPs) and their counterparts in traditional degree programs. Frequently, IEPs in anglophone settings are housed on college and university campuses, but may not award students college or university course credit (with the occasional exception of certain advanced-level courses). Many IEPs offer both academic and nonacademic ESL courses for international students as well as immigrant learners. Academic-track IEP courses often are geared toward providing students with the linguistic and academic skills they need to matriculate as regular students and to enter traditional degree programs (Gaskill, 1996). Nonacademic courses, meanwhile, frequently serve international students who intend to spend a limited time in an English-speaking environment to improve their English proficiency and then to return to their home countries. Clearly, the teaching of ESL writing in IEP courses needs to be geared specifically toward students' educational, professional, and personal goals.

In many English-medium educational institutions, ESL students may be assessed and placed into pre-academic, basic, or "remedial" courses designed to bring their oral-aural and literacy skills to a level at which they can enroll in regular content courses with students who are native speakers (NS) of English (Braine, 1996; DeLuca, Fox, Johnson, & Kogen, 2001; Harklau, Losey, & Siegel, 1999; Silva, Leki, & Carson, 1997). Frequently, students assigned to these courses are identified as weak in specific skill areas

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and allowed to take courses that count toward a degree or certificate only after they successfully pass these courses, successfully pass an in-house language proficiency test, or achieve a specified score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or other criterion-referenced test.

The implications for the teaching of writing in these circumstances are clear. Instruction must furnish students with the skills required to perform in subsequent ESL, "mainstream" English, and content courses in the disciplines, and for better or worse, to succeed on tests. In a number of institutions, successful completion of these courses entitles students to make the transition from the ESL track to the regular or "native" track, where no distinction is made between NNS and NS students, and where classes are made up of both learner types.

Other institutions, meanwhile, may offer ESL- or NNS-stream writing courses that parallel NS courses in terms of curriculum and assessment criteria. In principle, such courses are designed specifically with NNS learners' needs in mind and, like their mainstream counterparts, enable students to earn credit toward a degree. Instructors with ESL training or experience working with NNS writers often (and preferably) teach courses designated for ESL students. In NNS-stream courses that parallel NS courses, instruction often is determined largely by the mainstream curriculum and guided by the principles and techniques featured in equivalent courses. In some such cases, conflicts may arise between philosophies and approaches to the literacy tasks and writing processes that students must practice and master (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Johns, 2003; Kroll, 2001; Silva et al, 1997).

Prior Educational Experience. In addition to the numerous factors influencing the extent and type of writing instruction offered and required by schools, colleges, and universities, ESL students' formal educational backgrounds also must be considered. The inventory of student variables shown in Fig. 3.1 includes two broad categories aimed at capturing this information: prior L1-medium educational experience and prior English-medium educational experience. For each of these categories, students' levels of education or years of formal schooling offer only a rough index of students' experience and expertise as classroom learners, note-takers, discussion participants, readers, writers, test-takers, and so forth. Teachers of ESL need to bear in mind, of course, that their students' prior educational experiences might vary considerably from those provided by the ESL or EFL setting in which they currently are receiving instruction. Immigrant and international students pursuing an education in an English-medium institution, for example, may find that their prior training contrasts considerably with the form of instruction embraced in the ESL and EFL courses they are offered. Educational systems around the world vary widely in terms of approach, philosophy, and cultural orientation (Feagles, 1997; Reagan, 1996). Anticipating and understanding learners' prior experiences can be tremendously valuable to writing teachers, because many ESL students come from educational traditions in which school-based texts exemplify rhetorical patterns that are fundamentally distinct from those valued in Englishmedium Discourses and communities of practice (see chapters 1 and 2).

Moreover, in some non-Western educational models, writing processes may not be explicitly taught if, in fact, writing is even featured in the curriculum. Students trained in those traditions may sometimes view composing as incidental to the mastery of discipline-specific subject matter or enhancement of language proficiency (Leki, 2003). Such students may thus be unfamiliar (and possibly uncomfortable) with the numerous ways in which texts and iterative composing processes are used and

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taught in English-medium academic settings (Corson, 2001; Duszak, 1997; Matsuda & Silva, 1999; Raimes, 1985,1998; Scollon, 1997; Scollon & Scollon, 1981).

Knowing about students' English-medium educational experiences can be equally informative, as teachers may need to accommodate their learners' familiarity with composing skills and strategies to prepare them effectively for writing at a more advanced level. For the university freshman composition instructor, for example, it is important to understand the extent to which his or her ESL writers are prepared to undertake the formal, academic writing often required in freshman-level courses, including personal and academic essays, literary analysis, and the like (see chapters 1 and 2). Students with a U.S. high school or community college background may already be familiar with these English-based genres, although their level of proficiency in producing them is bound to vary. Students with no English-medium educational experience, on the other hand, may come into the freshman writing course with little or no explicit awareness of these pervasive rhetorical forms or knowledge of how to reproduce them, thus presenting underequipped composition teachers with potentially daunting challenges.

Language Proficiency and Literacy. Along with information regarding the type and extent of students' formal schooling, indications of their general ESL proficiency as well as their L1 and L2 literacy skills can offer ESL writing teachers vital information about where composition instruction should begin and how it should proceed (Benesch, 1996; Johns, 1997, 2003). Adult ESL learners, regardless of their L1 literacy level, have at least two bases of knowledge from which to draw in building their L2 proficiency: L1 knowledge and emergent L2 knowledge. Moreover, many classroom ESL and EFL learners are, in fact, fully multilingual, able to function in several languages. If they have attained a threshold of L1 literacy, L2 learners also can "draw on their literacy skills and knowledge of literacy practices from their first language (interlingual transfer), and they can also use the input from literacy activities—reading and writing (intralingual input)—in their developing second language" (Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, Kuehn, 1990, p. 246). As noted in chapter 2, some researchers have maintained that L2 learners use both of these knowledge bases as they develop L2 literacy skills. Others, meanwhile, have claimed that the transfer of literacy skills from the primary language to an L2 is not automatic and that the relationship between the two literacies is complex and in need of extensive research.

It is nonetheless intuitively appealing to assume that textbased input influences the development of both reading and writing proficiency in a given language. For developing L2 writers, of course, the situation involves multiple dimensions of knowledge and skills: "One must take into account not only the learner's L2... proficiency, but also the possibility of interaction of first language literacy skills with second language input" (Carson et al., 1990, p. 248). Clearly, these interactions cannot possibly be captured with a crude instrument such as a questionnaire, although a rough measure of students' current L1 and L2 literacy skills can provide basic information about their literacy profiles, as can a characterization of students' learning styles and study habits (see chapter 2).

Immigration Status. An additional background factor that we have set apart as a distinct factor concerns students' immigration status. Although relevant only to international and immigrant English-language learners, this ostensibly trivial piece of demographic information can be a tremendously significant determinant of an individual student's educational pathway. A student's immigration status can consequently present important implications for ESL writing instruction. Immigrant students' linguistic and educational histories, instructional needs, and career plans may differ widely from those of

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international students, who, as we have already noted, generally intend to return to their home countries upon completion of their studies in North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, or any other English-medium environment (Brindley, 2000; DeLuca et al., 2001; Harklau et al, 1999; Murray, 1996; Schleppegrell & Colombi, 2002; Silva et al., 1997). As a supplement to information about students' prior educational experience, language proficiency, and literacy skills, immigration status can tell teachers a great deal about their students' personal histories and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as the educational and professional futures they may envision for themselves.

As we indicated earlier, immigrant students have (or may be in the process of obtaining) permanent residency status in the host countries where they are studying. In some cases, these students have lived in an anglophone setting for extended periods, in contrast to their nonimmigrant counterparts, who generally enter the host country on temporary student visas and do not intend to make the host country their permanent home. Immigrant students also may have left their primary language environments as refugees or may be the children of refugee parents. Such students may consequently be members of sizable and well-established ethnic and linguistic minority communities.

In many ethnolinguistic minority communities, ESL students' primary language or languages also may predominate in the home and in community-based Discourses. These broader Discourses may include formal communities of practice (e.g., cultural organizations, social clubs, religious institutions, aid agencies) in addition to less formal—although equally influential— social aggregations, from circles of family and friends, to neighborhoods, to street gangs, and so forth (Rampton, 1995; Romaine, 1995). This multilingual, multi-discursive situation may promote the development of bilingual (or multilingual) proficiency and multiliteracies among some learners (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Fairclough, 2000). For others, meanwhile, competition can arise between languages, literacies, and Discourses, posing challenges in the educational setting (Grosjean, 1982; Harklau et al., 1999; Skumabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988; Stewart, 1993).

To illustrate the potential range of such educational challenges, some immigrant students who have resided for many years and have attended school in an anglophone setting may achieve a highly functional level of linguistic proficiency and academic literacy in English, enabling them to advance through ESL courses quickly and transition to NS-track courses. These students may complete their postsecondary education while maintaining, and even strengthening, their bi- or multilingualism and cultural ties to their home communities (Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992).

For many other immigrant students, however, achieving bilingualism and biliteracy can be considerably more difficult and frustrating. Those with strong ties to a cohesive ethnic and linguistic community in which English is seldom or never used may find that the school, college, or university campus may be the only place in their daily lives where English is the primary medium of communication (August & Hakuta, 1997; Rampton, 1995). Consequently, such immigrant learners may have limited opportunities to use English for purposes other than those directly related to formal education and may therefore require substantial instructional support to compensate for these limitations. International ESL students enrolled in colleges, universities, and IEPs frequently report an analogous sense of social and linguistic isolation from English-speaking students and the wider community, often because both international and immigrant students may tend to socialize and find solidarity with peers from the same

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linguistic and sociocultural background. A result of this tendency is that ESL students may use their primary languages in their social interactions nearly everywhere but the educational setting.

This dualistic situation can pose problems of a slightly different nature for immigrant students than for international students. Immigrant students are faced with having to use English not only to complete their formal studies, but also to seek and secure employment, and to pursue careers and livelihoods in an English-speaking workplace. Many immigrant students also perform the difficult role of interpreter and translator for parents and extended families with severely limited English language skills. Moreover, the majority of immigrant students enrolled in educational institutions often struggle with economic and social hardships that their international peers may never experience. Many international students, for example, come from developed nations and have the economic resources to cover the cost of their foreign study, thanks to government sponsorships, family resources, or both. Immigration laws in most host countries, in fact, require student visa holders to demonstrate proof that they possess these financial means and that full-time student status is maintained throughout their course of study.

The circumstances of many (perhaps even most) immigrant students contrast sharply with those of international students. Because of the need to contribute financially to their family incomes or to support families of their own, immigrant learners enrolled in ESL programs at all levels of education may hold part- or full-time jobs. These financial and family-related obligations may place heavy demands on ESL students, for whom educational achievement may also be a palpably strong social value in their home communities. Not only may resident students face ever-present financial and educational pressures and hardships; they may likewise confront problems associated with being members of ethnolinguistic minority communities that do not enjoy equal, let alone privileged, social status with respect to dominant (anglophone) cultures and Discourses.

These divergent experiences clearly set resident student populations apart from international student populations and suggest the need for ESL teachers to adjust pedagogical assumptions accordingly. The content and assignments in a writing course designed for international students may be largely inappropriate for immigrant students. Consider, for example, a syllabus in which North American culture and literature serve as core content, in conjunction with writing tasks that involve students in making comparisons between the cultural practices of the target culture and the home culture. Whereas such a curriculum would probably serve the needs of newcomers to an Englishmedium cultural and educational environment, it would be of marginal relevance to ESL students who have lived and studied in the United States for quite some time, and for whom the "home country" is a distant memory. Recognizing and understanding the current personal, social, and economic conditions of immigrant and international students can help ESL teachers develop a sensitivity to the constraints that their students must overcome in their efforts to improve their linguistic and academic skills, including their composing proficiency (Valdes, 1992,2000).

Traditional and Nontraditional Students. An additional factor that frequently is overlooked but can influence the character of learning and teaching in a given ESL setting has to do with learners' status as so-called "traditional" or "nontraditional" students. Traditional students (both NS and NNS) are sometimes described as such if they have experienced few if any interruptions in their progress from secondary school to (and through) postsecondary education. That is, traditional students are those who upon completion of secondary school proceed directly to a community college, four-year college, or

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research university, and from there, perhaps to a graduate or professional program. Because of this rapid progress from a secondary to a postsecondary institution, traditional students usually are young adults in their late teens or early twenties when they begin their postsecondary education.

Nontraditional or "returning" students, on the other hand, may have experienced one or more interruptions along their educational pathways. These interruptions can include substantial periods of full-time employment (and sometimes the pursuit of a new career), as well as considerable time devoted to caring for children, elderly family members, or both. These students, whose numbers are increasing rapidly in many educational institutions, thus represent a variety of age groups (Peterson, 1995; Stewart, 1993). Moreover, many nontraditional students reinitiate their formal studies while working and may likewise have personal, financial, and family commitments to fulfill.

These circumstances can sometimes have a direct and obvious impact on students' participation, motivation, confidence level, and performance in a composition course. Consider, for example, a returning immigrant student who undertakes part-time coursework toward an undergraduate degree after having successfully completed her ESL composition requirements 10 years before. Such a student may have decided to return to college for compelling personal or economic reasons, such as no longer having young children to care for, coupled with a desire to pursue a career outside the home. A student in this situation might understandably need special assistance and guidance in readjusting to the academic environment. It may also take time for her to reactivate literacy skills that have not been practiced in a long time. With a sensitivity to such circumstances, teachers can anticipate the academic, linguistic, sociocultural, and psychological obstacles faced by their students and can appreciate the challenging experiences that might strongly influence their students' progress as writers.

Learner Preferences, Strategies, and Styles. A final but crucial dimension of needs assessment involves accounting for learners' predispositions toward aspects of classroom instruction and independent learning. Whereas the information targeted in Fig. 3.1 is primarily demographic, the learner variables included in the writing styles questionnaire (Fig. 3.2) address aspects of learners' predispositions, preferences, strategies, and styles that are subject to considerable change over time and that maybe most productively measured locally in the classroom context. Research on learner strategies and styles (which is, unfortunately, too extensive to consider in detail here) consistently shows how these highly personal and dynamic variables affect learning processes in the classroom and beyond (Cohen, 1998; Gass & Selinker, 2001; Graves, 2000; Reid, 1995b; Skehan, 1989, 1991,1998). This work also now suggests ways in which teachers can diagnose their students' styles and preferences, raise awareness of maximally productive strategies, and facilitate the acquisition of new strategies.

The sample questionnaire in Fig. 3.2, inspired by several instruments presented in Reid (1995b), was developed by an instructor who administered it on the first day of an advanced university course in Writing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) offered to international students. The prompts are clearly geared toward nonimmigrant students with limited experience in English-medium classrooms. The questionnaire items are specifically aimed at inviting students to report their perceived expertise as readers and writers, in addition to their views regarding collaborative work, drafting procedures, feedback, and revision. The instructor was able to use his students' responses to address these issues explicitly in the course and to plan instruction to accommodate the reported needs and preferences of the class. In other words, the questionnaire results not only served to guide the instructor's instructional

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planning, but also provided data on which students could subsequently reflect as a measurement of their literacy development as the course progressed. During periodic writing conferences, the teacher informally interviewed students' about their level of satisfaction with the course. At the end of the course, the instructor devised a retrospective assignment in which students wrote a comparison of their initial perceptions and their cumulative achievements.

By regularly considering formally and informally gathered self-report data about their students' work patterns, study habits, drafting styles, task type preferences, and so forth, teachers can design syllabi, plan lessons, construct assignments, lead activities that capitalize on students' strengths and overcome their weaknesses, and avoid student resistance to dispreferred task types. Instruments used to collect this information are perhaps most suitably and productively developed by adapting and combining styles and strategies resources already available.2

Topic: 186: Setting and Meeting Goals for L2 Writing

Having collected systematic profile data on his or her student cohort, the teacher is minimally equipped to identify, articulate, and negotiate the desired outcomes (global and specific) of a literacy course. Goals are frequently recognized as global targets around which instructional programs and syllabi are designed. Brown (1995) defined goals as "general statements concerning desirable and attainable program purposes and aims based on perceived language and situation needs" (p. 71). The goals for a particular program and its course sequence should address the observed needs of the student population and the requirements of the educational institution, as identified by regular, methodical needs analyses (Frodesen, 1995; Graves, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Nunan, 2001; Walker, 2003).

A goal summary for a premainstream, advanced academic ESL literacy course series, for example, might read something like this: "Students will be able to identify implicit relationships in academic English between parts of a concept: in a flow chart, in a table, and in an outline, as well as in the prose describing a chart or table in an essay" (Brown, 1995, p. 77). Such goal statements ideally reflect cognitive, linguistic, academic, and analytic skills that can be described, practiced, and assessed in the context of an instructional program and the courses it comprises.3

In many ESL and EFL settings, instructional goals are preestablished by administrators and institutions. The role of individual teachers is to work toward and accomplish these goals in the planning and execution of the courses they teach. However, embracing this role should not imply that teachers cannot play a part in shaping institutional, program-level goals or in using these goals to their advantage in developing syllabi and lesson plans. As Graves (2000) pointed out, "clear goals help to make teaching purposeful because what you do in class is related to your overall purpose. Goals and objectives provide a basis for making choices about what to teach and how" (p. 79). Instead of confining teachers' decision making, therefore, well-articulated goals should be viewed as tools for facilitating literacy instruction in the following ways:

1. formalized goals articulate the purposes of the course and educational program.
2. Goal statements focus on what the course or program intends to accomplish, indicating the specific skills that students will acquire or perfect upon completion of the course.
3. Goals allow for the formulation of more precise and achievable instructional objectives,

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4. Goals are dynamic—they evolve as a function of the changing needs of the students as their skills develops 1995; Graves, 2000).

In the sections that follow, we look at procedures for constructing course syllabi and designing lessons. By planning instruction to meet specific learning objectives formulated on the basis of a solid needs analysis, teachers can bring about the realization of broader programmatic goals.

FROM GOALS TO OBJECTIVES: THE SYLLABUS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR INSTRUCTION

Whereas goals typically constitute general statements of a curriculum's purpose, objectives articulate "the particular knowledge, behaviors, and/or skills that the learner will be expected to know or perform at the end of a course" (Brown, 1995, p. 73). We use the term "instructional objective" in this discussion to describe the purposes of a course as outlined in a syllabus as well as the tools for devising units and lessons.4 Objectives are thus fairly precise. Instructional objectives specify the following essential characteristics: performance (what the learner will be able to do), conditions (procedural and sociocognitive, within which the performance is expected to occur), and criteria (the quality or level of performance that will be considered acceptable) (Mager, 1975). The following sample goal statements illustrate how these components can be spelled out succinctly in a curriculum plan or course description:

- "By the aid of the course, students will have become more aware of their writing in general and be able to identify the specific areas in which improvement is needed" (Graves, 2000, p. 80);
- "By the end of the course, students Will improve their writing to the next level of the ACTFL [American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages] Proficiency Guidelines Writing scale" (Graves, 2000, p. 80);
- "By the end of the course, the students will be able to write the full forms of selected abbreviations drawn from pages 6-8 of the course textbook with 80 percent accuracy" (Mager, 1975, p. 74).

We underscore the specific, explicit wording of these statements, which articulate observable (and, ideally, measurable) learner behaviors or performances. We maintain that this level of precision is not only indispensable for lesson planning and teacher selfevaluation, but also crucial for fair, meaningful assessment (see chapter 8). The instructional objectives outlined in Fig. 3.3 represent a small but somewhat more extensive sampling of the types of functions that ESL writing syllabi at various proficiency levels and in various institutions might include.

Not all curriculum design experts, language educators, or rhetoricians advocate setting a priori instructional objectives. A principal objection to explicit aims relates to their negative association with behavioral psychology and the charge that stating objectives somehow trivializes classroom teaching by forcing instructors to focus only on narrowly defined skills and written products (Gronland, 1985; Hillocks, 1995). A further complaint maintains that explicit objectives limit teachers' freedom, constrain their decision making, and perpetuate the status quo (Benesch, 1996; Joseph, Bravmann, Windschitl, Mikel, & Green, 2000). We do not find these objections to be particularly persuasive. We argue that teachers should view objectives not as rigid, prescriptive targets, but as flexible guidelines keyed to performative outcomes embedded in the curriculum. As Brown (1995) pointed out, "objectives are most effective when a variety of different types are used and when the level of specificity for different.

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Course Type & Level	Sample Objectives as Outlined in Course Syllabus
Grades 9-12 ESL or EFL: Intermediate/High to Advanced	• Identify and summarize in writing main ideas of paragraphs and larger units of written discourse, including textbooks and literary passages. • Compose paragraph-length prose responses to specific questions in connected prose form, • Compose original expository and narrative texts (up to 500 words in length] on personal topics, academic content, and current events.
Adult/Vocational ESL: Low to Low Intermediate	• Transcribe simple words in dictation! • Compose lists of words that relate to a theme, semantic category, or pragmatic function. • Complete simple forms and documents, including bank deposit and withdrawal slips, postal forms, and so on. • Use simple illustrations and diagrams to compose simple descriptive sentences.
Pre-Academic Intensive ESL or EFL: Low to Low Intermediate	• Take legible notes on familiar topics! • Respond in complete sentences to personal and academic questions. • Compose simple letters, paraphrases, and summaries of biographical data as well as work and school experiences. • Compose descriptive, narrative, and expository paragraphs of 100 words or more based on simple, authentic texts.
Community College/University ESL: Intermediate to Advanced	• Take detailed notes on familiar and unfamiliar topics. Respond in connected written discourse to text-based questions. • Compose summaries of biographical data and work/ school experiences. • Compose paraphrases and summaries of extended academic prose (texts of up to 10 pages in length). • Compose descriptive, narrative, and expository essayiength texts (up to 500 words in length).
College/University ESL: Advanced (N5-track equivalent)	• Take detailed notes on familiar and unfamiliar topics. • Respond in connected written prose to text-based content questions. • Compose summaries of statistical and graphic data. • Compose paraphrases and summaries of

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extended academic or technical discourse (texts of up to 20 pages in length].
- Compose descriptive, exposi tory, analytic, and argumentative texts of 1,500 words or more.

FIG. 3.3. Sample course objectives: ESL writing skills.

Objectives is allowed to diverge" (p. 95). The explicit presentation of instructional objectives in a course syllabus enables teachers to

1. transform student needs into teaching points that can be organized into a teaching sequence
2. identify for students target skills that underlie Instructional points
3. decide on the level of specificity for the teaching activities in the syllabus
4. Adopt or adapt teaching materials that appropriately accommodate student needs and expectations
5. Map out a blueprint for assessing student performance and progress
6. Evaluate their own teaching effectiveness (Frodesen, 1995; Graves, 2000; Richards & Lockhart, 1994)

Topic: 187: Nuts and Bolts of L2 Writing Syllabus

Conducting a needs assessment can be an informative and rewarding process leading to the development and establishment of clear, measurable, and achievable course objectives. These objectives and their operationalization, of course, need to be formalized in writing on the course syllabus.

It is useful to think of a course syllabus as a document comprising two main parts. First, it can serve as a contract between the instructor and the students, summarizing course objectives and how they will be met (Hafernik, Messerschmitt, & Vandrick, 2002; Kroll, 2001). Second, a syllabus serves as an operational framework and planning tool. It structures and sequences instructional aims, units, lessons, assignments, classroom procedures, and assessment procedures for both the instructor and the students (Graves, 2000; Nunan, 1991a, 2001). The checklist in Fig. 3.4, although not exhaustive, offers a framework for providing students with all the information they will need about course objectives and content, workload, participation requirements, policies, assignments, and performance expectations. Figure. 3.4 also serves as an advance organizer for the discussion in the sections that follow. A sample syllabus for a community college composition course appears in Appendix 3A to exemplify the principles and practices outlined in this chapter.

THE COURSE SCHEDULE: PRIORITIZING, SEQUENCING, AND PLANNING FOR WRITING

Laying out a sequence of reading materials, classroom activities, and assignments can be one of the most challenging tasks facing novice and even experienced classroom teachers. Before describing specific techniques for meeting these challenges, we offer some guiding principles to assist in laying groundwork for writing a syllabus and course outline. Figure 3.5 presents an overarching schema and set of suggested procedures for incorporating overlapping phases of a hypothetical composing sequence into a course outline (see chapter 1). We point out that the stages leading from prewriting through publishing are not mechanical, autonomous steps, but potentially overlapping and recursive phases and subprocesses

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(Clark, 2003d). Hillocks (1995) persuasively argued that conventional approaches to implementing socalled "process" models of composition instruction should be viewed with extreme caution, as we suggested in our discussion of process and postprocess pedagogies in chapter 1. "While the general model of the composing process is useful," wrote Hillocks (1995), "it cannot begin to account for variations in process that appear to be dependent on a variety of factors" (p. xix). Therefore, we wish to avoid trivializing the complexity of individual writers' evolving composing processes. We thus present the model in Fig. 3.5 not as a linear, operational design, but as a general guideline for structuring and sequencing classroom tasks and multiple drafting to serve a broad range of instructional contexts and student writer populations.

1. **Descriptive Information**

- Course name, number, meeting lime, and location
- Prerequisites and other requirements
- Instructor's name and contact information (office location, consultation hours, campus telephone number, and e-mail address)

2. **Couse goals and primary content**

- Program-level and course goals
- Specific course goals, as well as general and specific course objectives
- Core course content, as well as aspects of literacy and composing processes to be presented, practiced, and assessed
- Dimensions of English rhetoric, textual analysis, grammar, and so forth, that will be directly addressed Description of what constitutes progress toward the achievement of course atms (see Item (7)
- Quantity and scope of reading material to be covered in class activities and writing assignments

3. **Reading materials**

- Bibliographic information for all required and optional text sources, as well as details about their availability
- List of reading assignments, their sequence, page ranges, and deadlines (if this information can be determined in advance)

4. **Writing assignments**

- Number and description of writing assignments, including information about genre, length, use of published sources, and so on
- Description of how many and which assignments will involve muttidrafting, peer response, teacher feedback, and so forth Indication of how many and which assignment will involve limed |In-class) or online writing
- Policies governing late work, revised assignments, collaboration, plagiarism, and so on
- Presentation requirements, including preferred stylesheet (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE), length criteria, text formatting, word-processing conventions, electronic file formatting, and so forth

5. **Instructional processes and procedures**

- Description of how class time will be allocated (e.g.. balance of workshop activities, drafting, peer review sessions, class discussions, Lecture, in-class writing, quizzes)
- Expectations concerning student preparedness and participation In discussions, group tasks, peer review sessions, contributions to electronic bulletin boards, and so on

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6. Course requirements

- Summary of compulsory assignments and their deadlines
- Description of assessment criteria, including how student work will be evaluated
- Explanation of policies concerning attendance, participation, missed assignments, and so on

7. Assessment and grading procedures

- Explicit description of assessment criteria and how they will be applied to assignments
- Account of how final course grades are weighted (if applicable) and calculated
- Justification of assessment and marking procedures

8. Course schedule or timetable

- If practicable and appropriate, a session-by-session or weed -by-week calendar of dates, themes, events, reading assignments, and deadlines (considerable flexibility often is required with course timetables to accommodate inevitable changes, delays, and negotiated syllabi

FIG. 3.4. Syllabus checklist.

To operationalize this iterative writing process schema, we must first and foremost establish student and program goals as our highest priority, organizing our material, instructional procedures, and tasks accordingly (Jensen, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Omaggio Hadley, 2001). Second, it is crucial that we understand how our planning decisions (including materials selection, sequencing, balance of instructional activity types, assignment development, and so on) will help our students to meet course objectives (see chapter 4). If textbooks and assignments are prescribed by an academic department, program, institution, or educational agency, our syllabi still will not write themselves. Our teaching will be most effective when we can justify—to ourselves and to our students—our planning decisions with direct reference to course objectives (Cumming, 2003). Third, flexibility is essential: As Tarvers (1993) aptly emphasized, "a ruthless sense of realism must go into planning [a] course schedule" (p. 42), because no timeline can be etched in stone.

Whereas some teachers can efficiently follow and complete a detailed, preplanned course timetable, many find it difficult to adhere so closely to a course outline that lays out a day-by-day, 10- or 15-week plan. Under ideal conditions, teachers can work with students to negotiate a syllabus, involving learners in decision making about literacy development tasks, reading selections, the nature and number of assignments, multidrafting processes, revision requirements, assessment criteria, portfolio contents, and so forth (Bamberg, 2003; Glenn et al., 2003; Nunan, 1991b, 2001). Under such circumstances, a quarter- or semester length timetable is perhaps unnecessary. On the other hand, successfully delivering a negotiated syllabus requires even more scrupulous attention to curricular goals and course objectives because teachers must ensure that writers achieve the outcomes stated in the syllabus without the explicit structure of a detailed timetable (Jensen, 2001).

Prewriting

- Involve writers In text-based tasks featuring both reading and writing (See chapters 2 and 4),
- Lead activities requiring students to write from lexis. Including tasks such as reading journals, comprehension exercises, reaction papers, and soon (see chapter 2, Application Activities 2.2 - 2.4].

