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Teachers Guide:

Foundations in teaching English

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Introduction

This teachers' guide is designed to support the teaching of a semester long, graduate level module in English language teaching for student teachers in China. The module is intended for pre-service teacher education and aims to prepare new teachers for English by introducing them to some of the foundational aspects of English language teaching in schools.

The design of the module is based on a combination of lecture style input and more student centred activities that allow opportunities for students to explore the course content and develop their own understanding of teaching theories and practices, with a particular emphasis on linking theory and practice.

For each topic the guide provides:

- An overview of the teaching content for each topic. Bullet points for main content areas and explanations of key concepts.
- Suggested student activities for group work with a focus on converting theory into practice. Teachers may use some or all of these activities or replace them with other tasks. These tasks are included as suggestions, and teachers can substitute tasks with different focuses to meet the needs of their students. The tasks are presented as:
 - Pre-lecture tasks that are designed as a preparation for the lecture content. These tasks are intended as a warm-up activity before the lecture.
 - In class activities that teachers can select from as student-centred activities. The activities include discussions, demonstration teaching with follow up reflections, and design and analysis tasks.
 - Follow-up tasks that can be done as homework to extend students thinking and application of ideas.
- Suggested further reading for further information

Module outline

1. Basic information about the module

This module introduces students to the theory and practice of pedagogy for teaching English. It covers the teaching and learning of the main areas of language ability specified in the English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education in China. It also includes a focus on some of the key problems that teachers may encounter in teaching English as a foreign language in the Chinese context.

2. Curriculum education objectives

1. Strengthen students' understanding and knowledge of pedagogy for teaching English;
2. Develop students' ability to link theory and practice in language pedagogy;
3. Prepare teachers to teach across the full range of language abilities in the contemporary curriculum.

3. Content and organisation

Session	Content	Teaching arrangements
Topic 1	Overview of the Curriculum for English	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 2	Principles for teaching English for communication	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 3	Student-centred teaching and integrated language skills	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 4	Teaching grammar and vocabulary	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 5	Teaching speaking	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 6	Teaching listening	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 7	Teaching reading	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 8	Teaching writing	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 9	Teaching viewing	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 10	Motivation for language learning	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 11	Teaching multilevel classes	3 classes of 45 minutes
Topic 12	Review and Assessment	3 classes of 45 minutes

4. Assessment and performance evaluation

It is important that assessment link the ideas in the module to practice rather than just focusing on recall of ideas. For example

- Students could be asked to write a lesson plan and provide a rationale for the lesson which explains their teaching decisions with reference to relevant course material.
- Students could also compile a portfolio based on the homework tasks given for each lesson and write a critical reflection on the portfolio and what it shows about their learning as a teacher of English.

Ideally, assessment could be linked to the on-campus practicum, especially to micro teaching, so that students have an opportunity to experiment with ideas and theories from the module in their own practice.

Topic by topic overview

Topic 1: Overview of the curriculum for English

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. The scope and nature of the new Chinese curriculum for teaching English
2. The key elements of teaching English

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the aims and objectives for English language teaching in the curriculum
2. Become familiar with the various components of the curriculum
3. Understand the role of the teacher in delivering the curriculum

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Curriculum development for English in China

Currently, English education in both compulsory education and senior high schools in China concentrates on nurturing students' core competences (*Suyang* 素养), as presented in the latest national *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* and *English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools* issued by Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2022 and 2018 respectively. The planning and drafting of the new curriculum standards were initiated in 2013 to meet the needs of the ever-changing world. As is always the case, the new official guidelines for English teaching and learning are introduced as part of the overall reform of basic education in China. To fully interpret the ideology of these new curriculum standards and to understand the necessity of their implementation in China's basic education, we will first go through the goals of three major initiatives for the educational reforms in China from early 1990s until the present, namely *Shuangji* 双基, *Sanwei* 三维 and *Suyang* 素养 to understand how the current curricula have been developed and how language teaching in China has changed over time..

***Shuangji* 双基 (early 1990s to 2000)**

The two representative English syllabi, the *English syllabus for full-time junior middle schools of nine-year compulsory education* and the *English syllabus for full-time senior high schools* were issued by Ministry of Education in 1992 and 1993 respectively. The guidelines for English education in senior high schools were published for the first time to address the problem of the disconnection between English education in junior middle school and senior high schools. The aim was for the concrete goals for English in junior middle schools and senior high schools to be different but always consistent to serve for the same general goal, with the latter building on the former.

In both syllabi, the goal of Double Basics or Double Fundamentals (*Shuangji* 双基) was emphasised. 'Shuangji 双基' highlighted the significance of nurturing students' basic/fundamental English knowledge and basic/fundamental English skills. The goal for teaching and learning English subject was to cultivate talents with a command of English, who could communicate competently in the language.

During this time, the English subject was more instrumentally focused, and English was learned mainly as a tool for communication purposes. During this period, students' academic performance improved but various problems associated with the overemphasis on the double basics arose, of which the main one was the persistent existence of 应试教育 (Examination-oriented education).

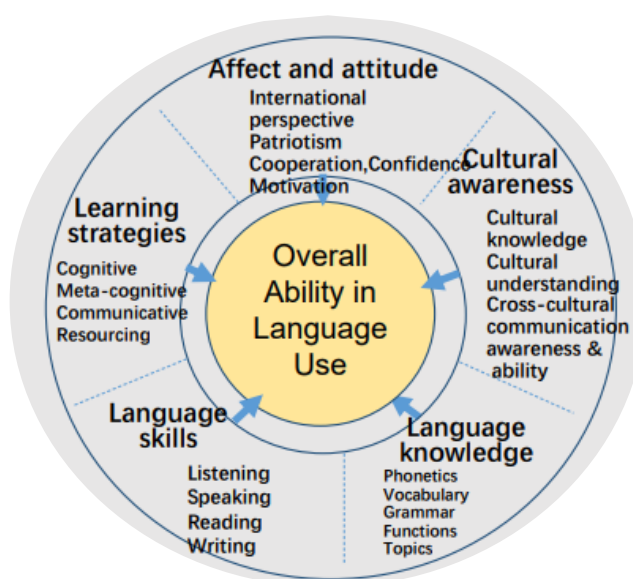
***Sanwei* 三维 (early 2000 to 2017)**

The two representative English curriculum standards, the *English curriculum standards for compulsory education* and the *English curriculum standards for senior high schools* were issued by Ministry of Education in 2001 and 2003 respectively.

It is important to note that at this time, the term 'standards' instead of 'syllabus' was used for both the curriculum guidelines. According to Cheng (2011), the change of terminology was of great significance, which meant 'clearly an indication of the endorsement of the standards movement since the 1990s' (p.133). The standards intended to specify the targets that students should be able to reach

by the end of that corresponding educational stage. Therefore, specific standards were expected from basic education as the result of the establishment of these curricula.

The primary goal of this round educational reform was to promote learners' development instead of simply transmitting subject knowledge. For the specific English subject curriculum goal, both curriculum standards emphasised the importance of nurturing students' overall ability in language use (综合语言应用能力) (See Figure 1), which encompassed five different aspects, including English knowledge, English skills, English learning strategies, cultural consciousness, as well as affect, attitude, and values. This goal is often summarised as the Three-Dimensional Curriculum Goals or Three-Dimensional Targets (*Sanwei* 三维), with knowledge and skills as the first dimension, process and steps as the second dimension and affect, attitude and values as the third dimension. It is vital to note that the three dimensions are understood as an organic unity.



**Figure 1: Curriculum goals in 2001 and 2003 *English Curriculum Standards*:
Source Wang (2022)**

Sanwei 三维 is an upgrade from *Shuangji* 双基, based on which additional dimensions were added. In addition, English as a subject was no longer learned only for its instrumental role, i.e., knowledge and skills, but also for the thoughts and behaviours behind the knowledge and skills, as well as for the attitudes, emotions and values embedding these thoughts and behaviours. Thus, *Shuangji* 双基 emphasised only the students' level of English, particularly the ability to communicate while *Sanwei* 三维 stressed not only students' command of English, but also their strategies and interest in learning English, which could contribute to students' future needs as well. To conclude, *Sanwei* 三维 requires students be taught as a whole person.

The goal of *Sanwei* 三维 was put forward mainly to accommodate the demand for more competent and qualified users of English due to China's economic development, increased international cultural and intellectual engagement. Importantly, education was understood as no longer only serving the purpose of economic growth but also human development.

In summary, during this time, the learning of the English subject in basic education was emphasised for both instrumentality as a useful tool and humanity as a medium for students' personal growth. This round of curriculum reform is generally referred to as 素质教育 (Quality education) and highlighted the importance of whole-person education, as 'the antidote' to the excesses of yingshi jiaoyu 应试教育.

Suyang 素养 (2018 onwards)

The two representative English curriculum standards, the *English curriculum standards for compulsory education* and the *English curriculum standards for senior high schools* were issued by Ministry of Education in 2022 and 2018 respectively.

The primary goal of this round of educational reform was 立德树人 (to foster virtues in talent development, developing morality and cultivating humanity)', with cultivating new generations equipped with ideals, ability, and a strong sense of responsibility as both the starting point and the ultimate goal. This acknowledges the fundamental role of values going beyond knowledge, skills, capabilities, and affect, to cultivating human beings that value family, community, society and nation. In addition, it is consistently emphasised in the curricula that the awareness of a global community with a shared future should be cultivated.

The reform was also a reflection of China's own context and the influence of another new prevailing worldwide educational ideology. In 2015, UNESCO published *Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?* (UNESCO, 2015) to address the emergence of a new global context of learning. This new thinking on education has a far-reaching impact on the education policies and practices of countries around the world. The publication reaffirms the humanistic approach to education and acknowledges the essential role of education, as the most powerful transformative force, can play in ensuring fundamental aspects of our common humanity in a complex and rapidly changing world. In other words, education should contribute to sustainable human and social development. This view of the purpose of education has been expanded from a personal level to a social level, towards the common good of humanity, as is pointed out in the publication:

Humanity has entered a new phase in its history with increasingly rapid developments in science and technology. These have both utopian and dystopian possibilities. For us to benefit in an emancipatory, just and sustainable way, we must understand and manage the opportunities and the risks. Making this possible should be the fundamental purpose of education and learning in the twenty-first century. It should also be the basic task of UNESCO, as a global laboratory of ideas, to enhance our understanding (UNESCO, 2015, p. 84)

This international guideline of education is in line with the primary goals of '立德树人' mentioned above, as stated in the new curriculum (MOE, 2018, 2022).

For the specific English subject curriculum goals, both curriculum standards emphasised Core Competencies (*Suyang 素养*), which were defined by China as 'the key competencies, character, and values that individuals show when they apply knowledge and skills to deal with complex situations' (Wang, 2019, p.236). The notion of 'key competencies' also originated from international initiatives.

The idea of key competencies has been supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which initiated a project in late 1997 to provide a sound conceptual framework for them. In 2003, this resulted in *Key competencies for a successful life and well-functioning society* (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Three categories of key competencies were identified, (1) interacting in socially heterogeneous groups; (2) acting autonomously; and (3) using tools interactively. The key competencies identified within the three broad categories are believed to be the competencies needed for an individual to face the complex challenges of the modern world, to live a successful life and to build a well-functioning society. This framework has also been used to guide some performance evaluations of education systems, like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In addition, in 2006, the European Union also published its own document on key competencies based on its own research agenda. The document titled *Key competencies for lifelong learning- A European reference framework* (European Parliament and of the Council, 2006) outlines eight key competencies to prepare the citizens in its member states to adapt to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world. The eight key competencies are communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competencies in science and technology; digital competencies, learning to learn, social and civic competencies, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression.

As a result of such work, countries around the world have joined the initiative to establish their own framework of key competencies reflecting their national characteristics. The new curriculum standards were built around core competencies with a Chinese understanding and characteristics. The core competencies the English subject seeks to cultivate in learners include language ability, cultural awareness, thinking capacity, and learning ability (语言能力, 文化品格, 思维品质和学习能力) (See Figure 2). These core competencies are stressed as an integrated educational focal point for the new curriculum standards, which are intended to play a crucial role in developing students' positive values, essential character traits, and those key skills necessary for their life-long learning and social development. They are not independent elements but intertwined with each other. Among these, language ability is the foundation; cultural awareness concerns value orientation; thinking capacity embodies the characteristics of mental and intellectual development; and learning ability is the key driving force behind them all.



**Figure 2: Curriculum goals in 2017 and 2022 *English Curriculum Standards*:
Source Wang, (2022)**

Therefore, *Suyang* 素养 is also an upgrade from *Sanwei* 三维, with further integration and improvement. Compared to all the previous curriculum standards published, 学业质量 (Learning performance levels or achievement standards) have been added as a new section to the curriculum standards. This is the first time that curriculum standards have explicitly listed the standards for assessing students' learning performance. The significance of such a move has been frequently emphasised in the literature. The prescribed learning performance standards should not only be closely associated with the assessments in high-stakes exams but also provide a reference for assessing students' learning performance and creating the exam paper for 高考 Gaokao (The National College Entrance Examination). In addition, since learning performance is a reflection of students' mastery of the key competencies, the standards support the assessment of students' key competencies at different stages during their study.

To summarize, it is important to note that the three main rounds of education reforms since the 1990s in China has never been a total denial or rejection of the previous educational approaches, but instead, the new educational initiatives are all based on earlier versions and developed them further. Throughout these reforms, China has intended to answer the three fundamental questions related to education: what kind of persons we aspire to develop, how we will develop them, and for whom they are developed (培养什么人, 如何培养人, 为谁培养人). The first initiative *Shuangji* 双基 failed to answer the three questions adequately, since the English subject was only valued for its instrumentality, resulting in a missing emphasis on learning agents as persons. The second initiative, *Sanwei* 三维, began to value the integration of instrumentality and humanity in the English subject, by emphasizing that teaching was an activity to nurture persons. But still, it did not give a satisfactory answer to the three questions. Too often, during the implementation, the Three-Dimensional Targets were treated as three different aspects of teaching goals, resulting in fragmentation in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, *Sanwei* 三维 did not sufficiently nurture students' development of key competencies.

For the third initiative of *Suyang* 素养, education authorities have acknowledged the value of the new curriculum and reached a consensus that the new curriculum has answered the three questions well both in theory and in practice. Regarding the first question, the new curriculum standards take fostering students' virtue and enhancing students' all-rounded development as their fundamental mission. In addition, a learning activities-based approach (学习活动观) that integrates learning, thinking and innovation has been introduced as a suggested route for accomplishing the ideals of the curriculum standards, which answers the second question. As for the last one, learners are educated not only for personal and national development but also for the shared future of all the mankind.

***Teaching Suyang* 素养**

The new curricula include descriptions of the four factors of *Suyang* 素养 as well as a suggested approach to teach them: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking capacity, and learning ability (语言能力, 文化品格, 思维品质和学习能力). They describe an approach to designing teaching activities, i.e., a learning activities-based approach (学习活动观) and a way to assess students' achievement levels, i.e., learning performance levels or achievement standards 学业质量. Therefore, to teach *Suyang* 素养, we need first to have a clear idea of what the four factors are, how the suggested

pedagogy could be employed, and how to maintain the consistency of learning, teaching and assessment, by taking into consideration of the stipulated performance standards.

Simply put, according to the new curriculum standards, the elaborations of the four factors of *Suyang* 素养 are as follows:

- Language ability 语言能力 refers to the ability to understand and express meaning by using both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge as well as a range of different strategies. In addition, there is also an expectation that students will develop their awareness of similarities and differences between the Chinese and English languages, and gradually establish a sense of the English language and use the language for meaningful communication and exchange.
- Cultural awareness 文化品格 means an understanding of both Chinese and foreign cultures, not only to be able to recognize and appreciate cultures, but also developing appropriate cross-cultural cognition, attitudes, and behaviours. With this ability, students would be able to learn about the advantages of different cultures, compare cultures, and enhance cross-cultural communication capacities. Additionally, through developing cultural awareness, students will be able to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and thus develop their own cultural identity and build confidence in their own culture.
- Thinking capacity 思维品质 is the capabilities students employ in thinking and the quality of that thinking, including understanding, analysing, referring, judging, critiquing, creating, and synthesizing. Logical thinking, innovative thinking and criticality are all expected to be developed during the learning process.

Learning ability 学习能力 emphasises students' awareness of and ability to use and adjust to learning strategies and to expand their channels for learning English. Particularly, it highlights the importance of students establishing appropriate goals for learning English to sustain their interest during the learning process. Independent and collaborative learning styles are both stressed. Reflection and self-management are also valued. Overall, learning ability is essential for developing good habits for enacting life-long learning.

To achieve these goals and contribute to the final goal of '立德树人' (fostering virtues in talent development), a learning activities-based approach (学习活动观) that integrates learning, thinking, and innovation is advised in the new curricula with concrete examples in the new curricula. The curriculum follows the education theory of learning through experiencing (学习理解), applying through practicing(应用实践) and creating through skills transfer (迁移创新).

The activities that the approach proposes are associated these three broad categories and there are also three sub-activities within each of the broad categories.

For learning through experiencing (学习理解), activities include 'perceiving and noticing (感知和注意), acquiring and sorting (获取与梳理), and summarizing and synthesizing (概括与整合)'. These activities are designed for students to build the foundation for an in-depth understanding of a text as well as its associated cultural values, by gaining an idea of new text, integrating it with their existing knowledge and building their structural knowledge about a particular topic.

For applying through practicing (应用实践), activities include describing and interpreting (描述与尝试), analysing and judging (分析与判断), and internalizing and applying (内化与应用)'. These activities are meant for students to experience the new culture and thus achieve a transformation from knowledge to ability, by internalizing the new knowledge of language and culture and exploring the cultural phenomena and connotations behind the language.

For creating through skills transfer (迁移创新), activities cover reasoning and arguing (推理与论证), judging and commenting (评判与评价) and imagining and creating (想象与创造). These activities intend to enable students to solve similar problems creatively in an unfamiliar context, express their views and emotions in an appropriate way by using the language, perspectives, thoughts, and methods they acquire from the learning process and associating it with their own lived realities.

The activities in the three categories are building on each other and by employing such activities, students are able to take responsibility for their own learning by engaging with and accomplishing these activities. Teachers can nurture students' key competencies by respecting their role as learning agents in the classroom and enhancing their ability to cope with similar problems in an unfamiliar environment in future, as the curriculum expects.

To ensure that the teaching and learning are consistent with what the curriculum proposes, it is vital to maintain an alignment of teaching, learning, and assessment (教-学-评一体化). This alignment can be understood in terms of three sub-alignments, which orient to the same goal(s), including the consistency between learning and teaching, between teaching and assessing, and between assessing and learning (see Figure 3).

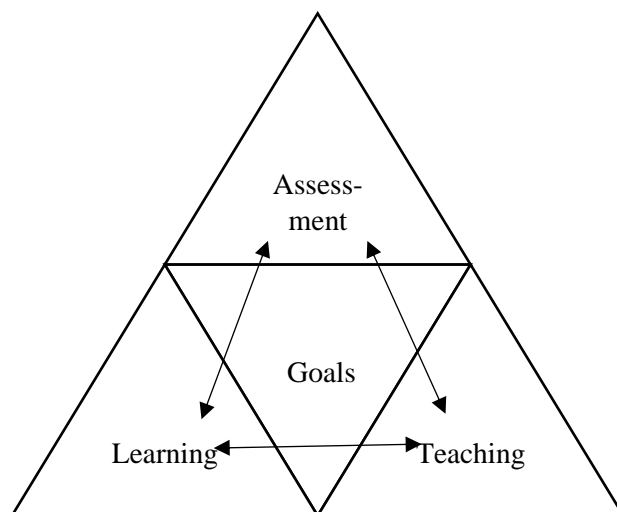


Figure 3: Teaching-Learning-Assessment Alignment. Source Cui & Lei (2015, p.17)

It is believed that by integrating assessment into the teaching system, we can promote both teachers' teaching and students' learning through assessment. To be more specific, teachers can design their teaching retrospectively based on the goals they intend to achieve, which is an effective way for designing teaching.

Suggested activities for teaching

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

At the beginning of the class, students discuss the following question in groups: What do you think the main goals are for teaching English in China.

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Group discussion: The teacher assigns the students one of the four curriculum standards to discuss in groups. Students identify the main features of each standard and discuss the implications of the standard for English language teaching. Students share their conclusions with the whole class.

Group discussion: The teacher plays the students the following video of a Chinese expert's view regarding the changes of the new curriculum:

https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1M4411M75r/?spm_id_from=333.337.search-card.all.click.

While watching the videos, students could take notes about what they think are the most important issues for teaching practice. After watching the videos, students discuss the issues they have identified and the implications these have for English language teaching.

Group discussion: The teacher divides students into groups to discuss the question: In your experience as a learner of English, what elements of the four curriculum standards do you think were included in your education and which were missing? For those that you think were included, how well did your learning address each of the standards.

Follow-up tasks - homework

After the class, students write a reflection on the four curriculum standards and consider which aspects of teaching the standards are likely to be the most challenging for you?

Suggested further reading

Cheng, X. (2018). On the achievement standards for high school English curriculum[高中英语学业质量标准研究]. *Curriculum, Teaching materials and Methods*, 38(4), 64-70.

Mei, D. (2021). 致力于培养具有中国情怀、国际视野和跨文化沟通能力的时代新人. *English Language Learning*, 3, 60-65.

MOE(2018). *English curriculum standards for high schools* [普通高中英语课程标准]. People's Education Press.

MOE (2022). *English curriculum standards for compulsory education* [义务教育英语课程标准]. Beijing Normal University Press.

Wang, Q. (2022). *Understanding the implications of the 2022 primary & junior high English curriculum* [Webinar]. British Council China. <https://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/teach/emerging-English-webinar2022>

Wang, Q., & Li, L. (2019). Integrating Teaching-Learning-Assessment in the EFL classroom in the context of developing key competencies: Significance, theories and methods[推动核心素养背景下英语课堂教—学—评一体化:意义、理论与方法]. *Curriculum, Teaching and Methods*, 39(5), 114-120.

Wang, Q., Qian, X., & Wu, H. (2021). 指向英语学科核心素养的英语学习活动观——内涵、架构、优势、学理基础及实践初效. *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools*, 7, 1-6.

Yu, W., & Long, A. (2022). On the pedagogical meaning of the new curriculum standards for compulsory education[论义务教育新课程标准的教育学意义]. *Curriculum, Teaching and Methods*,42(6),4-13.

Topic 2: Principles for teaching English for communication

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Communicative competence
2. Form-focused teaching and communicatively focused teaching

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the nature and purpose of communicative teaching
2. Develop knowledge of common communicative activities for teaching English (e.g., jigsaw, task-completion, information gathering, information transfer, reasoning gap, role-play)

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Approaches to language teaching prior to the Communicative Approach

Language education has a long history, but it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that it was established as a discipline in its own right (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). To develop theoretically sound and effective teaching approaches, second language pedagogy has largely borrowed from linguistics, second language acquisition (SLA), and the psychology of learning. Consequently, several divergent teaching methods and approaches have emerged throughout the years as second language practitioners and researchers have sought to respond to the needs and prevailing theories of the times. Some of these approaches were adopted for a brief period, after which they fell into disuse, while others have emerged as widely used ways of understanding language teaching and learning, as is the case of communicative language teaching (CLT). Before reviewing the core principles of this widely used approach, it is useful to summarise of the approaches that have shaped language teaching and learning over time and consider how language education has been understood in different ways.

One influential understanding of language teaching has been the grammar-translation method (GTM), or traditional method, which focused strongly on the learning of second language grammar rules and vocabulary that would allow learners to apply this knowledge to translation tasks. The GTM remained highly popular until the early twentieth century, but modified versions of it are still practiced in various part of the world today. Some of the main characteristics of this method include the use of direct translation in and out of the second language, the deductive learning of grammar rules, memorising vocabulary, the use of the learners' first language as the medium of instruction, the sentence as the unit of analysis, and a greater focus on reading and writing skills than on listening and speaking skills. In addition, given its grammatical focus, the method has been regarded as an early example of a cognitive view of language learning which posits that learners possess the linguistic knowledge and

mental ability to pick up any language. However, the popularity that the GTM enjoyed during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century started to decline as the focus of language learning moved from learning about language to focus more on using the language for communication and an increasing demand for second language oral proficiency due to a growth in contact between speakers of other languages.

The military need for speakers and interpreters of foreign languages during World War II, for instance, prompted the emergence of the Audiolingual method in the United Kingdom and the United States. The articulation of this method was highly influenced by the dominant theories of the time about language, which was a structuralist view that emphasised language as an autonomous set of structural systems (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax), and about learning, in particular behaviourist learning theory that emphasised the acquisition of knowledge from repeated experience. In Audiolingualism, Language learning is understood as the result of habit formation through the repetition and reinforcement of correct grammatical structures. This means that the learner's language environment played a decisive role in the learning process, and extensive drilling, repetition of dialogues, and memorisation tasks were used to provide the necessary input to master native-like accuracy. Moreover, to prevent errors, the structures that differed most from the learner's first language were emphasised, and the development of listening and speaking skills were prioritised.

In the late 1950s, the cognitive-generativist Noam Chomsky challenged the idea that learning a language was entirely dependent on external stimuli by asserting that it was also a mental process. In accounting for the learners' linguistic capacities, he contended that humans have an innate ability for languages. His theory proposes that we are equipped with a universal grammar device: a specialised element in our brains that contains the building blocks of the grammars of all human languages. Accordingly, this knowledge, which Chomsky called Universal Grammar, is what enables language learners to make grammatical decisions and judgments about a specific language. Chomsky argued that learning happens through an unconscious testing of language input against universal grammar in order to discover the grammar of a particular language. Chomsky's work was adapted to second language teaching, and this led to an emphasis on the idea that the teacher's main role was to provide meaningful input that learners could draw on to construct their own language learning. An example of a popular teaching approach informed by cognitive views is the PPP (presentation, practice, production) approach.

Presentation: A written or spoken text is used by the teacher to present the grammar in context .

Practice: A controlled practice phase where the learner produces the structure using activities such as drills and transformations, gap-fill and cloze, and multiple-choice tasks.

Production: The learner uses the structure in freer communication such as in dialogues.

In practice, PPP involves introducing learners to the language elements they need to learn by eliciting and cueing of target language structures followed by a series of exercises to practice them at varying degrees of structuredness, and finally the creative use of the target language items in communication.

It is undeniable that Chomsky and his followers made significant contributions to the understanding of language learning; however, their postulates were not free from contestation. Although valuing the distance that generativists took from behaviourism, advocates of functional and socio linguistics, for example, argued that the emphasis that generativists placed on the grammatical properties of language

undermined the value of other equally important aspects such as its communicative and social function. Functionalist approaches to linguistics, on the one hand, viewed language as a means for expressing meaning and performing actions in the real world. Sociolinguists, on the other hand, added a social dimension to language use and argued that language was a context-dependent communicative tool for social interaction. In emphasising the communicative and social aspects of language both approaches contributed to a broader definition of language and a major turning point in second language pedagogy and research: the communicative turn.

The communicative movement started in the 1960's as second language practitioners and researchers became convinced of the need of a more comprehensive approach towards language teaching and learning that would focus specifically of developing learners' ability to communicate. The call for second language educators to move beyond grammatical accuracy to focus more on spontaneous, fluent, and meaningful language use came mostly from theoreticians of language. Little was said at that time about learning theories that could support CLT, but some of its principles were later found compatible with the following theories: sociocultural learning theory, a skill-learning model, and interactional theory. For their advocates, learning was thought to be facilitated through social interaction, scaffolding by an expert, experimentation, cognitive internalisation and processing of desirable behaviour, cooperative work. All these theoretical underpinnings set the foundations for one of the most influential teaching approaches in second language education, the communicative language teaching approach.

While there have been different approaches to language teaching that have emerged at different times, current teaching practice of individual teachers is often a mixture of different teaching approaches that results from teachers contributing to teach according to the ways they themselves have learnt while at the same time adopting new ideas about teaching. One problem is that often teachers do not fully understand what different ways of teaching aim to do and why certain approaches were developed and there may even be conflicts between the different ways of teaching they use that result from their lack of knowledge of different ways of teaching.

Models of Communicative Competence

The aim of CLT is the development of Communicative Competence. Communicative competence, broadly defined as the knowledge and skills to use language in a range of communicative situations in appropriate ways, started to gain ground in theoretical discussions of second language teaching and learning in the late twentieth century as a reaction to the prevailing tendencies at the time. Since its introduction in the early 1970's, the construct has been revisited and revised at different points in time leading to the development of more comprehensive definitions and detailed frameworks for second language pedagogy.

In 1972, the sociolinguist Dell Hymes coined the term Communicative Competence to make a contrast between his communicative view of language and Chomsky's assertions of competence as being restricted to grammatical knowledge only. Hymes defined Communicative Competence as a crucial aspect of linguistic ability. He specifically used the term Communicative Competence to refer to the ability to use linguistic knowledge appropriately in a variety of social contexts in order to achieve communicative goals. Using this definition, he attempted to draw attention to the knowledge (*of social norms of language use*) required for effective communication.

Among the most influential models of Communicative Competence for second language pedagogy is the work of Canale and Swain (1980). In 1980, they presented a framework that advocated for the application of a communicative approach from the onset of second language learning and presented a model of Communicative Competence that would help focus teaching and learning. As a practical guide, they proposed the following general principles for teaching:

- a communicative approach must be responsive to the learner's communicative needs,
- learners need to be given the possibility to engage in meaningful interaction with competent language speakers in real situations, and so they need to be involved in genuine communication tasks,
- emphasis should be placed on the communication of intended meaning as opposed to appropriateness at the beginning of second language learning, and
- the teaching of grammar must be contextualised in a meaningful way from the start of second language study.

In their model, Communicative Competence consists of both knowledge (*of grammatical principles, of language use in social contexts, and of discourse principles*) and skills (*practical use of knowledge*) as equally crucial for effective second language communication. They proposed four main dimensions of Communicative Competence:

- *Grammatical competence* includes knowledge of the sounds of the language, how the language is written, vocabulary, processes of word formation, and how sentences are formed.
- *Sociolinguistic competence* comprises the knowledge of the norms of language use and discourse which enables individuals to engage in interaction with others. It also focuses on learners' ability to use appropriate grammatical forms for different communicative functions in different social contexts.
- *Discourse competence* is related to the learners' understanding and producing extended language in listening, speaking, reading and writing and how to construct cohesive and coherent messages that are longer than a single sentence.
- *Strategic competence* refers to strategies that learners use to overcome grammatical, sociolinguistic or discourse difficulties. Such strategies can include paraphrases, requests for repetition, clarification, or slower speech, or the use of reference sources such as dictionaries.

Based on Canale and Swain's work, Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) presented a revised model of Communicative Competence. Their model was made up of five dimensions: linguistic (instead of grammatical) competence, sociocultural (rather than sociolinguistic) competence, actional competence (the ability to understand and express communicative intent), strategic competence, and discourse competence. Celce-Murcia (2007) broadened the scope of actional competence by using the term interactional competence (ability to perform speech acts and speech act sets, conversational turn-taking, paralinguistic features of oral interactions), and added formulaic competence (the ability to use fixed and prefabricated language) to draw attention to the role that lexical chunks play in everyday interactions.

Another influential theoretical framework for communicative ability was proposed by Bachman and Palmer in 1996, which was later revised in 2010. According to Bachman and Palmer communicative ability is influenced by several factors such as the participants' knowledge of the subject matter, their

past emotional experiences in relation to communication, and their language knowledge/ability; this latter was regarded to play a crucial role. In their multilevel model, they distinguish between knowledge about/of language (language knowledge) and the cognitive abilities for language use (strategic competence/metacognitive strategies). With regards to language knowledge, they identified two types of knowledge: organisational (composed of formal language structures: textual and grammatical knowledge) and pragmatic (comprised of lexical, functional, and sociocultural knowledge). Within organisational knowledge, grammatical knowledge is equivalent to Canale and Swain’s grammatical competence, and textual knowledge is similar to Canale and Swain’s discourse competence. Pragmatic knowledge, on the other hand, comprises the knowledge of the components and sociolinguistic conventions that enable us to connect words to their meanings (and intended meanings), express acceptable language functions, and interpret the speakers’/writers’ intentions in oral and written discourse in a variety of contexts.

Table 1: Significant implications of communicative language ability for teaching and learning.
Adapted from Hedge (2001).

Aspect of communicative competence	What learners need to learn
Linguistic competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accuracy in the grammatical forms of the language • pronounce the forms appropriately, • use of stress, rhythm, and intonation to express meaning • a range of vocabulary • the script and spelling rules
Pragmatic competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relationship between grammatical forms and functions • use of stress and intonation to express attitude and emotion • the scale of formality (very informal to very formal) • understanding and use emotive tone • the pragmatic rules of language • how to select language forms appropriate to topic, listener, etc.
Discourse competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to take longer turns in talk, and open and close conversations • how to use discourse markers, • how to appreciate and produce contextualised written texts in a variety of genres • how to use cohesive devices in reading and writing texts • how to cope with authentic texts
Strategic competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to take risks in using both spoken and written language • how to use a range of communication strategies • the language needed to use some communication strategies, e.g. “what do you call a thing that.../person who...”
Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dealing with the information gap of real discourse, • processing language and respond appropriately with a degree of ease, • responding with reasonable speed in “real time”.

Although there are a few differences between the models previously described, at least four different communicative competences cut across all models and have been regarded as essential learning targets in order to achieve high levels of language proficiency. In Table 1, Hedge (2001) presents a detailed account of the communicative abilities that language learners are expected to develop based on the most influential models of communicative competence.

The definition of the elements comprising Communicative Competence has significant consequences for setting up the goals of language learning and teaching. In reviewing the specific elements of communicative competence, we can better understand the goals of communicative language teaching and learning, detect our learners' communicative needs, and plan ways to respond to them accordingly. To devise communicative tasks, it is important to be familiar with the guiding principles of a CLT approach. Let us finish this chapter with a brief account of the key principles and characteristics of CLT.

Core principles of CLT

CLT has remained the preferred approach to language teaching over the past sixty years and although interpreted and enacted in various ways, there is some consensus as to the following key principles and defining characteristics:

- The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses and not only its grammatical features and these need to be integrated into language teaching and learning.
- Learners need to be active users of the language for communication not passive recipients of knowledge. This means involving learners in tasks where they exchange or gather information for a known purpose.
- Language is understood as the means for communication, therefore learning a language means acquiring the knowledge and developing the abilities to create and interpret meaning.
- Language instruction should focus on functional meaning and fluency rather than just on accuracy. This entails fostering the learner's ability to produce meaningful and fluent ideas.
- Language instruction should favour the learners' engagement in meaningful and purposeful tasks through exposure to authentic language use (as used outside the classroom).
- Learning implies creative and collaborative construction. Throughout the learning process, trial and error are common practices, hence language mistakes and errors should not be punished, but viewed as intrinsic parts to learning.
- The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator instead of an instructor or model for correct language use. This implies making sensitive and strategic decisions as to our corrective feedback and attitudes to learners' errors,
- Learners are expected to participate actively, take on responsibility for their learning, and work collaboratively with others.

Bearing these principles in mind can help us to plan and design classroom activities that contribute to the development and enhancement of our learners' second language communicative abilities.

Some key ideas in teaching language as communication

Focus on forms, focus on meaning, focus on form

In language teaching it is possible to focus on grammar in language in different ways.

Focus of *forms* refers to making grammatical forms the main focus of instruction. The focus is on knowing what grammatical structures are and how they are constructed in the language. This is the traditional focus in language classrooms and involves explanation of grammatical forms and practice of grammar, and only moving to using grammar in communication once students know it.

Focus on *meaning* refers to a teaching approach that emphasises the use of language in communication and does not include explicit instruction about grammar. The language being used is treated as input and the teachers' role is to help students understand and produce meaning. Students learn grammar from understanding meaningful language, not form instruction.

Focus of *form* is an attempt to balance between the extremes of the other two approaches refers to drawing learners' attention to grammar in context. In focus on form, the main focus of the lesson is on communication and grammar is brought in when it is needed to support a focus on meaning. Focus of forms involves:

- using classroom tasks that promote learner engagement with meaning before they consider the form; that is teaching about grammar forms follows from observing grammar in use in communication (e.g., in reading, listening or viewing);
- supporting learners in noticing how forms are used in communication for themselves as the starting point for learning grammar.
- ensuring that instruction of grammar is not the main focus of the teaching and is done to help consolidate what students have discovered for themselves.

Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the extent to which what language learners do reflects the 'real' world. It is based on an underlying assumption that what is done in classrooms may not be as real for students as what is done in other contexts. In language-teaching, authenticity has mainly been applied to texts (spoken or written) and has referred to the idea of texts that have not been designed specifically for language learning, e.g., newspaper reports, tourism websites, television programs, etc. However, authenticity is not simply related to where a text comes from but also to how it is used for the purposes of learning. It is therefore possible to think about the authenticity of how students use a text and respond to it. This means that authenticity is also a feature of classroom language use, not just something that exists outside the classroom. This means that authenticity can mean something that is real for the students themselves; that is, something that learners can connect with or respond to in a personal way, such as by connecting the content of a text to their own lives. Both types of authenticity are important. Engaging with texts designed for genuine communication can develop language abilities that can be drawn on in communication outside the classroom. It is especially when materials are used as experiences of the language being learnt that open possibilities for learners to focus on the content of the text and not simply focus on the language forms of the text.

Suggested activities for teaching

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: Students discuss in groups one of the following questions: What do you believe the main focus of language learning should be? or What does using a language effectively mean?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Discussion: In small groups, students identify a class from their previous learning that helped to develop their communicative ability and specify the characteristics of the lesson that contributed most to their communicative learning (focus on role of the teacher and the students, the teaching procedures used, the material provided, the learning task, etc).

Textbook analysis: In groups, students examine a learning unit from a textbook that is widely used for teaching English. The students examine the tasks included in the unit and identify how each task develops communicative competence. They then consider which aspects of communicative competence are included in the unit and which are not included.

Whole group discussion: The teacher shows a video of a teacher implementing a communicative task and discuss it with the class (focus on the CLT principles that the teacher is applying, i.e, focus on meaning, fluency, authenticity of the material, teacher's role, etc.).

Follow-up tasks - homework

Task development: Students work an example of a learning task designed according to a more traditional approach and consider ways of making it more communicative.

Suggested further reading:

- Kanwit, M., & Solon, M. (Eds.). (2023). *Communicative competence in a second language: Theory, method, and applications*. Taylor & Francis.
- Littlewood, W. (2011). Communicative language teaching: An expanding concept for a changing world. In Hinkle E. (ed.) *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 541-557). Routledge.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge university press.
- Savignon, S. J. (2018). Communicative competence. *The TESOL encyclopaedia of English language teaching*. John Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0047>

Topic 3: Student-centred teaching

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. The theory and practice of student-centered pedagogy
2. Integrating language skills to develop communicative abilities in student-centred teaching

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the purpose and value of integrating language skills
2. Understand how to connect tasks across different language skills
3. Understand how to select, adapt and design materials and tasks to create integrated tasks

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

What is a student-centred approach?

A student-centred (or learner-centred) approach is a wide-ranging view of teaching and learning which places the emphasis on the learners' 'acquisition of language skills, participation in communicative processes and the construction of language knowledge' (Benson, 2012, p. 31). This approach can be applied in different ways within, and outside, the language classroom to support learners in using the target language effectively and more independently.

The student-centred class is a move away from traditional teacher-centred classes which place the emphasis on the teacher as being in a position of authority and the provider of knowledge who is distant from the students. In teacher-centred instruction, the teacher has great responsibility for student learning, leading them in instruction with a focus on grammar and repetition to produce accurate fixed language structures. In contrast, the student-centred approach focuses the 'classroom and curriculum processes on the needs, preferences and goals of individual learners and progressively involves them in negotiation and decision-making processes that affect their learning' (Benson, 2012, p. 35). This approach requires learners to take a more active role in their learning under the guidance of the teacher.

Roles of teacher and student in student-centred learning

The role of the teacher in student-centred learning changes in that they still have great responsibility for student learning as in a teacher-centred approach, but this is on a more equal basis with students and encourages students to take more responsibility for their own learning. This may seem difficult to achieve in practice, especially in contexts where assessments and grading are the foremost concerns for teachers and students. There are also other factors to consider such as the students' previous experiences of language learning and whether the cultural expectation places sole responsibility for learning on the teacher. It is important therefore, to take into account the individual differences among learners and how these can impact the language learning process.