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- To prepare for and complement intensive writing (i.e.. drafting and revising formal writing assignments), allow for extensive writing for discovery \Elbow. 1973, I9fl1b; Wurray, 1978, 1937-Tarrers. 1993; Zamel, 19B2, 19fl3.1985), both in class and out; promote production of texts that address the tasks, audience, and genres at hand (Johns, 1997, 2QQ3; Kroll, 2001).
- Without letting prewriting take on a life of its own, weave idea generation tasks such as brainstorming, mapping. cut-inn, and so on into the Instructional sequence (see chapter 4). Practice and a variety of prewriting activities (see chapter 4).

Planning and Drafting

- Encourage students to plan as they BO along and to understand the evolving purposes of their writing.
- Continue to supply content- and theme-based input in the way of readings, discussions, and so forth to develop and sharpen. students' emerging ideas and plans,
- Allow sufficient time in the drafting and planning phase for students to exchange ideas, share their plans, and elicit new Information for further development of a schema for the writing task.

Rewriting and Revising

- Situate writing tasks in a transactional space Give students practice envisioning the text's audience, the reader's knowledge and expectations, strategies for satisfying reader expectations, and so on (Adam & Arterneva, 2002, Carson, 2001; Hanseri, 2000; Horawitz, I936c; Johns, 1997, 2003;Spack, 1997a).
- Provide students with practice incorporating peer and expert feedback into their evolving drafts (we chapters 5 and 6).
- Continue to supply content- and theme-based input in the way of readings, discussions, and so on to supplement and narrow students' emerging ideas and plans.

Feedback, Incubation, and Revision

- Demonstrate productive and supportive ways in which students can respond to the writing of their peers (see chapter 6|.
- Conduct peer response seniors In a safe environment where students act as critical readers, but not as evaluators (see chapter 6).
- Emphasize the benefits of reading and responding to the work of others. Point out that the greatest contribution of peer feedback may not be to the work of the writer who receives feedback, but to the work of the peer reviewer who gives feedback.
- Demonstrate procedures and techniques (or evaluating peer and expert feedback, and for applying that information to students' changing drafts.
- Build in time for incubation between Iterations of the composing subprocess. As Zamel's (1982) student said, the more days 50 by, the more ideas come. It's like fruit; it needs time to ripen (pp. 200-201)

Editing and Pollshinsg

- Build sufficient time into the teaching sequence for peer, teacher, and self-editing of mature, developed pieces of writing (see chapters 5, 6, and 7;

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Publishing

- Provide opportunities for students" "final" products to be distributed shared, and appreciated by others
- Systematically engage students in making decisions regarding written products that should be included in their writing portfolios (If applicable).

FIG. 3.5. Writing process schema for course planning.

With these general planning precepts in mind, we can begin to lay out the work of a quarter or semester with the goals of our institutions and our students (as operationalized in our course objectives) as clear, measurable targets. It is useful to start the process with an academic calendar or planner showing the exact number of class meetings and holidays to be included in the timetable. Cancellations because of personal and professional commitments should then be noted, and any required makeup meetings should be built into the schedule. Class days also should be reserved for timed writings, midterms, examinations, and the like to give a clear picture of exactly how many meetings can be planned for teaching, workshops, feedback sessions, and so on.

We further suggest designating one or two sessions per term as "free" or "flex" (flexible) sessions if the academic calendar permits. Flex sessions can provide highly valuable padding that allows the teacher to carry over units, tasks, and assignments without having to rework the entire course timetable when a class falls behind schedule, as many inevitably do. If the course proceeds as planned, flex sessions can then be used for extra writing time, teacher-student conferences, portfolio preparation, and even working ahead.

Next, it is a good idea to schedule due dates for graded writing assignments, particularly if these deadlines are prescribed by the program, department, or institution. We recommend working backward from final submission deadlines to include intermediate deadlines for drafts, peer feedback sessions, editing workshops, student-teacher conferences, and so forth. The sample syllabus and course outline in Appendix 3A illustrates one way in which this "backtracking" planning method can be used. We recommend allocating adequate time for multidraft assignments and revised papers, particularly near the beginning of a term, when writing assignments tend to take longer to work through. Extra class periods may be necessary early on to discuss preliminary drafts, demonstrate and practice peer response techniques, and revise assignments in class or in the computer lab.

You will likewise find it valuable to build into the course timetable sufficient time for you and your students to read assigned texts, practice prewriting and drafting techniques, and work through peer response tasks. The timetable should also allow sufficient time for you to annotate and evaluate your students' work (see chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8). Allow as much time between sessions as practicable to make a multidraft approach worthwhile if multidrafting is a central feature of your course.

To maximize the multidrafting approach and provide sufficient incubation time between drafts, it can be useful to initiate a new writing assignment while the preceding one is still in progress. For example, it may be time efficient to collect a set of short papers for feedback or evaluation while students embark on an extended project or research assignment.

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Once the core assignments are in place and the deadlines for preliminary work (readings, drafts, peer and teacher feedback, revision, and so on) are established, the course outline has at least a skeletal form that allows for the planning of discussions, lectures, student presentations, peer response workshops, online chats, quizzes, and other class activities. If reading figures prominently in the course objectives (as we strongly suggest it should), reading selections should be assigned with great care so that they correspond logically to the themes, genres, rhetorical patterns, and discursive forms to be featured in the syllabus, as well as the writing assignments and literacy tasks based on them (Johns, 1997; Kroll, 2001). Generally, reading selections in published anthologies and rhetorical readers (see chapter 4) are presented as units, linked topically, and connected to specific writing tasks (e.g., expository or argumentative essays).

Examples of themes included in recent ESL and NS composition textbooks include affirmative action, educational policy, environmental controversies, gender issues, globalization, human sexuality, immigration, language rights, multiculturalism, racism, and reproductive rights. Where such textbooks are not part of the curriculum, a thematic approach still may be used as the basis for syllabus design, with a thematic unit revolving around an identifiable topic or context (Snow, 1998, 2001; Snow & Brinton, 1997). As with writing assignments, reading assignments should be allotted generous time. Lengthy reading selections may need to be divided into smaller parts to enable students to complete them and to provide for effective treatment in class. Finally, lay your plan out so that you and the students can see the chronology of the entire term. Before finalizing the course schedule, check to see that adequate time has been allocated for especially labor-intensive literacy tasks such as extended reading selections, multi-draft writing assignments, and investigation projects. For multidraft assignments, track the sequence you have sketched out to ensure enough time for the necessary iterations of drafting, feedback, revision, and editing (Kroll, 2001).

Topic: 188: Lesson Planning: Practices and Procedures

Identifying Lesson Objectives

In the same way that the instructional objectives specified in a syllabus identify what knowledge and skills students will acquire by the end of a course, effective lesson objectives describe the observable behaviors that students will demonstrate at the end of a class period or unit (Brown, 2001; Jensen, 2001; Nunan, 2001; Raimes, 1983). If instructional objectives are clearly specified in the syllabus, identifying lesson objectives should be an easy task when it comes to planning individual class periods. Lesson objectives should emanate directly from instructional objectives and at least indirectly from program or course goals. Consider, for example, this instructional objective for a low to low-intermediate, pre-academic ESL writing course from Fig. 3.3: "Compose descriptive, narrative, and expository paragraphs." A corresponding performative objective for a lesson derived from this course aim might read "Compose a 200- to 250-word paragraph describing each writer's dormitory room, apartment, or house." The anticipated outcome is described in terms of an observable, measurable student performance as well as a written product with which students can work and that can ultimately be published, shared, and evaluated. The objective statement also should be worded with action verbs such as "compose" and "describe" (in contrast to verbs such as "learn" or "understand," which are difficult to observe and appraise).

Although many experienced and skilled teachers plan and execute productive lessons without writing out their objectives in detail, effective teachers do have a clear purpose in mind when they select

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and organize classroom tasks. As Purgason (1991) pointed out, "each activity needs to have a reason. A teacher must think through why that activity is important to the students and what they will be able to do when they finish it" (p. 423). Consequently, it is advisable for both novice and experienced teachers to articulate lesson objectives routinely in their planning (Brown, 2001; Cruickshank, Bainer, & Metcalf, 1999; Graves, 2000; Ur, 1996). Explicit, measurable objectives help teachers to unify the components of their lessons:

In synthetic terms, lessons and units of work will consist, among other things, of sequences of tasks, and the coherence of such lessons or units will depend on the extent to which the tasks have been integrated and sequenced in some principled way. (Nunan, 1989, p. 10)

Sequencing and Organizing a Lesson Plan

A lesson plan can take many forms, depending on the time constraints and personal style of the individual teacher. Regardless of how it appears, a lesson plan should provide the teacher with a "script" for presenting materials, interacting with students, and leading students through structured and unstructured activities. Much more than a mere step-by-step chronology of a classroom event, however, a lesson plan is a practical, tangible, and potentially dynamic tool for meeting student needs as operationalized in course objectives. It serves as a vital link between curricular goals and the learning we wish to bring about among our students. In this sense, the lesson is where the known (instructional objectives, texts, and so on) meets the unknown (the novice writers in our composition classes).

Hillocks (1995) noted that mapping out instruction is initially an exploratory endeavor: "At the beginning of a year or term, our students are likely to be new to us. We cannot begin planning, except with general outlines, until we know what students do as writers" (p. 132). Because we cannot possibly anticipate every aspect of what happens in our classrooms, we can think of lessons as opportunities for experimentation. Not all lessons or activities will succeed. We can be prepared for this outcome, however, by expecting the unexpected. We also can improve our teaching effectiveness by reflecting on what works well and what does not work so successfully with the students in our own classes (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001; Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

Hillocks (1995) offered sound planning advice in noting that "the thoughtful teacher, in searching for ways to help students learn more effectively, will plan real trials (what researchers call quasi-experiments), determine what effect they have, even as the trial goes forward, and consider new options as a result" (p. 125). Most teachers, even those seasoned and self-assured enough to conduct entire lessons with no written notes, are aware of the benefits of advance planning, which can lead to a willingness to depart from their plans when necessary (Bailey, 1996). A written lesson plan, whether a general list of activities or a meticulously detailed sequence of procedures, facilitates processes such as postlesson evaluation, problem diagnosis, and skills enhancement.

Topic: 189: Mechanics of Lesson Planning

In purely mechanical terms, a lesson plan can be handwritten or word-processed on standard paper and formatted in any number of ways. Teachers working in highly "wired" environments can even prepare their class plans using interactive software such as Microsoft PowerPoint, enabling them to project outlines and materials onto a screen or an array of monitors. In contrast, a lowtech lesson plan can

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easily be printed out on notecards. In fact, for some teachers, it is enough to write out lesson notes before class as a way of putting the content and sequencing into their heads. In this way, they obviate the need for a written plan during the lesson.

Whatever form a lesson plan takes, it should be readable, convenient to refer to in class when needed, and usable as a future record of what took place. Instead of proposing a rigid or prescriptive model for planning ESL writing classes, we offer the following general outline and conceptual framework as options for individualizing daily lesson designs.5 The outline in Fig. 3.6 includes practical and procedural aspects of the planning process that many teachers consider essential in constructing a lesson. Appendix 3B contains an example of an authentic lesson plan that reflects these principles, procedures, and formatting options. Figure 3.6 focuses principally on logistical elements, whereas Fig. 3.7 focuses on pedagogical moves and instructional procedures.

Although most of the items in Fig. 3.6 are self-explanatory, a few are worth elaboration. In addition to reviewing the lesson's objectives, making a note about the work that students did during the previous class and have done for homework can give us a realistic feeling for what kinds of reading, writing, discussion, and problem solving tasks students are ready for next. This review process is invaluable in managing time effectively. Preparing a list of equipment (e.g., overhead projector, transparencies, markers), materials, page numbers, and so on before class can avert the need to spend valuable class time getting organized. Having a prepared checklist of student work to return and collect can likewise save time, as can dispensing with announcements efficiently. Some teachers routinely write these on the board or an overhead transparency for students to read on their own. Others prefer to make announcements at the end of class, when they will not have to be repeated for latecomers. On an increasing number of campuses, instructors can also post informational messages on electronic bulletin boards or conferences dedicated to courses.

Course and Lesson Objectives

- Summary of lesson objectives

Work Previously Completed

- Account of reading, writing, discussion, and feedback completed in the previous class session

Materials

- Textbook(s)
- Handouts, including worksheets, feedback guides, copies of student writing, and so forth
- Materials for student writing, including writing paper, blue books for inclass writing, printer paper for sessions conducted in computer labs, and so on
- AV materials (e.g., OHP transparencies, video player, laptop, computer projection unit, and so on)

Class Management

- Assignments to be collected
- Assignments to be given and examined before the next class meeting a

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- Class business, announcements, reminders, and so on

Lesson Sequence

(Elements to consider in applying the steps listed in Figure 3.7)

- Time allocation for tasks and activities
- Variety of activity types (reading, drafting, discussion, collaborative tasks, lecture, and so forth)
- Transitions between lesson phases and integration of activities a
- Coherence and activity flow
- Clear procedures for setting up collaborative tasks and other independent activity types

Contingency Plans

- Ideas for alternative tasks or activities in case the lesson ends early or a lesson component has to be abandoned

Reflection and Self-Evaluation

(To be completed after the lesson)

- Observations to keep in mind before planning the next class
- Notations on successful tasks, procedures, and techniques a
- Comments on tasks, procedures, and techniques to modify before repeating them

FIG. 3.6. Lesson plan outline/checklist.

The core lesson elements in Fig. 3.6 refer to techniques for successfully executing the steps outlined in Fig. 3.7. The first of these core elements is time management, perhaps the single most pervasive challenge for teachers in carrying out their lesson plans. For this reason, a useful practice is to anticipate the time that each activity in a lesson will require, adding several additional minutes to that total. This strategy gives teachers a way of estimating what can reasonably be accomplished in a single class period. A general rule to follow is that open-ended activities such as unstructured discussions of texts, group activities, peer response workshops, and student conferences frequently take much longer than teachers predict, partly because of the numerous unexpected questions that can emerge and partly because managing such activities requires added time. The same can often be said of untested classroom tasks (see chapter 4).

Lesson Phase	Teacher actions	Student actions
1. Activation of prior learning	• Helps students recall what they have teamed or practiced in previous lesson(S) • Asks students to demonstrate new knowledge and skills	• Report on prior learning • Demonstrate new knowledge and skills through practice
2. Preview/warm-up	• Previews new lesson, connecling new material to material just reviewed or practiced	• Respond to preview • Respond to teacher's prompts

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	• Checks students' understanding of material and concepts at hand • Guides students in anticipating lesson content by capturing their interest arid stimulating thought about the topic and task	
3. Lesson core: Instruction, procedures, participation	• Presents lecture, writing task, or activity • Communicates lesson objectives to students • Models task or activity, guiding students to engage with new concepts and practice relevant skills • Asks students to complete the task or activity Individually or in groups • Provides opportunities (or students to practice using new knowledge and skills independently - Encourages student involvement, participation, and interaction • Checks students' understanding of material and concepts at hand	• Respond to teacher's presentation (e.g., by taking notes, asking questions, and so on) • Observe modeling, ask questions • Undertake the task or activity Individually or In groups • Complete the task or activity Independently • Elicit teachers assistance to complete the task, as. needed
4. Closure	- Prompts students to reflect on what they have learned and practiced • Links new learning to prior learning	• Discuss or describe what they have learned or practiced • Discuss relationship of new learning to prior learning
5. Follow-up and preparation far next lesson	• Presents additional tasks or activities to practice same concepts • Introduces or lays groundwork for future tasks and learning objectives	• Complete additional tasks or activities • Take note to prepare for (urther learning

Related to the issue of time management is the principle that lessons should involve some degree of variety in terms of task type and interactional styles (Graves, 2000; Jensen, 2001).

In an ESL composition course, it is entirely appropriate that a significant amount of class time be dedicated to the practice of writing, to the discussion of writing processes, and to effective text construction strategies. At the same time, teachers should recognize that allocating large chunks of time to writing in class can result in unproductive use of instructional resources (e.g., teacher expertise, class discussion, peer interaction). The classroom should serve not only as a workshop environment, as Kroll (2001) maintained, but also as a setting for meaningful, socioliterate activity.

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Lesson 35

Planning a writing course I

Topic: 190: Introduction Planning a Writing Course

A few years ago, I gave papers called 'The Neurosis of lesson planning' and 'Anguish as a Second language' in which I explored the fact that both learning and teaching a language promote anxiety. There is even more anxiety when many teachers themselves do not feel entirely comfortable with writing in English, even if it is their native language. Today, with a burgeoning of conflicting theories, planning a writing course is like walking a minefield. It involves so many choices about where to go next, what is the best step to take, and what is the best route to the goal. Taking a wrong step in this context might not be as dire as stepping on a mine, but it can undermine our confidence and detonate our students' resistance. So I have come up with ten steps that I hope can lead us to safer ground both in planning writing courses and in helping teachers to plan writing courses.

Topic: 191: Ascertaining Goals and Institutional Constraints

When I began writing this paper, I listed only "ascertaining goals." Then, as I worked on the paper, I found myself discussing under every heading the constraints imposed upon teachers by their institutions or, further afield, by ministries of education, examining and accreditation agencies, funding sources, and the like. Such constraints include assigned curricula, approved textbooks, and designated proficiency examinations; they lead to questions such as these about goals: Do your students have to pass an exam that values writing to a formula and rewards above all accuracy of grammar; spelling, and punctuation? Do they even have to compose at all, or just write sentences, judge grammaticality, or pick from multiple-choice responses? Do you want your students to write to demonstrate mastery of form, or to experiment with language, record experiences and reactions, and generate and communicate ideas? Or do you want simply to increase their confidence in themselves as writers? Answering questions like these is a necessary first step in designing a course. And different answers will lead in different directions.

Students in a recent ESL class of mine wrote about the times when they wrote or spoke in English. They felt worried, embarrassed, hampered by barriers, restrictions and fears. They felt their voice was monotonous: "I'm not the real me," said one. "I feel like I'm choking on a word that won't come out," said another. And one capped it all by saying, "inside of me I feel stupid and dumb." This was owing mainly, it seems, not to the difficulty of writing itself but to the difficulty of doing it in a new language. when student wrote in their native language they felt, they said, 'comfortable, free, self-assured, open, loud, and positive' ; "I feel more like me"; "I can write with feelings and anger"; "words just come out from my brain on paper." We can see that taking direction from these students and addressing comfort, confidence, and fluency as a goal would lead to a very different course from one that sees as its goal the production of an academic essay with an introduction, three points, and a conclusion, and effective use of transition words. And what if an imposed curriculum or textbook stresses only rhetorical form and grammatical accuracy? What is the teacher to do?

If institutional constraints limit our ability to pursue our goals and what we see as the student's goals, a few courses of action are open to us.

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- We can work politically to change the constraints. We can join and form committees, we can make proposals, and we can run pilot projects. Pilot projects are a good way to test out alternate methods, since administrations do not view them as too threatening.
- We can make only a part of our course address the test or the assigned curriculum.
- We can avoid seeing ends as means. If a student has to learn how to write an essay in 30 minutes on a prescribed topic, that does not mean that the whole course should consist of 30-minute writing tasks. The ends dictate only the destination, not how we get there. We need to find ways to ensure that we vary our means of working toward the prescribed ends.

Topic: 192: Deciding on Theoretical Principles

Articles by Santos(1992), Mckay (1993), and Benesch(1993) have discussed the role of ideology in teaching writing. Terry Santos tells us that ESL composition "see[s] itself pragmatically" and so "in my classroom I teach English and there's no ideology in that." But Sarah Benesch points out that "all forms of ESL instruction are ideological, whether or not educators are conscious of the political implications of their instructional choices" (1993, p.705). She illustrates this with an analysis of English for academic purposes (EAP). She point out that in its attempts "to adapt students to the status quo" (p.714) by presenting the demands of literacy as "positive artifacts of a normative academic culture" (p. 710), EAP turns toward "an acocommodationist ideology" (p. 714), which prepares students to be assimilated into systems that instructors never question and that their students never examine critically. She claims, then, that all writing is ideological.

So teachers first need to confront their ideological position and recognize their perceptions of the relationship between the type of writing they teach and the roles they are preparing students for in academia and the wider world of work. The question of ideology and who determines what is taught is a question of power and reflects local conditions. In the United states, teaching writing to immigrants and refugees rises issues of assimilation and accommodation which are obviously different from issues raised by teaching EFL writing in other parts of the world. Suresh Canagarajah discusses this in relation to Sri Lanka in a TESOL Quarterly article (1993). It is important for all of us to ask ourselves what English and what types of writing we teach, what content our students are exposed to, and what we accept our students to do with what they learn. What roles in society does our instruction prepare them for? How specific are the specific purposes of ESP(English for specific purposes), socioecnomically and politically?

Then, closely allied to ideology comes theory and our views of language, the nature of language learning, writing, and the nature of the learning of composition. Even if we never articulate our theories to ourselves, they become apparent to others in our syllabus and choice of materials and activities. Let's look at two examples of writing-class decisions: the use of text models and the choice of focus on content form.

What are text models used for? Are they to be imitated or examined critically, analyzed, and compared? Fan Shen (1989) from the People's Republic of China has written about his experience learning English composition in the United states. He says that in Chinese, writers try to "reach a topic gradually and systematically." To him, the concept of a topic sentence stating the main idea of a paragraph right there up front is "symbolic of the values of a busy people in an industrialized society" (p.462). As teachers, we have the choice of presenting a text structure as a given, as some kind of

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"standard," as a form to be learned and imitated, or going beyond that and exploring in our classes the notion that what writers do reflects an entire system of values and beliefs, with strong connections between the writing process and the beliefs of a culture. Sandra McKay claims that we need to examine the "social practices that surround academic discourse" (1993, p.74), and we can do that by discussing openly in our classes the differences in approaches to writing and reading and critically examining the text forms that appear in our textbooks and curricular guides.

Another example of a writing-class decision that has clear links to theory is the choice of focus on content or form. A commitment to content, fluency, personal voice, and revising is often called *process writing.* But since all writing involves a process, whether teachers focus on it or not, I prefer to call this a process approach to teaching writing and to emphasize that when we pay attention to how a piece of writing is constructed, this is not necessarily at the expense of attention to the product. In addition, a process approach is not the same as an expressionist approach, focusing only on personal writing. A process approach to teaching writing can be used with personal and with academic content, with literature and with nonfiction. And in a process approach, of course the product and accuracy and grammar are important-they are just not the first and only thing that is important. A principles process approach always pays serious attention to the product-but at an appropriate stage in the process.

So what we decide to emphasize in the classroom is not just a practical matter of choosing an activity to fill the next day's lesson plan. Principled teaching will always reveal principled theoretical underpinnings. To detect these, I always ask the teachers in my teacher-training courses to ask themselves the following questions: Why am I doing this activity in my class? How does it fit into what I know about language and language leaning? What will my students learn from it? What is it worth learning for?

Topic: 193: Planning Content

There's a healthy controversy about what the content of writing classes should be, and teacers use any or all of the following: personal experience, social issues, cultural issues, literature, or the content of other subject areas. There is no one right answer to the question of content, but I will go so far as to say that there is one wrong answer. That wrong answer is that the content of a writing course takes a back seat to practice in prescribed models of paragraph or essay form; that is, that it does not matter what you write about as long as it conforms to an accepted rhetorical model. Why is that wrong? Because it misses the point about using writing as a unique tool for language learning. It returns to an early view of writing as one (and the least important) of the four language skills to be used to test that the others skills has been mastered. It neglects the real value of writing: that it is a valuable tool for learning not only about subject matter, whatever the choice, but also about language. Writing is for discovery of learning, not just demonstration of learning. For writing, unlike speaking, provides us with a way not only to generate ideas before presenting them to an audience, but also to scrutinize the ideas and language we produce; this re-vision, this seeing again, lets us receive feedback from ourselves and others and, learning as we go, make changes and corrections. If we simply ask students to analyze, manipulate, and imitate given texts, we are not allowing them to grapple for that fit between content and form that all writers need to grapple with.

However, the question of content involves more than selecting content that is not based on rhetorical models of form. It involves also the question of what content will actively encourage students to use writing as a tool for learning and for communication and to become engaged enough with their writing to have an investment in examining it, improving it, and eventually revising it for readers. So

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when the pursuit of so-called objective academic content in a content-based approach leads to borrowing content from such areas as history and social sciences, this serves the shoulder out personal responses to the authentic academic issue of examining culture, identity, and language. Then a lot of the advantages of writing as a language learning tool bite the dust too. Although graduate curses might address specific genres as the focus of instruction, in large numbers of ESL and EFL writing courses, language learning rather than forms of written discourse is a major consideration. So students need topics that allow them to generate ideas, find the forms to fit the ideas, and invite risk taking.

Topic: 194: Weighting the Elements

Writing consists of many constituent parts and we need to consider which ones will be the most important for a course: content, organization, originality, style, fluency, accuracy, or using appropriate rhetorical forms of discourse. Obviously, unless a course lasts for years, we will not be able to do all these justice. So we have to form priorities and weight the elements according to students' needs and our own philosophy.

When I first began teaching ESL in the early 1960s, a writing course existed primarily as grammar practice. I would have students write dozens of sentences about John and Mary (and the tedious, boring lives they led) and eventually, with the advent of controlled and guided compositions, moved daringly into having them write paragraphs, but they were still working with content that was already provided for them write paragraphs, but they were still working with content that was already provided for them on the page. Then came the idea that writing is generative of ideas, that it is a messy and chaotic process. Contrastive rhetoricians frequently graphically present a piece of writing in English as a straight line, but that is a depiction of the product, not the process. There are, unfortunately, not neat formulas for getting to an exquisite final product, one step at a time. Giving instruction in writing is not like giving instructions for assembling a toy or a mail-order computer. It is not simply a question of getting the right tools and following directions. If it were, more people would be good writers, and more teachers and textbook writers would be very rich. We must accept the chaotic and messy nature of writing-but teachers do not like chaos, so they have sought to impose order on it by focusing on grammar, rhetorical modes, and models of academic discourse, to provide themselves with neat systems to teach.

It is helpful to do a needs analysis on the first day, balancing institutional goals with what students say they need to learn and what they need to use writing for; then we can weigh the elements so that the chaos of composing is somewhat reduced for the students, since they can focus on one or two things at a time. My ESL courses usually address a theme-culture and identity, or education, for example-and within that theme and within each task, students focus on critical reading, generating ideas and expressing them with clarity, organization, style, and accuracy. My students know what I see learning to write a lab report as a priority in a physics class, not in an ESL class.

Topic: 195: Drawing up a Syllabus

The next question we ask after deciding on content and weighting the elements is how we will that content and the learning experiences in the classroom. In *The Language Teaching Matrix,* Richards(1990) lists the kinds of syllabi commonly found in speaking and listening courses in ESL. I will adapt his list to the types of syllabus organization for writing courses, from the traditional to the more current and innovative, with a lot of overlap:

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1. **Structural**: writing courses, particularly at beginning levels, can be organized around grammar and and sentence patterns. A present tense paragraph one day, then a past tense paragraph, and so on. This was common in the 1960s, but is less so now. Structural courses nowadays are often organized by patterns of writing forms or genres: paragraphs with topic sentence, description, analyses and so on.
2. **Functional**: writing courses can be organized around rhetorical activities: describing, telling story, writing autobiography, comparing and contrasting, classifying, defining, explaining, arguing, persuading, or supporting a thesis with examples, illustrations, and other evidence.
3. **Topical**: a writing course can be organized around themes, such as housing, health, education, or abstraction such as success or courage. In the United States, ESL writing courses in college are often linked with a content course. At Hunter College in New York, students in an intermediate-level ESL course are also enrolled in "The Greek and Latin Roots of English" and many of the readings in that course are examined in more linguistic detail in the ESL course.
4. **Situational**: writing courses can be organized around situational transactions, such as applying for a job, complaining to a landlord, and writing letters to the newspaper, writing a business memo, or writing essays to pass a course.
5. **Skills and processes**: writing courses can be organized around skills and processes such as generating ideas, organizing ideas, revising, writing fluently, writing effective beginnings and endings, and developing an argument to convince a reader.
6. **Tasks**: writing courses can be organized around problem-solving activities, such as producing a play; and examining the differences between ESL textbook situations and the expectations of the student's culture.

Such a spread of choices is like going to a big food center. There is so much there that we do not know those wonderful big prawns. I do not want to stick with Chinese noodles. I want satay and curry and these wonderful big prawns. With syllabus types, too, in practice, as Richards points out, a "combination of approaches is often used" (1990, pp. 9-10); what they are, and in what proportion they are used, depends on our students, goals, theoretical principles, and institutional constraints. And we have to make a principled selection every time we plan a lesson or a course.

Learners do not have to be excluded from the process of syllabus design, though the traditional view, expressed by Reid (1993), is that a curriculum and syllabus "should be in place and ready to use before the ESL writing class meets for the first time" (p.73). but if a needs assessment of the students who are actually in the classroom rather than a typical body of students is preferred, then syllabus planning can become more of a collaborative than a teacher-directed process.

The easy way out of syllabus design is, of course, to simply choose a book, and build a day0by-day syllabus around it. But then we give all our power of choice to a textbook writer who does not know our students. If the book we choose fits our theoretical philosophy, we will not feel too bound by the syllabus it imposes. If a book is assigned to a class, or syllabus is prescribed, then we all learn to drop, add, cut, paste, and select. Creative adaption and critical analysis become the order of the day. Canagarajah reports on textbooks assigned in Sri Lanka in which the situations "assumes an urbanized, technological Western culture that is alien to the

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students" (1993, p.609). But even with texts such as these, students do not have to just repeat and perform the assigned dialogues and exercises. The texts can also be used as material for critical analysis and comparison with local cultural and rhetorical norms.

Topic: 196: Selecting Materials

Increasingly, teachers of writing are beginning to view the main texts of a writing class as what the students write and what the teacher write in response. Certainly, students and teachers generate a lot of words on the page for analysis, discussion, and revision. But to open up the classroom to shared experiences- to topics to stimulate writing- teachers turn to others materials, such as videos, software, and books. Then the materials have to fit as far as possible with the goals, principles, content, and weighting that we have already decided on. It just won't work, for example, to use a book full of sentence-level grammar exercises with a few controlled compositions thrown in.

Before selecting a book, either as an individual or as a committee, it is advisable to take a section or a task or two and work through it to see what is asked for and what assumptions the author makes, because sometimes authors make claims on which they do ot follow through. If you decide to use an ESL writing textbook and not books and articles written for authentic purposes, I would suggest looking for the following seven features:

1. **Topics.** Will they engage the student's interests? What are they based on-experience, materials in the book such as readings and pictures, activities and inquiries beyond the classroom, or out-of the-blue random topics? Are the topics culturally appropriate for your students? Is the content relevant and engaging?
2. **Types of writing.** Are the students writing essays, letters, or paragraphs? Is that what they need to be writing?
3. **Opportunities for and instruction in methods of generating ideas.** Which of the following are included: brainstorming, free writing, listing, mapping, outlining? Which are appropriate for your students?
4. **Instruction on principles of rhetorical organization.** Which information is provided to help students organize various types of writing-letters, description, narration, exposition, and argument, for example-and which types do your students need to practice?
5. **Opportunities for collaboration.** Is group working a part of the activities? If so, how are collaborative activities viewed in your culture?
6. **Opportunities for revision.** Are students encouraged and directed to write drafts? Does the book provide instruction on what to do at various stages? Does your curriculum allow for revision of essays?
7. **Instruction in editing and proofreading.** What can students learn from the book about how edit their own work? What instruction is provided in finding and editing grammatical error?

Once you have chosen a book, the task is not over. No time to relax. You still have to decide how to use it in classroom.

Topic: 197: Preparing Activities and Roles

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In planning a lesson or a course, the tendency is for teachers to think about what they will be doing; presenting a lesson on paragraph organization, leading a class discussion on editing a student paper, and so on. One of my graduate students wrote in her journal: "I'm always scared that I'll finish early and I won't know what to do next." What if we turn that around and ask what the students will be doing next? If we are presenting, the students are listening. If we have the right answers to the questions we ask, students become passive pawns in a guessing game.

There is a lot of theoretical talk about student-centered classrooms, and teachers can find out what that means when they analyze their own classes and their own experience as students. That is why it is important for teachers to be students, too- in their own classrooms, by writing reflective teaching journals, and, whatever possible, in another teacher's classroom. When I took a course in elementary Japanese, the thing that frustrated me more than anything was the various systems for counting: different words for counting people, or cylindrical objects, or flat ones, or books, and so on. This was a result of the instructor's adopting what Paulo Freire (1998) calls the "banking" concepts of education: depositing knowledge in the learners' heads. But this head was not ready for it, and in fact actively rejected it. I could not understand why I was not learning the one most useful system that would help me more than any other. Once resistance sets in, it is all over. We have to make sure that we do not try to bank too much in our students' brains all at once. It helps if we think about what students will be doing and learning in the classroom rather than the comprehensiveness of the information we will be imparting.

Topic: 198: Choosing Types and Methods of Feedback

Here each teacher has a lot of decisions to make: Will anyone respond, and if so, who? What will be the method and type of response-and what do I have time for? What is the purpose of my response?

First, in the case of large classes, not every piece of writing has to be corrected or even seen by the teacher. Students can do journal writing, response logs to reading or free writing in which the aim is to generate ideas, and so increase fluency rather than accuracy, but for a response as a reader. If the teacher is to read the writing, the possible roles can be specified and distinguished: general reader, helper, copy editor, or examiner. Then the teacher will not have to look for and comment on everything all at once, in one draft.

Second, whoever responds has a variety of physical methods of responding: a comment to or a conversation with the writer; an interlinear response with computer software, using such features as the "Comment" capability and redlining; and audiotape response; or a written response. If you choose a written response, you can write a note to the student on a separate sheet of paper or on adhesive "post-it notes"; you can write comments on the page; you can use an analytical checklist, or guidelines. But students have to understand what you are doing and why, and what you are not doing and why- and also what you will do on a later draft.

Third, you have to select the type of response you prefer to give, with time and class size being important factor in the decision. Some teachers do the following:

- They evaluate by giving a grade.
- They locate, indicate the nature of, and/or correct the students' errors.

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- They make suggestions for changes: “I think you need to rewrite the sentence about your boss so that we understand his point of view more clearly.”
- They reflect-and subtly correct as they do so: “I’m not surprised that your grandmother felt upset.” (The student had actually written: “My grandmother feeling upset.”)
- They rewrite passages: “I am easy to change a fuse.”→ “Changing a fuse is easy.”
- They comment on strategies: “It might be useful to define the term success.”
- They ask questions: “Where was your grandmother born?”
- They emote: “What a terrible experience!” “I feel this way, too.”
- They criticize: “The conclusion is weak. It introduces new points”
- They describe: “You start out by mentioning four ways in which language learning is beneficial. Then you provide two specific examples.”
- (less frequently) They praise: “The paragraph about your aunt’s language learning experience makes its point very strongly through the story you tell.

  I used to type up student sentences with errors in them for the whole class to edit. Now, to emphasize the positive, I type up those that work well and we discuss these “winters.”

Fourth, you and your students need to agree on the purpose of the response. The key question here is: What are the students supposed to do next? Does the feedback help them do that? If we fail to make our expectations clear, we have only ourselves to blame if the students cast a mere cursory glance at all our hard work and file it in the circular file.

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Lesson 36

Planning a writing course II

Topic: 199: Evaluating the Course

Teachers use sentence tests and essay tests to evaluate student's progress. They use the results of these tests in addition to questionnaires and their own reflective logs to evaluate their own success as teachers. One form of evaluation that is becoming increasingly popular in writing course actually helps to combine student evaluation and course evaluation: the use of portfolios. All semester students work on multiple drafts of their writing, which are guided by their instructor but not graded. At the end, they select three or four specified types of writing to include in the portfolio, both in-class writing and revised work. They write a cover letter assessing their work and their progress and what they have learned in the course. The portfolio is then evaluated by another instructor in the program, who assigns a grade. So the original instructor in coach, not evaluator. These portfolios lead assigns a grade. So the original instructor is coach, not evaluator. These portfolio lead students to want to revise, to present their best work. They also provide a valuable ongoing teacher-training tool, since teachers continually discuss appropriate assignments and qualities of acceptable and student writing-a salutary lesson.

Probably, enough problematic considerations about planning a writing course been presented to give you food for thought for a while. But let's round off our steps one last, vital step.

Topic: 200: Reflecting the Teacher's Experience

Goals, theories, content, focus, syllabus, materials, activities, feedback, and course evaluation are substantive matters that we have to address whenever we design a writing course, but they pale into insignificance beside one thing: ourselves and our experience. In fact, we should begin-not end-with that. Teachers do not always consider themselves researchers. But any teacher who ponders why one class or activity works and another does not, any teacher who tests out a new approach and notes its effects, is a researcher, theorist, and practitioner-a busy person. We need to have confidence in what is called variously "the wisdom of practice" (Shulman, 1987, p.11) or "a teacher's sense of plausibility about teaching" (Prabhu, 1990, p.172). The best way for teacher to record this sense this sense of plausibility and analyze it is, of course, through writing. A key component of any teacher-training course should therefore be a massive amount of writing: reflective teaching logs, reports, essays, research papers, and responses to other teachers' and students' writing, with the hope that teacher in writing courses will then write along with their students and present their own writing for discussion. That way, we will along with their students and present their own writing for discussion. That way, we will keep in the forefront what we and our students learn and experience as we work together, and we will let that set the framework for the other nine steps in planning a writing course.

Topic: 201: Planning

Planning (Pre-writing):

Pre-writing is any activity in the classroom that encourages students to write. It stimulates thoughts for getting started. In fact, it moves students away from having to face a blank page toward

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generating tentative ideas and gathering information for writing. The following activities provide the learning experiences for students at this stage:

Group Brainstorming:

Group members spew out ideas about the topic. Spontaneity is important here. There is no right or wrong answers. Students may cover familiar ground first and then move off to more abstract or wild territories.

Clustering:

Students from words related to a stimulus supplied by the teacher. The words are circled and then linked by lines to show discernible cluster. Clustering is a simple yet powerful strategy: "Its visual character seems to stimulate the flow of association… and is particularly good for students who know what they want to say but just can't say it" (Proett & Gill, 1986, p.6)

Rapid Free Writing:

Within a limited time of 1 and 2 minutes, individual students freely and quickly write down single words and phrases about a topic. The time limit keeps the writer's minds ticking and thinking fast. Rapid free writing is done when group brainstorming is not possible or because the personal nature of a certain topic requires a different strategy.

WH-Question:

Students generate *who, why, what, where, when and how* question about a topic. More such questions can be asked of answers to the first string of *wh-questions*, and so on. This can go on indefinitely.

In addition, ideas for writing can be elicited from multimedia sources (e.g. printed material, videos, films), as well as from direct interviews, talks, surveys, and questionnaires.

Students will be more motivated to write when given a variety of means for gathering information during pre-writing.

Topic: 202: Drafting

One sufficient ideas are gathered at the planning stage, the first attempt at writing-that is, drafting-may proceed quickly. At the drafting stage, the writers are focused on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft. One dimension of good writing is the writer's ability to visualize an audience. Although writing in the classroom is almost always for the teacher, the students may also be encouraged to write for different audience, among who are peers, other classmates, pen-friends and family members. A conscious sense of audience can dictate a certain style to be used. Students should also have in mind a central idea that they want to communicate to the audience in order to give direction to their writing.

Depending on the genre of writing (narrative, expository or argumentative), an introduction to the subject of writing may be a startling statement to arrest the reader's attention, a short summary of the rest

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of the writing, an apt quotation, a provocative question, a general statement, an analogy, a statement of purpose, and so on. Such a strategy may provide the lead at the drafting stage. Once a start is made, the writing task is simplified 'as the writers let go and disappear into the act of writing' (D'Aoust 1986, p.7).

Topic: 203: Responding and Revising

Responding

Responding to student writing by the teacher (or by peers) has a central role to play in the successful implementation of process writing. Responding intervenes between drafting and revising. It is the teacher's quick initial reaction to student's drafts. Response can be oral or in writing, after the students have produced the first draft and just before they proceed to revise. The failure of many writing programs in schools today may be ascribed to the fact that responding is done in the final stage when the teacher simultaneously responds and evaluates, and even edits students' finished texts, thus giving students the impression that nothing more needs to be done.

Text-specific responses in the form of helpful suggestions and questions rather than 'rubber-stamped' comments (such as 'organization is OK', 'ideas are too vague' etc.) by the teacher will help students rediscover meanings and facilitate the revision of initial drafts. Such responses may be provided in the margin, between sentence lines or at the end of students' texts. Peer responding can be effectively carried out by having students respond to each other's texts in small groups or in pairs, with the aid of the checklist in Table 1 (adapted from Reinking & Hart, 1991).

Revising:

When students revise, they review their texts on the basis of the feedback given in the responding stage. They reexamine what was written to see how effectively they have communicated their meanings to the reader. Revising is not merely checking for language errors (i.e., editing). It is done to improve global content and the organization of ideas so that the writer's intent is made clearer to the reader.

Table 1. PEER RESPONDING CHECKLIST
When responding to your peer's draft, ask yourself these questions:
What is the greatest strength of this composition?
What is its greatest weakness?
What is the central idea of this composition?
Which are the ideas which need more elaboration?
Where more details or examples should be added? Why?
What are some of the questions that the writer has not answered?
At which point does this composition fail to hold the reader's interest? Why?
Where is the organization confusion?
Where is the writing unclear or vague?

To ensure that rewriting does not mean recopying, Beck (1986, p.149) suggests that the teacher collect and keep the students' drafts and ask them for rewrites. 'When the students are forced to act without their original drafts, they become more familiar with their purposes and their unique messages… The writers move more ably within their topics, and their writing develops tones of confidence and authority'.

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Another activity for revising may have the students working in pairs to read aloud each others' drafts before they revise. As students listen intently to their own writing, they are brought to a more conscious level of rethinking and reseeing what they have written. Meanings which are vague become more apparent when the writers actually hear their own texts read out to them. Revision often becomes more voluntary and motivating. An alternative to this would be to have individual students read their own texts into a tape recorder and take a dictation of their own writing later. Students can replay the tape as often as necessary and activate the pause button at points where they need to make productive revision of their texts.

Topic: 204: Editing II

At this stage, students are engaged in tidying up their texts as they prepare the final draft for evaluation by the teacher. They edit their own or their peer's work for grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure and accuracy of supportive textual material such as quotations, examples and the like. Formal editing is deferred till this phase in order that its application not disrupts the free flow of ideas during the drafting and revising stages.

A simple checklist might be issued to students to alert them to some of the common surface errors found in students' writing: for instance:

- Have you used your verbs in the correct tense?
- Are the verb forms correct?
- Have you checked for subject-verb agreement?
- Have you used the correct prepositions?
- Have you left out the articles where they are required?
- Have you used all your pronouns correctly?
- Is your choice of adjectives and adverbs appropriate?
- Have you written in complete sentences?

The students are, however, not always expected to know where and how to correct every error, but editing to the best of their ability should be done as a matter of course, every error, but editing to the best of their ability should be done as a matter of course, prior to submitting their work for evaluation each time. Editing within process writing is meaningful because students can see the connection between such an exercise and their own writing in that correction is not done for its own sake but as part of the process of making communication as clear and unambiguous as possible to an audience.

Topic: 205: Evaluating and Post Writing

Editing:

Very often, teachers pleading lack of time have compressed responding, editing and evaluating all into one. This would, in effect, deprive students of that vital link between drafting and revision-that is, responding-which often make a big difference to the kind of writing that will eventually be produced.

In evaluating student writing, the storing may be analytical (i.e., based on specific aspects of writing ability) or holistic (i.e., based on a global interpretation of the effectiveness of that piece of writing). In order to be effective, the criteria for evaluation should be made known to students in advance.

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They should include overall interpretation of the task, sense of audience, relevance, development and organization of ideas, format or layout, grammar and clarity of communication. Depending on the purpose of evaluation, a numerical score or grade may be assigned.

Students may be encouraged to evaluate their own and each other's texts once they have been properly taught how to do it. In this way, they are made to be more responsible for their own writing.

Post writing:

Post-writing constitutes any classroom activity that the teacher ad students can do with the completed pieces of writing. This includes publishing, sharing, reading aloud, transforming texts for stage performances, or merely displaying texts on notice-boards. The post-writing stage is a platform for recognizing students' work as important and worthwhile. It may be used as a motivation for writing as well as to hedge against students finding excuses for writing. Students must be made to feel that they are writing for a very real purpose.

Topic: 206: Implementing Process

Here are some pointers which teachers may like to take note of when implementing processes writing:

Teacher Modeling:

Teachers should model the writing process at every stage and teach specific writing strategies to students through meaningful classroom activities.

Relating Process to Product:

A first draft looks quite unlike another draft that has gone through several revisions. It is vital that as students go through the various stages of writing, they understand what kind of product is expected at each stage. Thus students need to be guided to set and achieve specific writing goals at every stage.

Working Within Institutional Constraints:

It is possible to teach some process skills appropriate to a writing stage, be it planning, drafting, responding, revising or editing within a regular two-period composition lesson. The teaching of the same process skill could be repeated in subsequent composition lessons. Process skills can be systematically taught each time until the entire series of such skills is developed over a period of time.

Catering To Diverse Student Needs:

The teacher should implement a flexible program to cater to different student needs. The teacher will need to know what the individual student knows and work from there. The teacher may also decide to have students enter into different writing groups as planners, drafters, responders, revisers, or editors during a writing session. A student may be with the planner for one task, but move to be with the editors later for the same or another task, according to his or her need or development stage in writing.

Exploiting the Use of Computers in Process Writing:

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Many word-processing programs are user-friendly enough for students to handle. Their direct application to process writing, especially for the purposes of drafting, revising and editing, is rewarding for both the teacher and the students. The teacher can teach responding or editing skills via the computers hooked on to an overhead projector. The students can freely make any number of changes to their texts by deleting words or moving them around without having to retype large chunks of text all over again. Any work done can be saved on the computer for revision later.

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Lesson 37

Teaching students to self-edit

Topic: 207: Introduction Teaching Students to Self-edit

Over the past couple of decades, the process approach to teaching writing has greatly improved both L1 and L2 composition pedagogy. However, though students may be much better at invention, organization, and revision than they were before, too many written products are still riddled with grammatical and lexical inaccuracies. No matter how interesting or original a student's overall writing abilities, ESL writing teachers, in addition to focusing on student's ideas, need to help students develop and improve their editing skills.

In the modern process approach composition classroom, editing refers to finding and correcting grammatical, lexical, and mechanical errors before submitting (or "publishing") a final written product. A number of studies claim that a lack of grammatical accuracy in ESL student writing may impede students' progress in the university at large (Janopolous, 1992; Santos, 1998; Vann, Lorenz & Meyer, 1991; Meyer, & Lorenz, 1984). As a university-level ESL writing teacher, I know the high standard of accuracy in student writing that the academic discourse community demands. My students will not succeed outside of that the academic discourse community demands. My students will not succeed outside of the sheltered world of the ESL class unless they can learn to reduce their errors. Because I will not always be there to help my students, it is important that they learn to edit their own work.

As shown by several ESL editing textbooks (Ascher, 1993; Fox, 1992; Lane and Lange, 1993; Raimes, 1992a) and a teacher's reference on responding to ESL writing (Bates, Lane & Lange, 1993), researchers and teachers of ESL writing have become more aware of the need to help students self-edit their writing (Lane & Lange, 1993, p.xix). In response to this need, I have developed and used a semester-long editing process approach to help advanced ESL writing students become more self-sufficient as editors. The particulars of this approach follow.

Philosophical assumption:

I based my editing process approach on the following principles:

- Students and teachers should focus on major patterns of error rather than attempt to correct every single error (Bates, Lane, & Lange, 1993).
- Because not all students will make the same errors, it is necessary and desirable to personalize editing instruction as much as possible.
- The errors to focus on should be those that are most frequent, global (interface with the comprehensibility of the text), and stigmatizing (would cause a negative evaluation from native speakers) (Bates, Lane, & Lange, 1993; Hendrickson, 1980).

The Editing Process:

Bates, lane, and Lange (1993) and Hendrickson (1980) advocate teaching students as discovery approach through which they will become independent self-editors. I teach my advanced ESL student through a three-stage discovery approach to become self-sufficient editors.

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Topic: 208: Focusing on Form

Although some teachers assume that all ESL students are obsessively concerned with grammar to the detriment of developing and presenting their ideas, I have found that many students have little interest in and pay limited attention to editing their work. They find editing tedious or unimportant or they have become overly dependent on teachers or tutors to correct their work for them. A crucial step in teaching students to become good editors is to convince them of the necessity of doing so.

To raise awareness of the importance of editing, I use in-class activities in which the students look at sentences or short student essays that contain a variety of editing problems. Rather than simply finding and correcting errors, they discuss how these errors impede their understanding of the texts, as in following three examples:

1. My parent always gave me a lot of love.
2. School is the place where I learn things such as reading and writing.
3. I like coffee; on the other hand, I also like.

The italicized portions of these three sentences contain common ESL writing errors: respectively, an omitted plural marker, a verb tense error, and a misused transitional phrase.

However, none of the sentences immediately appears ungrammatical-parent can be singular; the two verbs in example 2 are both in present tense and thus appear consistent; and on the other hand does signal a clause expressing a different viewpoint from the one preceding it. But once the students look closely, at the texts, they can see that the use of parent is confusing and no idiomatic (if you really had only one parent, you would identify him or her as your father or mother), that they learned to read and write a long time ago in school, and that liking coffee is not the opposite of liking tea, as implied by the use of on the other hand. Even fairly minor errors can lead to problems in text processing and comprehension.

Another strategy I use to convince the students of the necessity of developing editing skills is to give them a diagnostic essay assignment and then provide them with written feedback about their ideas, detailed information about their editing problems, and an indication of what grade they would receive if still writing at this level at the end of the semester. Giving students an immediate sense of what their final grade could be is motivating, but does not seems to be intimidating if it is made clear that these initial grades are for the students' information only and will not be counted in their final course evaluatation.

Topic: 209: Recognizing Major Error Types

Research indicates that focusing on patterns of error, rather than on individual errors, is most effective for both teachers and students, so at this stage I train students to recognize various types of errors. The categories may vary depending on the students' needs, but they should be selected from error types which are frequent, global, and stigmatizing. I sensitize students be selected from error patterns by going over the targeted categories, letting them practice identifying them in sample student essays, and then looking for these errors in peer-editing exercises (see Activities 1 & 2). It seems to be true that it is easier to find mistakes in others' work than in one's own. Exercises in recognizing error patterns of other

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writers' work help lead students away from the frustrating and even counterproductive notion that they can or should attempt to correct every single error in a given essay draft.

During this stage of the editing process, I may also give brief, focused instruction on major patterns of error if there are particular errors to which more students are prone. For instance, students may be confused about when to use the simple past tense and when to use the present perfect. In-class instruction should deal directly with this difficulty, rather than attempting to give students a complete overview of the English verb tense system or even of the various uses of the present perfect. (See activity 3, which provides an example of an overview of noun error problems: this activity takes 15-20 minutes)

Activity 1

Editing: Major Error Categories

Type 1: Nouns

- *Noun endings*
  I need to buy some *book.*
  I gained a lot of *knowledges* in high school.
- *Articles*
  I need to buy ∧ *book.*
  A good *jobs* is hard to find.

Type 2: Verbs

- *Subject-verb agreement*
  The boys *was* hungry.
  That TV show *come* on at 8:00.
  Many students in the class *is* failing.
- *Verb tense*
  Last year I *come* to Sac State.
  I've never been to Disney World, but I *had been* to Disneyland before.
- *Verb form*
  My car *was stole.*
  My mother *is miss* her children.

Type 3: Punctuation and Sentence Structure

- *Sentence fragments*
  Wrong: *After I got home.* I washed the dishes.
  Right: After I got home, I washed the dishes.

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- *Comma errors*
  When I got home ∧ I discovered my house was on fire.
  I studied hard for the test ∧ but I still got a bad grade.
  I studied hard for the test, I still got a bad grade.
- *Run-on sentences*
  I studied hard for the test I still got a bad grade.
- *Semicolon errors*
  Although I studied hard for the test; I still got a bad grade.
  I studied hard for the test ∧ I still got a bad grade.

Type 4: Word Form Errors
Examples:
My father is very *generosity.*
Intelligent is *importance* for academic success.

Type 5: Preposition Errors
Examples:
I do a lot of work *on* volunteer organizations.
For an American, I like baseball and hot dogs.

Editing Worksheet

Instructions: Read the sample essay. First, find all the nouns, and underline any noun errors. Then do the same with verbs, punctuation/sentence structure. word forms, and prepositions. Count the errors of each type and fill in the worksheet below. Turn in both your marked essay and this worksheet.

Type 1: Noun Errors
Total number of noun errors in essay: _____
Write one example from the essay. Underline the error.

Type 2: Verb Errors
Total number of verb errors in essay: _____
Write one example from the essay. Underline the error.

Type 3: Punctuation and Sentence Structure
Total number of punctuation errors in essay: _____
Write one example from the essay. Underline the error.

Type 4: Word Forms
Total number of word-form errors in essay: _____
Write one example from the essay. Underline the error.

Type 5: Prepositions
Total number of preposition errors in essay: _____
Write one example from the essay. Underline the error.

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Activity 2

Peer-/Self-Editing Workshop

Your Name: _____

Writer's Name: _____

Instructions: Read your partner's second essay, looking specifically for errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Mark the paper using the following symbols:

- If there is a spelling error, circle it.
- If there is a grammar error, underline the word or phrase that has the problem.
- If there is a missing word, put a ∧ to show that something is missing.

After you have read and marked the essay, complete the worksheet below.

Error Types

Type 1 (Noun Errors)
Total number found in essay: _____
Example (from essay): _____

Type 2 (Verb Errors)
Total number found in essay: _____
Example (from essay): _____

Type 3 (Punctuation and Sentence Structure Errors)
Total number found in essay: _____
Example (from essay): _____

Type 4 (Word Form Errors)
Total number found in essay: _____
Example (from essay): _____

Type 5 (Preposition errors)
Total number found in essay: _____
Example (from essay): _____

Topic: 210: Self-Editing Practice

In the final, I require students to find and correct errors in their own and other students' essay drafts (see Activity 2). Also, throughout the semester, students keep a log of their error frequencies in the different categories so they can observe their progress. As the semester progresses and the students get more and more editing practice, I gradually decrease the amount of editing feedback I provide and turn the editing task over first to peer editors and then to the writers themselves.

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Activity 3

Grammar Focus: Nouns

I. Definitions: A noun is a word that names a person, place, object, idea, emotion, or quantity.
Nouns may be concret: physical, can be touched, seen, felt, etc. (book, table, gas).
Nouns may be abstract: nonphysical (friendship, sadness, hope).
Both concrete and abstract nouns can be classified into two types:
- count nouns: may be counted (apples, students, chairs)
- noncount nouns: are not counted (money, coffee, happiness)

II. Noun trouble spots for ESL writers
A. Plural nouns must have plural markers:
1. English teachers are good spellers.
2. One of the ways to improve your spelling is to study hard.

B. Subject nouns must agree in number with their verbs.
1. *One* of the reasons I came here *is* to study English.
2. *People* who emigrate to the United States *are* usually very happy.
3. English *teachers are* good spellers.

C. *Singular count nouns must* be preceded by a determiner (*a/an*, *the*, *some*, *my*, *this*, *that*, *one*, etc.).
1. I have *a friend*.
2. My friend owns *a car*.
3. *The car* is old.
4. She bought *her car a long time ago*.
5. *Some people* think she should get *a new car*.
6. *These people* have more money than she does.

Exercises: Find and Correct the Noun Errors.

1. One of the way teacher helps her students is to talk to them outside of class.
2. Teacher in general are very hardworking.
3. This is the reason that many people don't want to become teacher.
4. Each of the students is important to a good teacher.
5. Student should come to class every day and always do homework.
6. Students should treat their teacher with respect at all time.
7. Student who come to United States have to learn English.
8. Students is very nervous.
9. A teacher who gives a lot of high grade is good teacher.
10. All of student should give presents to their teacher at the end of the semester.

Topic: 211: Does This Editing Approach Work?

I have adapted the various components of this approach over several years. In order to assess its effectiveness, I undertook two small research projects (Ferris, 1994). The first showed that nearly all students analyzed (twenty-eight to thirty) made significant progress in reducing their percentage of errors in five error categories over the course of a semester.

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However, their degree of improvement varied across error types, essay topics, and writing context (in or out of class). As a result, I modified my instructional approach to editing during the following semester to allow for a more individualization treatment of student editing problems. Specifically, I gave the students individual editing assignments from a text (Fox, 1992) when each essay draft was returned, rather than providing in-class grammar- focus presentations. Research on the effects of this change is ongoing, but preliminary results indicate that student improvement was even greater than with the prior approach.

Editing is an aspect of the writing process which has been somewhat neglected by ESL writing teachers and researchers. With the introduction of new techniques and tools (such as editing handbooks) to help students edit better (and research and teacher-training books to support these efforts), working on students' sentence-level needs is likely to become a more successful and satisfying enterprise than it has been. Although we should not return to the excesses of previous generations (attempting to mark and eradicate every single error student write make), our goal should be to have our students become skillful independent editors who can function beyond the ESL writing class.

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Lesson 38

Theoretical and practical issues in ESL writing

Topic: 212: The Value of Theoretical Knowledge

Teacher preparation manuals conventionally begin with a theoretical background that explains and justifies the premises of the instructional approaches to be presented. This practice sometimes frustrates pre- and in-service teachers who may wish to forgo a careful study of abstract theories in favor of acquiring practical strategies for effective classroom teaching. This book aims to provide its readers with a principled set of instructional tools for teaching writing to secondary and postsecondary learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).1 To achieve this goal, we first lay a foundation of theoretical principles and historical precedents so that readers can make informed decisions about the pedagogical processes and procedures presented throughout the chapters of this book. By acquainting themselves with the historical and philosophical origins of the discipline of second language (L2) writing, readers can approach current instructional paradigms from a well-grounded, critical standpoint (Matsuda, 2003b; Polio, 2003).