As language learners, students bring their individual experiences, which have been culturally influenced, along with their personal motivations for learning English and affective factors such as their attitudes and personality. While it is not possible to cater for every difference between learners, the teacher can make an effort to promote a positive attitude towards language learning, to provide a range of motivating tasks and activities to enable different personality types to contribute, to build students' self-confidence and enhance motivation to learn with supportive feedback.

The teacher's role in setting up tasks and activities to promote student-centred learning requires them to be able to manage classroom activities and interactions successfully to make clear to learners what they need to do in the activity and why they are doing it. Therefore, the teacher's actions in giving clear instructions, monitoring, giving guidance to support students as needed, and encouraging active participation are important. Students can be encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning using a variety of ways, some practices that promote student-centred learning include:

- Giving students more control over their learning and allowing them to make decisions about what they will learn and how
- Encouraging learners to make more choices and decisions in the classroom
- Giving learners a more active role in constructing knowledge in the classroom rather than just listening to instruction
- Encouraging more student-student interaction such as small group work or pair work
- Allowing students to take on teaching and assessment roles
- Encouraging independent inquiry inside or outside the classroom
- Bringing out-of-class knowledge and learning into the classroom
- Making learning more personally relevant to the students
- Encouraging students to reflect on the content and processes of teaching and learning
- Encouraging students to prepare for active participation in class activities

These ideas can be used by teachers in order to implement a student-centred approach in the language classroom. Student-centred learning does not have to involve all of these dimensions but at least some will be present in a student-centred classroom. It is important to consider the impact of these ideas on students, particularly in contexts where they may not be used to having so much input and control over their own learning. To support the implementation of student-centred learning and promote individual student development, a range of learner training strategies can be applied. These will be explored in the following sections, the first of which is the importance of developing learner autonomy.

Learner strategies training

Strategies for learner autonomy

The concept of learner autonomy is an important one in the student-centred approach as it involves a shift in responsibility for learning from the traditional teacher-centred approach onto the individual learner. Thornbury (p. 22) defines autonomy as, 'your capacity to take responsibility for, and control of, your own learning, either in an institutional context, or completely independent of a teacher or institution'. Reaching this high level of autonomy in language learning may be considered to be something which is an aspirational objective and will depend on whether the cultural contexts promote autonomy as well as individual learner capabilities.

Student-centred learning aims to reduce the traditional dependence on the teacher for learning and promote active learning as opposed to passive transmission. Learners can be encouraged to become more autonomous in their language learning through the implementation of strategies such as:

Learners are given a range of tasks to choose from based around a specific language point. They are then encouraged to decide themselves on which ones they will complete and in which order. Students could be asked to work in pairs or small groups to read different sections of a text and then explain the key points to each other. They could then assess if they have covered all the key points by checking their ideas with another pair or small group.

These types of activities can help students to work collaboratively and gradually reduce dependence on the teacher.

Autonomous learning is also referred to as self-directed learning. There are a range of definitions of the self-directed learner which can be summarised in the following characteristics:

- Having the ability to define one's own objectives for learning
- Having awareness of how to use materials in the target language and other learning materials effectively to support their own learning
- Being able to organise their time for learning
- Actively developing their own learning strategies.

These are characteristics which can be fostered in the language classroom by applying a student-centred approach to encourage learners to take more responsibility for their learning. Calls for students to become more independent in their learning are based on research into what makes a good language learner, this focuses on developing and encouraging metacognitive, reflective and social skills to support students in becoming more self-directed and autonomous learners.

Metacognitive strategies and reflective skills

The development of metacognitive and reflective skills are also learner training strategies which can support student-centred learning. Metacognitive skills involve planning learning, reflecting on one's learning and thinking about how to make learning effective. Here, the teacher's role can be to support learners in considering how they learn and to suggest ways in which other strategies could help them achieve their learning goals. A further element of metacognitive skills is self-monitoring. Here, teachers can provide a range of tasks and activities for students to complete and encourage them assess their own achievement of the task. This can be done in several ways, by guiding students to develop criteria for self-assessment, by providing regular time for self-assessment and by commenting on students' progress to give them something to compare to their own personal assessment. Through promoting reflective skills, students can be encouraged to evaluate whether or not their learning has been effective and how they could improve their learning.

Strategies for developing social skills

The student-centred approach aims to develop independent language learners, but the social nature of the classroom can also be used to provide a communicative environment to practice language learning and to develop social skills. Collaborative and cooperative strategies for group work activities are useful in promoting interaction. For instance, in speaking activities, students working in pairs or small groups will have an opportunity to communicate using the target language, to listen and respond, to

take turns, and also self-assess their language use and to what extent they are understood by others. It is also important to consider that small group work may create issues as individual learners may be anxious or hesitant about participating in such activities, some students may dominate and some may feel this type of activity lacks value based on prior learning experiences.

To create a positive environment for using language, the teacher's role is to manage the classroom effectively and build an atmosphere of confidence in the group thereby enabling students to participate actively. This can be done through providing a range of tasks and activities which learners can engage with in pairs or small groups enabling them to interact communicatively with their peers. The use of peer support in such activities can encourage participation and build individual learner confidence. The size of groups and which members are grouped together can be planned in advance. Ways in which the teacher elicits feedback can also help to build a positive atmosphere, for instance, particular students can be nominated within a group to give feedback to the wider group. An alternative would be for small groups to join another group and exchange ideas together without the need for larger group feedback. These methods can help to reduce anxiety learners may have in speaking out in front of the class.

Teacher's role in strategy development

Although the student-centred approach focuses on developing individual learners' language skills, the teacher still has an integral role in providing opportunities and training to enable student progression and success. There are four main ways in which teachers can provide instruction on learner strategies:

- raising learners' awareness of the strategies they already use
- presenting and modelling strategies to help learners to be more aware of their own thinking and learning processes
- give a lot of opportunities to practise using strategies to help learners become more autonomous in using strategies for themselves, with the teacher beginning by scaffolding the strategies and the gradually withdrawing the scaffolding
- getting learners to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies they use and how well they can be adapted to new learning tasks

For the first point, the teacher needs to promote metacognitive skills through considering how to elicit the ways in which a particular language task or activity is undertaken. These can be linked to specific skills, for example, how learners approach a reading activity, find the meaning of unknown vocabulary and complete comprehension questions. Teacher guidance is used in the second point to give learners a supportive frame of reference and the third point refers to the need for teachers to provide a range of activities and tasks that learners can undertake which can also support the development of social skills. Reflection is then encouraged where learners can self-assess and possibly peer assess with the aim of applying useful strategies to other learning situations. Learner autonomy is progressively promoted within these points with teacher guidance used to support and encourage students.

Through training learners on how they can use strategies to enhance their language learning, the development of learner autonomy, metacognitive, reflective and social skills will support the student-centred approach to learning. This in turn should support students in continuing their learning more independently outside of the classroom environment.

Student-centred learning in large classes

The learner training strategies explored above aim to increase the level of responsibility individual learners take for their own language learning, but they will also be beneficial in contexts where large class sizes are common and there are limited resources. Setting up a student-centred classroom environment for a large class can support the teacher in introducing language, monitoring activities and planning for further individual learner language development. The implementation of collaborative and interactive activities can be used to motivate students to participate in a communicative way. Students can be encouraged to work with peers and also to self-assess their learning, providing a means to becoming more autonomous. The teacher can also ask students to reflect and give feedback on their learning to check on every individual learner in a large class.

Regular feedback from learners

Within student-centred teaching, it is important to get regular feedback from learners on their learning and progress. This can be done in the classroom following a specific activity, at the end of a class or on a weekly basis. Examples of how to obtain feedback include questioning and discussion activities, surveys, or asking students to write notes to review how they feel about their learning. Students could be asked to complete feedback tasks independently and submit these to the teacher. While learners may not be used to this approach, the strategies for training outlined above can support them in providing honest feedback. The teacher then has to respond and act on the feedback, this may be through sharing the key positives and negatives which have been raised with students, giving learners further choices and control over classroom activities, and exploring ways of motivating students who may question how relevant the learning is for their language development.

Conclusion

A student-centred approach moves away from the traditional teacher-centred approach to language learning, placing responsibility for learning on both teachers and students on a more equal basis. This approach can be implemented in language classes through focused learner training on strategies to develop the autonomy, metacognitive, reflective and social skills of each individual learner.

Suggested activities for teaching

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: in groups students discuss one of the following questions and make notes as a mind map or list of key words: What would you expect to see in a student-centred classroom? Or What do you think is the difference between a teacher-centred class and a student-centred class?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Discussion: In groups, students consider the question: What do you think are the main challenges in implementing student-centred in teaching in their local context and how could you address these challenges in your teaching?

Discussion: In groups, students identify the strategies that they commonly use in their own language learning. Students identify which strategies are used by most students in the groups and which are less widely used. Students consider how they could teach these strategies to students who do not already use them.

Discussion: In groups, students consider how they can get feedback from learners about students' experiences and needs in their classes. They should consider what information they think they would need as teachers and consider how to get such information from their students.

Follow-up tasks – homework

Task design: Students consider a task from a commonly used textbook for teaching English and consider how to teach the task in a student-centred manner. They should focus on the role of the teacher in the task and the sorts of support the teacher would give and the roles of the students.

Suggested further reading

- Benson, P. (2012). Learner-centered Teaching. In A. Burns & J. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching* (pp. 30-37). Cambridge University Press.
- Jacobs, G. M., & Renandya, W. A. (2016). Student-centred learning in ELT. In W. A. Renandya and H. P. Widodo (eds) *English language teaching today: Linking theory and practice* (pp. 13-23). Springer.
- Cohen, A. D. (2011). Second language learner strategies. In E. Hinkle (Ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Vol II. (pp. 681–98). Routledge.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Topic 4: Grammar and vocabulary

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Understanding why and how to teach grammar and vocabulary
2. Understanding the importance of teaching grammar and vocabulary in context

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the reasons for and limitations of teaching of grammar and vocabulary
2. Understand different approaches to teaching grammar and vocabulary (explicit/implicit)
3. Understand how to select, adapt and design materials and tasks to support teaching grammar and vocabulary

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Building vocabulary and grammatical knowledge

Grammar and vocabulary are often seen as the building blocks of language. Language is made up of words (vocabulary) that put together based on patterns and words (grammar). An important part of learning another language is to build up as much vocabulary and grammatical knowledge as possible. However, there are different ways to approach the teaching of grammar and vocabulary that have different purposes and outcomes.

Vocabulary

Knowing a word involves more than knowing its meaning; it also includes knowing its *form*, that is being able to recognize it and say/write it appropriately, and its *use*, that is being able to say/write it according to its intended meaning and context. Table 1 presents three dimensions of word knowledge that need to be considered in teaching vocabulary together with some suggestions for how to teach each dimension.

Table 2: Knowing a word. Source: Adapted from Nation (2001)

Dimension	Specific type of knowledge	Examples	Suggested learning tasks Source: adapted from Hurtz (2018)
Meaning	<p><i>Form and meaning:</i> core and additional meanings.</p> <p><i>Concept and referents:</i> connotative or figurative meanings.</p> <p><i>Associations:</i> antonyms, synonyms, false cognates, etc.</p>	<p><i>Save (keep safe or rescue (someone or something) from harm or danger/keep and store up (something, especially money) for future use.)</i></p> <p><i>Save = put aside, rescue.</i></p> <p><i>Save ≠ waste, endanger.</i></p>	<p>Matching pictures to vocabulary</p> <p>Odd one out (identify the word that is different from the others)</p> <p>Memory games</p> <p>Pictionary</p> <p>Taboo game (explaining a word on a card without using it)</p> <p>Matching vocabulary items to other words, e.g. collocations, antonyms, synonyms</p>
Form	<p><i>Spoken:</i> Pronunciation, word stress.</p> <p><i>Written:</i> Spelling.</p> <p><i>Word parts:</i> morphology, colligations (syntactic and grammatical word patterns), etc.</p>	<p><i>/serv/</i></p> <p><i>S – A – V – E</i></p> <p><i>Verb: saves, saved, be + saving.</i></p>	<p>Pronunciation drills</p> <p>Filling in grids or crosswords to practise spelling</p> <p>Reconstruction exercises (e. g. assembling jumbled letters)</p> <p>Filling in gaps to practise word grammar (e. g. tenses)</p>
Use	<p><i>Grammatical functions:</i> word patterns.</p> <p><i>Collocations:</i> habitual word combinations.</p> <p><i>Constraints on use:</i> register, frequency, context, semantic range, etc.</p>	<p><i>Save + something</i> <i>/save for + something</i></p> <p><i>Save up (informal / phrasal verb)</i></p> <p><i>Save your breath, save time, save face, God save the King</i></p>	<p>Writing a story based on a number of key words,</p> <p>Information gap activities</p>

As shown in Table 2, word knowledge encompasses information about the form of individual vocabulary items and their connections to other words as well as the ability to recognize and use this information appropriately to mean things in different communicative contexts.

In teaching vocabulary, it is important for learners to encounter words frequently in their work and to see how they are used in context. Therefore, providing opportunities for learners to engage with a word is key to vocabulary acquisition. (Schmitt, 2008, p. 2) argues that “the more a learner engages with a new word, the more likely he or she is to learn it”. For this purpose, he suggests that any activity involving more exposure, attention, manipulation, or time spent on the target item will contribute to vocabulary learning. The activities in Table 1 are examples of how students can engage with words. They aim to address specific aspects of word knowledge and aid vocabulary retention.

Understanding how words are stored in our long-term memory can also help us create effective learning activities. When words are learnt, they systematically link to others in terms of phonological, syntactic, and semantic similarities creating word networks. This process is facilitated by drawing connections between already existing and new information. The better words are organised in our minds, the easier it is to recall and retrieve them. There are a set of principles, each with teaching implications, for the acquisition of words and the construction of semantic webs in our minds (see Table 3). This can be achieved in several ways such as by presenting topic-based word networks (e.g., cities, the supermarket).

Table 3: Integrating words into the mental lexicon. Source: Adapted from Hurtz (2018)

Principle	Explanation	Implications for teaching
Connecting words	Words should not be presented and learned in isolation, but in a way that allow learners to make as many connections to other words as possible.	Presenting words in topic-based networks, semantic fields, vocabulary patterns and colligations; demonstrating vocabulary relations between items (e.g. synonyms, antonyms, subordinate/superordinate terms)
Processing words in a multi-sensory approach	The more channels and senses are involved in processing vocabulary input, the easier it is to store and retrieve information.	Providing visual support (e.g. pictures), auditory support (e.g. rhymes, songs) or kinaesthetic support (i.e. linking the vocabulary items with physical motion)
Contextualising words	Learners need to explore how the new vocabulary items are used in specific contexts.	Using authentic texts; using index cards with sentences that show how the vocabulary item is used.
Repeating words	Words need to be repeated at certain intervals.	Revising vocabulary at intervals in communicatively focused transfer activities (e.g. roleplays)

Grammar

Grammar is the set of rules that are used to join words together. Grammar teaching has often focused on developing a knowledge of the grammatical rules of a language as a preparation for communication. However, this way of approaching grammar is problematic as it separates grammar from communication even though grammar needs to be closely connected to it. Moreover, grammar is more than just a set of rules; it is a tool for making meaning. From this perspective, grammar serves two purposes: it helps us reflect the world as we perceive it (which is encoded in verbs, nouns, objects, tense, etc. e.g., *my mum is baking a cake*), and it influences the way things happen in the world (e.g., *Can I borrow your pen?*). Apart from this, grammar also helps to make meaning clear in contexts when there is little or no literal information. By using contextual information, we can understand communicative functions or an interlocutor's/writer's intended meaning. This has significant implications for the teaching of grammar in the sense that emphasis should not only be placed on the language forms, but also on the meanings and functions that these forms communicate.

Discussions about effective approaches to second language grammar instruction have therefore revolved around two teaching alternatives: non-interventionist and interventionist approaches. Non-interventionist grammar instruction is largely influenced by communicative approaches to second language teaching which tended to regard a strong focus on grammar instruction as creating problems for using grammar for language production. As a result, it emphasises the importance to focus on meaning before form, and fluency before accuracy. Grammar is taught following these main principles:

- rules are acquired subconsciously through exposure to meaningful and contextualised input
- an inductive approach is needed to teach grammatical rules – learners develop their knowledge of grammar by using the target language rather than through instruction
- tasks need to focus on meaning and fluency rather than accuracy
- error correction should be implicit,
- the emphasis is placed on using the target structures rather than using metalinguistic terms to describe them (e.g. noun, verb, etc.).

Although non-interventionist approaches to grammar teaching are common in Communicative Language Teaching, it is now recognised that interventionist approaches can be useful in conjunction with non-interventionist approaches. One of the possible limitations in non-interventionist approaches is that learners may have difficulty noticing forms and functions when they are focused on meaning. Noticing is crucial to promoting language awareness and enabling learners to build, revise, and adjust their grammatical knowledge. Interventionist approaches can be used to support learning by enhancing awareness of language forms and functions. Interventionist approaches to grammar teaching involve:

- explicit teaching of grammatical rules
- a deductive approach to rules
- tasks with a focus on discrete grammatical units and accuracy
- explicit error correction, and
- promoting the use of metalinguistic terminology.

Within this approach, the design of grammatical tasks is sequenced in a way that allows learners to gradually move from conscious attention to new forms through guided production to free language use.

A good example of this is the PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) approach whose main features are briefly described in Table 4.

Table 4: The PPP approach. Source: Adapted from Hurtz (2018)

Phase	Explanation	Examples
Presentation	Learners are exposed to a new language item. The new item(s) is explained and the rules are presented.	A text or dialogue with numerous examples of the target language item.
Practice	Learners are given the opportunity to practise the selected language item in controlled ways. The exercises provided aim at strengthening the learner's grasp and knowledge of the new item(s).	gap-filling exercises, matching sentences to pictures, multiple choice tasks, etc.
Production	Learners use the form more or less freely in communicative activities.	Roleplays, free-writing tasks, peer-interviews, class discussions and debates, etc.

In language teaching, it is important to draw on both interventionist and non-interventionist approaches to grammar teaching and teaching supports communication best when it works from non-interventionist to more interventionist approaches rather than by starting directly with explicit grammar instruction.

Linking grammar and vocabulary: the lexico-grammatical approach

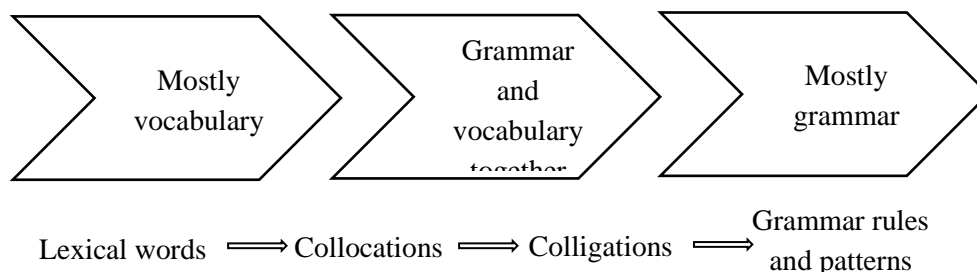
In language teaching, it has been common to separate elements of language such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary as distinct areas of focus and to teach them independently. Target vocabulary items are thus dealt with in isolation from rules of form and use. For the purposes of fostering communicative abilities, however, making such clear-cut division is rather counterproductive and confusing as grammar and vocabulary interrelate at different levels.

Every word has connotative and denotative meaning, but it also has its own grammatical profile (e.g., *word class, tense, person, number*) and grammatical relationships with others in the shape of recurring word combinations and language patterns (e.g., *collocations and vocabulary chunks*). In other words, vocabulary items co-occur with others to form networks of patterns and relationships in complex and unique ways. Take, for example, the noun *time* which is always used in the singular to talk about the measurements of time, e.g. What *time* is it? but countable when it refers to specific points in time, e.g. I saw her two *times*. Moreover, the noun *time* is usually combined with specific words to form multi-word expressions such as *from time to time, have a good/bad/terrible time, to waste time*, and so on. This example demonstrates the problem of treating grammar and vocabulary separately as in many ways in both concepts interact.

Rather than thinking about grammar and vocabulary as separate elements of language it is useful to think of them as a continuum (see Figure 4), in which some words function mainly as meanings and others mainly as grammar. For example, semantically strong vocabulary items (that is words where the meaning of the word itself is more important than its relationships to others), e.g., *Hello! Thanks!* are located at one end, and purely grammatical items, e.g., grammatical tenses to signal time of

occurrence, at the other end. In between, the separation of between and vocabulary becomes less clear; for example, some vocabulary items are almost devoid of meaning (e.g., *auxiliary verbs*) and serve mostly a grammatical function, while collocations (regular word combinations) and colligations (syntactic and grammatical word patterns) involve both grammar and vocabulary equally..

Figure 4: The lexico-grammatical continuum. Source: adapted form Hutz (2018)



The lexico-grammatical continuum provides a clear depiction of the interaction points between grammar and vocabulary, which, in turn, helps to broaden our perspective towards grammar and vocabulary instruction. Instead of teaching vocabulary items separately from grammatical rules and patterns, a lexico-grammatical approach involves an integrated study of the links between both attributes. Within this approach, the grammatical profile, the specific patterning of individual words, and their potential combinations are regarded as equally important as their specific meanings. This can afford opportunities for learning a language as used in real-life communication.

The foundational idea of a lexico-grammatical approach is to provide an integrated alternative to the teaching of vocabulary and grammar. There are four overarching principles for the using a lexico-grammatical approach in a communicative classroom. They are summarised as follows,

- The core principle of this approach is that grammar and vocabulary should be taught in combination. Tackling individual words in isolation from grammar does not make much sense considering that vocabulary items have an internal grammar that determines their form, meaning, and function. Vocabulary and grammatical knowledge is stored in our minds together and should therefore they need to be linked in teaching.
- The second principle suggests starting with meaning and function before attending to formal language attributes. To convey meaning, learners initially need to be equipped with vocabulary knowledge and so it is important to focus on meaning and function first and then gradually direct attention to concrete grammatical features. Words are essential for communication and as such can serve as a steppingstone for addressing grammar.
- The third principle involves promoting language awareness through noticing. To integrate new information into their mental lexicons and establish connections with existing knowledge, learners need to notice how vocabulary and grammatical items are used in authentic contexts of communication. The instruction in vocabulary and grammatical knowledge is not likely to lead to effective and meaningful learning. Rather, learners need to engage with the new input through the cognitive processes of noticing and inquiring as much as possible. For example, when learners ask for the meaning of a word, the teacher help them to figure out the meaning based on contextual cues. Similarly, rather than explicitly teaching grammatical rules and patterns, teachers can support learners to discover the patterns and rules by themselves. The man advantage of doing this is that, since more cognitive processes are engaged, vocabulary items and structures become better integrated into learners' mental representations thus facilitating recall and retrieval.

- The last principle is that form-focused teaching should be integrated into communicative classroom tasks and activities. Drawing attention to accuracy when focusing on getting meaning across creates problems for learners because it can lead to increased anxiety, decreased motivation, and even distract them from completing the task. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of when form-focused feedback will be positive and when it will be negative.

Note that all the principles of a lexico-grammatical approach are applicable to the communicative classroom as they are compatible with the linguistic goals of CLT. However, they are by no means binding. On the contrary, teachers are encouraged to make any necessary adjustments considering the needs of their teaching contexts.

In-class tasks for teachers

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion. In groups students discuss one of the following questions: Which do you think is more important in language learning conveying meaning or speaking with correct grammar? Which teaching approaches do you think helped you to learn vocabulary and grammar the most and which helped you the least?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Individual work: Have learners do a task that is beyond their current ability. Students need to identify the features of language that prevented them from completing the task. The students also consider how they could support students in doing such a task.

Task design: In groups students consider how to teach a specific grammar concept (past tense, future tense, plural nouns, relative clauses, etc.) that allows learners to develop their knowledge of grammar by using the target language rather than through instruction. Students consider the material they would use to teach the grammar concept and how they would structure the teaching.

Follow-up tasks - homework

Task analysis: Students look at a teaching unit from a currently used textbook with a clear separation between grammar and vocabulary and make modifications to the unit that would allow them to teach both grammar and vocabulary in combination.

Suggested further reading

Celce-Murcia, M. (2015). An overview of teaching grammar in ELT. In M. Christison, D. Christian, P. A. Duff, N. Spada (eds) *Teaching and learning English grammar: Research findings and future directions* (pp. 27-42.). Routledge.

Nation, I.S.P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press.

British Council (2003). *Teaching English. Lexical approach 1: What does the vocabulary approach look like?* <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowning-subject/articles/vocabulary-approach-1-what-does-vocabulary>>

Hutz, M. (2018). Focus on form—The Lexico-Grammar Approach. In: Surkamp, C., Viebrock, B. (eds) *Teaching English as a foreign language*. Metzler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-04480-8_8

Topic 5: Teaching speaking

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Teaching spoken English for communication
2. The place of accuracy, fluency, and authenticity in speaking

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the core concepts of accuracy, fluency, and authenticity in speaking
2. Understand the role of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary in teaching speaking
3. Understand how to select, adapt and design materials and tasks to support task types teaching speaking

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Introduction

Teaching speaking is a critical aspect of English language education, as it is something learners need to interact and communicate in real-world contexts. Therefore, it is essential for English language teachers to have a strong understanding of approaches to teaching speaking, communication strategies, and classroom activities to support learners' development of speaking skills. This chapter outlines various aspects of teaching speaking, including the approaches to teaching pronunciation, essential communicative strategies for compensating for knowledge, and techniques for designing speaking activities.

Speaking as communication

Speaking is a complex communication skill that involves more than simply being able to pronounce words suitably to ensure comprehension. Moreover, there are different types of speaking activity that learners need to be able to do.

Speaking may be monologic or interactive. *Monologic speaking* is where a person speaks for an extended period of time, for example as when giving a presentation. When speaking in a monologue, the speaker needs to focus only on speaking and successful performance depends on the clarity, organisation and delivery of the talk. Monologic talk can be preprepared, as when speakers write a speech and then deliver it and may even be memorised. Spontaneous, as is the case when speakers speak on a topic that its not known in advance.

Interactive speaking involves situations in which there are two or more participants and in which the participants move between the roles of speaker and listener. Interactive speaking is always spontaneous and requires participants to listen to what others are saying and then respond to them. It is sometimes the case that in teaching speaking, teachers as students to prepare and even memorise dialogues, but this is not the same as interactive speaking as it does not involve the same listening and speaking skills as true interactive speaking. This does not mean that using such dialogues is a problem for teaching speaking, but it should not be confused with preparing learners to participate in spontaneous spoken

interaction. When learning interactive speaking, students need to learn to take turns in interaction, to link their turns at talk to what has been said previously and to deal with problems in meaning making that arise in the talk.

It is important that teachers include both types of speaking in their teaching as each type of speaking involves different processes and knowledge.

Teaching pronunciation

Differences in Englishes/models – problem of the NS norm comprehensibility vs NS accent.

As a world language, English spoken in different parts of the world has developed differently, resulting in the emergence of multiple English varieties with their own features of pronunciation. One of the challenges in teaching English is therefore the selection of the target model for pronunciation. The two widely used varieties are British English and American English; however, there are many others. British English refers to the type of standardised English that is generally spoken in professional communication in the United Kingdom. However, what is known as British English is not the only pronunciation of English found in Britain; it is rather a standardised form that is spoken by many but not all people in Britain. Standard British English is sometimes used as a synonym for Received Pronunciation (RP). American English refers to the type of standardised English that is generally spoken in professional communication in the United States. Again, it is not the only variety found in the USA and many other varieties exist.

In addition to considering which target pronunciation will be in focus, teachers also need to consider what the goal is for teaching pronunciation. There has been much discussion about whether the goal should be the acquisition of a Native Speaker (NS) accent or whether comprehensibility is more important than specific pronunciations. Supporters of the NS accent model argue that the goal of L2 learning is to help speakers attain a native-like accent and eradicate traces of their mother tongue accent. One reason for this goal is that learners who sound like NSs are more likely to be perceived as competent, credible, and professional, particularly in academic and professional contexts. However, others argue that the emphasis on the NS accent may be unrealistic and even detrimental to learners' language development. Developing a native-like accent may be a problematic goal as only a small number of learners ever achieve this. At the same time, many people are effective speakers of English without having native-like accents. Focusing too much on developing an NS accent tends to detract from other important aspects of spoken language, such as fluency and communicative ability. In addition, it may also reinforce linguistic hierarchies and perpetuate discrimination against non-native English speakers. As an alternative, many experts argue that learners should strive for acquiring *NS norm comprehensibility* rather than an NS-like accent. NS norm comprehensibility refers to whether or not listeners can understand a speaker easily or not. As the pronunciation of English among NS varies significantly but they are still able to communicate with each, this indicates that variation in pronunciation is not a barrier to successful communication. However, if a pronunciation differs too much from NS norms, this can create problems for communication. NS norm comprehensibility therefore prioritises the extent to which learners' speech can be understood by a native speaker rather than how native-like learners' accents are. It is believed that prioritising comprehensibility will enhance learners' communicative abilities in a range of contexts where English is spoken. Also, highlighting the effectiveness of communication may potentially mitigate possibilities of accent-based discrimination that non-native speakers might otherwise experience.

Learning to pronounce a language depends on becoming familiar with the sounds of a language and this involves hearing the speech sounds of the language. Therefore, hearing plays a critical role in learners' speech production. Becoming familiar with the sounds of a language enables learners to use their auditory feedback to monitor their own speech and adjust it accordingly. When teachers present pronunciation models, learners can be encouraged to notice and fill in the gap between their current pronunciation levels and more target-like pronunciation by comparing their output to the input they hear. It is therefore important that teachers involve a lot of listening work in the teaching of pronunciation.

Teaching pronunciation

Given the importance of hearing to learning pronunciation, students need to be exposed to clear and accurate sound models. This can be achieved by using audio or video materials, or by having the teacher provide a clear pronunciation model for the target sounds. Also, teachers can use visual aids, such as diagrams of mouth movements, to help learners visualise how the sounds are articulated. In addition, certain activities can be employed to facilitate learners' pronunciation learning, such as tracking and shadowing. The former refers to learners listening to speakers on video or audiotape while following a transcript or subtitles and simultaneously reproducing what they hear. Shadowing is similar to tracking in that learners listen and repeat what they hear with a slight delay and can pause the recording at times when necessary.

Among the existing approaches to the teaching and assessing of pronunciation, there are two different, yet potentially complementary routes for English language teachers to follow: a holistic approach and an atomistic approach. The *holistic approach* emphasises the importance of the whole system of sounds in a language. It views pronunciation as a holistic system of elements that are mutually influential and requires that learners should focus on the overall communicative effectiveness of the speech, rather than individual sounds. Holistic pronunciation assessments normally adopt a group of speaking activities to evaluate the learners' speaking competence comprehensively, such as retelling stories or description of pictures. On the other hand, the *atomistic approach* underlines the importance of discrete pronunciation features – that is of individual sounds. In this approach, learners are guided to concentrate on producing only segments of speech, such as particular vowels, consonants, stress, rhythm, and intonation, instead of on the overall sound patterns of the language. In an atomistic assessment, pronunciation will mainly be evaluated from two levels: at the segmental level (the level of individual sounds), phonemic oppositions will be tested by having learners read word lists aloud to identify if they are able to differentiate the sounds of the language (for example thin, vs din, vs fin); at the suprasegmental level (intonation, stress, etc.), sentence accentuation, stress, and intonation will be examined by having learners read various types of short sentences with appropriate stress and intonation.

Basic IPA Symbols

As English spelling is not always a good guide to pronunciation, it is useful for learners to understand the basic features of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as these are often used in dictionaries. The primary aim of IPA is to standardise the representation of spoken language in order to sidestep the confusion caused by inconsistent spellings employed by different language writing systems. That is to say, the IPA symbols represent individual speech sounds or phonemes in different languages, rather than the written letters. For example, the IPA symbol /k/ stands for the sound made by the letter

“c” in the word *car* while /s/ represents the sound made by the same letter in the word *centre*. Because IPA represents sounds, words from different varieties of English may have different pronunciations. For example, in southern British English the word *car* is pronounced /kɑ/ but in American English is usually pronounced /kɑr/.

Teaching communication strategies

One of the primary goals of teaching English is to enhance learners’ communicative competence so that they can interact with others effectively. However, oral communication in a foreign language can be challenging for learners. In addition to pronunciation, limited vocabulary or grammatical knowledge and inadequate socio-cultural or contextual understanding of conversation topics may also hinder effective communication. To help learners compensate for their lack of knowledge and meet their communicative goals, English language teachers need to include communication strategies in their teaching and teach students on how to apply such strategies in real-life situations.

Twelve different communication strategies have been identified that can support English language learners in their spoken language communication. These strategies are:

- Circumlocution, which when learners describe the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language item or structure, for example, by saying ‘something for washing clothes’ rather than ‘laundry detergent’.
- Approximation involves learners using words or phrases that are not exact but are close in meaning to convey a message, for example saying ‘chair’ rather than ‘stool’. This strategy emphasises that communication doesn’t have to be perfect in order to work.
- Use of all-purpose words, which refers to learners using general, multipurpose words or phrases to convey their message when they are unsure of the precise word to use. For example, using the word “thing” instead of a specific noun like “detergent”.
- Word coinage, which means the learners create a non-existing L2 word based on a possible rule for word formation (e.g. vegetablist for vegetarian);
- Use of non-linguistic means, which refers to the strategy of using facial expressions, gestures mime or sound imitation to help with communication;
- Literal translation, which means the learners translate literally a lexical item, idiom or compound word from L1 to L2;
- Appeal for help, which means the learners ask for aid from the interlocutors directly;
- Use of fillers / hesitation devices, which is the strategy where learners adopt fillers or hesitation devices (e.g. well, now let’s see, uh) to fill pauses and gain time to think.

Given the importance of communication strategies, researchers have suggested a two-phased training scheme, including an instruction and a practice stage, to help English language instructors to teach such strategies effectively. The instruction phase includes raising learners’ awareness of (i) the existence of communication strategies; (ii) their important role in communication as problem-solving devices, and (iii) the communicative efficacy of different communication strategies. This phase can be achieved in the English language classroom either inductively or deductively. Inductive awareness raising involves classroom activities (e.g. role play) where students observe the performance of communication tasks and are then asked to (i) identify the problems experienced by the interlocutors and the strategies used to solve these problems, and (ii) assess the efficacy of the solution employed. In contrast, deductive awareness raising involves direct explanations and/or modelling of each strategy

by instructors in the classroom. In the practice stage, students should be given chances of participating in tasks with a clearly stated communicative goal in a spontaneous language task. Classroom activities that can be included in this stage are object description tasks (in which learners must identify the object being described by his/her partner), or information gap activities that require learners to communicate and exchange information with each other.

Teaching speaking

Learning to speak can be difficult for students and speaking in front of others can be a source of anxiety for many students. Because of this, positive classroom dynamics and engaging classroom activities are indispensable elements in promoting English speaking in the classroom. Teachers need to create a supportive learning environment, as such an atmosphere encourages students to voice their ideas without fear of being judged or ridiculed by the rest of the class or frequently corrected by teachers, thus facilitating them to speak up more often. Another strategy that promotes speaking is the creation of a collaborative learning approach, which can be achieved through using pair/group tasks. By breaking students up into small groups, can create a more intimate environment, in which students would feel more comfortable and safe to share their ideas in front of their peers, leading to a higher level of engagement and participation in classroom activities. For example, role-play is an effective activity that helps foster collaborative learning and improves learners' overall interactive speaking skills. In addition, promoting active listening also contributes to encouraging speaking in the language classroom. Active listening involves focusing on the content produced by speakers, comprehending the information, and responding appropriately. When students perceive attentive listening from others, they are more likely to participate in class discussions and, subsequently, gain confidence in their speaking abilities.

Types of activities for teaching speaking

Prior to carrying out a speaking task in the classroom, it is critical to consider the types of activities contained in the oral task and their effectiveness in achieving the teaching goals. Speaking activities can be divided into different types.

Speaking activities can be considered either fluency- or accuracy-oriented given their different training emphasis. Fluency denotes learners' ability to get across communicative intent without too much hesitation and too many pauses to cause barriers or a breakdown in communication. Therefore, fluency activities prioritise learners' ability to communicate effectively. For instance, debates, role-plays, and simulations are normally considered as fluency-oriented activities where students are encouraged to express their opinions more freely, despite occasional oral mistakes. Accuracy refers to the use of correct forms so that utterances do not contain errors in the phonological, syntactic, semantic, or discourse features of the language. Hence, accuracy-focused activities place more emphasis on using the target language correctly, such as sentence completion practices, gap-fillings, and pronunciation drills.

Speaking activities can also be categorised as monologic speaking or interactive speaking. Monologue speaking activities mainly involve individual students delivering an extended talk, such as a speech or a presentation, on a given topic. These activities usually require preparation time and can be designed to assess or practise students' abilities to organise their thoughts, structure their ideas, and deliver their opinions clearly and coherently. Interactive speaking activities, on the other hand, ask pairs or small groups of students to complete tasks collaboratively. These activities mainly aim to advance learners'

interactive skills, such as initiating and sustaining a conversation, asking and answering questions, and responding to feedback from their peers.

When choosing different types of speaking activities, learners' proficiency levels needs to be taken into consideration. At the beginning stage of language learning, students may benefit more from scripted speaking activities, such as controlled practice that involve memorisation and repetition of phrases or sentences. For example, learners could be asked to practise ordering food or asking for directions using a fixed script. As students gain more confidence with the target language, they can move on to semi-spontaneous speaking activities, including presenting their ideas with the assistance of given prompts or structures or spontaneous interactions based on partial texts that require participants to add information to a structured task. This enables learners to practise using the target language more naturally while still offering some support as scaffolding. At a later stage, students would benefit from practising personalised speaking activities, such as open-ended questions or presentations on a given topic, as these activities provide learners with opportunities to express their individuality from their perspectives, leading to more genuine and spontaneous use of the target language.

Designing speaking tasks

In designing tasks for teaching speaking, there are a number of things that teachers need to consider. Firstly, teachers need to consider the purpose of the task and the desired learning outcomes for the students and to ensure that task types are varied enough to reflect all of the students' learning needs. Each type of task has its own purpose and is useful for teaching some aspects of speaking, but no task can achieve everything that students need. Tasks that function on pronunciation are not useful for supporting interactive speaking or developing fluency. Tasks that focus on communication strategies are not useful for developing accuracy. Monologic tasks and prepared dialogues are not useful for developing interactive speaking.

Teachers also need to consider what feedback students will receive after they have performed the task to ensure that feedback is targeted to the learning purpose of the task. Feedback is effective if it is closely associated with the task purpose. For example, feedback on the use of communication strategies is useful for helping students in fluency focused tasks, while feedback on accuracy of pronunciation would conflict with the aim of teaching fluency. A brief reflection session asking students to discuss their learning experiences with their peers might be beneficial for further development.

It is important in designing speaking tasks that students have practice in both initiating and responding to talk. For example, students need to be able to both ask and answer questions. They also need to be able to propose topics as well as speaking on the topics proposed by others. It is important that students are not always put in a position of responding to others talk and learn to take the lead in conversation.

Some possible tasks for teaching speaking are:

- **Role play:** Students pretend that they are carrying out a real world activity, for example getting advice from a friend, buying something in a shop, or ordering in a restaurant. In role-play activities, the teacher needs to tell the learners who they are in the interaction and what they think or feel or need so that they can use this information in doing the task.