We believe that the development of effective instructional skills for the L2 composition classroom relies partly on an explicit awareness of the fundamental precepts that guide prevailing beliefs and practices in the field (Hedgcock, 2002; Kroll, 2003b). Our current understanding of composing processes and methods for teaching them is evolving and disparate. Consequently, teachers must "consider a variety of approaches, their underlying assumptions, and the practices that each philosophy generates" (Raimes, 1991, p. 412). A knowledge of formally articulated paradigms, theories, models, and precepts enables teachers to discover and build on their own theories (Grabe & Kaplan, 1997; Johnson, 1996; Tsui, 1996; Yates & Muchisky, 2003). This knowledge also enables teachers to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of their own teaching, a dimension of teacher education that encourages teachers "to become critical and reflective practitioners, researchers of their own professional life, and agents of change" (van Lier, 1994, p. 7).

Formal theories, in tandem with the insights of empirical research, can and should play a vital role in our thinking about instructional planning, practice, and assessment (Sasaki, 2000). In a persuasive argument for the utility of theory in composition teaching, Zebroski (1986) characterized the ways in which theory served his day-to-day teaching:

> Theory has helped me to excavate and to uncover my own assumptions about writing. It has aided me in crafting a more coherent and unified course structure. It has encouraged me to try out some new methods of teaching writing. It has helped me to relinquish control and to emphasize classroom community, (p. 58)

Instead of viewing theory as abstract and distant from the challenges we face as novice and expert teachers, we should recognize its enormous practical utility: Without the knowledge provided by theoretical principles, we lose sight of a crucial tool for responsible instructional planning and classroom decision making. As Lewin (1951), a pioneer in social psychology, wrote, "There is nothing so practical as good theory" (p. 7).

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Topic: 213: Theory and Research in ESL Composition

Despite its brief history as a discipline, L2 writing lacks a tidy corpus of conclusive theory and research on which to base a straightforward introduction to processes of learning and teaching. The field can boast an impressive body of research, yet a single, comprehensive theory of L2 writing is perhaps a long way off—if, in fact, a singular theory is even a suitable aim. Indeed, Cumming and Riazi (2000) cautiously observed that the field currently lacks a coherent understanding of "how people actually learn to write in a second language" and of how teaching contributes to this learning (p. 57). Nonetheless, L2 writing instruction as a discipline is far from atheoretical. Substantive L2 composition research did not appear until the 1980s, but its current theoretical frameworks can be traced to advances in first language (L1) rhetoric and composition research, applied linguistics, and TESOL (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996,1997; Hedgcock, in press; Leki, 2000; Matsuda, 1998,1999, 2003a, 2003b; Raimes, 1991,1998). The following sections examine major approaches to L1 rhetoric and composition, focusing on those paradigms and approaches that have played influential roles in shaping theory development and praxis in L2 writing. Throughout this survey, it should be remembered that no singular theory or paradigm is necessarily autonomous or selfcontained. In fact, we should expect to find a number of common features and overlapping points of view, even among so-called "competing theories" (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984).

Product-Oriented Instructional Traditions in LI Rhetoric and Composition

From the early 20th century into the 1960s, the principles governing composition instruction in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities were rooted largely in an educational philosophy that featured the reading and analysis of literature. In this tradition, native speakers (NSs) of English were required to read novels, short stories, plays, essays, and poetry. They then analyzed these works in written compositions or "themes." Pedagogical practice emphasized the understanding and interpretation of canonical literary texts. Consequently, little, if any, instructional time was devoted to planning, drafting, sharing, or revising written products (Babin & Harrison, 1999; Berlin, 1984,1987; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Graves, 1999; Kroll, 2001; Matsuda, 2003b). Paradoxically, however, students were expected to master a range of schoolbased written genres (e.g., narration, exposition, argumentation) that embedded functions such as description, illustration, process analysis, and comparison and contrast.

To enable students to achieve this mastery, many 20th century textbooks followed what was then a conventional model of instruction. Initially, the teacher introduced and defined a rhetorical form, pattern, or "mode" (e.g., comparison) in terms of rigidly established rules or formulas. Students then read a work of literature, which they discussed and analyzed in class. Next, the teacher assigned a composing task based on the literary text, referring back to the rhetorical description introduced earlier. This sequence often was accompanied by a linear outline or template for students to follow in constructing their essays or themes. In the final phase of the instructional sequence, the teacher evaluated the students' assignments before initiating a similar cycle based on a new literary text.

This model of composition instruction, known by some as the "traditional paradigm" in U.S. English language education (Berlin, 1987; Bloom, Daiker, & White, 1997; Clark, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d) and by others as the "product approach" (Kroll, 2001), was not grounded in a fully articulated theory of education or cognitive development. Indeed, the traditional paradigm reflected a perspective in which school-based essays and themes were viewed as static representations of students' learning and content knowledge. Therefore, in product-oriented writing classrooms, little if any effort was dedicated to the

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strategies and other cognitive operations involved in putting pen to paper (or fingers to the keyboard) and drafting a coherent, meaningful piece of connected discourse.

The Process Movement and Allied Pedagogies in L1 and L2 Composition

The 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s witnessed a highly influential trend in L1 composition pedagogy and research. "Process approaches," as they now are broadly labeled, emphasized the individual writer as a creator of original ideas. It was believed that written discourse encoded these ideas, serving as a vehicle for exploring oneself, conveying one's thoughts, and claiming one's individual voice, or authorial persona, as a writer. Process-oriented writing pedagogies focused particular attention on procedures for solving problems, discovering ideas, expressing them in writing, and revising emergent texts—typically, in isolation from any cultural, educational, or sociopolitical contexts in which writing might take place (Canagarajah, 2002; Casanave, 2003; Hyland, 2003).

Faigley (1986) divided process writing proponents into two distinct categories: expressivists and cognitivists. Expressivists (Elbow, 1973,1981a, 1981b; Macrorie, 1984; Murray, 1985; Zamel, 1982, 1983) viewed composing as "a creative act in which the process—the discovery of the true self—is as important as the product" (Berlin, 1988, p. 484). Based on the belief that writing instruction should be nondirective and personalized, expressionism writing instruction involved tasks designed to promote selfdiscovery, the emergence of personal voice, and empowerment of the individual's inner writer. Elbow (1981b), for example, enthusiastically advocated journal writing and personal essays as tasks in which students could "write freely and uncritically" to "get down as many words as possible" (p. 7). Expressivism therefore explicitly valued fluency and voice (Elbow, 1981b, 1999) as the chief tools for achieving writing proficiency (Hillocks, 1995; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanic, 1998; Sharpies, 1999; Soven, 1999; Zamel, 1976,1982,1983).

Cognitivism, sometimes described as a "writing as problem solving" approach, has affected theory construction in L2 writing pedagogy in even more marked ways. At the same time, some cognitivist approaches share with expressivism an explicit appreciation of novice writers' composing processes as recursive, personal, and "inner directed" (Bizzell, 1992). Cognitivists placed considerably greater value than did expressivists on high-order thinking and problem-solving operations. These operations included planning, defining rhetorical problems, positioning problems in a larger context, elaborating definitions, proposing solutions, and generating grounded conclusions (Emig, 1983; Flower, 1985,1989; Hayes & Flower, 1983).

Hallmarks of cognitivist approaches to teaching L1 and L2 writing as a process include invention and prewriting tasks, drafting of multiple versions of writing assignments, abundant textlevel revision, collaborative writing, feedback sessions, and the postponement of editing until the final stages of the composing cycle (Atkinson, 2003b; Clark, 2003b; Murray, 1992; see chapters 3, 4, and 5). Cognitivist rhetoricians and L2 writing practitioners thus focused principally on developing writers' intramental processes, particularly cognitive and metacognitive strategies for creating, revising, and correcting their texts independently (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Berlin, 1988; de Larios, Murphy, & Marín, 2002; Flower, 1989; Ransdell & Barbier, 2002a, 2002b). From a cognitivist, process-based perspective, writing is "essentially learnt, not taught, and the teacher's role is to be nondirective and facilitating, assisting writers to express their own meanings through an encouraging and cooperative environment with minimal interference" (Hyland, 2003, p. 18).

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Topic: 214: Issues and Methods in L2 Writing

Based on presumed and observed similarities between L1 and L2 composing processes, ESL writing instruction in the early 1980s largely replicated L1 classroom practice (Leki, 1992; Matsuda, 2003b). Not only did research in L1 composition and rhetoric provide sound theoretical underpinnings for L2 composing pedagogy, emergent L2 writing research also began to show that ESL writers already proficient in writing in their primary languages tended to display strategies and skills parallel to those displayed by native English-speaking writers. For instance, Cumming (1989) and Zamel (1976, 1982, 1983) demonstrated that ESL writers with well-developed L1 writing abilities tended to transfer L1 skills and strategies to their L2 composing processes. The ESL students in these investigations displayed skills that included planning, grappling successfully with specific writing tasks, organizing their ideas, and revising their texts to reflect their intentions as writers. Cumming (1989) also reported that the ability of his intermediate- and advanced-level writers to practice these strategies as they composed in English was an independent function of their measured ESL proficiency. This study and others like it led some L2 writing researchers and practitioners to conclude that ESL students' needs are essentially comparable with those of basic L1 writers in terms of composing processes and their instructional needs.

Nonnative linguistic proficiency does not seem to prevent ESL writers from becoming effective writers of English, yet many such learners require assistance in developing written fluency and practice with a range of composing strategies and written genres. Some experts (Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Zamel, 1983) have argued that the primary needs of ESL writers consist of extensive and directed practice with global writing functions, as opposed to more extensive language instruction. Research involving ESL writers who are inexperienced writers in their Lls tends to suggest that, like their NS peers, NNSs may lack a sense of direction as they undertake composing tasks, may experience difficulty categorizing and sequencing information according to reader expectations, and may often get stalled at intermediate steps in their composing and revision processes (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Bosher, 1998; Cumming, 1989; Raimes, 1985). Consequently, less experienced L1 and L2 writers may focus prematurely—and with less than satisfactory results—on microlevel features such as grammatical, lexical, and mechanical accuracy, as opposed to discourse-level concerns such as audience, purpose, rhetorical structure, coherence, cohesion, and clarity (Cumming, 1989; Jones, 1985; New, 1999). Given that novice L1 and L2 writers appear to share such characteristics, many models of L2 composing pedagogy, particularly, those that emphasize process writing and multidrafting, assume that L2 writers benefit from the same instructional techniques as those used in L1 composition settings (Krapels, 1990; Leki, 1991b, 1992). Several recent studies (Laity 2000a, 2000b; Ma & Wen, 1999; Olsen, 1999; Thorson, 2000) have nonetheless suggested that L2 writers may require targeted instruction aimed at the development of specific linguistic skills, rhetorical expertise, and composing strategies.

Topic: 215: Shifts in Pedagogical Focus

Approaches to L2 composition reflect parallel (although by no means simultaneous) developments in L1 composition and rhetoric. Historical accounts of ESL writing theory and practice (Cumming, 2001; Hedgcock, in press; Leki, 2000; Matsuda, 2003a, 2003b; Raimes, 1998) provide meaningful insights into how ESL writing theory and practice have evolved and how the field has achieved status as a discipline in its own right. For the sake of expediency, we summarize major trends in

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ESL writing according to the following foci, which we link to relevant approaches, schools of thought, and ideologies.

Focus on Discursive Form, Traditional Form, and "Current-Traditional Rhetoric," 1966- Raimes (1991) and Matsuda (2003b) traced formally oriented L2 writing approaches to the audiolingual tradition in second language teaching (Fries, 1945), in which writing served essentially to reinforce oral patterns of the language being learned and to test learners' accurate application of grammatical rules (Rivers, 1968).

Early L2 composition pedagogy emphasized the production of well-formed sentences. A writing task that typifies this paradigm is the controlled composition, a narrowly focused paragraph- or essay-length assignment designed principally to give students practice with specific syntactic patterns (e.g., the past simple and past progressive in narration) as well as lexical forms (Kroll, 2001; Matsuda, 1999; Silva, 1990).

In an extension of this model, known as "current-traditional rhetoric" (Berlin & Inkster, 1980; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Silva, 1990), students also were instructed to generate connected discourse by combining and arranging sentences into paragraphs based on prescribed formulas. Representative composing tasks involved the imitation of specific rhetorical patterns (e.g., exposition, exemplification, comparison, classification, argumentation, and so forth) based on authentic samples and sometimes studentgenerated models (Barnett, 2002).

Focus on the Writer: Expressionism and Cognitivism, 1976—. Congruent with process approaches to L1 composition (described earlier), a focus on the writer in L2 composition has drawn researchers' and teachers' attention to what writers "actually do as they write" (Raimes, 1991, p. 409). Researchers in this paradigm therefore attempted to characterize the heuristics, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive processes used by writers as they plan, draft, read, revise, and edit their texts (Cumming, 2001; Manchón, 2001; Ransdell & Barbier, 2002b). Classroom procedures associated with this writer-based orientation include practice with invention strategies (see chapter 4), creation and sharing of multiple drafts, peer collaboration, abundant revision, and implementation of editing strategies. Syllabi reflecting this approach may likewise allow writers to select their own topics and take more time to complete writing tasks than would be possible with a formally oriented approach.

Focus on Disciplinary Content and Discursive Practices, 1986-: Reservations concerning writer-centered instructional designs have been expressed by researchers and practitioners who argue that the "almost total obsession" (Horowitz, 1986c, p. 788) with how writers construct personal meaning overlooks the need of many NS and NNS writers to compose texts for academic or professional readers with particular expertise (Coe, 1987; Horowitz, 1986a; Hyland, 2000,2003; Johns, 1997,2003). In response to this perceived need, experts have proposed shifting the methodological emphasis in the direction of the knowledge and written genres characteristic of ESL students' specific areas of study and academic disciplines.

Instead of replacing writing processes with the pedagogical material characteristic of traditional English courses (i.e., language, literature, and culture), proponents of content- and genrebased instruction assert that ESL writing courses should feature the specific subject matter that ESL students must master in their major and required courses (Crandall & Kaufman, 2001; DudleyEvans & St. John, 1998;

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Flowerdew, 2002; Johns & Price-Machado, 2001; Jordan, 1997; Kasper, 2000; Pally, 2000; Paltridge, 2002; Reppen, 1994/1995; Snow, 2001; Snow & Brinton, 1988,1997). In this model, students in adjunct, multiskill, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses are given assistance with "the language of the thinking processes and the structure or shape of content" (Mohan, 1986, p. 18). This focus on content does not preclude the use of writer-driven, process-oriented principles and procedures such as prewriting, revision, collaboration, and peer review (Guleff, 2002; Horowitz, 1986b; Johns, 2003). The fundamental emphasis "is on the instructor's determination of what academic content is most appropriate to build whole courses or modules of reading and writing tasks around that content" (Raimes, 1991, p. 411).

Focus on Readers and Discursive Communities: Social Constructionism, 1986-. Overlapping considerably with content-based models, reader- and discourse-based frameworks for ESL writing instruction have emerged partly in opposition to the prescriptions of writer-centered approaches, described by Horowitz (1986a) as a form of "humanistic therapy" (p. 789). Reader- and discourse-oriented composition pedagogy is founded instead on the social constructionist premise that NS and NNS writers need to be apprenticed into one or more academic discourse communities, and that writing instruction consequently should prepare students to anticipate, satisfy, and even challenge the demands of academic readers (i.e., their instructors and other authorities) as they generate their written products (Flower, 1979; Flower, Long, & Higgins, 2000; Hinds, 1987; Hyland, 2002; Johns, 1990; Pennycook, 2001).

Clearly, socioliterate approaches (Johns, 1997) are highly compatible with content-based approaches, ideologically and methodologically. Interestingly, some have interpreted the implementation of socioliterate pedagogies as entailing a return to a directive, prescriptive stance with respect to materials selection and classroom pedagogy (Benesch, 2001; Freedman & Medway, 1994b). To operationalize a reader-centered pedagogy emphasizing discipline-specific rhetorical forms, teachers need to collect texts and assignments from the relevant disciplines, analyze their purposes, assess audience expectations, and acquaint learners with their findings. According to this view, writing instruction most appropriately centers on identifying, practicing, and reproducing the implicit and explicit features of written texts aimed at particular audiences.

Focus on Sociopolitical Issues and Critical Pedagogy, 1990-. With a number of scholars appealing to "Freirean notions of liberatory literacy practices" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 32), the educational, ethical, and political dimensions of L2 writing instruction, including genre-oriented and socioliterate models, have come under careful scrutiny in recent years (Freire, 1970, 1985, 1994; Freire & Macedo, 1987). Zamel (1993), for instance, argued that academic literacy instruction should enable writers to comprehend, analyze, and negotiate the demands of academic disciplines.

Belcher and Braine (1995) pointed out that the teaching of academic literacy should no longer be understood as "neutral, value-free, and nonexclusionary" (p. xiii). Consequently, ESL/EFL writing specialists have begun to address issues of critical pedagogy, including critical needs analysis (Benesch, 1996), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995), critical writing about academic genres (Benesch, 2001; Hyland, 2002), the complexity of text appropriation and plagiarism (Bloch, 2001; Hyland, 2000; Pecorari, 2001; Pennycook, 1996), race and class issues (Canagarajah, 2002; Vandrick, 1995), gender

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equality and inequality (Belcher, 1997; Kirsch & Ritchie, 1995; Vandrick, 1994), and identity (Ivanic, 1998; Norton, 1997).

A major thread in applications of critical pedagogy to literacy instruction stems from the charge that social constructionist approaches have tended to overlook "sociopolitical issues affecting life in and outside of academic settings" (Benesch, 2001, p. xv). Whereas EAP and socioliterate approaches embrace the precept that writing and the teaching of writing always have social purposes, critical pedagogy challenges assumptions that those purposes are necessarily value free or beneficial to novice writers.

These ideological, theoretical, and methodological orientations do not reflect discrete historical periods, epistemological models, or ideological orientations. In other words, whereas each focus represents a distinct instructional purpose and area of core interest, we can see considerable chronological, conceptual, and practical overlap among them. The conflicts and compatibilities that exist among these orientations can certainly cause confusion among ESL writing teachers in search of answers to pedagogical questions.

Nonetheless, with the maturation of L2 writing as a discipline and profession, progress has been made, and it is increasingly possible to navigate a sometimes bewildering landscape of theories and practices (Kroll, 2003b). To make sense of a challenging and perplexing situation, Silva (1990) first proposed that L2 writing be approached systematically as "purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction, which involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge" (p. 18). Working within this framework, we then can consider the following components of composing processes as we assess research and theory, and in doing so, make sound decisions about our own teaching practices:

- **The ESL writer**. The writer as a person (ie., his or her personal knowledge, attitudes, learning styles, cultural orientation, orientations, evolving identity, language proficiency, and motivational profile, in addition to his or her composing strategies) (see chapter 3).
- **The NS reader as the ESL writer's primary audience**. The L1reader's needs and expectations as a respondent and as a potential evahiator of the ESL student's written products (see chapters 5, 6, and 7X
- **The writer's texts**. The writer's products as represented, by their purposes, formal characteristics, and signifying constituent elements: genre, rhetorical form, discursive mode, coherence, cohesion, syntactic properties, lexical patterns, mechanical features, print-code properties, and so on (see chapters 2 through 7).
- **The contexts for writing**. Cultural, political, social, economic, situational, and physical dimensions of the writer's texts (see this chapter and chapter 6).
- The interaction of all these components in authentic educational and disciplinary settings. Sources; Polio, 2003; Raimes, 1991; Silva, 1990,

We can begin to formulate our own operational theories of how ESL writers learn to write, and how we can shape our instruction to meet their needs effectively, by adopting a critical view of L2 composing theory and research. In addition, it is important for us to appreciate how this work has been informed by developments in L1 composition, rhetoric, and their allied fields. An operational understanding of theoretical and pedagogical paradigms can sensitize us to our students' strengths and weaknesses. It also can equip us to implement a balanced, informed, and effective pedagogy that takes into account the multiple dimensions of L2 writers' developing skills in composing.

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Topic: 216: Prior Knowledge and Its Implications for the Teaching of L2 Writing

A primary feature distinguishing NNS from NS writers lies in the prior experience they bring to the composition classroom. Differences in background knowledge and strategic proficiency manifest themselves in a variety of ways: in NNS students' responses to texts and topics, in their reactions to the activities of ESL writing classrooms, and in their familiarity with the rhetorical patterns of academic and professional discourse communities (Fig. 1.1).

This prior knowledge about texts, their purposes, their genre categories, and their formal properties are part of a learner's schema. A schema refers to an "organized chunk of knowledge or experience, often accompanied by feelings" (Weaver, 1994, p. 18). In psycholinguistic and cognitive approaches to L1 and L2 reading, schema has been discussed in terms of both content and formal knowledge about texts (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Carrell, 1983a, 1983b; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Chen & Graves, 1995; Grabe & Stoller, 2002b), particularly the facilitative effects of adequate schemata—and, conversely, the debilitating impact of the absence of sufficient schematic knowledge—among L2 readers and writers.

Knowledge brought to the writing class

about reading and writing topics

about written texts

about rhetorical patterns of academic writing in English

about the expectations of English-speaking academic readers

Reactions to the writing class

about the role of personal expression in English writing

about writing from sources and using the work of others

about peer response and teacher-student conferences

about teachers' response techniques

about revision procedures

The notion of schema as it relates to formal instruction rests on several precepts: that literacy events involve an interaction between readers and texts (Rumelhart & McClelland, 1982), that readers' responses to and comprehension of a text vary according to individuals' schemata and other circumstances at the time of the interaction (Weaver, 1994), and that schemata include not only the content of a text, but also its organization (Carrell, 1987). For example, imagine that you are reading a recipe in a magazine, newspaper, or web page. What would you expect the content and the organization of that text to comprise? You probably would anticipate finding a list of necessary ingredients and then a sequential list of steps to follow in order to prepare the dish. A recipe that deviates from this expected structure might frustrate or confuse you. These expectations constitute your formal and content schemata. Of course, if

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you have never cooked a meal or baked a cake, your schemata related to recipes will be quite different from those of a skilled cook. Moreover, your experience with reading that text will vary depending on the circumstances: Are you merely glancing at the recipe to consider it for a future meal? Are you in the kitchen at this moment preparing dinner? The specific situation naturally will affect the level of concentration and attention to detail that you bring to the reading task.

The findings of L1 and L2 literacy research have generally demonstrated that "when content and form are familiar, reading and writing are relatively easy. But when one or the other (or both) are unfamiliar, efficiency, effectiveness, and success are problematic" (Reid, 1993a, p. 63). A major implication of schema theory is that teachers should take systematic steps to ensure that students find the texts and topics of a course accessible—cognitively, culturally, and educationally (Ediger, 2001; Moran, 2001). These goals can be achieved by selecting reading materials and writing tasks that allow learners to capitalize on their prior experience. Teachers can likewise devise in-class activities that develop and expand students' schemata. Specific suggestions for schema activation and development are presented in chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Topic: 217: Contrastive Rhetoric and Its Implications for Teaching ESL Writing

As we have suggested, an important way that the schemata of L2 students differ from those of L1 writers involves their expectations about the structural properties and rhetorical functions of texts. The study of contrastive rhetoric (CR) aims to characterize these divergent expectations and their effects on L2 literacy development, including L2 writing skills. Connor (1996) wrote that "contrastive rhetoric maintains that language and writing are cultural phenomena. As a result, each language has rhetorical conventions unique to it. Furthermore, the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of the first language interfere with writing in the second language" (p. 5).

The Genesis of Contrastive Rhetoric. Kaplan's (1966) pioneering article is frequently considered to be a landmark work in the study of CR. At the time that Kaplan's article appeared, contrastive analysis (CA) and its application to foreignand second-language instruction were very much in vogue. With the CA approach, linguists and materials developers compared the grammatical structures and phonological features of learners' Lls with those of the L2 they were trying to acquire. It was believed that CA could identify specific areas of difficulty (e.g., in syntax and speech production), and that direct instruction focusing on major contrastive features could facilitate and accelerate the language learning process (Gass & Selinker, 2001; Mitchell & Myles, 1998).

Against the backdrop of CA, Kaplan (1966) suggested that L2 students' Lls also exhibited contrasting rhetorical and logical patterns. His study featured a formal analysis of more than 600 texts written by NNS writers representing a range of primary languages. On the basis of his rhetorical analysis, Kaplan proposed the following generalizations: Arabic-speaking writers make extensive use of coordination (considered excessive by Englishspeaking readers), speakers of "Oriental" languages tend to circle around a topic instead of approaching it head-on, and speakers of French and Spanish tend to digress and introduce extraneous material more than NNS writers of English do.

The Impact of CR in ESL Writing Instruction. Kaplan's ground-breaking article ignited considerable interest in CR, which has since generated an impressive body of empirical research. In characterizing the impact of Kaplan's work, Hinkel (2002) noted that CR research

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> pursues the goal of descriptive accuracy that originates in pedagogical necessity. He specified that L2 students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities are expected to produce academic texts that are congruent with Anglo-American rhetorical paradigms. However, these students bring to the larger academic arena the fundamental discourse paradigms that reflect their LI conventions of writing, and need to be taught the textual constructs accepted in writing in English, (p. 6)

With its focus on the written products of expert and novice writers (as compared with the writers themselves), CR has led to spirited discussions concerning the possible influences of L2 writers' primary languages, their knowledge of L1-specific rhetorical patterns, and their educational experiences on the construction of their written products. Although hardly uncontroversial, CR has contributed much to our understanding of rhetorical patterns in written text across a range of genres by accounting for the frequency of selected rhetorical features in written discourse, the conventions associated with particular written genres, and the patterns of text construction across numerous languages (Brauer, 2000; Connor, 2003).

In the years after the publication of Kaplan's (1966) research, ESL and composition professionals interpreted his findings as suggesting a number of instructional implications. For instance, many teachers felt that the CR hypothesis pointed to the need among L2 writers for explicit instruction and modeling in the rhetorical patterns of English (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 1997). Not unexpectedly, this view dovetailed nicely with current-traditional approaches to writing instruction that prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s, and into the 1980s. Nonetheless, as the CR hypothesis underwent increasing scrutiny, a number of reservations surfaced concerning its validity and empirical premises (Panetta, 2001). Kaplan's (1966) early work was criticized for the alleged imprecision of his analytic categories (e.g., his classification of all Asian writers in his sample under the broad category, of "Oriental") (Zhang, 1997). Critics have likewise asserted that Kaplan's early framework was overly simple, given his attempt to reconstruct L1 rhetorical patterns from compositions written in students' L2s (Holyoak & Piper, 1997). In addition, detractors have argued that CR models were deterministic, leading to rigid, ethnocentric views of English rhetorical patterns and potentially damaging stereotypes of ESL writers (Kachru, 1995; Kubota, 1997,1999; Leki, 1997; Scollon, 1997; Wu & Rubin, 2000; Zamel, 1997).

Nevertheless, CR-based studies have produced useful evidence of differing rhetorical patterns across diverse languages, indicating measurable effects of L1-specific discursive and sentence-level patterns on the texts of ESL writers (Connor 1996, 2003; Connor & Kaplan, 1987; Kaplan, 1987, 1988; Leki, 1991b, 1992; Purves, 1988; Reid, 1993a). Hinds' (1983a, 1983b, 1987) investigations of Japanese and English argumentation styles provide a clear and persuasive example. In his studies, Hinds discovered that English-speaking readers expected writers to make clear, unambiguous statements of their points of view, usually near the beginning of a persuasive text. In contrast, he reported that Japanese-speaking writers elected to obscure their own opinions in their presentation of the various sides of an issue, taking a position only at the end of the text, if at all. Having probed his writers' and readers' perceptions of persuasive writing, he discovered that Japanese readers found the linear, deductive argumentation style associated with English-language texts to be dull, pointless, and self-involved. At the same time, Englishspeaking readers perceived Japanese argumentative patterns to be circuitous, abstract, and occasionally evasive.

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The strong predictive claims made by early CR researchers no longer characterize this important line of empirical study in L2 writing (Connor, 2003; Hinkel, 2002; Kaplan, 2001), yet even the most conservative scholars acknowledge the descriptive value of careful CR research. According to state-of-the-art CR research, we cannot assume that all writers from a given linguistic or cultural background will experience the same difficulties in a given L2.

However, the knowledge that logical patterns of organization in written language differ cross-culturally and cross-linguistically can help both teachers and students understand issues and challenges involved in composing in an L2 (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 1997). Leki (1991a) and Reid (1993a) suggested several ways in which an understanding of CR findings can inform L2 writing instruction. These suggestions are summarized in Fig. 1.2. We believe that L2 writing teachers must be aware of the rhetorical knowledge that their novice writers bring to the composition course. This rhetorical knowledge may include formal and content schemata as well as implicit and explicit knowledge about text structure, genres, and their purposes. It is essential to recognize, however, that L2 writers' Lls, cultures, and prior educational experience do not predetermine their difficulties or abilities in mastering the genres and text structures that typify English-language writing (Atkinson, 1999). The backgrounds and knowledge bases of L2 writers' differ not only from those of NS writers of English, but also from those of other L2 writers. In other words, each L2 writer should be viewed in individual terms, not as a prototype representing a set of collective norms or stereotypes (Scollon, 1997). Individual differences across novice

Implications

1. Familiarity with CR findings can assist teachers in understanding some of the culturally and educationally based influences on rhetorical patterns in L2 students' written production.
2. An understanding of CR research can help teachers avoid stereotypes, leading them to view L2 writers as individuals who may or may not incorporate L1-based rhetorical patterns into their L2 writing.
3. Insights from CR may help L2 writers appreciate and understand L1-based cultural and educational factors that underlie their L2 written production.
4. CR findings can show students that their L2 writing development may be affected by cultural patterns and rhetorical practices rather than individual inadequacies (adapted from Leki, 1991b).