- **Speaking games:** These are games that require students to speak to complete them. For example: **Two Truths and a Lie:** a small group speaking game in which learners present three statements, two of which are true and the other is a lie, and other students need to guess which statement is a lie by asking questions about the statements.
- **Information Gap:** Students work in pairs in which one student has information that other partner does not have and the partners share their information to complete a task. In information gap, each partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. These activities give all of the students an opportunity to talk.
- **Brainstorming:** In a large or small group, students produce a list of as many ideas as possible in a limited time.
- **Storytelling:** Students briefly tell a story from their own experience or summarise story they have heard or read previously. Story telling makes opportunities for students to speak on something about which they are familiar and focus on the fluency of their speaking.
- **Interviews:** Students conduct interviews on selected topics with other students. This is a partially structured interactive activity as the questions can be established in advance, but responses need to be more spontaneous. More advanced students can develop their own questions and use the results as a presentation.
- **Presentations:** Students speak on a topic for a required time. Presentations can be on topics chosen by the students themselves or assigned by the teacher.
- **Story Completion:** The teacher starts to tell a story, but after a few sentences stops narrating and asks students to continue the story for a few sentences. Each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped.
- **Picture Narrating:** Students look at a series of pictures, and tell a story based on the pictures.
- **Picture Describing:** Students view a picture and describe what it is in the picture. For this activity students could form groups with each group seeing a different picture. The groups discuss the picture and select a speaker to describe it to the whole class.
- **Find the Difference:** Students can work in pairs and each pair has a picture that has some similarities and some difference with the other (e.g. a picture of a room with some similar and some different furniture). Pairs discuss the similarities and/or differences in the pictures.
- **Discussions:** Students talk in small groups about ideas that come from a content-based lesson or to talk about an issue they already know about. The students need to be given a very concrete goal for the discussion to achieve for discussions to work well. For example, they can be asked to decide if they agree or disagree with a position, they can be asked to identify the main arguments for against an idea, or they can present an argument for a particular position.

Monitoring speaking activities

During the speaking activities, it is critical for English language teachers monitor individual learners and the whole class. By monitoring speaking tasks, English language teachers can (i) assess learners' level of participation and engagement to ensure that they stay on topic; (ii) identify common mistakes and challenges that learners face, and address them in a follow-up correction activity or provide scaffolding such as micro-teaching, re-instruction or re-modelling to support learners; (iii) assess the effectiveness of the task in achieving the teaching goals, and (iv) make further teaching plans as needed. While acknowledging the importance of effective monitoring, it is important for teachers need to avoid over-monitoring and especially frequent correction, as it can create a tense learning environment. Further, teachers should be aware of their physical presence while monitoring. Close monitoring needs to be carried out with sensitivity and awareness. In most cases, monitoring should be as unobtrusive

as possible, and it is often best done from a distance or from behind the learners, out of their field of vision so as not to distract their attention.

In-class tasks for teachers

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: In groups, students consider the question: What do students need to learn to be able to speak well?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Demonstration teaching and reflection: The teacher models one or more different ways of teaching speaking with the class.

- Spot the difference: In pairs, students are given two similar pictures but with some differences between the picture. The students ask questions about what is in the picture to identify what is different between the pictures.
- Guess who: In groups, each student thinks of a famous person and the other students have to guess who the person is by asking questions. The students must ask questions that have a yes or no answer, such as Is the person Chinese?
- Pictionary: In groups, one student draws a picture and having other students guess the word it represents.
- Eye spy: In a small group, one student thinks of something that can be seen by all of the students and tells the students what letter the name of the thing begins with. The other students have to guess what the thing is by asking questions with the structure: is it a (frog, tree, window, etc.)? In its traditional form, the game begins with the first student saying 'I spy with my little eye, something beginning with... (a letter of the alphabet).
- Spontaneous presentation: a student is given a topic and asked to speak for 30 seconds on that topic after a short preparation time.

After the demonstration, students form groups and reflect on: the purpose of the task and what learning it supported, their performance on the task, ways of adapting the task to teach other aspects of speaking.

Follow-up tasks – homework

Task design: students design a game for teaching a particular aspect of speaking and reflect on how the task teaches the particular skill.

Suggested further reading

Anderson, J. (2017). *Speaking games: Photocopiable activities to make language learning fun*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.

Burns, A. (2019). Concepts for teaching speaking in the English language classroom. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 12(1), 1-11

De Jong, N. H. (2020). Teaching speaking. In C. A. Chapelle, (ed.) *The concise encyclopedia of applied linguistics*, (pp. 1071-1077). Routledge. doi:10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1437.pub2

Pakula, H.-M. (2019). Teaching speaking. *Apples - Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 13(1), 95–111. <https://doi.org/10.17011/apples/urn.201903011691>

Topic 6: Teaching listening

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Teaching listening as a communicative activity
2. Listening as a product and listening as a process and the implications for teaching

Learning Objectives

1. Understand different approaches teaching listening: role of top-down and bottom-up, comprehension approach
2. Understand the role of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary in teaching listening
3. Understand how to select, adapt and design materials and tasks to support teaching listening

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Introduction

Listening has long been described as the ‘neglected’ or ‘taken for granted’ skill in language learning. This perspective is based on the belief that listening proficiency is developed automatically in the process of learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, resulting in inadequate attention being given to listening practice within English language teaching (ELT) curricula. This neglect contradicts the significance of listening comprehension in society’s shift from printed to sound-based media, where listening comprehension becomes particularly important. Moreover, with the increasing interest in oracy, listening skills have received more attention as they can significantly impact communicative interactions. In light of the heightened awareness of the significance of developing listening ability, it is worth examining the types of knowledge employed in listening comprehension and how the listening system works.

Types of knowledge involved in listening comprehension

When discussing the knowledge involved in listening comprehension, two terms are frequently used: linguistic knowledge and schematic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge pertains to the language itself, including phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics, and discourse structure. These components work together to provide a holistic understanding of the entire language system. Linguistic knowledge can therefore be referred to as systemic knowledge, used to help listeners decode speech and arrive at the literal meaning. In contrast, schematic knowledge is about general world knowledge, the topic, context, and sociocultural knowledge. It enables listeners to interpret meaning associated with language knowledge. Anderson and Lynch’s (1988) more detailed classification of knowledge in listening comprehension can also be a reference point where contextual knowledge is isolated from schematic knowledge (see Figure 5).

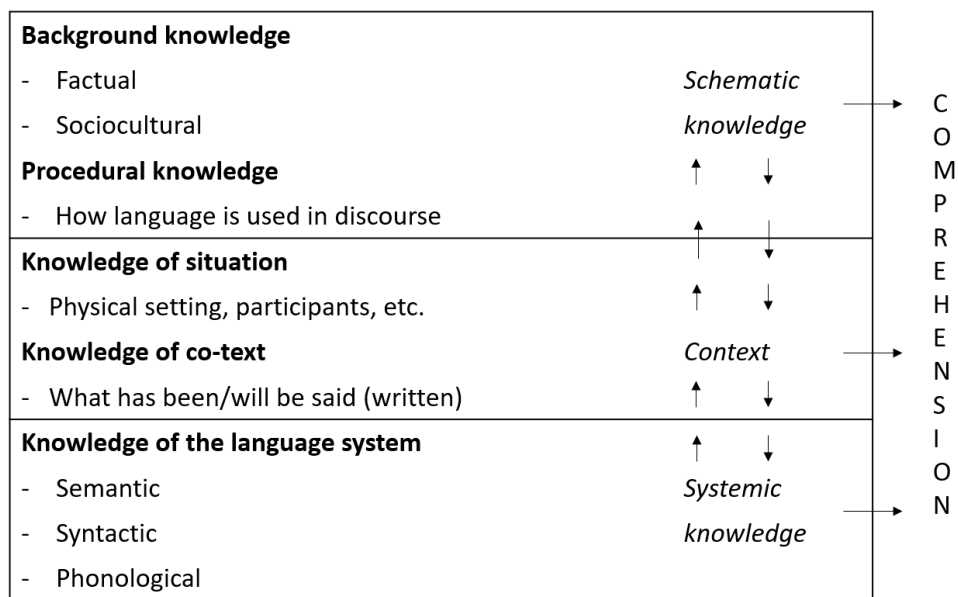


Figure 5. Information sources in comprehension

Listening process

Given the importance of different types of knowledge in listening comprehension, there has been a substantial body of literature examining the processing of such knowledge. Two prevalent terms used to describe different aspects of the listening process are “Bottom-up” and “top-down”. These terms are widely recognised as representing two significant approaches to listening comprehension.

Bottom-up process in listening

The bottom-up process involves several stages to achieve the literal meaning of the input. Firstly, the speech is segmented into phonemes, which are the smallest units of sound within a language, to distinguish one word from another. Then, processing moves into a higher stage - the syntactic level — where the order of words in a sentence is analyzed. Following this, an analysis of the semantic content is conducted to determine the literal meaning of the input. Many listening activities in traditional classrooms are designed with a focus on the bottom-up process, such as dictation and cloze listening, which require detailed recognition and processing of the input.

In addition to segmenting the acoustic input into sounds, words, and sentences in the end, there are clues available in the speech listeners can use to infer what the speaker means. For instance,

- the placement of stress on meaningful words can alter the meaning of the sentence, as illustrated by the following examples:
 I didn't *steal* your wallet (I just *borrowed* it)!
 I didn't steal *your* wallet (I stole *his* wallet)!
- Pauses in speech also provide access to indicating a sense group situated between very short internal pauses and a slightly longer terminal pause at the end of each utterance.
 As soon as I get the information [pause] *from a friend of mine* [pause] I'll let you know the answer.
 I prepared *eggs* [pause] *bacon* [pause] and *pancakes* for breakfast.

- Tone of voice also helps listeners make sense of the speaker's attitude. For example, when a speaker congratulates someone by saying "Great job!" in a cheerful tone of voice, it indicates the speaker's positive attitude towards the achievement. However, the intention would be completely different if the speaker said it in a sarcastic tone of voice, which would change the implicit emotion of the message conveyed.

As previously mentioned, the bottom-up approach views the process of comprehending speech as a series of consecutive stages where the output of each stage becomes the input for the next higher stage. In that sense, the listening process works in a sequential order. However, the aforementioned types of knowledge involved in the bottom-up approach may function concurrently or based on the accessibility of the knowledge to the listeners. For example, it is likely that listeners understand the meaning of a word before decoding its sound because they may have other types of knowledge, such as contextual knowledge, to interpret the meaning. Alternatively, listeners may have already formed a hypothesis about what might come next based on what has been heard. If that is the case, listeners do not need to use all the available knowledge and may not even need to listen to the last word. In some situations, listeners may even be able to predict the content before listening to the speech. For instance, when taking a listening test, listeners can infer what the speaker might say next by skimming the questions first. In such cases, listening comprehension shifts to the top-down process.

Top-down process in listening

The top-down approach refers to the use of schematic knowledge that a listener brings to a text, as opposed to language knowledge, to infer the meaning. A typical example of this is when teachers encourage students to predict what is going to happen before listening to a recording, using given pictures or the topic. In this case, teachers assist students in interpreting content with the help of their prior knowledge of the topic. There are also other common top-down listening activities in the classroom, such as reading information about a topic and then listening to check whether these points are consistent. To gain a clear understanding of how top-down strategies work, Hedge (2000) introduces three categories of schematic knowledge used in listening comprehension.

One category is termed formal schemata, which refers to knowledge of the underlying structure of speech events, including the logical organisation (Sharp, 2002). For instance, "once upon a time" indicates a story that may include a description of the setting (i.e. time, place, and characters), followed by an event with a tacit moral. In a more formal lecture, it might have an introduction, aims, contents, and a summary at the end. Such formal schemata helps listeners build knowledge about the content of the input as a whole. The second category of schemata is termed content schemata, which includes general world knowledge, sociocultural knowledge, and topic knowledge (Hedge, 2000, p. 233). In some cases, content knowledge plays an indispensable role in inferring meaning. For example, when John returns to work after Christmas Break, his boss says, "You are full of beans." Each word is easy to comprehend, but John, a German, feels confused as he makes little sense of the whole sentence due to a lack of knowledge about British culture. British people often describe people in this way when they are in high spirits. In contrast, everyday situations in listening often provide clues to the content because they are routinised. Schank (1975) coined the terms "script" to refer to stored, routinised schemata in memory. Schank also depicts it as "an elaborate causal chain which provides world knowledge about an often-experienced situation" (p. 240). For example, the script for ordering a coffee at Starbucks would include specifying the size first, then giving the name of the drink, and finally adding any special instructions. There is also routinised knowledge for seeing a doctor, ordering at a

restaurant, or speaking with a food delivery person. Such knowledge of scripts helps listeners process the input by making full use of their understanding of how the world functions.

So far, we have a clear picture of how the acoustic input is processed from two distinct views: top-down processing and bottom-up processing. However, it is important to note that these two approaches are not working in opposition. Rather, it is widely accepted that the bottom-up and top-down approaches work hand in hand and depend on each other to comprehend the input.

But listening is much more than just comprehension because the speaker's intended message might differ from what the listener infers. For example, if a child expresses his gratitude to their mom for putting their happiness before her own, the mom needs to use her intelligence or personal knowledge to judge whether the child's purpose is just to show appreciation or to ask for something new. In order to respond effectively, it is necessary for listeners to understand the diverse purposes for listening.

Purposes for listening

The purposes for listening vary depending on the type of listening. There are two significant categories of listening: participatory and non-participatory listening. Participatory listening refers to the listener's active participation in the speech with the aim of making an appropriate response, such as group discussion and consulting. The purposes for participatory listening are diverse. For example, in an informal gathering, listeners are inclined to enjoy the gossip and to occasionally contribute a humorous anecdote or remark intended to provoke laughter. In contrast, the purposes for participatory listening are to obtain specific information for needs such as asking language teachers how to distinguish certain grammatical features or getting to know how to complete a lost book form from a library staff. These purposes of achieving information for participatory listening have been classified into two types: "interactional" to define the social communicative purpose (e.g., listening to chatting at a birthday party), and "transactional" to describe the purpose of exchanging information (e.g., listening to how to complete a lost book form) (Brown et al., 1983). As is the case with the top-down and bottom-up processes working jointly, these two types of purposes for participatory listening can shift from one to the other in the same situation or community. For example, the purposes for listening in a talk between a student and a teacher can move between interactional (e.g., listening to a student's plan for the upcoming summer vacation) and transactional purpose (e.g., listening to a student's talk about their problems in language learning).

For the teaching of listening, fostering listeners' ability to distinguish interactional and transactional purposes can help them infer the topic of the conversation and provide accurate information at the appropriate time, thereby maintaining the conversation running smoothly. For example, in a small-talk at a party, when listeners evaluate the familiarity between the participants and the formality of the language used there, they can make sense of the general topic of the conversation and input some information with a humorous purpose properly. For transactional purposes, listeners are supposed to focus on the details of the information they need for further actions.

In contrast to participatory listening, non-participatory listening does not require listeners to interact with the speakers, such as listening to a podcast or a report presentation. The purposes for non-participatory listening vary along with listeners' use of different skills. For example, listeners explore the general content from daily news podcasts out of curiosity or write down the details to find approaches to certain professional issues, that is, listening for learning. Up until now, there has been a

wide range of purposes for participatory and non-participatory listening. However, it is not enough for teachers to be aware of the various purposes for listening; they also need to have listeners experience appropriate types of activities in line with diverse reasons for listening with the aim of developing listeners' ability to comprehend.

Types of activities in listening

The design of classroom listening activities is supposed to follow a routinised procedure with different purposes at each stage. Normally, teachers and students do some preparation before listening to activate listeners' prior knowledge, enable them to become familiar with the topic, avoid demotivation due to great difficulties in vocabulary, and build up their confidence. Tasks in the while-listening phase set goals to enhance students' understanding of the text. At the post-reading stage, teachers are likely take advantage of activities to introduce certain language knowledge, such as grammatical features and content words, to students for further development of effective listening. Therefore, activities at each stage serve specific functions.

Pre-listening activities

As mentioned above, activities at the pre-listening stage aim to introduce the context, provide information relevant to the text, and encourage students to make certain predictions. It often works with top-down ideas. There are lists of recommended pre-listening activities:

- Predicting content from the title of a talk or key words: students are encouraged to use the given words to predict what comes next, as shown in the picture below.

2 You are going to listen to a short story by the American humorist James Thurber called *The Unicorn in the Garden*. These are the main characters, objects and places in the story.

A man his wife a unicorn a psychiatrist a policeman
a strait jacket a golden horn the 'booby-hatch'

a) From the key words, do you expect the story to be:

- Tragic?
- Amusing?
- Magical?
- Clever?
- 'Dark'?
- Children?

b) Predict briefly what might happen in the story?

* Booby is a type of bird, but also refers to a stupid or crazy person. In this story, booby-hatch is taken to mean a mental hospital.

- Talking about a picture related to the text: pictures are used to give students clues about what is happening. Multiple possible interpretations should be encouraged to motivate students to think creatively.
- Discussing the topic: brainstorming is often used to create a wide range of ideas based on the main topic. One way to do this is to arrange group discussion followed by group sharing about the given topic. All contributions are accepted without negative judgement.

- Using realia, such as photos, guides, maps, and brochures: teachers bring in photos of themselves at different ages and guide students to make guesses about the teachers' age, hobbies, or family members. This activity is likely to get more students involved as they tend to be interested in the teachers' personal life. Also, guides or maps can be used as stimuli to recall students' information relevant to the topic.

In view of the significance of effective pre-listening activities to the success of listening comprehension, Wilson (2008) recommends avoiding the following: a) allowing the pre-listening stage to drag on, instead keeping it short and fast-paced; b) giving too much information to the students, as the goal of pre-listening is to introduce the topic rather than provide all the answers; and c) doing a listening exercise before the actual listening, which is equivalent to asking students to do two listening exercises. To avoid this, a student-centred teaching approach is highly recommended.

While-listening activities

Well-designed while-listening activities can not only help students understand the text, but also assist teachers in checking students' understanding of the text and recognizing the points where interventions and further clarification are needed. At this stage, listeners are encouraged to bring an authentic purpose for listening, such as listening for gist or detail. The gist practice is often designed into wh-questions, such as "What are they talking about?" or "What does the speaker think of the topic?" For listening for specific information for the second time, activities such as noting down the information about times, dates, and numbers are preferred in the listening classroom. A more challenging task is to spot the difference. While looking at one picture, students listen to the text describing several differences from the picture. They are expected to identify the differences and mark them down on the page. In contrast to "times, dates, and numbers" tasks, where students just wait for the answers to come, this task of listening for differences requires more listening ability because students have no idea what needs to be noted down and when it will happen. Ticking multiple-choice items, filling in a chart, and matching pictures with the text are also on the list of common while-listening activities. It is worth noting that the choice of activities should not only attend to the types of text which decide the level of the appropriateness of the response but also take into account the level of the learners. Simple tasks, such as "times, dates, and numbers", are more suitable for early-stage learners, but advanced learners are able to challenge themselves with more complex tasks.

Post-listening activities

Post-listening activities involve checking the answers and summarizing the content of the text. The teachers' role is to ask for evidence of the answers and their justifications, monitor students' discussions to ensure more students speak, help students organize the collected information, and finally summarize the content of the text. Group discussion might be an optimal alternative that avoids shy students' anxiety, who are not active to speak in the front of the whole class. For example, the teacher can list a couple of aspects based on the topic and ask each group to rank them in order of importance. Alternatively, group members can also discuss 'dos' and 'don'ts' based on the topic and produce their list. After the discussion, each group member can write down one sentence to summarize, and then pass it to another group member who reads and writes. Each group can get a couple of summaries and then compare and discuss their contributions. Such post-listening activities not only work well to enable students to reflect on the text but also contribute a lot to integrating other essential skills, such as speaking, writing, and reading.

Principles of grading tasks

As discussed above, listening activities serve to help listeners comprehend the text and develop their listening ability, but this cannot be achieved once the level of difficulty in tasks mismatches the level of listeners. For example, simple activities might build up beginner listeners' confidence and avoid anxiety and demotivation from doing tough tasks, whereas such activities are unlikely to attend to the needs of advanced listeners. Therefore, it is necessary to master effective strategies for simplifying or complexifying listening tasks. Four principles can be followed when grading listening activities.

- the speaker, including the number of speakers, the speed at which they speak, the complexity of the language features they use, and the variation in accent. For Example, when the speaking speed is fast with various accents, the degree of response should be simple. Multiple choices for basic information, such as where the speakers are, can be appropriate
- the text's content, language factors, its formal structure, and the prior knowledge required to infer meaning. If the content of the text is close to real life and the listeners have certain prior knowledge of the topic, more complex tasks, such as what the speaker's actual intentions by doing this is, are expected to be designed.
- the listeners, including the degree of motivation and response required. When listeners have weak top-down skills, tasks can be upgraded to practice listeners' interpretation ability.
- the degree of support given to listeners while they are listening. If the teachers are playing the listening accompanied by a video, it would be easier for listeners to comprehend the text, and thereby, tasks can be designed in a more complicated way.

Listening strategies

As presented earlier, there is a wide range of diverse purposes for listening, and learners are likely to face challenges in listening comprehension. One effective way to support learners is to teach them listening strategies that "good listeners" employ to overcome their deficiencies in language knowledge. The generally recognised types of strategies are proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990): a) metacognitive strategies, b) cognitive strategies, and c) socio-affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies are concerned with monitoring listening to have long-term benefits, such as planning how to approach a learning task, solving problems with appropriate strategies, and self-assessing. One common example of using metacognitive strategies is when listeners choose to tune in to BBC news podcasts three times a week to improve their listening ability. Cognitive strategies refer to mental abilities and processes relevant to linguistic knowledge. When listeners infer the meaning of unknown words using context, they are using cognitive strategies to assist their learning. Socio-affective strategies are related to interactions with another person to enhance learning. Asking for repetition for clarification is an example of listeners tending to use social strategies in listening.

Good listeners employ strategies concurrently in the process of comprehending one text. They often listen to one recording (metacognitive), infer the meaning of unknown words to predict content (cognitive), and then discuss what they have heard with their friends (socio-affective). What needs to be noted is that listening strategies are often compensatory. They provide ways for listeners to overcome challenges in listening to one text. In other words, they cannot replace fundamental skills listeners are supposed to acquire, such as bottom-up skills to decode words in the speech. The optimal approach is to enable strategies and skills to work together to develop listening ability.

In-class tasks for teachers

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: In groups, students consider the question: Why do learners need to learn to listen? What do they use their listening abilities to do?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Demonstration teaching and reflection: The teacher models one or more different ways of teaching speaking with the class.

- Note taking: The lecture reads a paragraph length text with frequent pauses. Students take notes during their listening. After the reading is finished, students form groups and compare their notes.
- Dictogloss: The teacher reads a passage at full speed three times while students make notes. After the reading is completed, the students work in groups to reproduce a version of the passage that is written in good English and contains all the main ideas of the original. At the end, compare their version with the original.
- Listening jigsaw: In pairs, students listen to two different versions of the same text (e.g. a description of an accident, a story about a shared experience, etc.). The students then identify which parts of the texts are similar and different.
- Simon Says: As a whole class activity, the teacher gives instructions that either begin with ‘Simon says’ (e.g. Simon says put your hands on your head) or which leave it out (e.g. Put your hands on your head). If the instruction begins with ‘Simon says’, the students must perform the action, if there is no ‘Simon says’ they must not do it.

After the demonstration, students form groups and reflect on: the purpose of the task and what learning it supported, their performance on the task, ways of adapting the task to teach other aspects of speaking.

Follow-up tasks – homework

Task design: students design a game for listing a particular aspect of listening and reflect on how the task teaches the particular skill.

Suggested further reading

- Newton, J. M., & Nation, I. S. P. (2020). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge.
- Nguyen, H., & Abbott, M. (2016). Promoting process-oriented listening instruction in the ESL classroom. *TESL Canada journal*, 34(1), 72-86
- Anderson, A., & Lynch, T. (1988). *Listening*. Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, J. (2008). *How to teach listening*. Pearson Education.

Topic 7: Teaching reading

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. The reading process and its implications for how we teach reading
2. Different ways of reading: gist, information
3. Approaches to teaching reading

Learning Objectives

1. Understand reading for different purposes: reading for gist, reading for information
2. Understand different approaches teaching reading: top-down and bottom-up, interactive and integrated views of reading
3. Understand how particular task types support different aspects of learning to read
4. Understand how to select, adapt and design materials and tasks to support teaching reading

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Introduction

Reading is an important part of language use and is also an important means for enhancing language proficiency. As receptive language abilities, reading and listening have much in common. Analogous to the listening process, the reading process entails two principle types of knowledge: linguistic knowledge, which encompasses syntax and semantics, and schematic knowledge, which includes sociocultural and genre knowledge. To facilitate the development of learners' reading proficiency, it is essential to comprehend how forms of knowledge function in promoting readers' comprehension of textual material.

Reading process

The reading process, like listening comprehension, is often categorised using the terms "bottom-up" and "top-down". The former emphasises readers' interaction with language knowledge in written or printed text and proceeds linearly from words to text, assuming fast processing speed, no interruptions, and complete information storage in memory. Bottom-up processing is seen as a passive reading approach, limited to word recognition, and thus considered a form of lower-level processing. Bottom-up strategies are useful when readers encounter unfamiliar words or ideas. However, readers who rely on bottom-up approaches exclusively may have problems comprehending the overall meanings of texts as the focus on word or sentence recognition rather than on constructing meaning from the text. Top-down processing occurs when readers activate their schemata to comprehend the text, for example by starting with their own hypotheses or predictions about meaning based on schematic knowledge. This approach involves active reader engagement in testing hypotheses and is considered higher-level processing, relying on readers' cognitive processes and background knowledge.

Bottom-up and top-down processing models reflect different aspects of reading and good readers combine both when reading. Teachers of reading therefore need to emphasize the interplay of different types of knowledge, with readers alternating between top-down and bottom-up approaches as necessary, with knowledge from one process complementing the other. Such ways of teaching reading are called 'interactive' and they place equal importance on the role of background knowledge and schematic knowledge in reading comprehension and emphasize the need for these processes to work together to build meaning in response to the text.

Types of reading with different purposes

Readers have different purposes for reading. Some common purposes for reading are: a) to get information; b) to satisfy to curiosity about a topic; c) to follow instructions to perform a task; d) for pleasure, amusement, and personal enjoyment; e) to keep in touch with friends and colleagues; f) to

know what is happening in the world; and g) to find out when and where things are. These purposes can be achieved through the use of different ways of reading that need to be brought into teaching reading in the language classroom.

- *Receptive reading* involves receiving information from a text without the need to produce language as a result of the reading. For example, readers who read in order to enjoy a story, find out the news from a newspaper, or look for information on a website.
- *Reflective reading* refers to the process of reading in which learners read a text and then pause to reflect on its content, to make personal meaning from the text. They may backtrack in the text to check how new information is related to what was expressed earlier. The purpose of reading is not just entertainment or finding information; it is an intentional and thoughtful practice. Reflective reading assists learners in synthesizing new information.
- *Skimming* is when readers glance through a text rapidly to get a general overview of the content. For example, you will skim through an article with a focus on headings and the first sentences of each paragraph to get a sense of what a text is about. Skimming can be important for helping to plan a fuller reading of a text.
- *Scanning* refers to looking through a text very quickly to find specific details. For example, we scan the text to find the time and the place one event happened. Scanning therefore helps readers identify where they need to attend to in a text in order to achieve their reading purposes.
- *Intensive reading* involves reading one text thoroughly with a specific goal as the outcome of the reading. Intensive reading involves absorbing as much of the meaning of the text as possible and ensuring that the reader understands the text fully, for example by checking all unfamiliar words. Intensive reading involves focusing on short texts with specific goals. News articles, blog posts and short stories can therefore be useful texts for intensive reading.
- *Extensive reading* involves reading as widely as possible for general meaning in relation to a particular topic or purpose, including enjoyment. Extensive reading does not focus on specific detailed meanings but on general ideas. One way to characterize extensive reading is to contrast it with intensive reading, which refers to reading in detail with clear aims.
- *Critical reading* is the process of reading texts to understand core concepts or ideas, resulting in enhanced clarity about and comprehension of the text. Critical reading does not simply aim for comprehension of the text but also requires students to interpret the reading and connect it to other ideas and to evaluate texts, for example by distinguishing fact from opinion, considering arguments for and against a position,

Each type of reading has quite different purposes and involves different reading strategies. It is essential for teachers to expose learners to a variety of ways of reading and to support learners in knowing how and when to read in different ways.

Criteria for selecting reading texts

When teachers select texts for language learners, they need to consider various features of the texts in order to match texts to students' language levels and learning needs. Some features of texts that influence their difficulty for students are text length, familiarity of the content, frequency of unknown vocabulary or new meanings, and text density (e.g. the wordiness of the text, the number of content words compared with the overall number of words).

Text selection needs to relate to students' needs, interests, cultural background, and language level. There are a number of important qualities of a text: interest, lexis and syntax, length, and familiarity and the need for schemata building. The purpose for reading is also important in for selecting texts as texts need to be relevant to the purposes for which they will be used.

Interest is a key criterion when selecting texts for students. If the texts used for teaching reading are not interesting for the learners, then their effectiveness for language learning is reduced. The relationship between interest and learning is straightforward. Whether the text can attract students' attention decides the extent to which students engages in reading and feels enthusiastic about reading and is attentive to finding new information. There are two types of interest that are relevant: individual interest and situational interest. Individual interest refers to the things that interest a specific person. It is a stable and enduring cognitive form of interest that can persist across situations. Reading tasks that link to individual interest include self-determined activities relevant to individual interest, such as asking students themselves to find one text they are interested in and then share the general idea and details with others. To identify individuals' interests, teachers need to know about their students. They could, for example, design a "Reading interest questionnaire" to collect the information about what topics students would like to read about. Situational interest is a relatively short-lived emotional state that is triggered by the situation a person is in. It is related to meeting the person's needs at a particular moment. Tasks assigned by teachers can create situational interest by presenting students with stimuli that is unusual or unfamiliar for students and stimulates their curiosity.

Linguistic features have been considered to contribute a lot to the readability of a text. One common way to describe linguistic features is to evaluate the complexity of a text from two perspectives, namely, lexis (words) and syntax (grammar). In terms of lexical features, the level of complexity of individual words and word phrases influences students' reading performance. For example, a large proportion of unfamiliar words makes reading more difficult and may demotivate students and affect the development of their reading ability. When selecting a reading text, it is useful to consider both the depth and breadth of the vocabulary in the text.

The depth of vocabulary refers to a robust or strong knowledge of word. In other words, it describes how well a person knows a word. If a text contains words that are well known by the reader it will be less difficult linguistically than if it has many words. At the same time, it is important to introduce students to new words in reading texts to help them develop their reading strategies. It is therefore important to consider the balance between new and familiar vocabulary. The breadth of vocabulary refers to how many words a person knows. If a person has a broad vocabulary, then reading is easier than if the person knows fewer words. This means that the ability to read relates to the overall vocabulary of the reader not just to features of the text and so the selection of reading material needs to consider the size of learners' vocabularies.

Syntactic complexity refers to the range and sophistication of the grammatical forms found in the text. The more complex a sentence is, the more difficult it is to understand it. Shorter and simpler sentences are better suited to lower levels of learners, while more complex sentences can be used at higher levels. In this sense, the complexity of syntax should be considered together with lexis when selecting texts for reading.

Text length contributes to the difficulty of reading and the longer a passage is, the more difficult it will be. Teachers therefore need to select texts of an appropriate length for their learners and for the purpose they are being used. For example, intensive reading requires relatively short texts. When teachers are working with longer texts, they may need to provide more support to students to help them deal with the amount of information present in the text, including breaking longer texts into smaller units.

Students' *familiarity* with the topic and content of the text can facilitate their reading comprehension as they can use top-down strategies to support their reading. Students' schematic knowledge helps supports the semantic processing of a text, allows readers to make predictions and enables them to associate new information with known knowledge in a meaningful way. Therefore, it is necessary to consider where students knowledge about the topic of a text and then choose a relevant level of familiarity to support the aims of the reading. If a text is linguistically complex but on a familiar topic, their existing knowledge of the content may compensate for their language knowledge. If a text is on a less familiar topic but where the language is familiar, students are better able to deal with the content. When students lack content knowledge to support their reading, teachers can develop such knowledge through pre-reading activities.

As mentioned earlier, people read with diverse purposes. Therefore, text selection should cover a range of reading purposes, allowing students to practice different ways of approaching a text without expecting to understand every single word in one text. Some examples of text types of different purposes are:

- Getting information: travel brochures and websites, train timetables, bus schedules, notices, public signs, directories, catalogues, information leaflets, regulations, weather forecasts
- Curiosity about a topic: magazine articles, websites, blogs newspaper editorials, advertisements, specialist brochures
- Follow instructions: maps, route planners, recipes, assembly instructions, instructions for use, guides, manuals
- For pleasure and enjoyment: blogs, fan sites, short stories, novels, plays, cartoons, poems, social media.
- To keep in touch: text messages, postcards, notes, invitations, letters, emails, social media.
- To know what is happening in the world: news articles and websites, news summaries, social media
- To find out when and where: announcements, programmes, tour guides, posters, brochures

Designing reading tasks

In designing reading tasks, it is usual to build in pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. The purpose of this structure to develop the readers' ability to tackle the texts and to respond to what they have read.

The *pre-reading* stage comprises "enabling activities" that activate students' prior knowledge and provide language preparation to enable students to cope with the content and form of the text. Pre-reading activities may include: a) talking about any pictures accompanying the text to help students become oriented to the topic; b) predicting the focus of a text from the title; c) stating opinions about the topic; d) answering a set of questions or doing a quiz about the topic; e) listing items of information they already know about the topic; and f) discussing the topic to raise interest in the topic. In the enabling activities teachers can also teach critical new words in the text. In pre-reading activities, group

discussion is an effective approach to activate knowledge and to get students involved in the process of critical thinking. Additionally, the students' L1 may be a useful resource for pre-reading activities to encourage them to articulate their ideas of the topic and reduce their insecurities due to limited language ability.

During the *while-reading* stage, the actual reading takes place and students are encouraged to focus on the content to understand the gist or details. Well-designed while-reading activities should give students opportunities to do the following things: a) follow the order of ideas in a text; b) react to the opinions expressed; c) understand the information it contains; d) ask themselves questions; e) make notes; f) confirm expectations or prior knowledge; and g) predict the next part of the text from various clues. To support these activities, teachers can offer support by: a) asking students to tick off items on a check list of expectations about the topic or find answers to their own questions; b) having students make tick and cross in the margin to show a positive or negative reaction to the writers' opinions; c) providing questions for students to stop and think about; d) providing a chart for them to fill in with information from the reading; and e) providing questions for students to answer from the reading. The interventions in the activities encourage students to reflect and response while reading.

Post-reading activities allow students to evaluate the reading or to work on the content of the reading. At this point, teachers can ask students to check and discuss their responses to while-reading tasks. Various activities can then be organised with a focus on the content or the language of the text. For instance, activities such as role-play, reading of contrasting texts, producing posters, and reconstructing texts can be used to facilitate students' comprehension of the content. In terms of language-focused activities, teachers can provide students with a list of key words from the text and encourage them to find these words with their dictionary and underline the meaning used in the text. Teacher can also ask students to identify a target structure in the text (e.g. a grammatical construction, a verb tense, a particular part of speech, etc.) to focus on grammar. In doing the task students go back through the text and identify the target grammatical structure and how it is applied in the text.

Reading strategies

Reading strategies are conscious, planned steps that skilled readers use to actively engage with the text. In order to enhance students' reading abilities, teachers can provide instruction in reading strategies by focusing on four strategies that are important for reading comprehension: predicting, visualizing, inferring, and questioning.

Predicting is a strategy that helps students create a purpose for reading. Teachers can prompt students to establish connections with their prior knowledge and make predictions regarding the content of the text they are about to read and check these predictions as they read the text. Teachers can guide students to make predictions using features of the text such as the title, table of contents, pictures, or keywords. For longer texts, teachers may encourage students to make predictions at specific junctures throughout the text. This technique also helps foster student engagement, which can help increase their interest in the text.

Visualisation is another strategy that proficient readers use to comprehend a text. This technique involves students creating mental images during the reading process that reflect their interpretation of the text. For example, students can be prompted to visualize the setting, characters, and actions found

in a story and then write about or draw the images that they have imagined. Like predicting, visualizing can help enhance students' interest as well as supporting their reading comprehension.

Inferring is a reading strategy that entails deducing what the writer implies but does not explicitly state. Students make inferences based on their prior knowledge and on information from the text. In this way, they can draw conclusions and discover underlying meanings in the texts. Clues, such as illustrations, graphs, pictures, dates, relevant vocabulary, and titles, can be used by students in making inferences.

Questioning is another strategy that can be used during all three stages of reading. Using questions requires students to think about the issues raised as they read the text to identify information in the text and enhance their comprehension of it. Asking questions before reading helps students access their prior knowledge so that they can use it to interpret meaning while reading the text. Asking questions after reading provides opportunities for students to check their comprehension and facilitate the integration of the information they have found in the text.

In-class tasks for teachers

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: In groups, students consider the question: What are the main challenges in teaching English-language reading for Chinese students?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Discussion: In groups, students discuss the questions: How important is learning to read aloud? How much information does reading aloud give to teachers about students' ability to read? What information do teachers not get about students' reading ability from reading aloud tasks?

Discussion: In groups, students discuss principles for selecting texts for a specific group of learners. Students then compare their principles across groups.

Demonstration teaching and reflection: The teacher models one or more different ways of teaching speaking with the class.

- Find target words (a skim reading activity) – The teacher gives students a reading text and provide them with a list of words in Chinese to find in English in the text. Students can highlight the words in the text or underline them.
- True or False (reading for information and responding) – The teacher gives students a text to read. Students then create a short list of statements that are true or false based on the reading. Students exchange the statements with the partner who has to decide if each statement is true or false.
- Summarise the text (identifying main ideas) – The teacher gives students a text to read. Students identify the key ideas in the text (for example by underlining or highlighting them and then re-word these ideas to summarise the whole text in a set number of words).

After the demonstration, students form groups and reflect on: the purpose of the task and what learning it supported, their performance on the task, ways of adapting the task to teach other aspects of speaking.

Follow-up tasks – homework

Students are suggested to write a reflection on teaching reading and consider what the implications are for how they will teach reading for their students, identifying the sorts of tasks they think would be useful.

Suggested further reading

Nation, I. S. P., & Waring, R. (2019). *Teaching extensive reading in another language*. Routledge.

Grabe, W. (2008). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Hudson, T. (2009). *Teaching second language reading*. Oxford University Press.

Wallace, C. (2003). *Critical reading in language education*. Springer.

Topic 8: Teaching writing

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Key concepts in writing: spelling, coherence, cohesion, genre, register
2. Writing as a communicative process: purpose, audience
3. Approaches to teaching writing

Learning Objectives

1. Understand different elements of writing and how they contribute to writing ability
2. Understand the role of spelling, grammar and vocabulary in teaching writing
3. Understand different approaches teaching writing: controlled writing, process writing
4. Understand how particular task types support different aspects of learning to write
5. Understand how to select, adapt and design materials and tasks to support teaching writing

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Approaches to teaching L2 writing

L2 writing is a purposeful and contextualised way of communication, in which, learners not only learn to construct their knowledge coherently and logically but also convey their thoughts and meanings. Before we proceed to introducing some of the most common approaches to teaching L2 writing, it is essential to understand what teaching L2 writing means. For L2 teachers, the process of teaching L2 writing can be viewed as a process where they support their students to construct knowledge appropriately and express meaning effectively in a written form. Teachers need thinking tools including coherent perspectives, principles, models to enable them to live up to perform this task well. Accordingly, in this chapter, the most well-established approaches to teaching L2 writing both in the international arena and in China are introduced one by one to provide some possible models. However, L2 writing teachers need to have a critical eye to evaluate these approaches instead of accepting all of them without questions and getting lost in the changing fashion. The approach adopted or adjusted to teaching L2 writing in real classroom settings should be the one that enables teachers to facilitate this L2 writing process in a better way for their students.

Controlled writing and free writing approaches

Controlled writing is a learning model where learners are given structured prompts to help them write, and helps them focus on content and form, both at the sentence and the paragraph levels. It is the opposite of free writing, where learners come up with their own ideas. Controlled writing can be interpreted as a controlled gradual pedagogical process working from words to sentences, from sentences to paragraphs and from paragraphs to a whole composition. Tasks for controlled writing typically provide with things such as 1) an outline to complete, 2) a paragraph to change, 3) a model to follow, or 4) a passage to continue.