Applications

1. Teachers can collect literacy assignments across the curriculum to "become more informed about appropriate . . . academic discourse patterns" in the L2.
2. Teachers can analyze diverse assignments "to inform their. . . writing students about discourse differences and audience expectations."
3. Teachers then can plan activities and lessons around this information "to provide practice with the imposition of appropriate patterns upon experience and to offer opportunities for practice and experience with the new schema" (adapted from Reid, 1993b, p. 63; cf. Kirkpatrick, 1997).

FIG. 1.2. Implications and applications of contrastive rhetoric

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L2 writers affect their abilities to comprehend, analyze, and respond to the texts they read, to function effectively in the L2 literacy classroom, and to construct original texts that fulfill the expectations of target language readers. Consequently, ESL writing teachers must consider the implications of schematic and rhetorical differences in the readings they select, the tasks they assign, the modes of instruction they deploy, the assessment instruments they use, and the feedback they offer their student writers.

Topic: 218: The Uniqueness Of ESL Writers: Classroom Implications

The preceding discussion addressed aspects of L2 composing theory, research, and pedagogy that drew on parallels with L1 composition and rhetoric. It also dealt with ideological assumptions, empirical discoveries, and instructional approaches that make implicit and explicit distinctions between L1 and L2 composing processes and strategies, particularly with respect to CR research. Silva (1993) observed that "L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in important ways from L1 writing" (p. 696). It is, therefore, crucial for L2 writing teachers—as well as L1 composition instructors whose mainstream classes include L2 writers—to understand fundamental characteristics that distinguish L2 writers, and to appreciate the diversity of learners whom they may encounter in their composition courses. This variety of backgrounds, goals, and expectations on the part of novice ESL writers accentuates the complexity of an already challenging educational endeavor.

We embrace the precept that "there is no such thing as a generalized ESL student" (Raimes, 1991, p. 420). If ESL writers (or any other type of writer, for that matter) constituted a homogeneous group, our task as composition professionals might simply entail making decisions about the optimal instructional approach or approaches to adopt, on the basis of current expert knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). In fact, however, ESL instructors in many educational settings are keenly aware of the challenges posed by student populations that are heterogeneous in terms of linguistic, ethnic, and cultural background, not to mention language proficiency, literacy, educational attainment, and cognitive development (Cumming, 2001; Leki, 2000; Raimes, 1998; Spack, 1997b). Also of concern to classroom teachers are learners' attitudes toward learning, formal instruction, and the target subject matter, as well as students' motivation to acquire linguistic, cognitive, and academic skills. Other factors known to influence learning include age, academic goals, aptitude, anxiety, cognitive strategy use, language awareness, and social distance. We mention these variables here to acknowledge the enormously complex challenges facing classroom teachers of ESL writers. At the same time, we suggest general directions for identifying, categorizing, and working with these multiple variables in planning and delivering instruction. The individual differences (ID) research in second language acquisition has shed considerable light on the multiple learner-specific, linguistic, and environmental factors bearing on L2 learners' success, or failure, in their efforts to acquire L2 knowledge and skills. In general, ID research has focused on how ID variables influence learner development, proficiency, and achievement, as measured in quantifiable performances (Ellis, 1994; Gass & Selinker, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Mitchell & Myles, 1998; Skehan, 1989,1991,1998; Williams & Burden, 1997).

Notwithstanding a few notable exceptions (Lally, 2000b; Reid, 1995b), the L2 composition literature seldom draws upon this research, yet it is worthy of our attention because it offers a systematic framework for identifying roughly hewn, but easily identifiable, ID factors known to influence language proficiency, academic performance, and student predispositions toward writing processes and tasks. Of particular relevance to ESL composition are dimensions of learners' knowledge and prior training that

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have shaped their current linguistic capabilities, L1 and L2 literacy skills, metacognitive strategy repertoires, and language awareness. Figure 1.3 summarizes a few of the major features that may set ESL writers apart from NS writers.

As the previous sections on schema theory and CR observed in some detail, a chief characteristic distinguishing ESL writers from their NS peers is that ESL students come to the classroom with the ability to speak, and often write, one or more languages other than English. This multilingual, multicultural, and, in many cases, multiliterate, knowledge gives ESL students a unique status as learners that entails a set of linguistic, metalinguistic, cognitive, and metacognitive skills. This skill set may be very different from the skill sets of monolingual, NSs of English (Brisk & Harrington, 2000; Carrell & Monroe, 1995; Harklau, Losey, & Siegel, 1999). Based on the findings of CR research and genre analysis, we have suggested that this rich knowledge can both facilitate and impede progress in the development of L2 writing proficiency.

	NS writers	**ESL Writers**
Knowledge of language and writing systems	• begin with "intact" knowledge of spoken and written English • are principally acquiring English composing skills • are familiar with the Roman alphabet and English orthographic conventions • produce sentence- level errors that are not influenced by knowledge of another language • are not influenced by rhetorical knowledge emanating from another language, writing system, or rhetorical tradition, although they may be unfamiliar with formal rhetorical conventions (i.e., organizational sequences, coherence and cohesion markers, and so forth).	• begin with an intact t1 and a developing knowledge of spoken and written English as a second language • are simultaneously acquiring language and composing skills • may or may not be familiar with the Roman alphabet and thus still may be acquiring English graphemic and orthographic conventions • may produce sentence- level errors influenced by their primary language(s) • may have L1-related rhetorical knowledge (I.e., organizational sequences, coherence and cohesion markers, and so forth) that could facilitate or possibly inhibit the learning of English rhetorical conventions.
Schematic and rhetorical knowledge	• have topical and schematic knowledge specific to Englishspeaking discourse communities, cultures, and educational systems • have access to (and perhaps some knowledge of| Englishspeaking readers' expectations • by virtue of educational experience in an English-speaking discourse community, have exposure to (and experience	• may not have the same topical or schematic knowledge as NS writers because of educational experience (e.g., in an L1 discourse community) • may be unfamiliar with the expectations of Englishspeaking readers • may have little or no experience with rhetorical conventions of writing in English -speaking discourse communities; may have been trained in rhetorical

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	with] rhetorical conventions of school-based writing in English.	conventions of a L1 educational tradition, which may contrast with those observed in English-speaking discourse communities.
Responses to composition instruction	• may have experience with personal writing and the development of individual voice * may have experience with peer response (and may expect it) • may have experience using published sources, paraphrasing, quoting, and so on • may have received instruction in how to avoid plagiarism • may have extensive experience with teachers' response and feedback styles (e.g., marginal notes, questioning, Indirectness, and so forth) • may expect to revise assignments significantly.	• may have some experience with personal writing and expressing voice, or none at all (especially in school contexts) • may have little or no experience with peer response * may have little or no experience using published sources, paraphrasing, or quoting • may have undergone little or no Instruction In how to avoid plagiarism • may have little or no experience with teachers' Interactive response and feedback styles (e.g., marginal notes, questioning, indirectness, and so forth); may expect little or no feedback for revision • may not expect to revise assignments significantly (if at all).

FIG. 1.3. Overview of differences between novice NS and ESL writers.

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Lesson 39

Responding to written work I

Topic: 219: Introduction Responding to Written Work

The assessment of learners' written work can have a range of goals. These goals can be classified under various headings. First, as we have seen in Chapter 8 on the writing process, assessment can focus on the product or the piece of writing itself, or on the process of writing. Second, assessment can differ in its purposes. It can aim at making a summative judgement on the learners' writing for the purpose of awarding a grade, or passing or failing. It can aim at a formative shaping of the learners' progress in writing by diagnosing problems, by providing encouragement to keep writing and to write more, and by providing constructive feedback on the content and form of the writing. Table 10.1 lists one range of options.

Topic: 220: Assessment and Motivation

Motivating

Positive feedback on the content of learners' writing can do a lot to increase the amount of writing that learners do and to improve their attitude to writing. This feedback includes comments like the following.

"The part about the fire was really interesting. Can you tell me more about that?"

"You wrote that the end of the movie surprised you. What were you expecting?"

Written feedback like this tells the writer that their work is being read, is understood, and interests the reader. Especially with younger learners, it is important not to discourage writing by always giving feedback that points out the errors in the writing. There should be a place in a writing course for feedback on errors but this kind of feedback needs to be very carefully balanced against the positive encouragement to write more, and these two kinds of feedback need to be separated.

Table 10.1 Goals, Purpose and Means of Writing Assessment

Goals	Purpose	Means
Motivating	Increase amount of writing Develop a love of writing	Positive feedback on the content Publication of the writing
Improving the quality of writing	Improve the written product Improve control of the writing process	Peer feedback Conferencing Marking of errors Analytic assessment Use of checklists Self-assessment
Diagnosing problems	Finding poorly controlled parts of the writing process	Analysis of the product Observation of the process
Measuring proficiency	Award a grade	Holistic assessment Analytic assessment Assessment of a portfolio

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Another form of positive feedback is publication. This can take many forms. Reading written work aloud to others is a form of publication. Having your work circulated or posted on the wall of the classroom is another, and having it appear in a printed collection is yet another.

Some learners are embarrassed by praise, especially in the presence of peers. One way of dealing with this is to praise the piece of work not the person. That is, rather than say "You did a good job with the introduction", some learners may find it more acceptable to hear "The introduction was very clear and well organised".

The motivation to write is most helped by learners doing a lot of successful writing. **Speed writing** involves the learners writing for a set time each day and keeping a graph of the number of words written within that fixed time. Special praise is given to those who increase the amount they write within that time.

Topic: 221: Improving the Quality Of Writing

In Chapter 8 we have looked at ways of providing feedback on the various parts of the writing process. The techniques used to provide feedback to learners on their writing can differ over a range of factors. Table 10.2 lists the possibilities.

Source of feedback	Teacher; Peers; Self
Mode of feedback	Spoken; Written; Both
Size of audience	Whole class; Small group; Individual
Focus of the feedback	Product—several aspects or narrow focus; Process—several aspects or narrow focus
Form of the feedback	Comments; Scale; Checklist
Amount of writing	Single piece of writing; A portfolio of writing

Table 10.2 Factors Involved in Giving Feedback

1. **Source of feedback**. The feedback can come from the teacher, from peers, and from the learners themselves in self-assessment. The use of peer feedback can reduce the teacher's load but is also very valuable in helping writers develop a sense of audience. The use of self-assessment encourages metacognitive awareness of the writing process and the qualities of good writing.
2. **Mode of feedback**. Feedback can be written or spoken or a combination of these. Spoken feedback allows a dialogue to exist between the writer and the source of feedback. It may also be more effective in getting the writer's attention than written feedback. Written feedback provides a lasting record which can be used to measure progress and to act as a reminder.
3. **Size of the audience**. A teacher can give feedback to the whole class, to small groups or to individuals. Where there are common problems in the class, feedback to the whole class can save

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a lot of time. Working at the individual level, as in conferencing, can provide an opportunity to explore issues as well as give feedback.

4. **Focus of the feedback**. Feedback can focus on aspects of the written product as, for example, when marking scales are used. It can also focus on the parts of the writing process. The focus can also cover a range of aspects or parts of the process, or it can be narrowed down to focus on only one or two. Having a narrow focus can make peer evaluation more effective.
5. **Form of the feedback**. Feedback can be guided by the use of checklists or scales. Feedback can be uncontrolled when spoken or written comments are given on the strengths and weaknesses of the piece of writing without the systematic coverage of a scale. Upshur and Turner (1995) describe a way of making scales which can be used for marking large quantities of tests with reasonable reliability and validity.
6. **Amount of the writing looked at.** Feedback can be given on parts of a piece of writing, for example, when someone sits next to the writer and reads what they have just written after every two or three sentences are written. Feedback can be given on the whole of a piece of writing, or on a portfolio of writing. The advantages of seeing a portfolio are that a range of genres can be looked at, the learner's progress over time can be seen and commented on, and the assessment is likely to be more reliable and valid because of the numerous points of assessment.

Let us now look at some techniques for providing feedback that draw on the factors we have just considered. The various combinations of these factors provide a very large number of feedback possibilities. We will look at a few that together cover most of the factors.

Topic: 222: Written and Oral Feedback to the Class

Written Feedback to the Class

Where learners in the class have common weaknesses and strengths in their writing, an efficient way of giving feedback is to prepare a written report that is handed out to the class. This report can detail what the best pieces of writing were like, what the common errors and weaknesses were, and what to do about them. The teacher may also make individual written comments on each piece of writing but these need not be so extensive if they are accompanied by a class handout.

This sheet also provides a useful record that can be looked at again by the teacher for later pieces of writing or for other years to see if the strengths and weaknesses are the same or have changed.

If a grade is given to the pieces of writing, the handout sheet can also explain the range of grades and the criteria for each step in the grading scale.

Oral Feedback to the Whole Class

A very effective way to give feedback on writing is to get the permission of two or three learners to put their pieces of writing on an overhead projector transparency and then go through them orally with the whole class. In effect, the learners are watching the teacher mark a piece of work and this can help the learners see what the teacher is looking for and what the teacher values in a piece of writing. The teacher can also ask the learners to comment and can interact with them on points in the piece of writing. This obviously has to be done tactfully and with praise for the writing playing a large part in the commentary.

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The name of the writer could be kept confidential, but this is unlikely to be successful in a small class where learners know each other reasonably well.

It is worth remembering that when the good points and bad points are mentioned, it is better to end with the good points so that the writer is left with a positive feeling about the piece of writing. If learners know that everyone has a chance of having their writing discussed in this way, they may be less likely to use it as a way of making fun of others.

Topic: 223: Individual Feedback

One way of speeding up marking and making sure a balanced range of aspects of writing are dealt with is to mark each learner's work using a scale. Each part of the scale can be accompanied by a brief comment explaining why that point on the scale was chosen. Here is an example of a scale.

Aspects of writing	Comments
Richness of vocabulary 1 -------- 2 ------- 3 ------- 4 ------- 5	
Mechanics (spelling, punctuation) 1 -------- 2 ------- 3 ------- 4 ------- 5	
Grammatical accuracy and complexity 1 -------- 2 ------- 3 ------- 4 ------- 5	
Organisation and coherence 1 -------- 2 ------- 3 ------- 4 ------- 5	
Content 1 -------- 2 ------- 3 ------- 4 ------- 5	

The use of a standard feedback tool like a scale gives learners feedback on each of the important aspects of their writing, allows them to see improvement or lack of it for each aspect, and makes them aware of the range of aspects that need to be considered while writing and when reflecting on it. It can be a useful preparation for self-assessment.

Topic: 224: Conferencing on a Portfolio

Conferencing involves a one-to-one meeting between the teacher and the learner to talk about the learner's writing. A portfolio is a collection of several pieces of the learner's writing, some of which may have already been marked and commented on. The major strength of conferencing is that the learner can provide an explanation of what was involved in the pieces of writing, and can seek clarification from the teacher about the teacher's evaluation of them.

Good conferencing is interactive. It should conclude with clear proposals for future improvement of the writing. Learners can prepare for conferencing either by preparing some questions to ask, or by having a sheet provided by the teacher that gives the learner some questions to consider. These questions can focus on what the teacher expects in the writing.

Conferencing on a portfolio allows the opportunity to look at weaknesses and strengths which appear in several pieces of writing and thus deserve comment. It also allows the opportunity to see improvement across several pieces of writing. This improvement can be in the quantity written, the quality of the writing, and quality and range of the content. Conferencing is also used at different stages of

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a piece of writing so that the learner is helped to improve a particular piece of writing. Conferencing takes a lot of time but its focused one-to-one interaction brings many benefits.

Topic: 225: Marking Grammatical Errors

Some pieces of writing can be marked for grammatical accuracy, appropriate use of vocabulary, and spelling. This feedback can have the goal of helping learners develop knowledge and strategies for self-correction. Learners at intermediate and advanced levels appreciate such feedback and ask for it, particularly when they have to write reports, memos, and assignments that others will read.

The most effective way of giving this kind of feedback is to have a set of signals that indicate where the error occurs and what kind of error it is. The learners then have to correct their own errors after they have been marked and show their corrections to the teacher. They do not rewrite the piece of writing but make the corrections on the marked piece of writing. This makes the teacher's checking much easier. See Chapter 8 for such a scheme.

If the number of errors per 100 words is calculated and put on a graph, learners can see their improvement on this aspect of writing. When the errors per 100 words is high, around ten or more errors per 100 words, it is easy to make very quick improvement in grammatical accuracy. This is because many of the errors will involve items like subject-verb agreement, article usage, and verb group construction, which are rule-based. Learning the rules and how to check their application brings quick improvement. When learners are making about three errors per 100 words, improvement is very slow because most of the errors are word-based, involving collocation, appropriacy, and grammatical patterns that apply to certain words.

Such feedback is a useful part of a well-balanced writing course, but it must not be the only kind of feedback. Too much of this detailed, negative feedback can discourage learners from writing and from taking risks when writing.

Topic: 226: Peer Evaluation

Peer evaluation involves learners receiving feedback on their writing from each other. It can be done in pairs or in a small group. Each learner brings the draft of a piece of writing, the others read it, and then give helpful comments. In order to make commenting easier, the learners can be told to focus on one or two aspects of the piece of writing, such as organisation, the quality of the argument, or formal aspects such as the use of headings or references. Usually the learners will make oral comments, but written feedback is also possible.

The main advantages of peer evaluation is that learners get feedback from others besides the teacher. It can help them develop a more balanced model of the reader, who they can then think of when they write. Peer feedback also allows those giving feedback to learn from seeing others' pieces of writing and hearing what others say about them. In the academic world, peer review is an important part of the publication process. It has the two goals of obtaining an adequate product as well as providing training for future writing.

A major problem with peer evaluation is that learners may not value the comments of their peers and see them as being far inferior to the teacher's comments (Zhang, 1995). There are several ways of

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dealing with this. First, peer evaluation can be a step before teacher evaluation. If learners see that peer evaluation can result in an eventual better evaluation by the teacher, peer evaluation will be valued. Second, the quality of peer evaluation can be raised by providing training in evaluation (Min, 2005 and 2006) and by providing written guidelines to use during the evaluation. These written guidelines can be questions to ask or a checklist. Min's (2006) study shows that training learners in doing peer review results in many more comments being incorporated into the revision, peer comments becoming by far the greatest source of revisions, and in better revisions. The training Min used lasted a total of five hours and involved in-class modelling and one-on-one conferencing outside class. It should be possible to develop a more efficient training system. The benefits make it clearly worth doing.

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Lesson 40

Responding to written work II

Topic: 227: Self-Evaluation with a Checklist and Reformulation

Part of the writing process is checking over what has been written to make improvements. In formal writing, such as the writing of assignments for academic study, this checking can be helped if there is a checklist of things to consider. Here is a possible checklist.

- Is your main argument clearly stated?
- Is it presented very early in the writing?
- Are the supports for this argument clearly signalled?
- Are there enough sub-headings?
- If you look only at the sub-headings, do they cover the main ideas in the assignment?
- Have you checked carefully for spelling and grammar errors?
- Are all the references in your text also in the list of references?
- Are your references complete and do they follow a consistent format?
- Have you kept within the word limits of the assignment?

A step towards self-assessment is pair checking, where learners work in pairs to check each other's assignment together. That is, both learners read the same assignment together.

Topic: 228: Electronic Feedback

If texts are submitted in electronic form, it is possible to provide feedback using the range of word-processing functions. Here we will look at some of those available in the word-processing program, Microsoft Word, but other programs have similar features.

- **Track changes**: by turning on the Track changes function in the Tools menu, any changes the teacher makes to the text are clearly indicated for the learner to see. Additions are highlighted, and deletions are indicated. The learner can decide to accept or reject these changes and continue to improve the text.
- **Comment:** by turning on the Comment function in the Insert menu, the teacher can add helpful suggestions for improving the text or can praise parts of the text.
- **Font colour**: by selecting part of the text, and changing the font colour (go to the Format menu, choose Font, and click the desired colour), the teacher can mark parts of the text that need careful checking or rewriting. Different colours can be used to mark different problems.
- **Hyperlink:** if the learner has a problem with using a particular word, the teacher can make a small concordance (a list of sentences all containing the problem word) using Tom Cobb's website (www.lextutor.ca) or using a downloadable concordancer and link this short concordance using the hyperlink function in the insert menu.

Here is an example of a concordance for explain.

1. . . . te smoke screen . . . I have nothing to [[explain]]."<quote/ ><p/> <p >As for debates, Clin . . .

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2. . . . .the famous and the powerful squirm and [[explain]], charge and countercharge.<p/> <p >L . . .
3. . . . . re he will call a Press conference to [[explain]] his sorry side of this financial mess.<...
4. . . . eting. Failure to attend the meeting or [[explain]] inability to attend, the letters said,...
5. . . . ited States, State Department officials [[explain]], now is mainly interested in setting u...
6. . . . inted with this sport I should perhaps [[explain]] that dividend stripping is essentially...
7. . . . resentative of Syria called upon her to [[explain]] that his brother would meet her at the...
8. . . . a garrulous American egghead tried to [[explain]] the difference between the Senate and t...
9. . . . Department officials were inclined to [[explain]] the April sales decline as a reaction f...
10. . . . recorder (the "black box"), which could [[explain]] why two engines fell from the plane a...
11. . . . . to give a performance himself. This may [[explain]] why sometimes his films let personalit...
12. . . . term 's law clerks in their search to [[explain]] why Justices Anthony Kennedy, David Sou...

By looking at several relevant examples, the learner can work out how to correct the error they made when using this word in their writing. All of these types of feedback require the learners to send their writing as a computer file to the teacher, and the teacher responding to it on the computer (see Gaskell and Cobb, 2004 for further description of these activities).

Topic: 229: Measuring Proficiency in Writing

A good writing test should satisfy the demands of reliability, validity and practicality. One requirement for reliability is that the test should contain a good number of points of assessment. For writing, this means that any assessment based on one piece of writing is not likely to be reliable. Where the assessment is very important, Elley suggests the 2 × 3 rule. That is, learners should be assessed on two pieces of writing which are independently graded by three markers, or on three pieces of writing assessed by two markers. If this is not practical, then there should be at least two pieces of writing, with a second marker where the main marker has doubts. Analytic marking has also been used as a way of increasing the points of assessment.

Analytic marking involves having a marking scheme that awards marks for things like richness and appropriateness of vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, organisation, and overall communicative effectiveness. For each of these categories, marks from 0 to 5 can be awarded. The marks for all the categories can be added up to get a final grade. This contrasts with holistic marking where the marker reads the piece of writing and awards an overall grade for it. In analytic marking each point on each of the categories is arguably a point of assessment. The debate regarding holistic and analytic marking continues. What is clear from the debate is that assessing learners' writing on just one piece of writing is likely to be neither reliable nor valid.

A valid assessment of writing skill needs to consider the range of purposes for which learners write and the degrees of preparation they bring to writing. Some researchers are not happy with seeing a learner's writing skill summed up in one grade. They argue that it is much more informative and helpful to provide a richer description which provides information about the various aspects of the writing process, indicating both strengths and weaknesses.

Practicality is a major issue with the assessment of writing and has encouraged interest in peer feedback and self-assessment. Certainly, for non-native teachers of English, assessing writing can be a

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major challenge, usually requiring very high levels of language proficiency on the part of the marker. Marking is also very time-consuming, particularly if feedback to the learner on the piece of writing is required. This has encouraged the use of feedback sheets which provide categories for comments.

Topic: 230: Effects of Teacher Commentary

Quantitative descriptions of teacher commentary are interesting and illustrative, yet perhaps the most pressing question for writing instructors is whether the feedback over which they labor so diligently actually helps their students' writing development. Studies that explicitly link teacher commentary to student revision have been scarce, indeed, and longitudinal research on student improvement as a result of teacher feedback has been virtually nonexistent. Part of the problem, perhaps, is that it can be difficult to trace the effects of specific teacher comments on revision, to measure "improvement," and to isolate the effects of teacher feedback from other aspects of the writing instruction, including composing practice, reading, and so on, that likely also affect literacy development.

That said, the few studies conducted along these lines have yielded results that are helpful in assessing the effectiveness of teacher commentary and certainly in identifying areas for future empirical investigations. One important and clear finding is that L2 student writers are very likely to incorporate teacher commentary into their subsequent revisions. For instance, Ferris (1997) found that 76% of a teacher's suggestions were observably incorporated into students' next-draft revisions. Such findings should be simultaneously heartening and sobering. On the one hand, it certainly is encouraging to find that the commentary on which we work so hard is taken seriously by our student writers. On the other, it is daunting to realize that, because our students likely will not ignore our comments, the burden is on us to make sure that our feedback is helpful, or at least does no harm!

Thus, assuming that students do indeed pay attention to teacher commentary and try to use it in revision, the next question is whether such teacher-influenced revisions actually are beneficial to the quality of student texts and to the students' development as writers over time. Again, evidence on this point is scarce, but in the few attempts to trace the influence of teacher commentary on student writing, it appears that whereas most changes made by students in response to teacher feedback have a positive impact on their revised texts, at least some teacher comments lead students to make changes that actually weaken their papers (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997,2001; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Hyland & Hyland, 2002; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997).

Topic: 231: Student Views on Teacher Feedback

Studies on the nature of teacher feedback and its effects on student writers have been rare. Nonetheless, a more substantial body of work in both L1 and L2 composition examines student reactions to teacher response (Arndt, 1993; Brice, 1995; Cohen, 1987; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995b; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994,1996; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Saito, 1994; Straub, 1997; see also Ferris, 2003b, chapter 5, for a review). Findings across these studies are surprisingly consistent and include the following insights:

1. l. Students greatly appreciate and value teacher feedback, considering teacher commentary extremely important and helpful to their writing development
2. Students see value in teacher feedback On a Variety of issues, not just language errors,

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3. Students are frustrated by teacher feedback when it" is illegible, cryptic (e.g., consisting of symbols, circles, single-word questions, comments), or confusing (e.g., consisting of questions that are unclear, suggestions that are difficult to incorporate into emergent drafts).
4. Students value a mix of encouragement and constructive criticism and are generally not offended or hurt by thoughtful suggestions for improvement.

Topic: 232: Principles for Providing Written Feedback (I)

Considering our own experiences with the feedback we have received on our own writing as well as feedback we have offered as teachers, together with what the literature suggests about teacher commentary in L2 writing, we present the following guiding principles (summarized in Fig. 5.1 and discussed briefly here) for approaching the delicate and arduous process of constructing written feedback for L2 student writers:

1. The teacher is not the only respondent. Depending on their ability and experience with writing, students also can benefit greatly from peer response and guided self-evaluation. Chapter 6 focuses extensively on peer response, touching briefly on self-evaluation. Many students will benefit further from working individually with private tutors in a campus writing center, or interacting with peers or experts in an online context (see chapter 9).
2. Written commentary is not the only option. For some writing issues and for some individual writers' temperaments and learning styles, in-person writing conferences may be a superior option to written commentary. We provide guidelines for effective teacher-student conferences later in this chapter. Some teachers also use alternative delivery modes such as audiotaped feedback and commentary sent to students electronically.
3. Teachers need not respond to every single problem on every single student draft. Many instructors prefer to focus primarily or even exclusively on the development of student ideas in early drafts, saving language or editing issues for the penultimate draft. In any case, experienced teachers prioritize issues on individual student papers and selectively respond to the most important issues. Attempting to address all student problems on every paper can exhaust teachers and overwhelm students with commentary that, in some cases, may exceed the amount of text they themselves produced!
4. Feedback should focus on the issues presented by an individual student and his or her paper, not on rigid prescriptions. Many instructors have been taught that they should never mark errors on early drafts or address content issues on final drafts. However, if a student's initial version is solid in terms of idea development and organization yet replete with frequent and serious grammatical errors, it could be counterproductive to ignore these problems and struggle to find something "content-related" to say. Conversely, if a penultimate or final draft shows inadequate development or ineffective organization, it would not serve the student's needs simply to mark grammatical errors and ignore the major rhetorical issues.

Topic: 233: Principles For Providing Written Feedback (II)

5. Teachers should take care to avoid "appropriating, "or taking over, a student's text. Final decisions about content or revisions should be left in the control of the writer. A great deal has been written about teacher "appropriation" of student writing, a serious concern. As Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) argued, if a student feels that his or her text belongs to the teacher rather than

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to him or herself, the student may lose the motivation to write and revise. Students may resent overly controlling teacher responses. With L2 writers, however, the more serious risk is that they will make every attempt to please the teacher. However, if the teacher has misunderstood the student's purposes, or if the student has misunderstood the teacher's chief message, the writer's rigor in trying to give the teacher exactly what he or she asked for may well lead to an inferior revised product. All that said, in efforts to avoid such appropriative behavior (e.g., through questioning, indirectness, hedging) teachers also may fail to communicate suggestions and advice that student writers truly need.