The advantages of controlled writing have been widely acknowledged, predominantly in nurturing learners' acquisition of writing skills at an early stage. For learners, controlled writing can assist in combating errors due to the influence of the first language and to form and reinforce the appropriate L2 behaviour, because it allows them to manipulate previously learned language structures. Additionally, by focused practice, learners can concentrate on one or two problems at a time instead of having to tackle the demanding full range of complexity of free writing. For teachers, controlled writing is much easier to respond to and much less time-consuming.

Controlled writing supports learners to begin developing their writing and is useful where learners have difficulty in conceiving and structuring their own texts. However, it focuses most on the form of writing and less on the content of writing. Controlled writing may lead learners to become so occupied with producing correct forms that their ability to write fluently and to write at length is not developed. Controlled writing needs to be supplemented with more open writing tasks that allow learners to present their own ideas and experiences.

When quantity of writing (as in free writing) is placed before quality of writing (as in controlled writing), learners may achieve better L2 writing results in terms of fluency and length of writing. Free writing involves open writing tasks in which learners decide on their own topics and write longer texts based on these topics. They may also be given set topics (e.g., an interesting experience, an enjoyable day, etc.) and allowed to choose the own content and form for the writing task. In order to make free writing a useful and effective approach to teaching L2 writing, teachers need to make sure that certain practical considerations are met. Some key considerations include: 1) writing must be produced as extended texts; 2) learners' motivation to write must be promoted and sustained; 3) the subject content of the writings should fall within the personal experience of the learners; 4) rapid writing should be highlighted.

In using control writing, teachers need to ensure that students understand what they are writing, or the writing practice will have little benefit. When give examples and structures for wiring, it is possible that students will be able to produce correctly written texts even without understanding the examples they are working with. One approach proposed to develop learners' control over patterns in L2 writing is through having students first expressing their ideas freely in simple sentences and then to developing these sentences into more complex paragraphs or passages by using more complex grammatical forms such as coordination or subordination with adverb clauses, passive forms, relative and noun clauses, etc.

Process approach

The process approach, also known as process-oriented instruction, or process-focused writing approach, emphasises writing as a complex and overlapping cognitive process, and good writing as the result of a cycle of writing, feedback, and rewriting. The process approach focuses on how writing is done as compared to a product approach which focuses on finished texts only.

There are a number of different ways of working within process writing. One way of teaching process writing divides the writing process into three steps: 1) rehearsing and prewriting (写前准备); 2) drafting (写做阶段); 3) revising (重写阶段). Another approach identifies five steps: triggering (developing students' interest/knowledge), gathering (collecting together ideas and information), sharing (communicating ideas through writing and getting feedback), revising, and editing. Despite

these diverse opinions on the stages of the writing process, the essence of the approach highlights its recursive nature together with the significance of students' active engagement and teacher-student communication throughout the writing process. Unlike the product-oriented approach where students are only passively engaged in the teaching process and in process-oriented writing the teacher acts only as a reader and responder and marker after the writing is finished and handed in.

The advantages of the process approach are various. Two of the main benefits are:

- It enables students to enhance their thinking ability, for a deeper understanding of their own writing process while developing their writing.
- By acknowledging writing as creative process of linking ideas and language, it brings teachers and students to attend to writing strategies to help writers cope with the challenging, complex process of writing, which is neglected in the product-oriented approach.

To summarize, although it takes extra time and effort to employ the process approach to teaching L2 in the classroom, it has significant advantages for developing the quality and fluency of learners' writing and gives students more control over improving their written work than a product approach.

Genre approach

The genre approach views writing as a pre-dominantly linguistic activity and stresses the way that that writing varies with the social context in which it is written and the purpose for writing. The purpose of writing is central to this approach because writing is carried out for satisfying a certain communicative goal, like to apologize, to complain, to advertise, to report or to show gratitude and to share a recipe. Moreover, different communicative purposes are associated with different types of texts (or genres): a report is not the same as a story, an essay is not the same as recipe, and each has its own organisation and linguistic forms. In the genre approach, the starting point is to consider the models of the target genre, usually authentic texts taken from real life situations..

Generally, three phases are involved in the writing development when Genre Approach is adopted:

- the students are introduced to a model of a particular genre by reading a text and considering its purpose and communicative goals;
- the teacher helps learners get familiar with the targeted genre by explaining how the text is structured and what language forms are used and how the structure and language relate to the text's purpose; and
- a text of targeted genre produced.

The rationale behind this approach is that learning is viewed as partly involving imitation and partly involving understanding and consciously applying rules in a creative way to produce an original text.

The most distinct advantage of this approach is that students are exposed to writings in different genres and the texts come from authentic social situations in real life. Thus, they develop their ability to write texts using genres that they need for everyday life. Another advantage is that students' anxiety in producing a text in a particular genre is reduced since they are given a model text in advance. However, as an extension of product approach, this approach has been criticised for its neglect of the complexity of the writing process and too much emphasis on the form for writing. However, the genre approach can be combined with a process approach to address such shortcomings.

The Process Genre Approach is a synthesis of the merits of the process and product approaches, namely, the simultaneous emphases on knowledge about language (Product Approach and Genre Approach), knowledge of the context and purpose of writing (Genre Approach) and strategies and skills in using language (Process Approach). The Process Genre-based Approach stresses the knowledge of social context and the purpose of the text in genre approach while at the same time observes the emphases on the writing process and the importance of feedback and revising from the process approach.

Length Approach

The Length Approach (写长法) is a writing approach developed in China, in the early 2000s (Zheng, 2004). Simply put, it involves using 'writing' as a means, the length as a variable and the writing task as a context, to create the experience of writing long compositions. The approach involves encouraging students to write at length rather than giving a word limit to be reached and rewarding the length of the text in marking. The length approach involves preparing learners to write long texts by spending class time reading texts related to the topic of the writing task and also looking at models of good writing by other students. It then approaches evaluating the texts by focusing on the quality of the ideas presented rather than a strict focus on accuracy of writing.

Feedback on L2 writing

Feedback on L2 writing has a pivotal role to play in enhancing students' writing ability. Through constructive feedback from others, students have the chance to gain a clear(er) idea of their own strengths and weaknesses in writing and make adjustments accordingly in their next writing endeavour. Therefore, it is essential that teachers provide timely and constructive feedback to their students on their students' writing assignments. However, in the Chinese context, each English teacher in middle school and high school is usually assigned large classes to teach, which makes giving individualised and detailed feedback to each writing assignment difficult. Two possible solutions can be adopted in dealing with this difficulty.

The first is to involve students in the assessment process to provide peer feedback on each other's writing assignment, based on which teachers' feedback could be provided. Peer feedback should relate to the readability of the text and how well it communicates ideas to the reader. This sort of peer feedback can assist students in gaining a sense of the audience for their writing. Teachers can then comment more on formal issues in the writing. Another solution is to adopt a specific rubric, such as the Single Point Rubric (SPR) (See Table 5 for the example), which can be effective to assist teachers in providing effective individualised feedback for students' writing assignments in a concise and efficient way and thus reduce teachers' workload. Unlike the traditional holistic and analysis rubrics, SPR describes only the proficient level of performance and indicates what more needs to be done to reach this level.

Table 5: Single point rubric for persuasive writing (adapted form Rold, 2007)

Areas that need work	Performance standard	Evidence of how you met the standard	Areas that go beyond the basics
	<p>Ideas and content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. creates a clear understanding of the writer’s opinion b. Well-focused on the prompt c. Contains numerous relevant supporting examples, reasons d. Contains arguments that are distinctive in approach 		
	<p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Structural development includes a functional introduction body and conclusion b. Sequencing is thoughtful, logical and effective c. Pacing is well-controlled d. Transitions clearly show how ideas connect 		
	<p>Word choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Uses language that is specific and precise b. Uses language that seems appropriate and natural to the purpose and audience c. Effectively uses vivid words and phrases d. Avoids clichés and jargon 		
	<p>Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shows strong commitment to topic b. Engages the reader throughout c. Uses tone appropriate and effective for the audience and purpose d. Anticipate readers’ questions throughout 		
	<p>Conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Paragraphing is sound b. Grammar, usage, spelling and punctuation is correct c. Conventions may be manipulated for stylistic effect 		

In-class tasks for teachers

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: In groups, students consider the question: What is the purpose for writing? What sorts of texts do people write? What sorts of difficulties are involved in different types of writing?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Demonstration teaching and reflection: The teacher models one or more different ways of teaching speaking with the class.

- Continuation writing – The teacher gives students the following prompt and asks them to write four or five sentences to complete the story.
I was walking home last night. and it was very dark. It was raining and I was late getting home. Suddenly, I heard a loud noise behind me. ...
- Peer feedback – students each write a paragraph on the same topic. In pairs students exchange their writing and give each other feedback. Each student has to find two strengths in the writing and two things that need further work. Students then revise their texts based on the feedback.
- Writing from a visual stimulus – The teacher gives students a picture and asks them to write a paragraph about what is happening in the picture.
- Collaborative writing game – In groups of 4-5 students, each student writes one sentence on a piece of paper and passes it to another student. This student then writes a continuation of the story begun in the first sentence and then folds the paper to hide the first sentence. The student then passes it to the next student, who adds a further sentence and folds the paper to hide the preceding sentence. Students continue until all students have added a sentence to the story. Students then read the story.

After the demonstration, students form groups and reflect on: the purpose of the task and what learning it supported, their performance on the task, ways of adapting the task to teach other aspects of speaking.

Analysing a text: The teacher gives students a text that they would need to teach in school. Students work in groups to identify the purpose of the text and the main features of the text that students would need to be able to reproduce (e.g. text structure, specific language forms, etc.).

Follow-up tasks – homework

Students select a text type that they could teach and plan how to teach it.

Suggested further reading

Hyland, K. (2019). *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.

Hyland, K. (2021). *Teaching and researching writing*. Routledge.

Nordin, S. M. (2017). The best of two approaches: Process/genre-based approach to teaching writing. *The English Teacher*, 35, pp. 75-85

Pacello, J. (2019). Cultivating a process approach to writing: Student experiences in a developmental course. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 19(2), 187-197.

Selvaraj, M., & Aziz, A. A. (2019). Systematic review: Approaches in teaching writing skill in ESL classrooms. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 8(4), 450-473.

Topic 9: Teaching viewing

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Viewing as a communicative activity
2. Multimodality in English language teaching

Learning Objectives

1. Understand viewing and multimodal texts and the implications for teaching English
2. Understand how to teach different types of multimodal texts: video, charts, diagrams, etc.
3. Understand how to select, adapt and design materials and tasks to support teaching viewing

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Introduction

With the proliferation of social media and the emergence of digital technologies, teaching viewing - the use of visual materials such as images, videos, and infographics to enhance students' language learning experience - has been increasingly widely embraced by scholars as an important aspect of English language education. For English language teaching, understanding what viewing involves and incorporating it into teaching practice can prepare learners to engage in a visually oriented society. This chapter provides practical strategies for teaching viewing, including a brief introduction to visual literacy, different forms of multimodality, and ways of incorporating viewing with the teaching of other language skills.

Visual literacy

The teaching of viewing is based on the concept of visual literacy. Visual literacy can be defined as a set of competencies that allow a learner to “effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media” and visual literacy equips a learner with the ability “to understand and analyse the contextual, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, and technical components involved in the production and use of visual materials” (ACRL, 2011).

As working with visual information requires learners to research, interpret, analyse, and evaluate visual materials, such abilities need to be explicitly taught and developed by educators. To guide educators with the development of learners' visual literacy, ACRL (2011) also framed a set of standards that visually literate learners are expected to meet. These include:

- determining the nature and extent of the visual materials needed to undertake a task;
- finding and accessing the images and visual media needed effectively and efficiently;
- interpreting and analysing the meanings of images and visual media;
- evaluating images and their sources;
- using images and visual media effectively;
- designing and creating meaningful images and visual media;

- understanding many of the ethical, legal, social, and economic issues surrounding the creation and use of images and visual media, and knowing how to access and use visual materials ethically.

When developing or assessing learners' visual literacy, English language teaching teachers can refer to these standards and employ them either as a whole when a particular module has a teaching focus on visual materials, or individually when courses have only a few learning outcomes relating to visual materials.

Modes of Communication: linguistic, visual, spatial, aural, and gestural

In today's digitalised communication context, using language alone is insufficient for people to effectively engage in communication; they also need the ability to draw on other, non-linguistic, meaning-making resources. This means they need to be engaged with multimodal communication; that is communication that occurs across different modes. The term "mode" refers to a form, type, method, or channel of communication, and multimodality refers to the idea that information is conveyed not only through spoken or written words, but also realised through other semiotic systems. Taken together, multimodality denotes the use of two or more modes in the process of meaning-making, in which each mode has its distinct role and function in conveying meaning. In light of this, a text can be considered as multimodal when it combines two or more modes in creating meaning. For instance, in a picture book, both the text and the images contribute to conveying the whole story; however, they accomplish it in distinct ways.

There are five primary modes of communication, linguistic, visual, spatial, aural, and gestural. The following provides a brief introduction to different modes along with corresponding examples:

- The linguistic mode refers to the process of communicating ideas in spoken or written language, such as presenting information by stringing together words into a written text or an extended talk. Compared to other modes, the linguistic mode has had more extensive pedagogical support in language teaching.
- The visual mode refers to the use of visual elements, which either be dynamic (e.g. video or film) or static (e.g. pictures, tables) to transmit ideas and information. The visual mode includes but is not limited to pictures, signs, tables, drawings, graphic organisers, and animation.
- The aural mode focuses on composing meanings through sounds, such as music, sound effects, tones, volume and rhythm. By pairing the aural mode with other modes, such as the visual, a more engaging and dynamic message can be conveyed. An online video with captions can be seen as a combination of linguistic, visual, and aural modes.
- The spatial mode mainly concerns spatial arrangement, organisation and accessibility of the text. For example, how a brochure conveys information could be influenced by how it is laid out.
- The gestural mode refers to interpreting meanings through physical movements, such as facial expressions, hand gestures, body language and interaction between people. The gestural mode works with linguistic, visual, aural and sometimes even spatial modes to construct more detailed and nuanced information. For example, drama and mime are representative practices that use gestural mode together with other different modes in conveying meaning.

English language teaching teachers should be encouraged to incorporate a combination of modes in their classrooms to accommodate students' diverse learning styles and engage them with a more dynamic learning environment. However, in language teaching the emphasis has been on the linguistic

mode and pedagogical practices regarding teaching in relation to other modalities are still in their infancy.

Multimodal texts – different forms of multimodality

Types of multimodal texts (signs, tables, charts, videos, icons, virtual reality)

As stated earlier, multimodal texts have become vitally important in the current society due to the ubiquity of digital technologies and the ways in which they facilitate communication through a combination of different modes. As such, understanding how multimodal texts are constructed and employed has become a critical aspect within some academic fields, particularly in language education. Multimodal texts can be shaped into various types based on the modes they use and the ways in which they are presented. For example, signs are a type of multimodal text that use the visual mode of communication, while video is a combination of visual and auditory modes. Virtual reality, on the other hand, is a more recent development in multimodal expression that combines immersive technology with all five modes of communication to produce a virtually realised learning environment.

Further, multimodality can also be displayed in a variety of forms, including live events, digital content, and print-based formats. Print-based texts are traditional multimodal communication forms that are still extensively used in a variety of settings, including academic research, where this type of multimodality frequently combines written texts with information presented visually in diagrams or tables to communicate information. Digital text is another prominent form of multimodality, and its unique affordances, such as the ability to include hyperlinks, animations, and interactive elements, provide more opportunities for communication. Moreover, live multimodal texts, such as theatre performances and public speeches, contribute to a unique type of multimodal communication, where the audience can experience the communication in real time. Information conveyed via this form of multimodality is shaped by a range of contextual factors, such as spatial arrangement, performers’ gestural language, and their tone of voice. Table 6 summarises some examples of types of multimodal texts that are found in different forms of communication. Some of the examples may fit into more than one category as they may adopt a combination of modes and/or could be presented across multiple forms of multimodality.

Table 6: Forms of multimodality

Form of Multimodality	Mode of Communication	Examples
Print-based	Linguistic, visual	novels, newspapers, magazines, comics, graphic novels, brochures, flyers
Digital	Linguistic, visual	websites, blogs, e-books, online articles
	Audio, visual	movies, video games, animations
	Spatial	virtual reality games, digital maps
	Gestural	sign language videos, interactive dance apps
Live performances	Audio, visual	dramas, concerts
	Spatial	dance performances
	Gestural	sign language performances, mime shows

Ways of using multimodal texts: informational texts

As stated previously, multimodal texts involve presenting information through multiple modes, be they visual, aural, gestural, spatial and/or a combination thereof. In view of this, multimodal texts can be applied flexibly in a host of educational settings, one of which is the composition of informational texts. Based on their different communicative purposes and text features, informational texts can be categorised into five distinct types: informative/explanatory texts which give information about the natural or social world; persuasive texts which attempt to influence the readers' thinking and behaviour; nonfiction texts which recount a real event or give information on some aspect of the world; biography which interprets an individual's lived experiences, and procedural instructional texts which highlight how to accomplish something.

Incorporating multimodal texts such as signs, maps, infographics, and videos supports learners in developing sophisticated communication abilities in their second language (L2). Hence, English language teaching educators need to develop learners' abilities to access, navigate, interpret, and critically analyse multimodal texts.

Using multimodal texts

Moving information between modes

One important dimension of visual literacy is moving information between modes and understanding how changing the mode influences how the meaning is conveyed and understood. For example, students may be asked to represent the information conveyed in an image (a table, a diagram or a picture) in linguistic form, in which case they need to comprehend the meaning of the image and then work out how to communicate each idea in the image in words. Similarly, learners may be asked to present an oral report (spoken output) explaining a blood circulation diagram (visual input) or organise a nonfiction article (written input) into a mind map (visual output). These sorts of tasks ask students to use visual literacy either productively, that is by presenting information in visual form, or receptively, that is by identifying the information contained in the visual form. When engaging in the process of shifting modes to make sense of the content, students have opportunities to notice new aspects of a given concept and produce a coherent account of the concept across multiple modalities, which in turn strengthens their understanding of the learning target.

Students can also come to understand the strengths and limitations of the different modes that they can use to represent information. For example, architectural diagrams can express spatial and structural meanings that written texts cannot replicate, but they also have constraints on the amount of content they can represent.

Understanding the relationships between modes in a text

When information is presented in a multimodal text, the different modes convey information in different ways. In some cases, the two modes may present the same information in different forms, in other cases each mode may present only a part of the information. For example, in a graph, the visual text cannot be understood separately from the written text that shows what the graph is measuring.

The modes may be *concurrent*; that is one mode elaborates the meaning of the other and provides additional information about the same message. For example, in a picture of a flower that is labelled with its name. The image and the text both give information about the flower; one shows what the

flower looks like, the other shows what it is called. Similarly, an image accompanying a news story provides more elaboration of the situation being described rather than a new element of the message.

The modes may be *complementary*; that is each mode shows a part of the meaning of the text and it is only by understanding what each mode contributes that the whole text can be understood. For example, a graph requires both the written information and the visual information to have a meaning. Similarly, an advertisement may have a slogan such as 'High quality' but it is only by associating the words with the image that the reader understands what it is that is high quality.

The modes may be *connecting*; that is the two modes are linked together in such a way that what is presented in one mode is understood as occurring in the other mode. For example, in graphic novels speech bubbles are used to show spoken language in written form. In such texts what is presented in the bubbles is understood as spoken language, even though it is presented in the written mode.

In learning to work with multimodal texts, students need to learn how to recognise what information is presented in each mode and to understand how each mode contributes to the meaning of the text as a whole. This is especially important when students are moving information between modes. Supporting learners in understanding multimodal texts may require directing their attention to each mode and getting them to think through what the meaning in each mode is.

Receptive and productive uses of multimodality

Meaning is not created, understood, and disseminated simply through one single semiotic resource, but also through the bringing together multiple modes to create a meaning. If making sense of (and composing) texts requires the ability to comprehend the combined potential of different modalities, English language teachers should consciously use multimodal activities to develop learners' multimodal communicative competence in their teaching. To accomplish this, it is critical for teachers to recognise the pedagogical potential of applying multimodality in their teaching strategies both receptively and productively.