6. Teachers should provide both encouragement and constructive criticism through their feedback. Most students recognize that teacher feedback is intended to help them and will not feel offended if we provide suggestions for improvement. However, it is human nature to desire and appreciate positive responses as well to the work we have done. Some teachers, reticent to discourage or offend students, may lavish praise through their written commentary while making few revision suggestions. Other teachers may be so dismayed at the problems they see that they jump right into extensive critiques without ever stopping to consider what the student writer might have done well. An important part of our job as L2 writing instructors is to build students' motivation, especially their confidence in expressing their ideas in English. Although it is not strictly necessary to strive for a 50 /50 distribution of praise and criticism, teachers should recognize that both types of feedback are needed for the overall development of the writer and discipline themselves to provide written feedback at both ends of the spectrum on a regular basis.
7. Teachers should treat their students as individuals, considering their written feedback as part of an ongoing conversation between themselves and each student writer. Some authors urge teachers to provide "personalized" feedback, by writing summary end notes like a letter, addressing the student by name and signing their own. Whereas providing personalized feedback is a good goal—and one that we strive toward— treating students as individuals additionally means following their development from draft to draft and assignment to assignment, pointing out persistent areas of weakness and encouraging them for the progress we observe. To accomplish all this, we will need to become acquainted with our students in class, during conferences, and through their writing (whether graded or not). We also must collect and read ongoing writing assignments (not just individual drafts) to trace and comment on student progress (or lack thereof, in some cases!).

Guiding principles of written teacher commentary

1. The teacher is not only respondent.
2. Written commentary is not the only option.
3. Teachers do not need to respond to every single problem on every single student draft.
4. Feedback should focus on the issues presented by an individual student and his or her paper, not on rigid prescriptions.
5. Teachers should take care to avoid “approaching”, or taking over, a student’s text. Final decisions about content or revisions should be left in the control of the writer.
6. Teachers should provide both encouragement and constructive criticism through their feedback.
7. Teachers should treat their students as individuals and consider their written feedback as part of an ongoing conversation between themselves and each student.

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FIG. 5.1. Guiding principles.

Topic: 234: Guidelines for Written Teacher Feedback

With some guiding principles in mind, we can turn to practical suggestions for constructing responses that are helpful, clear, personalized, and appropriately encouraging. This discussion is divided into three general "stages": approach (knowing what to look for and prioritization), response (providing the commentary itself), and follow-up (helping students maximize feedback and holding them accountable for considering it) (Fig. 5.2).

Approach

Preservice and novice teachers in our courses often articulate their greatest fear and struggle in responding to student papers as "Knowing where to start." Teachers may find themselves at one of two extremes: not knowing what to look for or how to analyze student work critically on the one hand, or being so overwhelmed with the amount and severity of students' writing problems that they are paralyzed with indecision about where to begin.

Suggestions for Teacher Commentary

1. Clarify your own principles and strategies for responding and share them with students.
2. Read through the entire paper before making any comments.
3. Use a scoring rubric, checklist, specific writing assignments, and prior in-class instruction to identify possible feedback points.
4. Select two to four high-priority feedback points for that particular student and writing task
5. Compose a summary endnote that highlights both strengths and weaknesses of the paper.
6. Add marginal commentary that further illustrates the specific points raised in the endnote.
7. Check your comments to make certain that they are clear and effective; avoid jargon and questions.
8. Give students opportunities in class to pose questions about your feedback
9. Ask students to write a cover memo that they submit with revisions, explaining how they have considered and addressed comments they received, or why they chose not to address them.

Instructors who are not sure what to look for can use institutional grading criteria to identify possible areas of weakness or student need (see chapter 8). A rubric or checklist that outlines the qualities of passing or excellent papers for that specific context can help us to articulate questions that we might ask ourselves as we read student papers. For example, **one checklist includes** the following point: "Opposing viewpoints have been considered and responded to clearly and effectively" (Ferris, 2003b, p. 135). Thus, a question that the teacher might consider while reading could be "Is this a one-sided argument, or have possible counterarguments been anticipated and addressed in the paper?"

A second lens through which teachers can look at student writing is the assignment or task type as well as the task's genre category (see chapters 4 and 8). For example, a prototypical freshman composition assignment requires writers to describe a personal experience and analyze its significance in their lives (Spack, 1990/1996). This assignment raises two possible heuristic questions that teachers could ask as they review student papers: (a) Has the experience or event been described clearly and effectively

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with adequate but not extraneous detail? and (b) Has the writer analyzed the importance of the experience and how it has shaped his or her life?

A third way in which teachers can approach written commentary is to consider specific issues that have been covered in the syllabus and to look carefully at student papers to see the extent to which they have grasped and applied those concepts to their writing. Class time may have been spent on writing effective introductory sections and using systematic connectors (transitional expressions, repetition, synonyms, pronouns, and so on) to achieve better textual cohesion and coherence. Instruction may have focused on using summary, paraphrase, and quotation to incorporate ideas from another author into one's text, shifting verb tense and aspect accurately in telling personal narratives, and so forth. Under such conditions, the teacher may wish to comment on those specific issues to remind the students of what they have studied and practiced in class.

Once an instructor has examined a writing sample and identified strengths, weaknesses, and "feedback points," he or she then needs to consider how to prioritize these features and select which ones to address in written commentary. As suggested by principle 3 earlier, it can be counterproductive for the teacher to comment on every possible problem that he or she sees. Although prioritization decisions are highly variable and by definition subjective, in selecting feedback points to address, teachers should take into consideration: the point in the term and what has been covered in class; where students are in the drafting and composing cycle (first draft, penultimate draft); the needs of individual student writers including issues that have been covered in prior feedback cycles, persistent problems, and encouraging signs of progress; and the teacher's own judgments concerning the relative urgency of the possible feedback points in a particular paper, which again can and should vary from student to student. Considering all of these concerns, we have found that two to four major feedback points usually is about optimal.

The final point about an instructor's "approach" to writing comments on student papers is that he or she should have a philosophy or theory of commentary, such as the "guiding principles" discussed in chapter 1, and a strategy for commentary, whether it be using a checklist, writing a letter, highlighting language errors, or a combination of these options. The teacher should strive to be consistent in adhering to his or her own philosophy and strategy. We also would recommend explaining our own approach to students: Doing so forces teachers to articulate their approaches and attempts to follow them!

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Lesson 41

Responding to written work III

Topic: 235: Feedback on Preliminary Drafts and Final Drafts

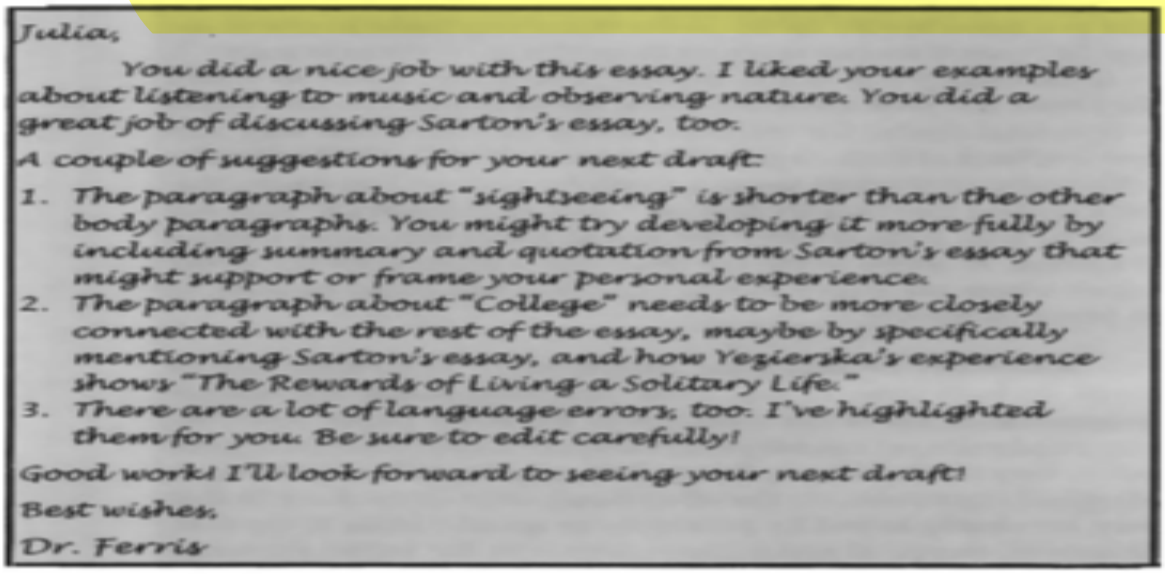
Most scholars agree that teacher feedback is most effective and most likely to be used when it is provided on preliminary drafts that will be revised subsequently (Ferris, 1995b; Krashen, 1984; Zamel, 1985). However, does this precept mean that feedback on a final draft is wasted energy? Perhaps not, but the process probably could be handled differently. Whereas feedback on earlier drafts is formative, helping students to see where their developing text can be improved, final-draft feedback tends to be evaluative and summative, informing students about what they did well, explaining the basis for a grade or a score (if one is given), and perhaps offering general suggestions for consideration in subsequent assignments (e.g., "Great job adding more support for your arguments in your body paragraphs! The conclusion is still underdeveloped, and you need to stay aware of the errors you make in article usage. Let's see if we can work on those things on the next paper").

In one study that asked students about the degree to which they read and paid attention to teacher comments on first drafts versus final drafts, the students clearly indicated that they valued feedback at both stages of the process (Ferris, 1995b). Finally, with many instructors using a portfolio approach to assess student writing (see chapter 8), even "final draft feedback" may not truly be final if the student chooses to revise that paper further. Therefore, it can be worth the instructor's effort to let the writer know where the paper stands and what still could be done to improve its quality.

Topic: 236: Praise and Criticism

As noted previously, solid arguments can be posited for incorporating both comments of encouragement and suggestions or constructive criticism into our written commentary. Many teachers like to use the "sandwich" approach to writing end notes: beginning and ending the note with encouraging remarks (the "bread") and making the two to four feedback points or suggestions in the middle (the "filling"). Figure. 5.3 illustrates this style of commentary. Most instructors also like to write positive comments in the margins of student texts to communicate that they are interested, engaged readers.

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Julia,

You did a nice job with this essay. I liked your examples about listening to music and observing nature. You did a great job of discussing Sarton's essay, too.

A couple of suggestions for your next draft:

1. The paragraph about "sightseeing" is shorter than the other body paragraphs. You might try developing it more fully by including summary and quotation from Sarton's essay that might support or frame your personal experience.
2. The paragraph about "College" needs to be more closely connected with the rest of the essay, maybe by specifically mentioning Sarton's essay, and how Yezierska's experience shows "The Rewards of Living a Solitary Life."
3. There are a lot of language errors, too. I've highlighted them for you. Be sure to edit carefully!

Good work! I'll look forward to seeing your next draft!

Best wishes,

Dr. Ferris

FIG. 5.3. Sample summary endnote (letter) to student.

Topic: 237: Feedback on Content or Form

Another area of disagreement in the literature concerns whether L2 writing teachers should avoid mixing commentary on students' ideas and content with feedback on their errors or the linguistic form of their texts. As we have already discussed, it is neither necessary nor desirable for a teacher to respond to every problem on every draft of a student essay. Chapter 7 discusses in detail how teachers might approach the challenging task of error correction and how they might effectively combine feedback on form with explicit grammar instruction and strategy training to build independent self-editing skills.

Although the chapter division in this volume explicitly separates the issues of responding to student content and responding to lexical and syntactic problems (as does most research), it is important to note that the oft-cited dichotomy between content and form is largely artificial. For instance, consistent errors in verb tense and aspect inflection (form) can cause confusion for the reader about the time frame or immediacy of the action (content). Inaccurate lexical choices (form) can cause major problems in the overall comprehensibility of a text, causing the reader to be unsure of what the writer intended to express (content). Nonetheless, because teachers' strategies for detecting and marking lexical and syntactic errors tend to be different from their strategies for responding to content issues, the techniques that can be used warrant a separate discussion.

It is also important to acknowledge that in the available L2 research to date, no empirical evidence suggests that L2 writers will ignore teacher feedback on content if errors are also addressed in the same draft of an assignment, or that they cannot simultaneously make successful revisions in both content and formal accuracy. On the contrary, we can cite evidence that student writers who received feedback on both content and form improved in both areas during revision (Ashwell, 2000; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1997). In any case, the principle of personalized or individualized feedback (Fig. 5.1, principle 7) should guide teachers here: Teachers should give each student what he or she most needs

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on a particular assignment at a specific point in time, rather than follow prescriptions such as "Never mix feedback on content with feedback on form."

Topic: 238: Follow up

An aspect of the response cycle that teachers may neglect to incorporate is follow-up. That is, we should ensure that students understand the feedback we have given them, helping students with revision strategies after receiving feedback and holding students accountable through the writing process and marking scheme. These strategies and tools should explicitly guide students in reading and understanding the feedback they have been given (see chapter 6 for further discussion of techniques for holding students accountable for peer response). Regrettably, teachers often simply return marked papers to students at the end of class or via e-mail, saying "The next draft is due 1 week from today." This lack of attention to follow-up is unfortunate because it fails to recognize that students may not understand the comments we have made despite our best attempts to be clear, that students may not know how to revise skillfully even if they understand our feedback, and that students may not be highly motivated to exert themselves during revision, preferring instead to make minor microlevel changes that can be done at the computer in a matter of minutes.

The first step in ensuring that students understand our written feedback is, of course, to do a careful job of constructing it. If we are so hasty, careless, or exhausted that students cannot understand what we are trying to tell them, we might as well not bother responding at all. It should be obvious that feedback that is incomprehensible to students cannot help them. Nonetheless, even when we are careful and systematic, all human communication can and does misfire at times, particularly when participants in the exchange include novice writers composing in their second language. We should also make the humbling observation that writing teachers, no matter how experienced, can misunderstand their students' intentions and purposes. Consequently, they may write comments that are off the point, inaccurate, or unhelpful. With these inevitable communication pitfalls in mind, we should allow students time in class to read over our feedback and to ask questions about it immediately, or we should ask them to write a one- to two-paragraph response to our feedback articulating what they think the main points of our feedback might be.

Students should also receive explicit classroom instruction on revision strategies, both in general and specifically on how to take suggestions from an expert or peer reader and to use them to make effective changes in their evolving texts. At the same time, writers should be assured that they are the authors of their work, and that the final decisions about revisions should remain in their hands. In other words, they should be given explicit permission to disregard suggestions that they find unhelpful or with which they disagree.

We recommend several ways to hold students accountable for taking feedback seriously. One method requires that students include with revisions a cover memo explaining how they have or have not incorporated their teacher's suggestions and why. Another requires students to turn in folders or miniportfolios of ongoing writing projects so that teachers can compare earlier drafts with later drafts (and be reminded of their own previous suggestions). Teachers can choose to make comments about the quality and effort demonstrated in student revisions or actually make such good-faith effort part of the course grading scheme.

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Topic: 239: Teacher-Student Writing Conferences

Another important means of giving feedback and instruction to writing students is through one-to-one writing conferences. Over the past several decades, the writing conference has achieved widespread popularity as a teaching tool for several reasons. One concerns the perception that writing conferences save teachers time and energy that would otherwise be spent marking student papers. Another is the immediacy and potential for interaction and negotiation that the conferencing event offers, allowing for on-the-spot clarification of difficult issues (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999) and helping teachers to avoid appropriating student texts (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985). Finally, with the consideration given in recent years to students' learning styles (Reid, 1995b; see chapter 1), it is argued that writing conferences offer a more effective means for communicating with students who are auditory rather than visual learners. Some writing instructors feel so strongly about the value of writing conferences that they have suggested doing away with all other forms of in-class instruction to make time for them (Carnicelli, 1980; Garrison, 1974).

Research on Teacher-Student Writing

Conferences: Empirical Trends

A number of researchers have described various aspects of conferencing, including attitudes toward and advantages of teacherstudent writing conferences, the discourse of writing conferences, the outcomes and effects of the conferences, and the differing roles and behaviors of teachers and students during conferences. Early researchers (Arndt, 1993; Carnicelli, 1980; Sokmen, 1988; Zamel, 1985) examined students' or teachers' attitudes toward conferencing, concluding with strong endorsements of writing conferences as pedagogical tools because students can ask for on-the-spot clarification, and because "dynamic interchange and negotiation" can take place (Zamel, 1985, p. 97). Arndt (1993) also found that students wanted both written comments and conferences, whereas their teachers preferred conferences.

Conferencing Techniques:

Suggestions and Criticisms

Early process-oriented concerns, particularly the desire to avoid appropriating students' texts or dictating the terms of the revisions, led to specific suggestions and guidelines for conducting teacher-student writing conferences. For instance, Murray (1985) encouraged teachers to allow students to take the lead in conferences by eliciting student writers' responses to their own writing before offering any feedback or evaluation, a procedure characterized by Newkirk (1995) as indirect. Similarly, Harris (1986) presented a list of nondirective strategies to guide teachers in their one-to-one interactions with students.

However, some composition theorists have expressed concern that in empowering students to retain ownership of their writing, we force them into roles for which they are not prepared and with which they are not comfortable (Arndt, 1993; Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986; Delpit, 1988; Newkirk, 1995; Silva, 1997). In ESL writing research, scholars have argued that nondirective approaches to teaching and responding to student writing leave L2 writers ill-prepared to deal with the demands for either linguistic accuracy or the literate and critical skills expected by subject matter faculty in the disciplines (Eskey, 1983; Ferris, 1995b, 1997; Horowitz, 1986c; Johns, 1995a).

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Most previous research on response to ESL student writing has examined teachers' written feedback, but it is safe to assume that some students may have problems adequately comprehending oral feedback, even though the conference format allows them increased opportunities to request clarification. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) pointed out that "ESL students bring with them diverse cultures and languages that potentially affect how students conference [and] how their teachers respond to them" (p. 459). For instance, some students may have strong inhibitions against questioning or challenging a teacher in any situation, especially a one-to-one conference. Meanwhile, others may feel that teachers' comments or corrections are to be incorporated verbatim into their texts because of instructors' presumed superior knowledge and authority. Arndt (1993), who compared teachers' and English as a foreign language (EFL) students' reactions to written commentary and conferences, noted that the potential for miscommunication existed in both modes, and that not all students were naturals at "the art of conferencing" (p. 100).

Topic: 240: Implementing Writing Conferences: Issues and Options

If a teacher wishes to incorporate writing conferences into a composition or literacy course, several practical issues are worth considering. The first is whether to provide feedback to all students in this manner. Some students would no doubt enjoy the opportunity to discuss their writing in person with their teacher, both to get individual attention and to clear up any problems. Meanwhile, others might prefer written feedback because they find one-to-one discussions with their instructor intimidating, because they prefer seeing feedback in writing, or because they might forget what they have discussed with the teacher during the conference.

Several options are available for addressing these challenges. A teacher can ask students at the beginning of the term whether they prefer written or oral feedback or some combination of both (e.g., in a needs assessment; see chapter 3). For students who are unsure, the teacher can provide written feedback on one assignment and oral feedback on the next. For students who feel nervous about conference dynamics, ideas to relieve their anxieties include conferencing with pairs of students (also adding a peer feedback dynamic to the mix) and allowing students to audiotape or take notes during the conference.

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Lesson 42

Teaching Academic L2 writing I

Topic: 241: Academic L2 writing Overview

Although ESL instruction to non-native speakers (NNSs) takes place in various domains of language skills, such as reading, speaking, listening, and pronunciation, L2 learners who undertake to become proficient L2 writers are usually academically bound. In light of the fact that most students who prepare to enter degree programs dedicate vast amounts of time and resources to learn to produce written academic discourse and text, the teaching of English to academically bound NNS students must include an academic writing component. Although it is a verifiable and established fact that NNS students need to develop academic writing skills, ESL teachers in EAP, intensive, and college-level writing programs do not always have a clear picture of the types of writing and written discourse expected of students once they achieve their short-term goals of entering degree programs. In particular, students rarely need to be proficient narrators of personal experiences and good writers of personal stories. In fact what they need is to become relatively good at displaying academic knowledge within the formats expected in academic discourse and text. More important, NNS students' academic survival often depends on their ability to construct written prose of at least passable quality in the context of academic discourse expectations. This chapter presents an overview of those written discourse genres and formats common in the academy in English-speaking environments.

Topic: 242: Writing Requirements in the University

Undergraduate students in U.S. colleges and universities are required to take general education courses in such disciplines as the sciences, history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology prior to their studies in their chosen majors. One implication of this structure in U.S. college education is that the greatest demand on students' language skills occurs during the first 2 years of their academic careers, when they are expected to read large amounts of diverse types academic text, write many short and long assignments, and take numerous tests and exams.

In the academy in English-speaking countries, the purpose of written assignments and of examinations and testing is to require students to display their knowledge and familiarity with the course material. Examinations vary in types and formats, ranging from multiple-choice tests to lengthy term papers, including essay tests and short essay-like responses. Outside multiple-choice tests, a great deal of writing is expected in most undergraduate courses, and it is not unusual for students to have to produce up to a dozen written assignments per term (Horowitz, 1986a). Even some multiple-choice tests—such as the TOEFL, ACT, or SAT—incorporate an essay component designed to measure test takers' writing proficiencies.

It is important to note that practically all writing assignments necessitate more than one writing task, such as exposition in the introduction, followed by cause/effect or comparison/contrast rhetorical structures, and possibly back to exposition in the conclusion. For instance, most types of writing assignments can include summaries of published works or syntheses of multiple sources of information or data. In this case, the writing tasks would include synthesis (or analysis) of information, paraphrasing, and restatement skills.

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Beginning in the early 1980s, several studies undertook to investigate the types of writing assignments and tasks required of undergraduate and graduate students in academic mainstream courses in various disciplines, such as the natural sciences (e.g., biology, chemistry, and physics), engineering, business, and the humanities including English.

Topic: 243: Characteristics of Academic Writing

A survey of 155 undergraduate and 215 graduate faculty in 21 U.S. universities specifically identified the essential NNS students' L2 writing skills in courses that ranged from history, psychology, business, chemistry, and engineering (Rosenfeld, Leung, & Oltman, 2001). The responses of undergraduate faculty (Table 2.1) clearly indicate that organizing writing to convey major and supporting ideas and using relevant examples to support them occupy top priority in the quality of academic discourse1 (ranks 4.19-4.09, respectively, out of 5).

TABLE 2.1 Undergraduate Faculty Assessments of Some Writing Tasks

Task Statement	Mean Importance Rating
Organize writing to convey major and supporting ideas.	4.19
Use relevant reasons and examples to support a position.	4.09
Demonstrate a command of standard written English, including grammar, phrasing, effective sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation.	3.70
Demonstrate facility with a range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic.	3.62
Show awareness of audience needs and write to a particular audience or reader.	3.33

Note. Mean Importance Rating on a scale of 0 to 5.

In addition, demonstrating command of standard written English, "including grammar, phrasing, effective sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation," is another high-priority requirement (rank 3.70), as well as demonstrating "facility with a range of vocabulary appropriate for the topic" (rank 3.62). On the other hand, showing awareness of audience needs and writing to a particular audience/reader was not found to be as important (rank 3.33). In addition to the faculty, undergraduate students ranked written discourse organization skills at 4.18; grammar, phrasing, and sentence structure at 4.15; and appropriate vocabulary at 3.69.

The teaching of academic discourse organization is crucially important in L2 writing instruction, and a large number of textbooks are available that focus on discourse. It would be no exaggeration to say that the teaching of L2 academic writing focuses predominantly on the features of discourse organization. However, markedly few course books on L2 writing for either students or teacher training address the importance of text features in L2 instruction. As mentioned earlier, however organized the information flow can be in student writing, it may be impossible to understand without an essential clarity and accuracy of text.

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Graduate faculty (Table 2.2) identified largely similar priorities in student writing with regard to the importance of information/discourse organization and examples (ranks 4.46 and 4.34, respectively), grammar, phrasing, and sentence structure (rank 4.06), and appropriate vocabulary (3.74).

On the other hand, graduate students ranked discourse organization and exemplification at 4.32 and 3.96, respectively; grammar, phrasing, and sentence structure at 3.83; and vocabulary 3.56 (i.e., below the importance rankings assigned by graduate faculty in practically all categories).

In a separate subset of survey items, both undergraduate and graduate faculty also specified the specific writing skills that in their experiences determined the success of NNS students in their courses. For undergraduate faculty, the top three L2 writing skills included (in declining order of importance):

- discourse and information organization (2.40 out of 3)
- standard written English (i.e., grammar, phrasing, and sentence structure; 2.35)
- vocabulary (2.26).

Among graduate faculty, the top three skills essential for success in academic courses consisted of:

- information/discourse organization (2.49 out of 3)
- command of standard written English (2.37)
- using background knowledge, reference materials, and other resources to analyze and refine arguments (2.35).

The employment of appropriate vocabulary received a ranking of 2.27.

TABLE 2.2 Graduate Faculty Assessments of Some Writing Tasks

Task Statement	**Mean Importance Rating**
Organize writing to convey major and supporting ideas.	4.46
Use relevant reasons and examples to support a position.	4.34
Demonstrate a command of standard written English, including grammar, phrasing, effective sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation.	4.06
Demonstrate facility with a range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic.	3.74
Show awareness of audience needs and write to a particular audience or reader.	3.62

Note. Mean Importance Rating on a scale of 0 to 5.

The Rosenfeld, Leung, and Oltman (2001) study demonstrated unambiguously that L2 grammar and vocabulary skills play a crucial role in student academic success (and obviously survival).

Topic: 244: Academic Writing Tasks and Assignments

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The most comprehensive study of academic writing tasks was carried out by the Educational Testing Service (Hale et al., 1996), which surveyed eight large comprehensive universities in the United States. The information discussed in this investigation is summarized next.

Major Writing Assignments

Major academic essays typically have a specified length of 5 to 10 or more than 10 pages. These papers predominantly take the forms of out-of-class assignments and are required far more frequently in humanities courses such as psychology, economics, history, and English than in the sciences, engineering, or computer science. Most of these projects also necessitate library research and syntheses of literature and relevant information from a variety of sources. According to the Hale et al. (1996) findings, undergraduate courses in the sciences and engineering rarely expect students to write papers as long as 5 to 10 pages, and most of these types of essays are expected in English department courses.

Medium-Length Essays and Short Written Tasks

Medium-length essays between 1 and 5 pages are required as in-class and out-of-class assignments in practically all disciplines, with the exceptions of undergraduate courses in physics, mathematics, and engineering. In social science and humanities studies, they are expected in a majority of undergraduate courses. Similarly, short written assignments of about 0.5 to 1.5 pages represent course components in approximately half of all undergraduate courses, including physics, math, and engineering, and 94% of English courses (Hale et al., 1996). These essays are assigned both in and out of class in undergraduate and graduate studies alike. Among these assignments, library research reports, laboratory or experiment reports with or without interpretation, and book reviews represent the most common types of writing.

Short writing tasks (also called expanded answers) found in many written in-class and out-of-class exams, laboratory reports, case studies, annotations of literature, and computer program documentation assignments constitute the most common type of writing across all disciplines and courses. Furthermore, short writing assignments are significantly more common in undergraduate than graduate courses and in in-class than outof-class assignments.

English Composition Writing Tasks

English composition instruction often provides the model for teaching writing in EAPs. According to the Hale et al. (1996) study, short writing tasks are far less common in English than in social or natural sciences (29% of all in-class assignments vs. 53% and 79%, respectively). On the other hand, out-of-class essays are required in 94% of all English courses, for example, compared with 53% in social and 47% in natural sciences. Among the assignment types, summaries and unstructured writing genre defined as free writing, journal entries, or notes, all which consist of writing down one's thoughts and experiences, are found almost exclusively in English courses, as well as twice as many assigned library research papers as in other disciplines. Major papers of 5 to 10 pages in length are assigned in 41% of English courses and only rarely in social science courses. Similarly, 1- to 5-page essays are required in 82% of English courses versus 39% of those in social sciences and 21% in physical/natural sciences.

Topic: 245: Teaching Academic Text Features

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Several researchers have identified English composition essays and the pedagogical essays (Johns, 1997) ubiquitous in English for Academic Purposes (EAPs) programs to be dramatically different from those students are required to write in the disciplines. Among other researchers, Horowitz (1986a) identified some of the writing tasks in undergraduate humanities courses. According to his findings, these included:

- summary/reaction to a journal article or reading
- annotated bibliography in such disciplines as biology, lab, and experiment reports
- connections between theory and data
- synthesis of multiple literature sources
- various research projects

Horowitz further noted that these assignments do not include invention and personal discovery and "the academic writer's task is not to create personal meaning but to find, organize, and present data according to fairly explicit instructions" (p. 452). According to the author, sentence-level grammar, use of discourse markers, and clarity of academic text remain "vital" (p. 454) in the teaching of academically bound NNS students. In the 1980s, several studies endeavored to learn about the reactions of faculty to particular features of NNS students' text (Johns, 1981; Ostler, 1980; Santos, 1988; Vann, Lorenz, & Meyer, 1991; Vann, Meyer, & Lorenz, 1984). Most professors in the disciplines are not well versed in the complexities of ESL instruction or L2 learning and acquisition. Nonetheless, their perceptions of text quality are important because they are the ones who grade students' assignments. According to the results of these studies, the employment of syntactic, lexical, and discourse features of text and errors in the uses of these features have an influential effect on the perceived quality of students' text. Although sentence- and phrase-level errors are often seen in relative rather than absolute terms, the problems in students' uses of verb tenses, word order, subordinate clauses, passive voice, and impersonal constructions have been found to obscure the text's meaning. In the view of faculty in various disciplines, such as physical and natural sciences, humanities, business, and the arts, accuracy in the uses of these and other syntactic and lexical features is very important and, in most cases, syntactic and lexical errors result in lower assignment grades. When thinking about the importance of accuracy in the academic writing of NNS students, many ESL and EAP teachers believe that syntactic and lexical errors in L2 texts are not particularly damaging because NS writers also make numerous mistakes in their texts. However, several studies have found that faculty in the disciplines have a far more critical view of ESL errors than those of NSs (Santos, 1988; Vann et al., 1984, 1991). Although the indications of error gravity vary across disciplines and even vary according to the age of faculty, the conclusions in all investigations largely remain similar: ESL errors in students' texts are costly in terms of grades and overall evaluations of work quality. To determine whether the needs of academically bound NNS learners were adequately addressed in EAP writing instruction, Leki and Carson (1997) interviewed a large group of students who began their ESL training and then continued their studies in various disciplines, such as engineering, biology, business, communications, and social work. The students reported great differences between the demands of writing in EAP classes and those in the disciplines. Among other important considerations, many students identified shortfalls in their vocabulary repertoire and a lack of familiarity with the dry academic textual style. Most important, the students spoke about the fact that EAP writing instruction represents what Leki and Carson called "non-text-responsible writing" (p. 63), whereas in the disciplines students are held accountable for the context of the text they read and the content and accuracy of the text they produce. The authors concluded that what is valued in writing classes that emphasize personal growth and

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experience is distinct from that necessary in academic writing in the disciplines. They further stated that EAP writing instruction has the responsibility for preparing students for "real" academic courses because without adequate exposure to the demands of academic writing students are essentially left to their own devices once their EAP training is completed. Johns (1997) explained that the narrow focus of writing instruction in EAPs and its focus on experiential essays is often based on the principle that, "if you can write [or read] an essay, you can write [or read] anything" (p. 122). She pointed out that in mainstream courses the expectations and grading of writing are different from those of ESL/EAP faculty.

In fact she commented that when NNS students are exposed to largely one type of writing task, they come to believe that "this is the only way to write." Such limited experience with writing actually does students a disservice and causes problems in their academic and professional careers. Like Horowitz, Johns emphasized the importance of text in students' academic writing. She emphasized that faculty often complain that students do not use vocabulary and data with care. However, in her view, because personal essays are highly valued in ESL and EAP writing instruction and because many instructional readings are in story form and/or simplified specifically for NNS readers, students are not exposed to the precision often expected in much of the academic prose. Furthermore, considerations of academic objectivity often conveyed by lexical and syntactic means, such as uses of personal pronouns and passive voice, are in conflict with those features of text encouraged in personal essays. Johns emphasized that formal academic register requires writers to be guarded and personally and emotionally removed from the text. She underscored that the hedged and depersonalized register of academic text is rarely addressed in ESL/EAP writing instruction, but should be if students are to attain the proficiency necessary for their success in mainstream academic courses.

In other studies, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) also stated that "the process approach [to teaching L2 writing], although extremely valuable in helping students organize and plan their writing has failed to tackle the actual texts that students have to produce as part of their academic or professional work" (p. 117). They also noted that in the United States, most of those who advocate a process approach see the teaching of generalized strategies of planning, writing, and revising as sufficient and believe that a detailed analysis of academic texts lies beyond the job of the writing teacher (Raimes, 1993; Zamel, 1983). However, according to Dudley-Evans and St. John, the considerations of end-product quality in L2 writing is important in academic and professional writing, and combining the strengths of both the product- and process-oriented approaches to the teaching of writing can lead to overall improvements in L2 writing instruction.

Topic: 246: Explicit Instruction in L2 Academic Writing

In an important study that surveyed 77 published research reports on the effectiveness of explicit grammar instruction, Norris and Ortega (2000) normed the results of investigations in an attempt to achieve consistency across various investigative and analytical methodologies. Their meta-analysis shows that in grammar learning focused instruction of any sort is far more effective than any type of teaching methodology based on focused exposure to L2 without explicit teaching. They further found that focused L2 instruction resulted in large language gains over the course of the instructional term and that the effects of the instruction seem to be durable over time. Furthermore, Norris and Ortega explained that explicit instruction based on inductive or deductive approaches leads to greater L2 gains than implicit instruction of any sort. Thus, given that academically bound L2 learners need to make substantial L2

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gains to begin their studies, it seems clear that L2 grammar and vocabulary should be taught thoroughly and intensively.

When students matriculate from ESL/EAP programs, the quality of their writing and text is evaluated by non-ESL specialists who are faculty in the disciplines. Furthermore, when students' academic studies are completed, the accuracy of their text production is continually appraised by subsequent nonspecialists in on-the-job writing whenever college-educated NNSs write e-mail, notes, reports, and old-fashioned memos. Considerate, understanding, and compassionate ESL teachers who seek to benefit their students have to teach the skills and language features that students must have to achieve their desired professional and career goals. In fact, this is what ESL teachers are hired to do. If instruction in the essential language skills is not provided, students are largely left to their own devices when attempting to attain L2 proficiency needed for their academic and professional endeavors.

Much recent research has shown that exposure to daily and classroom interactions, as well as fluency-oriented instruction, does not represent an effective pedagogical approach to developing syntactic and lexical accuracy (Chang & Swales, 1999; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Ellis, 2001 Jordan, 1997; Richards, 2002). Although teachers in academic preparatory and writing programs often believe that they set out to develop learners' academic reading and writing proficiencies, in actuality few are closely familiar with the types of writing assignments and tasks that NNS students need to perform once they complete their language training. For example, a list in chapter 5 includes the most frequently encountered nouns in course materials across all disciplines in college-level general education courses and contains such words as ambiguity, anomaly, apparatus, appeal, and aristocrat. In all likelihood, few practicing ESL teachers in EAP programs have undertaken to teach the meanings of these words unless they are fortuitously used in student reading texts. Fluency development activities in writing that require students to keep personal journals or carry out journal-centered correspondence with the teacher are not designed to increase learners' academic vocabulary or grammar repertoire, with its almost requisite uses of passive voice, impersonal construction, and complex hedging. In fact such fluency-based activities encourage the use of immediately accessible lexicon and grammar structures without a means of language gains and perpetuate learners' misunderstanding and confusion with regard to the high degree of accuracy expected in formal academic prose.

A teacher of writing would do a disservice to academically bound NNS students by not preparing them for academic writing assignments, particularly those in the more common forms the students are certain to encounter later in their studies. Within these academic assignments and tasks, students must produce text that is academically sophisticated enough to demonstrate their understanding of and familiarity with the course material. Yet few ESL/EAP programs undertake to at least expose their students to various types of academic assignments and require production of written academic (rather than personal) prose (Chang & Swales, 1999; Johns, 1997; Leki& Carson, 1997).

Topic: 247: Types of Writing Tasks

The discussion of writing tasks in this section relies on the findings of Hale et al. (1996) to survey the writing requirements in eight comprehensive U.S. universities. Overall the types of writing expected of undergraduate and graduate students do not seem to vary greatly with regard to the rhetorical and discourse patterns they elicit. Most assignments combine several rhetorical tasks (e.g., exposition and analysis in business case studies or history essays).

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The most common types of rhetorical formats found in in-class and out-of-class assignments represent (in declining order of frequency):

- **Exposition** (short tasks required largely in introductions and explanations of material or content to follow, and thus it is a component of all assignment types)
- **Cause-effect interpretation** (by far the most prevalent writing task, found in over half of all writing assignments)
- **Classification** of events, facts, and developments according to a generalized theoretical or factual scheme
- **Comparison/contrast** of entities, theories, methods, analyses, and approaches (in short assignments)
- **Analysis** of information/facts (in medium-length assignments)
- **Argumentation** based on facts/research/published literature (in medium-length assignments)

Less common writing tasks include:

- **Expanded definition** (least common in medium-length and out-of-class assignments)
- **Process analysis** in such disciplines as political science, economics, sociology, psychology, accounting, marketing, and management (hardly ever found in out-of-class assignments)
- **Fact-based exemplification** of concepts and theoretical premises and constructs (overall least common in both in-class and out-of-class assignments)
- Not found in any assignments—**narration/description** in the disciplines or English courses

In general, the frequency of rhetorical patterns does not seem to differ greatly among the writing tasks in undergraduate and graduate courses. Specifically, cause-effect essays can be found in over half of all written tasks in in- and out-of-class assignments, with exemplification, process analysis, and definition being comparatively least common.

Exposition rhetorical tasks require writers to explain or clarify the topic/subject. In general terms, exposition is entailed in expressing ideas, opinions, or explanation pertaining to a particular piece of knowledge or fact. For example,

1. *What nonverbal cues communicated the most conflict in the newlywed study? (Psychology) (Epstein, 1999, p. 291)*
2. *Discuss the various types of accounting information most companies routinely use. (Business) (Zikmund, Middlemist, & Middlemist, 1995, p. 447)*
3. *Which forms of government predominated among the Italian city-states ? In the end, which was the most successful? Why? (History) (Perry et al., 2000, p. 322)*

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Lesson 43

Teaching Academic L2 writing II

Topic: 248: Teaching Cause and Effect

Cause-effect interpretation tasks deal with establishing causal relationships and are based on causal reasoning. Most assignments of this type include a discussion or an explanation of a cause-effect relationship among events or problems, identification of causes or effects, and a presentation of problem solutions in the case of problem-solution tasks. Examples of cause-effect interpretation assignments can be:

1. *Pabst Blue Ribbon was a major beer company when I was in college. However, recently it has lost market share, and now you hardly even hear about it. What happened at Pabst and why? (Business) (Adapted from Bean, 1996)*
2. *Why does culture arise in the first place? Why is culture a necessary part of all organized life? (Sociology) (Charon, 1999, p. 105)*
3. *Why is the Renaissance considered a departure from the Middle Ages and the beginning of modernity? (History) (Perry et al., 2000, p. 322)*

Topic: 249: Teaching Classification

Classification of events, facts, and developments assignments involve cognitive tasks in which writers are expected to determine what types of group members share particular features or characteristics. Therefore, students are required to classify clusters or groups of objects, events, or situations according to their common attributes, create a system to classify objects or events, and list them based on this classification. For example,

1. *In what ways can a company maintain good relations with its union employees without being unfair to its nonunion employees? (Business) (Zikmund, Middlemist, & Middlemist, 1995, p. 421)*
2. *What do Elaine Walster and Ellen Berscheid say are the ingredients for love? (Psychology) (Epstein, 1999, p. 326)*
3. *What was the traditional relationship between the people and their rulers during the Middle Ages? How and why did this relationship begin to change in the sixteenth century and with what results ? (History) (Perry et al., 2000, p. 376)*

Topic: 250: Teaching Comparison and Contrast

Comparison/contrast tasks expect writers to discuss or examine objects or domains of knowledge by identifying their characteristics/properties that make them similar or different. In general, the purpose of such assignments is to identify the specific points that make objects, events, or situations similar and/or different as well as explain one in terms of the other. Examples of these assignments can be:

1. *Compare and contrast medieval universities with universities today (History) (Perry et al., 2000, p. 278)*

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2. *What distinguishes the philosophy of religion from theology ? (Philosophy) (Schoedinger, 2000, p. 225)*
3. *Compare the reaction ofOlaudah Equino on first encountering Europeans with that of the Spaniards encountering Aztecs. (History) (Perry, Peden, &VonLaue, 1999, p. 351)*

Topic: 251: Teaching Analysis

Analysis of information or facts (in medium-length assignments) requires writers to separate a whole into elements or component parts and identify relationships among these parts. Other types of analysis assignments include applying theories or interpretive methods to the object of analysis or a particular school of thought, distinguishing facts from theories, evaluating the validity of stated or unstated assumptions and/or various types of relationships among events, identifying logical fallacies in arguments, or specifying the author's purpose, bias, or point of view. For example:

1. *How does the bourgeoisie gradually undermine its own existence according to Marx? (Philosophy) (Schoedinger, 2000, p. 215)*
2. *How do the elasticities of supply and demand affect the deadweight loss of a tax ? Why do they have this effect ? (Economics) (Mankiw, 2001, p. 176)*
3. *If class, race, and gender are positions within social structures, we should be able to describe them in terms of power, prestige, privileges, role, identity, and perspective. Can you do this? (Sociology) (Charon, 1999, p. 86)*

Topic: 252: Teaching Argumentation

Argumentation assignments largely represent a form of exposition that includes an element of persuasion. Therefore, the rhetorical purpose of these writing tasks extends beyond the presentation, explanation, or discussion to convince the reader of a particular point of view. In argumentation tasks, the writers are required to recognize that issues have at least two sides and present the facts or information to develop a reasoned and logical conclusion based on the presented evidence. In practically all assignments, presentations of unsupported assertions are not considered to be argumentation (Hale et al., 1996).

1. *Human beings are social to their very core. How does the material covered in Chapter xxx/this term so far support this proposition ? What do you think of this argument? (Sociology) (Adapted from Charon, 1999)*
2. *What is freedom? What is individuality? To what extent do you think human beings are free or individuals ? What do you think is the origin of freedom and individuality? (Sociology) (Charon, 1999, p. 148)*
3. *Why would removing trade restrictions, such as a tariff, lead to more rapid economic growth? (Economics) (Mankiw, 2001, p. 262)*

Less Common Rhetorical and Writing Tasks

Three types of writing tasks appear markedly less common than those discussed earlier: definition, process description, and exemplification. Expanded definition assignments consist of explanations of exact meanings or significance of a phrase or term. Usually these assignments consist of defining the term, listing the concept to which the term belongs, and specifying the attributes that distinguish it from others in its class. For example:

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1. *What is social order? (Sociology) (Charon, 1999, p. 147)*
2. *Explain the meaning of nominal interest rate and real interest rate. How are they related? (Economics) (Mankiw, 2001, p. 237)*

Process analysis involves directions on how someone should do something or how something should be done, including chronological details in a series of steps/operations/ actions necessary to achieve a particular result or happening. In most cases, a discussion of reasons for the steps and negative directions are needed. For example,

1. *Suppose that you were to set up an organization—for example, a club, a church, a school, or a small community. What would you do to try to ensure that social order would successfully be established? (Sociology) (Charon, 1999, p. 147)*
2. *What is the business value chain ? Use frozen pizza sold in supermarkets to explain your answer. (Business) (Zikmund, Middlemist, & Middlemist, 1995, p. 17)*

Topic: 253: Teaching Exemplification

Exemplification and illustration largely deals with expanding on theories/concepts/ ideas and providing reasonable amounts of detail to explain a type, class, or group of objects or events by presenting examples. These assignments largely rely on general-to-specific discourse organization flow. For example,

1. *Give at least two examples of what children can learn from playing peek-a-boo. (Psychology) (Epstein, 1999, p. 258)*
2. *What is a simple idea, according to Locke? Give examples. (Philosophy) (Adapted from Schoedinger, 2000, p. 351)*

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Lesson 44

Teaching reading and writing in the Pakistani ELT context

Topic: 254: Introduction to Teaching reading and writing in the Pakistani ELT context

The provincial population figures detailed above have helped in deciding the sampling criteria for the schools selected for the present research [see section 6.7.3 below].

Role of English in Pakistan

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and helps in uniting the general public linguistically in a country whose people speak different regional languages; in fact it functions as a kind of local Lingua Franca in Pakistan (Shamim, 2011). English is recognized as the second language. However, it is spoken by a very small percentage of the population in Pakistan as shown in Table: 1.2 in which English does not even figure among the major languages to be given a separate reference and is instead included in the 'others' category:

Table: 2.2

Language	Percentage of Speakers	Number of Speakers
Punjabi	44.15	66,225,000
Pashto	15.42	23,130,000
Sindhi	14.10	21,150,000
Siraiki	10.53	15,795,000
Urdu	7.57	11,355,000
Balochi	3.57	5,355,000
Others	4.66	6,990,000

(1998 census cited in Rahman, 2004.: 2)

Major Languages spoken in Pakistan

Yet English is one of the main languages which are being utilized in the major spheres of power, like bureaucracy, judiciary, commerce, education, research and so on. There is some confusion regarding the official language even in the official circles; some refer to Urdu as the official language, while others assign English to this position:

> English was supposed to continue as the official language of Pakistan till such time that the national language (s) replaced it. However, this date came and went by as many other dates before it and English is as firmly entrenched in the domains of power in Pakistan as it was in 1947. (Rahman, 2004: 5)

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Rahman (2004) is of the view that the elite classes of Pakistan have been responsible for maintaining (if not strengthening) the privileged position of English in the country for their vested interests, namely that of reinforcing their own superior status. Whatever the reason for being assigned so much prominence, English has come to be accepted in the country especially by the younger generation:

In recent years with more young people from the affluent classes appearing in the British O' and A' level examinations; with the world-wide coverage of the BBC and the CNN; with globalization and the talk about English being a world language; with stories of young people emigrating all over the world armed with English---with all these things English is a commodity in more demand than ever before. (Rahman, 2004.: 5)

In the coming years the influence of English will continue to spread; "globalization will increase the power of English because it will open up more jobs for those who know it" (2004:7). Notwithstanding Rahman's misgivings about English as the language of the powerful elite, other Pakistani linguists affirm that the language is playing a significant role in the country – as a Lingua Franca and a "necessity" (Warsi, 2004; Akram and Mahmood, 2007: 6 respectively). Moreover, even the general populace believes that knowing English is "an asset". In fact, the growth of English medium schools even in remote areas highlights the great "demand" of the language among Pakistanis. (Ashraf, 2006: 112)

Furthermore, after years of debate as to which language (Urdu/English) should be used as the medium of instruction there has been official recognition of the importance of English as a language in Pakistan. This change in government attitude is reflected in the following assertions made by Aly (2007) while reviewing the national educational policy during the stint of the previous government (2002 – 2007):

> Historically, proficiency in English language has been the privilege of the elite and those who have been kept outside the facility of this language were at a disadvantage. Everyone now needs to learn English… To ensure that our education system provides for imparting instruction of English language to all people across the entire breadth of the country, it is important to comprehend the usefulness of the facility of the functional language and all the public schools should provide instruction of English language of uniform standard. (2007: 54)

The new government which took office in 2008 has continued to recognize the importance of English and the draft of the new education policy (2008) supports this view:

> Pakistan's policy is… based on the perception of increased importance of English language. It has been felt that the education sector, with the exception of a few elite schools, fails to produce the requisite proficiency. This has led to social exclusion of those who cannot afford to access these schools. There is also an opinion that the deficiency has impacted Pakistan's potential to attract investment and benefit optimally from globalization. In Pakistan the best jobs, whether in the public or the private sector, are beyond the reach of those who lack proficiency in the English language. (2008: 30)

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Thus according to the latest education policy, English will be taught from Grade I onwards as a compulsory subject and there will be a gradual shift towards English medium all over the country (at present many public schools are using Urdu as a medium of instruction).

Masood (2006) goes on to commend this policy since "higher education, research and access to better-paying jobs need a degree of proficiency in English that pupils from Urdu-language schools tend not to have" and asserts that teaching English from the commencement of formal schooling "will undoubtedly make a difference to the lives of many" (2006: webpage). This once again highlights that English is generally believed to play a vital role in Pakistani society even though a very small percentage of the population use the language in their daily discourse [see above].

Here it is important to emphasize that various linguists [named above] have just mentioned the different roles of English in general terms and no one has really tried to probe into the actual situation and illustrate the specifics. For instance, Masood (2006) and the Educational. Policy (2008) refer to the value of knowing English in the job market in vague terms like having access to "better-paying jobs" and "best jobs", while no attempt is made to elaborate upon or elucidate which particular job sectors and levels require English. However, Hasan (2009) has presented a relatively comprehensive list of areas where English is used in

Pakistan:

All government documents, military communications, street signs, many shop signs, business contracts and other activities are done in English. The language of the courts is also English. English is taught to all school level Pakistani students, and in many cases the medium of instruction is also in English. At College and University level all instruction is in English. Pakistan boasts a large English language press and media. (Hasan, 2009: webpage)

[Also see section 3.2 below]

Topic: 255: Teaching Reading Skills in the Pakistani Context

Educational System of Pakistan

The education system of any country is complex and multifaceted and so here it is neither possible nor relevant to provide a comprehensive survey of the whole system. Instead, the following discussion focuses on some aspects of the Pakistani educational system which are pertinent to the research in question. Without understanding the jurisdiction, structure and the simultaneous working of parallel systems of education in Pakistan, it will not be possible to comprehend the textbook situation. The school categorization and the comparison of the private and public educational sectors have provided the rationale behind the selection of schools for the present study. Finally, since teachers are the bridge between course books and the students, it is essential to briefly examine the teacher training structure.

Official Jurisdiction

In Pakistan, education had been under both the central control (that is the federal government) and the provincial governments. Saeed (2007) elaborates that at the centre the Ministry of Education, based in the federal capital (Islamabad), is in charge of preparing the national educational policies. Then

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each province formulates its own strategies but within the framework proposed by the federal government. According to the Federal Education Ministry Presentation (2008), the Curriculum Wing is responsible for the overall preparation and approval of the scheme of studies, curricula and textbooks of the different subjects. Thus as affirmed by Saeed:

> … uniform curriculum of each subject is followed all over the country; although textbooks in different subjects may vary across the provincial text book boards (PTB). (2007: 47)

However, recently under the eighteenth amendment to the constitution (which has been passed by the parliament in 2010) the formulation of the educational policies (including curriculum development) is being handed over to the provincial governments.

Educational Structure

The educational levels are classified into elementary (grades 1-8, ages about 5 to 13), secondary (grades 9-12, ages about 14 to 18), and tertiary or higher education after 12 years' schooling. The elementary grades are further divided into primary (grades 1-5) and middle (grades 6-8).

Categories of Schools

The following up-dated classification of schools in Pakistan based on the categories listed by Pakistani researchers like Aly (2007) is deemed relevant for the present study [see section 6.7.3 below]:

Table 2.3

School Type	Management	Examination	Clientele
Public sector			
Government I	Provincial Education Department	Local Matriculation Examination	Rural and urban poor
Government II	Local Bodies (like union councils)	Local Matriculation Examination	Urban poor and lower middle class
Government Model	Autonomous under commissioners	Local Matriculation Examination	Urban lower middle & middle classes
Cadet	Cantonment boards	Local Matriculation Examination	Urban Middle class
Public elite	Autonomous under the governor	O' Level & Local Matriculation Examination	Rural & urban upper middle & upper classes
Private Sector			
Madrassas	Religious bodies	Religious boards recognized by the government	Rural and urban poor
Private I	Private owners	Local Matriculation Examination	Rural & urban poor & lower middle class
Private II	Charity/ Philanthropists	Local Matriculation Examination	Urban poor & lower middle class
Private III	Private owners	O' Level/Local Matriculation	Urban middle & upper classes

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		Examination	
Private School chains	Private owners	O' Level/Local Matriculation Examination	Urban middle & upper classes
Private Elite institution	Private owners – foreign management	O' Levels & American school diploma	Urban upper class

Categories of Schools in Pakistan

Parallel Systems of Education

There are parallel systems of education in Pakistan – both differing in terms of objectives. The first system prepares the students for the local board examinations referred to as matriculation examination. Both the public and many private sector schools have adopted this system. There has been general confusion about the medium of instruction, with successive governments opting for Urdu or English (in rural Sindh the regional language Sindhi is widely used as the medium of instruction) at whim. The recent governments are promoting English as the medium of instruction [see section 2.2. above]. Irrespective of the approved medium, English is a compulsory subject from middle school upwards. The public sector schools prescribe the provincial textbook board approved textbooks, while for the private sector the school administration selects textbooks from those available locally.

The second system follows the British educational scheme leading to the O' level examination. The medium of instruction is English and generally imported textbooks are prescribed. Some private sector schools especially those in the affluent urban areas and the public elite institutions have adopted this system. However, most of the older established private institutions (that is, founded before 1979) and some relatively newly established schools offer both the local and the British system.

Topic: 256: Integration of Reading Skills in the Pakistani National Curriculum

The Public and Private Divide

First of all, it is important to clearly identify what constitutes public sector and private sector in the context of Pakistan. Aly (2007), while discussing the Pakistani educational scenario in policy papers (compiled to debate issues related to the education policy of Pakistan) clarifies these terms as follows:

> The public sector can be taken to include all government and State controlled organizations/institutions, while the private sector will be defined as "all organizations/ institutions not governed or controlled by the State". This definition equally encompasses institutions that are for profit or not for profit, religious/missionary and located/controlled from within Pakistan or internationally controlled. (2007: 30 – 31)

Private sector has continued to play an important role in education since Pakistan was founded in 1947. The only exception was the 1970s when nationalization policy affected the educational institutions.

Generally it is held that the children belonging to the upper strata of society attend the private schools, while the public schools cater to the students belonging to the lower social classes. In other words, it is believed that the public schools reach out to the greater sections of the society.

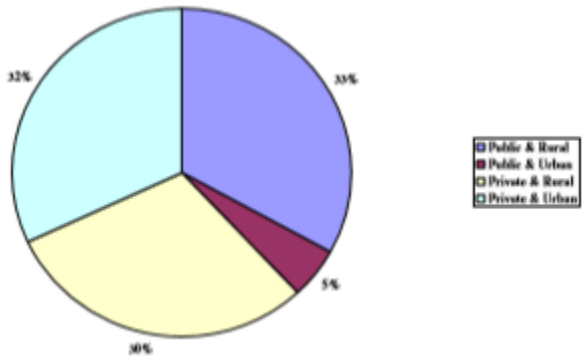
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However, the detailed survey of the situation highlights the other side of the picture. Recently with the setting up of low cost private schools (even in rural areas) children of low income families have a choice of opting for private institutions. In addition, the numbers of private school students has risen in recent years, and this number is expected to rise further:

> …a growing number of students now attend private schools, giving rise to an industry that has become one of the country's most profitable. According to former finance minister, Shahid Javed Burki, as many as 30 percent of Pakistani students now attend private schools. These range from one-room schoolhouses in villages that charge less than $1 per student to international schools that cost the same as elite private schools abroad. (Qureshi, 2008: webpage)

Furthermore, the examination of the educational level wise figures issued by the National Educational Census (2005) has belied claims that Pakistani educational scenario is dominated by public sector institutions at all levels. Thus a comparison of the number of middle schools belonging to public and private sectors classified separately into rural and urban types shows up interesting results (see Figure: 2.1 below):

Figure: 2.1

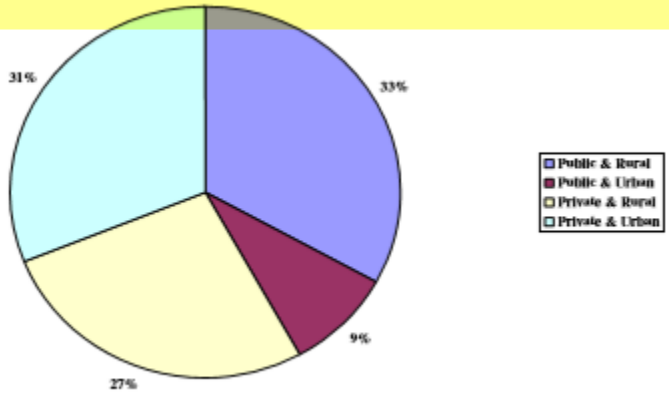


Sector Wise Distribution of Middle Schools

As observed from Figure: 2.1, the number of private middle schools in rural areas (30%) is almost at par with the public sector middle institutions (33%) in the same locale. On the other hand, while private sector schools are flourishing in the urban regions (32%), the number of public schools is comparatively very insignificant (only 5 %). The enrolment situation is similar to that of the number of institutions, as supported by the following graph

Figure: 2.2

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Sector Wise Enrolment in Middle Schools

In rural localities, the difference between the number of students attending public sector middle schools (33%) and those attending private sector (27%) is not very substantial, while in the urban areas the difference in enrolment in the two types of schools (9% and 31 %) is very significant. In other words, private middle schools appear to be popular in both urban and rural areas, whereas public middle schools seem to be in demand only in the rural areas.

Thus 58% (31 + 27) of the middle level student population attends private middle schools in the country. The above mentioned figures support the fact that private sector institutions are gaining popularity among the population across the board in Pakistan. This phenomenon by default throws light on the dismal state of affairs in the public sector education, as also asserted by

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) while discussing general language curriculum development:

An indication that language programmes are failing to meet learners' objectives is often signaled by the existence of flourishing schools and courses outside the official educational system. (1986: 11)

The above assumptions are supported by Aly (2007) in the context of Pakistan since he explicitly blames the poor quality education being imparted by the public institutions for the sharp increase in private educational institutions. Similarly, Masood (2006) has indicated that the dismal standard of education in the public schools is responsible for the preference of the private sector education among the lower classes in Pakistan:

> Worldwide, privately-funded schools tend to offer a significantly better quality of education compared to state-funded ones. In Pakistan, however, the difference between the two amounts to a chasm. Pakistan's state schools are notoriously bad. (2006: webpage)

Thus the private sector schools provide a good return for money because they provide better quality education at reasonable rates. However, a different perspective is provided by some rural educators (interviewed during the course of this research) who assert that private schooling has become a status symbol with parents who can afford it opting for these institutions, while in actual fact the quality of education is comparatively worse.

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Topic: 257: Teaching Writing Skills in the Pakistani Context

Teachers Training

In Pakistan training is a pre-requisite for public sector teachers. This training is classified into 'pre-service training' provided by the Government Colleges of Elementary Training and the 'in-service' training which is structured differently in the four provinces. Mainly the Provincial Institutes of Teacher Education are responsible for in-service training. In Punjab the Department for Staff Development is responsible for the training. In addition, B Ed degrees are awarded by Allama Iqbal Open University through distance learning projects and some private sector institutions.

The private sector schools do not adhere to the requirements specified for the public sector with regard to hiring of teachers. Instead, each school administration decides its own criteria for teacher selection. Generally training is stressed only in the more affluent institutions. A few well reputable school systems like the City School System have developed their own training services where teachers belonging to different branches from all over the country are rained. (Adapted from National Education Policy Review Team, 2006: 52 – 53; and, Aly, 2007: 23 – papers prepared for revision of the National Educational Policy.)

The Standard of English Language Education in Pakistan

It is perceived that the standard of teaching English in Pakistan is not up to the mark, especially as far as it implies facilitating students to use the language in real life. Thus linguists assert that Pakistani student lacks the ability to communicate effectively, fluently and accurately in the language even after studying English for at least 6 years (Warsi, 2004;

> Ashraf, 2006). Moreover, some studies which have been conducted by linguists exploring the ongoing English language courses and English proficiency of Pakistani students have revealed significant data. One such research highlighted the following weaknesses in the public tertiary level English programmes:
>
> The assessment practices in all cases focus on assessing content knowledge such as…'characteristics of a good paragraph' instead of language skills. Students are given few opportunities to develop academic literacy since teaching and learning focuses mainly on getting good grades in the content-based examination. Additionally, there are few expectations that learners will use English in the classroom. (Shamim, 2011: 8)
>
> Yet a survey of the relevant students and teachers (which was part of the same study) illustrated a high degree of satisfaction with the examined courses:

Surprisingly, we found that the majority of learners rated their current English language courses highly in terms of meeting their future needs. Similarly, more than 50 per cent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the current English language courses would help students in meeting future needs. This apparently optimistic picture could be the result of two things: a) teachers' and learners' limited experience of alternative pedagogies and assessment practices and b) a focus on gaining high grades in English as short-term goals for success in their respective educational programs. (2011: 8) An earlier research project explicitly revealed that "most of the students do not know the basic structure of

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the English sentences. They find great difficulty in change of voice and translation." (Ghani, Mahmood, and Akram 2008: 8) However, it is important to point out that the utilized proficiency test in this project was solely based on the grammatical and writing skill content of the local secondary level textbooks; the researchers made no attempt to devise an independent 'basic' English assessment tool. This observation highlights that at times even in research English language testing is primarily based on the prescribed course books.

Importantly, as borne out by innumerable advertisements promoting English courses outside the normal educational system [see Appendix 1 below for examples of these advertisements taken from newspapers] many private sector informal educational establishments have cropped up in Pakistan over the years. Most of these institutions either prepare Pakistanis for foreign English language proficiency examinations like IELTS or TOEFL (a requirement for higher education in native English speaking countries and emigration to Australia) or claim to improve spoken or professional English. As such these programs highlight that even after spending significant period studying English the Pakistani learners are deficient in language skills necessary for their future life. This in turn throws light on the deficiencies in the formal educational system which necessitates the conduction of these adult second language programs (Dubin and Olshtain,1986; Javed, 2008, cited in Hasan, 2009).

Finally, the actual samples of English language [provided in Appendix I below] produced by college level Pakistani students illustrate English language deficiencies. Sample A consists of extracts from the dissertations of students who have completed Masters in 'English Language Teaching' in a private university. Sample B contains extracts from English literature examination answers written by students of a government affiliated B Ed institution. Sample C comprises extracts from essays written by first year students of one of the top ranked Pakistani private university. These extracts exemplify that the students have not acquired effective skills for using English; in fact, some samples do not make any sense.

Topic: 258: Integration of Writing Skills in the Pakistani National Curriculum

Preliminary Survey of Textbooks in Pakistan

General Textbook Scenario

The textbook situation in Pakistan has been dismal and marred by inefficiency and inadequacy as even recognized by the research conducted by the Federal Ministry of Education itself:

> In Pakistan the education publishing sector as a whole and the role textbooks and learning materials can play in the development of education are largely underdeveloped. The learning environment of government as well as many private schools is passive. (National Education Policy Review Team, 2006: 53)

The textbooks prescribed for the public sector overburden the students with innumerable facts most of which are not clearly explained. Moreover, there is no emphasis on application of knowledge and this encourages rote learning. This recognition of weaknesses in the system has lead to the revising of the National Textbook Policy. Previously by and large the provincial governments' publishing houses (Provincial Textbook Boards) provided the textbooks to the public schools. In 2001 the then

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Federal government decided to deregulate the publishing of textbooks. The objective of this 'deregulation policy' is to promote the private sector to get involved in the development of school books. The rationale behind this change of policy was the perception that since the provincial Textbook Boards are the sole supplier of textbooks for public schools there is no choice for the user and no competition for the provider:

> Choice on the part of the buyer promotes knowledge, empowerment and participation. Competition on the part of the seller forces the acquisition of the best available know-how for product development and leads to a wider variety of products, improved quality and better prices. (National Education Policy Review Team, 2006: 53)

As a result of the implementation of this policy, even public schools would have been able to choose from a wide range of better quality text-books. However, the process was stalled by misgivings and reservations and by the time the previous government (in 2008) was voted out this deregulation textbook policy had still not been instigated. Nevertheless, the present government (2008 –) has managed to resolve the main issues and consequently, course books are being sanctioned for public schools under the new policy.

The State of English Language Textbooks

The discipline of English language materials development is not being assigned any significance in Pakistan and few educationists and applied linguists have ventured into this area. Consequently, there is hardly any illuminating literature on the English Language textbook situation in the country. A few of the comments that touch on this subject are discussed below.

Warsi (2004), while analyzing the prevailing educational environment in Pakistan with reference to teaching English as a second language, contends that the course books are being prescribed without taking into account the linguistic or developmental level of the learners:

> …textbooks in Pakistan are not geared towards honing on the linguistic needs of the learner, taking into account whether or not the learner is at the appropriate developmental stage to acquire the target language structures. (2004: webpage)

He goes on to assert that providing appropriate English language textbooks to students would help in improving the standard of English:

> The Department of Education can play an instrumental role in publishing textbooks that are written in accordance with generative grammar and the structural method containing appropriate pictures and graded exercises. Fortunately, there is a plethora of English as a Second Language textbooks, making it relatively easier for educators and policy makers in Pakistan to adopt appropriate textbooks taking into consideration the learner's level of proficiency and specific curricular objectives for the level being taught. (2004: webpage)

A Pakistani research report The Subtle Subversion has examined the weaknesses inherent in the curriculum of Pakistan. The report looks at the content of the coursebooks, and not at the activities, texts

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or language used in these books. However, a few shortcomings of the English teaching materials pertinent to the proposed study are illustrated. For instance, it is asserted that the English language textbooks produced in Pakistan fail to interest students or develop their intellectual curiosity. In addition, it is maintained that the coursebooks are poorly written as far as the language and design is concerned. Finally, it is highlighted that the local textbooks use an outdated methodology and their focus is limited to fulfilling the examination requirements:

> …there are numerous pedagogical problems in school textbooks, the consequences of which on students are enormous. In many books, the main concepts are unclear, arguments lack logic, explanations are lacking, and the emphasis is on rote learning and blind deference to the authority of the teacher and the textbook and the demands of examinations. These are all strong disincentives to curious and questioning minds who seek understanding and truth through objective facts, logical arguments, and debate. (Nayyar and Salim ed., 2007: 6)

In conclusion, most of the above mentioned assertions show that there is a considerable awareness about the weaknesses prevalent in the local coursebooks. Nevertheless, no one is willing to delve deep into this issue. For example, Warsi (2004) merely mentions a few basic shortcomings of textbooks, and recommends that officials and educators should select appropriate textbooks from amongst the many books flooding the market, making the students' linguistic level and the syllabus aims the basis for selection. However, the coursebook selection procedure is a complex process involving numerous factors, and so does not warranty such simplistic solutions. [See sections 4.5, 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 below]

Conclusion

The previous discussion has highlighted the importance of English in Pakistan, the existing shortcomings in the education sector, and the prevalent weaknesses in the standard of English textbooks. However, it is essential to examine and verify the validity of most of these assertions. Moreover, the recent revisions in the curriculum and education policies, call for an appraisal of the situation.

Having established the local background behind textbook preparation and selection, the next chapter will examine the general issues indirectly related to materials development, like the overall role of English language in the world, the developments in teaching methodology and the different principles of curriculum preparation and 'needs analysis'.

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Lesson 45

Integrating receptive and productive skills

Topic: 259: Introduction to Integrating Receptive and Productive Skills

When we are teaching a second language we are trying to develop in the learner not just grammatical competence in the Chomskyan sense, but communicative competence. The learner must, it is true, develop the ability to produce and understand grammatical utterances, he must be able to distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sequences, but he must also know when to select the one which is appropriate to the context, both linguistic and situational. Therefore, the language data to which the learner is exposed should be presented «in context».

If ELT does not only involve the teaching of the English sound system. Grammatical structures or vocabulary, but the practice of the contexts in which they occur —that, understands and producing language-, teachers will have a fundamental task in providing the students with texts, oral passages and situations for the students to communicate both in the written and the spoken form. These are the so-called four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The work presented here intends to show an integrative approach to the teaching and practice of the language skills. Bearing in mind that the language class will become more purposeful and meaningful for the learner at all levels if we do so. The methodological principles behind this approach are equally applicable lo general English. English for specific purposes, or the Primary English classroom.

Ewen Arnold (1993) points out that many tasks in task-based courses are purposeless because nothing is done with the students' output and it does not lead anywhere. The idea is to make the classroom contexts and situations come closer to the real-life ones, no matter how artificial or simulated we ma>' think that the teaching and learning environment is. It is a matter of linking tasks; by way of example, when we deal with an answer phone message (listening), we often have to use this information in the spoken or written form (by calling someone back or writing a note).

Our primary concern as teachers is to activate strategies for learning in the students, as well as providing student-centered materials which focus on the process of communication. Let us see in which way the integration of skills contribute to the task of facilitating second language learning.

Topic: 260: Why Should We Integrate Skills

lf we ask, «What is the ultimate aim of language teaching? Most teachers would probably agree that one answer is that students should be able to understand and produce the language that they need —in other words, we want them to develop their autonomy in language use, that is, a kind of freedom in their choice of language and manner. By integrating skills we are providing a certain input that becomes a basis for further output, which in turn will be new input, and so on. In this way the students' contributions turn out to be part of the process in which language is generated.

Rather than focusing on ways of controlling the language and ideas that students produce, we should always be looking for ways to free things up. Similarly, we should move the students from the role as consumers in the classroom towards the role as producers. By doing this, we are also likely to move

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away from «language specific» work and instead involve the students in broader educational processes. Some teachers will actually say that they are only responsible for teaching the language, and not for the general educational development of the students. However, as noted by Andrew Littlejohn (1998: l0):

Whether we are aware of it or not, students will always learn more u their language classes than just language. They will also learn their role in the classroom and (to a greater or lesser extent pick up values and attitudes from the texts they use. They will also learn a lot about themselves as learner's .and about what language learning involves.

In my view. When we integrate skills we are thinking beyond language alone and reflect on how our teaching does. Or does not, enrich the lives of the students; and. most importantly, we are using the target language and culture to do so.

Littlewood also mentions a number of principles that ~find useful as a starting point to plan a series of lessons or course book units if we are to analyze the teaching of skills from a holistic point of view:

- **Making teaching coherent** means to ensure that tasks link together around a common topic which lasts a whole lesson or extends over a series of lessons. In this way the content will stay with the learner longer —and with it, the language. Otherwise, a random choice of topic to exemplify a language form makes it more difficult to learn the language. As there is nothing coherent to make it memorable.
- Another way to enrich our teaching of skills and make language learning more effective is **to use content worth learning about.** We should expose the students to bits of language (through Reading or Listening) that are significant for the students to produce their own language (in Writing or Speaking)
- **Using the students' intelligence**: If we want to make language laming more challenging and motivating, we should use what Chih-Hua Kuo (1993) calls process-oriented materials. The type of activities involved in the use of these materials are unpredictable in nature and the learner must interpret and make inferences and decisions, since they are cognitively>' demanding. They facilitate interaction and the development of both linguistic knowledge and communication skills. The integration of skills comes more naturally>' if we accept that the students' planning, reviewing and evaluating of their work is more motivating than a mere pattern practice, matching or repetition.
- **Fostering autonomy**: Only when the students are able to understand or express the language that they need or want, can we think that there is a sense of achievement, which is essential in the Learning process.

A group of EOI teachers in Barcelona have recently published some work (1998) on the analysis and exploitation of authentic audiovisual materials. Their conclusions point to the necessity to make the students aware that if there is a task to carry out, their outcome should be relevant for them to apply in other in classroom situations, as well as outside the classroom.

Obviously the objective for English language learners must be better communication; better communication with their peers, with sources of information and other learning resources, such as literature, songs or Internet materials. It is here, in a dynamic learning environment where the integration

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of skills, either within a lesson or within a block of lessons, makes it easier for the students to work towards a project or final product, i.e. a certain language task for which the learners are asked to produce something in English —either a letter, a poster to displa>' in the classroom. A leaflet, an advertisement, a survey, an interview or a discussion panel. The important thing is that they are using the language they need naturally and that different skills are involved in the process.

In sum, apart from the above mentioned, skill-integration mates learning more meaningful and purposeful, because the students can see that what they are learning or practicing leads to some other task. It also introduces variety in the classroom dynamics and facilitates understanding of language areas and vocabulary fields to be dealt with in an oral or written passage at later stages; for these reasons, we should also provide pre and post session activities to contextualize and extend the content of receptive skills.

Topic: 261: Order Of L2 Acquisition

The divergent attitudes towards various aspects of language learning have led to a very different order of priorities in the teaching of the four skills. The formalist tends to place high value on skill in reading and accurate writing. Communicative approaches lay emphasis on the spoken language and consider practice in oral communication to be a necessary accompaniment to fluent reading and original writing.

Whether foreign-language skills should be learnt in the order in which children learn their native language has been a matter of controversy between applied linguists. The situation of both types of learners is dissimilar in man>' ways: whereas children are forming concepts and acquiring language at the same time. Surrounded by the speech of their family group, foreign language students already possess an effective means of communication; to learn another, they must limit themselves and embarrass themselves by their obvious incapacity to express their real meaning. For many of the latter, all this language-learning business is merely a classroom activity.

Since mother tongue acquisition differs markedly from second-language study, the order of learning language skills cannot be justified, then, merely by analogy with native-language learning. As Rivers (1981) suggests, the basic question for the teacher is not one of nature or logic but of the best order of presentation from the pedagogical point of view. Many different combinations of skills seem to have been successful in introducing the student to the language. **It is what is done with the learned material to extend it as early as possible to active use that is crucial.**

Decisions on ordering of skills will largely depend on the aims of the course. Where communication skills are the main objective, listening and speaking seem the obvious place to begin. lf reading is the primary objective, texts ma>' be tackled directly through deciphering techniques. From the point of view of motivation, the aural-oral skills are a good starting point for any general course because most students come to their first language class with the notion that language is something that one hears and speaks. Such an approach is more likely to keep the students' interest, since it lends itself to more activity and participation by the students. Few people would argue against the fundamental role played by the subject's own personal involvement in linguistic tasks.

Nevertheless, many experienced teachers have objected that some students feel very insecure when they are forced to depend on the car alone. It may be thought that it is better for the students to see

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the correct, accepted version of the written language at an earlier stage and learn to use it as a help and support for learning and practice. In my view, though, it seems a reasonable approach to present all new material first in oral form, especially in the elementary sections of the course; to give the students practice in working with this material orally until they can handle it; then to train them with the script. After the students have received some help from the printed version, they should be given opportunities to practice the material orally until they can demonstrate that they have learnt it thoroughly and are able to apply it to their own situations. The matter of encoding and decoding messages through the use of the skills in a second language is connected with certain verbal abilities acquired in the mother tongue: however. The instruction to a second language will need to re-teach, to some extent, what was learnt in one's own language. In Pit Carder's words (1973: 116):

(...) Learning to read and write presupposes (at]least, in all normal people) the ability to speak and hear; in other words, it requires the possession or some verbal behavior. Thus, the language teacher is concerned not with teaching speaking and hearing, etc, but speaking it' French, or reading German or hearing Italian. The teacher does not teach language skills from scratch but rather modifies or extends these skills in some perhaps relatively superficial fashion.

We can now take an overview at some of the different possibilities and connections for an effective teaching of the skills to take place in our classroom situations.

Topic: 262: Writing and Other Skills

Writing is not a skill which can be learned in isolation. In the apprentice stage of writing, what the student must learn, apart from the peculiar difficulties of spelling or script, is a counterpart of what has to be learnt for the mastery of listening comprehension, speaking and reading —a nucleus of linguistic knowledge. The activity of writing helps to consolidate the knowledge for use in other areas, since it gives the student practice in manipulating structures and selecting and combining lexical elements.

Written questions based on a reading passage encourage the student to read the text more attentively and discover areas which were misinterpreted on the first reading. Only by hearing and reading a great deal of the language as it is spoken and written by native speakers can language learners acquire that feeling for the appropriate use of language forms and combinations, which is basic to expressive writing.

The most effective writing practice will have a close connection with what is being practiced in relation to other skills. We should be aware, though, that not everybody will reach a tight standard in composition. Interference of the first language explains the unacceptable forms that many produce in the written form, the construction of hybrid phrases without realizing that these are incomprehensible in the context of the new language.

Attempts should be made to encourage the learners to use structures and expressions they have already learned in oral practice and in reading, creating interesting and amusing pieces of expressive writing. By doing so, they' will be using much language material which otherwise would escape from their active memory.

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More effective results will be achieved in writing exercises if there is a continual integration of practice in all the skills. When the students It have read. Heard and said to themselves or others what they are expected to write, they are more likely to write it correctly.

When dictation procedures are employed for reproduction, two skills are being exercised at once: Listening and writing. The dictation practice will then be reinforcing practice in listening comprehension, as well as providing practice in accurate writing. As students advance in language learning, phrases dictated will gradually be lengthened, until students are eventually able to retain complete sentences in their immediate memory and write them down correctly.

Note taking and the writing of reports can be further developments from exercise in listening comprehension. Anything available in the recorded form or lectures themselves can be the basis for written composition. Similarly, wide reading and practice in putting some of the material read into an uncomplicated written form will consolidate the students' familiarity with many language items and mate these more available for selection in oral expression. E>' integrating skills we are also giving the learners more opportunities to understand and broaden cultural concepts, since these happen through wide variety of channels. both written and oral —apart from a wide range of visual ones In order to ensure the potential contribution of other skill areas, the teacher should promote active class discussion of what has been heard or read and encourage the presentation of short oral reports. This will follow the communicative principle of task-dependency, which is essential to make the lessons meaningful from the students' point of view.

A story may be rewritten in dialogue form, or a dialogue rewritten as a narrative. We should, however, remember that not all students have a ready flow of ideas when asked to write. even in their native language.

Therefore, composition exercises should not be designed so that they become tests of originality and invention (although imaginative students should not be discouraged to go beyond what is required). The writing of an original dialogue, using the vocabulary area of some recent writing, keeps the student practicing in the style of spoken language.

Composition exercises may profitably be linked with assignments for extensive reading. This composition may consist of a summary of the contents with a personal commentary or the narration of some aspect of the story assigned previously by the teacher. The students will then be encouraged to select their own approach and demonstrate the level of expression of which they are capable.

Topic: 263: Reading and Other Skills

Reading at advanced levels may be included as a reference tool, to provide material for more informed discussion of aspects of the target culture, but it should not be to the detriment of the time devoted to oral communication. It is preferable to use for this purpose articles from magazines and newspapers where reading is individual preparatory work, done out of the classroom. It is useful in teaching reading to make a distinction between recognition and production grammar. The syntactic details the reader needs in order to extract the important elements of the message are fewer and may be different from those which are important when producing one's own messages in speech or writing. Rivers (1981: 267) makes a clear distinction between processes in speech production and speech perception:

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Perception of spoken or written messages is primarily dependent on apprehension of semantic meaning, moving from what one perceives in the sound sequence or in the written script to the idea, with re-ensure to knowledge of syntax only when (he meaning is not clear or an ambiguity or misdirected interpretation is detected (.4 In production the speaker or writer expresses the intention or idea through the operation of the syntactic system.

Students should not be expected or encouraged to stop whenever they mere a new or rather unfamiliar word to insert a native-language gloss between the lines. This habit must be discouraged if they are to learn to think in a second language. They could increase their vocabulary by keeping individual notebooks in which they copy words they wish to remember These words should be copied down in complete phrases or sentences, so that the students are reminded of the context in which they would be appropriately used, thus providing written practice from reading input.

Extensive reading fosters vocabulary growth and the acquisition of syntax in context. By reading, one may develop personal intuitions about what good writing looks like; practicing and applying those intuitions in writing is probably the best way for a student to become a good writer in a second language. In fact, there are courses, programs and teaching practices whose rationale is based on the assumption that there is a strong relationship between reading and writing.

One of the fundamental principles in second language acquisition is the claim that people acquire a second language only if they obtain comprehensible input which they allow «in». The input hypothesis ma>' also apply to the acquisition of writing competence, as Krashen and Terell (1983) point out when they highlight the fact that reading can serve as un important source of comprehensible input and may make a significant contribution to the development of overall proficiency.

The assumption underlying is that writing competence is acquired subconsciously. Without readers being aware that they have acquired it, while they are reading. We could even go further to illustrate the connections between reading and writing. Foong (1988), points to the fact that studies It have been conducted which find that those who get pleasure from reading at all ages, especially>' at high school, are better writers, while none of the poor writers seem to report «a lot» of pleasure reading at high school. He concludes that persons with good writing ability do 'Flore reading than persons with poor writing ability.

When it comes to discussing comprehension processes through receptive skills, the terms ~<bottom-up» and ~<top-down» play a fundamental role; they describe two different paths to comprehension. They are metaphors which presuppose that we view comprehension in terms of hierarchy, with lower or higher levels of processing. Lower levels relate to the sound or print stimulus and are concerned with recognizing and decoding it: higher levels are involved with comprehending and constructing the meaning of what is being heard or read.

Bottom-up processing suggests that linguistic information is received and processed beginning with the smallest unit and ending with larger units of meaning. Meaning, at any level, is accessed only once processing at previous levels has been completed. Top-down theories. in contrast. put forward a non-linear view of the process. Comprehension begins with the reader's or listener's own contribution, making hypothesis about what is coming next and confirming predictions. In listening. the quantity of incoming information mates it impossible for the human auditory system to process all of it. Amos Paran (1997)

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mentions that the processing of information when listening must be regulated by higher level cognitive processes. Incoming information is sampled and sampling is done on the basis of the listener's expectations, previous knowledge, and what has already been processed.

Such as statement seems to suggest that when reading, however. the actor of the process has more control over the pace and can therefore vary the speed and the focus of the activity. Going back to previous units of meaning to facilitate comprehension or to reinforce ideas. This may explain the big difference in the construction of meaning between the skills of reading and listening. The different nature of the processes would also account for the various degrees of linguistic challenge and would prove that listening ma>' be more demanding than reading. Nevertheless. it would be true to say that the level of difficulty is also dependent on such factors as subject matter, register, complexity of meaning relations or lexical items. Context and so forth.

Topic: 264: Transition between Skills

Reading and understanding apiece of text is an activity which the reader is able to perform because he or she can follow relationships of thought, understand cohesive functions, infer the meaning of unknown words, and so on. The distinction between receptive and productive performance comes from the fact that the participant has to be able to understand more alternative possibilities than they have to produce.

There is a general belief amongst teachers that the recognition of an item is easier than its retrieval iii production. Curda (1973: 262) blames on the difficulty of devising means of studying receptive errors, which has prevented us from confirming these general impressions or from establishing the qualitative or quantitative relations between them:

It could well be that we overestimate the pupils receptive abilities simply because we cannot so readily detect failures in comprehension. In any act of comprehension there is a major component supplied by the situation and the hearer.

The designing of syllabuses involves man>' different considerations, linguistic, pedagogic, sociolinguistic, psychological. The number of variables are too numerous. Since we teach groups and not individuals there must be a compromise to integrate a parallel set of syllabuses: syntactic, phonological, cultural and functional, and, within each of these, a parallel set of learning tasks.

The psycholinguistic processes which go on when we perform receptive>' and expressively in the linguistic activities do not occur in isolation but in some sort of sequence of coordination. The efficient learning of reading may also involve writing or speaking. However, we must not fall into a confusion offends and means. If the end is the ability to speak, this does not rule out receptive activity or exercise as a means to that end. Some exposure to language is necessary in order to discover its rules, and consequent>' some learning of receptive skills must logically precede productive activity. We must learn something of reading before we learn to write, something of comprehension before we learn to speak.

What we aim for is a balanced method in which practice and development of a skill leads naturally to another one through useful and authentic contexts, both for understanding and producing language. Language input should therefore be used as a springboard for students' output. The final

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product should be seen as a consolidation of all that the students have learnt by working their way through a unit and not just as an extra activity.

One of the principles in which the transition between the skills is contained is that of providing pre, while and post activities in order to help students to make sense of the texts and oral passages, deal with difficult language or unknown vocabulary and develop their own strategies. Besides, they are more likely to see the point in what they are doing when activities are linked together as part of a larger task. Writing at elementary levels should be guided, as they cannot be expected to write something they have not already seen in a reading text.

One of the best ways in which smooth transitions between skills can be made is by approaching reaching and learning beyond the sole linguistic purpose. We should go beyond the artificial contents and modes of information delivery so common to language classes, and use the students' interests to engage them in a personalization.

Topic: 265: Conclusion (I)

This book has described a wide range of techniques and strategies for improving learners' reading and writing skills. These techniques and strategies should not be seen as isolated activities but need to be seen as ways of bringing the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development into practice. In other words, one of the teacher's most important jobs is to plan so that a course provides a properly balanced set of opportunities for learning. Extensive reading is good. Intensive reading provides valuable opportunities for learning. Quick writing helps develop writing fluency. However, all of these activities need to help each other and be present in the course in the proper proportion, so that learners can have an effective range of useful opportunities to learn the language and develop skill in its use.

There are many different ways of bringing the four strands into a course. It is possible for each lesson or unit of work to include each of the four strands in a roughly equal balance. This may be the easiest way of planning a balance, but if lessons are about an hour long, it is unlikely to be very successful because fluency development, for example, requires some sustained attention, and meaning-focused input works best if there are substantial amounts of input. Bringing the four strands into a unit of work which stretches over a week or two weeks is much more feasible. It is also possible to focus reasonably large parts of the course on one or two strands. Regarding fluency development, Brumfit (1985) talks of "a syllabus with holes" where the holes are parts of the course when no new language items are introduced. These provide opportunities for strengthening and becoming fluent with what is already known.

Topic: 266: Conclusion (II)

It is also possible to have a less compartmentalized approach where the four strands blend into each other. For example, a course based around themes may begin with meaning-focused input. This then becomes the focus of meaning-focused output with language-focused learning arising from it. Towards the end of the theme, the activities become fluency development because the learners have become very familiar with the material. This more integrated approach to the four strands needs to be monitored to see that there is a rough balance of time between the strands and that each strand truly exists.

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The initial motivation for developing the idea of the four strands was to make sure that courses were not dominated by language-focused learning. Three of the four strands are strongly message focused. However, it is not a virtue to go the other way, so that language-focused learning largely disappears from a course, and incidental learning (picking it up as the course goes along) becomes the sole means of learning. This is a danger to be aware of in content-based instruction (Langman, 2003). There is a place for language-focused learning in language courses and there is plenty of evidence, particularly in vocabulary learning, that a course benefits from having a suitable amount of deliberate attention to language features.

This book has looked at the teaching and learning of reading and writing for learners of English as a second or foreign language. It has suggested principles to guide reading and writing courses, and has described a large number of techniques and activities to put these principles into practice. It is worth considering the principles used to guide the teaching of reading and writing in this book, and those described in the companion book, Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking, to see how much the principles for teaching each of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are similar to each other. By doing this, it will be seen that teaching a foreign or second language can most effectively be done by applying a rather short list of principles that are largely supported by research. It has been the goal of this book to show the various ways in which these principles can be applied.

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