Teachers can incorporate multimodality in a flexible manner to enhance learners' receptive language learning. In multimodal texts each semiotic system is equally important when conveying information, and no mode is considered superior to the others as each has its own affordances for the purposes of creating meaning. When incorporated in the classroom, these modes can work together to provide learners with a more complete picture of the subject matter. For example, when explaining a complex grammatical structure, English language teachers could utilise a combination of written and spoken instructions, colourful highlighters, and diagrams to facilitate learners' understanding, allowing them to see, hear, and read the information at the same time.

Multimodality also contributes to the development of productive language skills, particularly in both speaking and writing. By strategically navigating multiple modes in a written task, learners can produce more compelling and persuasive compositions that properly communicate complex ideas and capture the attention of the audience. They can also use multimodal in presentations and other speaking tasks. Compared with traditional productive assignments, multimodal tasks are superior for the following reasons. First, applying multimodality in productive assignments has the potential to address the diverse needs of different types of learners (e.g. visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic), in a sense that it allows learners additional opportunities to perform the tasks through the learning modes that they are

comfortable and confident with. This means that learners may be able to convey more complex ideas when their language levels are low, for example by producing diagrams and posters that require more limited language because the language is supported by images. Also, incorporating multimodality can promote deeper task engagement as learners can closely use information presented in different modes to help them to comprehend the subject matter fully before they can produce their own work. For example, learners could draw on images and diagrams to demonstrate key points in an argument or use visual effects in their slides to create a more immersive experience when delivering a presentation. They could also use visual texts as an intermediary in developing other spoken or written texts, for example by using mind maps to identify the content of an essay or presentation.

Using viewing as a way of teaching other skills

In second language education, viewing can be employed as a versatile tool for fostering the teaching of other skills. Teachers can include viewing in the language classroom to facilitate learners' development of the other four macro skills, namely, listening, speaking, writing and reading. For example:

- When developing learners' listening and speaking abilities, instructors can use videos featuring diverse accents, speaking styles, and topics to provide learners with a rich and varied source of authentic language input. In addition, images may be useful in pre-listening or pre-reading activities to help students articulate their existing knowledge about a topic.
- An online interactive discussion board can be employed to facilitate group discussion, by having learners upload their answers on the screen and sharing with the class visually.
- In teaching critical writing, teachers can guide learners to use infographics or mind maps to organise different perspectives on a particular issue and ask learners to compare and evaluate the arguments that are visually presented before commencing a critical writing task.
- Viewing also can be employed to promote vocabulary learning. For instance, teachers can make use of online interactive games for in-class vocabulary quizzes to help students check their understanding and evaluate their learning outcomes entertainingly and engagingly.

In-class tasks for teachers

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: In groups, students consider the questions: What sorts of multimodal texts do people use regularly? What challenges do create make for language learning?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Demonstration teaching and reflection: The teacher models one or more different ways of teaching speaking with the class.

- Reading a multimodal image: The teacher gives the students an advertising text in English. The advertisement could be an print or online advertisement with words and image, or it could be a short video advertisement with words, (moving) images and music. Students address the following questions:
 - What is the purpose of the text?
 - What mood is being created by the text? What elements of the text create this mood?
 - How is the text trying to persuade the viewer? What elements of the text are most persuasive?

- What does each mode (language, image, music, movement, etc.) contribute to the overall meaning of the text?
- Creating a diagram – Students design a diagram combining images and words to explain a simple procedure, such as buying an ice-cream, catching a bus, logging into WeChat, etc.).
- Interpreting a graph: The teacher gives students a graph and ask them to write a short text presenting the information in the graph.

After the demonstration, students form groups and reflect on: the purpose of the task and what learning it supported, their performance on the task, ways of adapting the task to teach other aspects of speaking.

Analysing a text: The teacher gives students a multimodal text, such as a graph or diagram. Students identify what language learners would need to do in order to understand the text and consider how they would support students in understanding the text.

Follow-up tasks – homework

Students select a multimodal text type and consider 1) how they would teach the text as a viewing text, and 2) how they could use the text to support the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, or writing.

Suggested further reading

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Topic 10: Teaching multilevel classes

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Teaching classes with a diverse range of abilities
2. Differentiated instruction

Learning Objectives

1. Develop awareness of the need to differentiate instruction
2. Understand the nature of differentiated instruction
3. Develop strategies to differentiate teaching for learners of different abilities by varying the content, processes, products and environment of learning

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

What is a multilevel class?

A multilevel class is one in which students have at different levels of language ability. In reality, any class will have students that have further differences, not just those related to language level, such as gender and age, knowledge, ability, personal characteristics, background and experience. There are even likely to be differences when the teacher has a class that may be organised by age and assessed language level. How to deal with the variations in proficiency level is an area that may cause concern for teachers and can be responded to through the application of differentiation.

Importance of differentiation

Differentiation is defined by Ur (2012, p. 274) as ‘providing individualised teaching appropriate to different students’. The teacher’s use of differentiation aims to ensure that all students within a multilevel class can participate actively and enhance their language learning proficiency. On a practical level, this can be applied in several ways; through differentiated instruction, tasks and materials which involves planning to utilise them in multiple ways. It is important to note that this does not require planning different tasks for individuals, as Benson (2012, p. 34) explains, ‘the underlying principle is that differentiation does not mean providing tailor-made programs for each student in a class, but instead involves setting up resources and processes that allow learners to tailor-make tasks and programs for themselves’.

In teaching multilevel classes, there are a number of practical activities that teachers may use to address the needs of students at different levels:

- Use a variety of activities, so that different learning-styles and levels can be addressed in different types of tasks
- Make the content of tasks interesting, so that more advanced students are less likely to be bored by lower-level activities
- Introduce choices in activities in order to allow for flexibility in terms of the language level of the task and the pace of working on the task
- Develop activities that allow room for self-expression for individual students

- Encourage collaboration in doing language tasks to take advantage of possibilities for peer-teaching
- Design pen-ended activities that allow different types of responses to create opportunities for students to use language at different levels
- Design activities that have a basic task can be done successfully fairly easily and add further optional extensions for faster or more advanced students.

Each of these ideas will be explored in further detail with some examples of ways on how to implement differentiated learning in the classroom.

Variation and interest of activities

Having a variety of interesting activities for learners to participate in and complete is useful to help address the different needs of the group. This can be difficult though when planning classroom activities for a multilevel class. One way to do this is by varying the skills focus, such as moving from receptive to productive skills activities. Students could be asked to listen to information about a specific topic and note down the main ideas, they could then have a small group discussion to share their views on the topic. Another way would be to vary the skill which different learners practice when undertaking an activity. For instance, using a particular topic (e.g. music), students could complete different activities based on their language level or interest. They could be asked to listen and complete song lyrics, or write to their favourite musician, or prepare questions to interview other students about their music preferences. Having a range of activities will help to hold students' interest in their learning, encourage lower-level students to participate confidently and also provide higher level learners with further opportunities to progress.

Variation in how the activities are organised is also another way of engaging learners in the multilevel classroom. Individual learners will have different preferences about how they like to interact in the classroom; with the teacher, with others and on their own. For the teacher, having a balance of interactional activities is important to promote student-centred learning and motivate all group members. In each lesson, it is good for the teacher to have an activity that the whole class can do together as this encourages the sense of students being part of a group. This could be a starter activity such as a short video clip to introduce the lesson focus followed by some directed questioning. An end of class activity could be to ask each learner to say or write down one sentence about what they have learned in the class or give an example using a specific language point. These types of short, whole group activities can help foster a positive classroom environment and sense of community within the group.

Individualise and personalise

Multilevel classes will certainly have a range of proficiency levels and the teacher cannot cater for all of these by planning individual activities. What teachers can do is to adapt the task requirements to increase flexibility for learners to respond by individualizing a task. When a task is individualised, it allows students to work on several different levels. This can be done by using the same material in different ways, or by using different materials for the same type of activity.

The first option of using the same content and asking students to complete different tasks could involve one reading text that is used in the class by all students. The text should be a sufficient level to challenge even the higher-level learners. The aspect of individualisation comes in how the students are expected to respond to the text; some students may be asked to summarise the content or reproduce it visually in a diagram or chart, some may be asked to answer questions which are open-ended and require an extended response, while others may be given multiple-choice questions, so they have more support in doing the task as possible answers are already provided.

The second option of having a range of materials and asking students to complete the same type of task could involve selecting two different texts which are based on the same topic, with one at a more manageable level and the other at a higher level. Students would be given whichever text suits their individual level and asked to answer questions which cover information from both texts. The students could then be paired to share their answers and complete all the questions through exchanging information about their particular text. Another example would be to provide students with different texts which are based on the same topic and sourced from different areas such as online websites, print media such as books, newspapers, magazines, or coursebooks and modified texts which the teacher has produced. This type of activity does require more planning on the teacher's part to source and where necessary adapt the materials for classroom use, they will also have to consider which materials will be given to which students based on their proficiency level. Monitoring the learning progress and obtaining feedback on the activity will also require extra thought and planning as the use of different texts makes this more complex.

In terms of personalisation, this aims to reflect the different backgrounds, interests, and personal characteristics our learners bring to the language classroom. Personalizing a task means allowing students to make their own by giving them opportunities to express their own individual opinions, experiences, and feelings in relation to the task content and working on it on an appropriate level. The materials used can be designed or selected based on topics or themes which are of interest to the students and the tasks learners are asked to participate in can elicit their personal views. For example, students could be asked to identify their three favourite foods from a given list and then speak to other students to check if they have the same. Personalisation can also be done through providing activities which enable students to complete tasks which do not have a single fixed, correct response and can be extended based on learner level. Here, students could be provided with sentence starters and asked to complete them with a minimum number of words. All learners can participate with lower-level learners having a set target to reach and higher-level learners encouraged to extend beyond this.

These example activities can further be used by teachers to provide individual students with a choice of which activity they would like to complete. This will help to promote learner autonomy and keep students engaged as they are in control of their own learning. For instance, the teacher can arrange a series of tasks related to a topic or specific language point, with students being allowed to self-select which one they would like to attempt and then move on to another task once they have completed their choice. The tasks could be graded by levels to encourage students to progress beyond their current level. Feedback could be provided once the task has been completed by the majority of students, alternatively students could work together to share their answers or check their work from a given answer sheet. Through individualizing and personalizing classroom tasks, this should motivate students to participate and encourage students' language learning development at all levels.

Collaboration

In a student-centred classroom, collaboration between learners can support the development of communicative language skills and is a particularly useful method to employ in a multilevel class so all students can benefit. The practical ways in which collaboration can be implemented is through paired and small group work based on the task requirements so that sometimes students of similar ability work together and at other times students of different abilities work together. Depending on the task, teachers can allow students to choose who they will work with or group students together by chance such as by allocating each student with a number (1, 2, 3) or letter (a, b, c) and asking those with the same to form groups. Alternatively, the teacher can take a more directed approach and arrange the pairs or groupings based on ability.

Grouping students of similar ability together can benefit them when the task is differentiated so that higher level learners are challenged in their learning and lower-level learners can receive more support and scaffolding from the teacher. Different ability groupings are beneficial in that they can encourage peer teaching where students collaborate and learn from each other. Students could be allocated a specific peer as a buddy, someone who they can work with to practise and review the language learning. This type of mixed level pair work or grouping can help to support and encourage lower-level learners, while higher level learners will benefit from explaining and reformulating the language input.

An issue may arise if learners of different levels feel they are not benefitting from working in mixed level groups. Higher level learners may dominate tasks and complete things sooner than others while lower-level learners may find it difficult to participate and possibly need more time to engage with the task. A suggestion to overcome this issue is to use collaboration mainly for tasks where a larger number of students can succeed in completing the task well, regardless of their level. Discussing, listing or memorising ideas or vocabulary items are useful activities as they will require students to produce multiple answers. It is also useful to discuss with students the benefits of groupwork in enhancing collaboration and providing communicative opportunities.

Even when learners are working in mixed level groups for other tasks, differentiation can be applied through providing the students with different roles to undertake. This is a meaningful way of giving each student an opportunity to fully participate at any level. In a debate activity, learners could be given the role of being for or against a particular situation and have to raise points to support their position, other students could act as note-takers or judge which side has a stronger argument. Another example would be a role-play activity where some students can be given guidance on vocabulary to use and sample questions to ask when performing a particular role, while others are asked to use their own ideas to respond.

Open-ended activities and further optional extensions

As presented earlier within the personalisation section, activities which are closed-ended in that there is a fixed, correct answer, can be modified to make them open-ended. For instance, the teacher can select a task from a coursebook such as a gap-fill activity and change the question style to make it more open. Here, the given cues could be deleted allowing students to complete the gaps with their own choice then checked with a peer to review if the answer fits in that situation. Specifying a minimum expected response to a task, such as completing at least five questions, can also support lower-level learners in having a target to reach while higher-level learners can be encouraged to go beyond and produce more.

Extension tasks should be planned to provide learners with a further option once they have completed the expected classwork as some are likely to finish before others have. These tasks could be related to the activities learners have been working on, for example, learners could be asked to write a set of questions for a partner to check their understanding of a reading text. The tasks could also be reflective in nature, where learners are asked to review their learning and note down key vocabulary or language items they have encountered in the class. Learners may be given some project work or a graded reading book as further practice activities once they have completed the classroom activities and then directed to this whenever the situation arises.

Homework activities to encourage language learning outside of the classroom environment can be used to support learners of all levels. Students could be provided with any of the activities or tasks which they did not complete in class and asked to review those at home. A range of extension activities which build on the classroom learning can also be provided. These could include links to websites

about a particular topic, quizzes on grammar or vocabulary or they can be asked to speak to others using the target language and feedback on their progress in class.

Conclusion

Multilevel classes will undoubtedly provide opportunities and challenges for the teacher and students. The teacher will have to manage each student as an individual whilst considering the needs of the group, set personal learning goals for every individual and measure their progress. Through differentiation of the instruction, tasks and materials that are used, all learners should be enabled to make progress and learn from each other in a collaborative, supportive environment.

In-class tasks for teachers

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: In groups, students consider the questions: Discuss the following questions together in small groups and make notes as a mind map or list of key words: Why do learners come to class with different levels? What are the positives of having a multilevel class? What are the negatives of having a multilevel class?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Analysing a text: The teacher gives students a text or task in an English language coursebook. Students identify the components of the task and order them in terms of their difficulty. Students then consider how you would modify this for different level learners focusing on how they could make the task simpler or more complex for different learners.

Follow-up tasks – homework

Task design: Students consider a task from a commonly used textbook for teaching English and consider how to teach the task to students with different levels of English.

Suggested further reading

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Topic 11 Motivation for language learning

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Language learner motivation and demotivation
2. Motivation and the role of the teacher

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the role and nature of motivation in language learning
2. Understand what motivates and demotivates language learners
3. Develop strategies to sustain and regulate students' motivation and engagement in learning

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

Introduction

Motivation plays a crucial role in the success of second and foreign language (second language) learning. On the one hand, it is believed to be the most influential determinant among all the factors of individual differences that are associated with achievements in second language learning. On the other hand, it is also acknowledged that unmotivated students may limit their efforts and involvement in second language learning, resulting in the failure of achieving their full potential in this regard. Given the significance of motivation in second language learning, there is a burgeoning body of literature exploring various aspects of learners' motivation for English learning in China's educational context, particularly in middle schools and high schools, where English is a required subject in the high-stake examination system (e.g., Chen & Shu, 2022; Dong, 2018; Liu et al., 2016; Wen, 2005; Zhu & Wu, 2010). Having a knowledge of basic theories of motivation for second language learning and plausible strategies to promote learners' self-regulation enactment of their motivation for second language learning would be not only necessary but also constructive for English language teachers working in these educational sectors.

What is motivation?

In the Cambridge Dictionary, motivation is defined as 'enthusiasm for doing something' or 'the need or reason for doing something'. Motivation can be simply put as "what moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, and to persist in action". The two definitions imply that motivation as an abstract psychological concept could be both (either) internal and (or) external stimulation for a person to carry out actions. Motivation suggests what a person will do but does not guarantee an action. One of the implications of these views is that motivation is something that either exist (in varying degrees), prompting certain efforts to achieving certain goals, or does not exist (demotivation), resulting in a withdrawal from making an effort and inaction.

What is language learning motivation?

Language learning motivation is an integration of efforts into a language, a desire to achieve the language learning goal and a favourable attitude towards language learning behaviour. This is in line with the two key elements, i.e., efforts and actions, that defined motivation in general above.

Language learning motivation differs from other forms of learning motivation, as language learners must also be able to identify with members of another linguistic and cultural group and adapt to aspects of their behaviour.

Integrative and instrumental motivation

In early research on language learning motivation, learners' second language motivation was categorised into integrative and instrumental motivational orientations. Integrative motivation means learners are learning a second language with the purpose of gaining more knowledge about or more encounters with the second language speakers because they are interested in their society or culture. Instrumental motivation means learners are making efforts in their learning mainly the material benefits of learning the language, such as getting a better job or passing an examination. This model of motivation was originally developed in Canada where learners of French or English lived close to speakers of the other language and where speakers could find situations in which to use their new language to communicate with others.

The distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation may be less relevant in a context where English is mainly only taught/used as a subject within the four walls of the classroom, like in China. Here, integrative motivation may be less relevant, since Chinese learners usually do not need to use the language in the society and thus no need for the integrative purpose. This limitation in understanding second language motivation prompted further thinking about the nature of second language motivation and two main theories emerged to explain what motivates learners: Self-determination Theory and the Second Language Motivational Self System.

Self-determination Theory

Self-determination Theory means that human beings make choices about the efforts they will make in learning based on personal desires (intrinsic) or external factors (extrinsic). In other words, second language learners have self-determination – they make decisions for themselves – and have the capacity to choose, rather than simply being forced into actions by external pressure. However, these unwelcoming factors are usually associated with externally motivated behaviours. Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are based on the specific reasons or goals, which prompt actions. Second language learners with intrinsic motivation consider second language learning as a source of pleasure and enjoyment with inherent satisfaction; they are learning the language for the sake of the language itself. Those with extrinsic motivation view language learning as a means for an outcome that is separate to their own interest and enjoyment, such as for a reward or as the result of pressure from parents or teachers, or to avoid punishment for poor performance.

Although intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are two different types of motivation, they are closely related to each other, and can even both be present for the same person. They can best be treated as two points on a continuum of motivation and people may shift between the two elements during learning.

The mastery of second language does not happen overnight and thus it is usually a relatively long process, which requires continuous efforts from the learners. Many less successful students, who are learning English for extrinsic reasons, are more likely to stop learning when they encounter with difficulties. For this reason, it is important that learners' intrinsic motivation is enhanced and developed to ensure that students could carry on with their learning instead of giving up, especially when they face challenges.

Second Language Motivational Self System

The Second Language Motivational Self System consists of three components: Ideal Second Language Self, Ought-to Second Language Self and second language Learning Experience. According to Dörnyei (2009, p.29), Ideal Second Language Self refers to the person that students would like to become as speakers of the second language; it involves their imagination about what speaking the language would enable them to be or do. The Ought-to Second Language Self is as learners' belief that they need to meet the expectations of others and avoid possible negative outcomes. Society, parents, and peers all have a strong influence on an individual's ought-to second language self. The majority of people usually prefer simply getting by in their normal life instead of achieving excellence as their primary goal. This means that most people are motivated by the Ought-to Second Language Self rather than being motivated a future image of their Ideal Second Language Self. Nevertheless, both the Ideal Second Language Self and the Ought-to Second Language Self can work as future self-guides and thus both can guide and regulate behaviours.

Finally, second language Learning Experience focuses on the learner's immediate learning experience and refers to motivation linked to a specific learning situation. Some experiences of learning can increase motivation and others can decrease motivation. Learning Experience has not received strong theoretical emphasis compared to the two future self ideas but it is actually very important in shaping learners' motivation and can be the most powerful indicator of learners' motivation for learning. Therefore, it is important for teachers to pay attention to learners' second language learning experience and to design teaching that will help to enhance their enjoyment for learning and their motivation to continue learning.

Promoting motivation for language learning

Motivating students to learn is one of the most important responsibilities but also the most difficult challenge of being a teacher. Teachers all around the world are asking the same questions concerning learner's motivation for second language learning: What can I do when my students show no interest in second language at all? How can I make my students more motivated to do second language classroom activities? Is there anything I can do to sustain my students' motivation in second language learning? There are no universal answers to these questions. However, general advice has been given in research literature which can give some directions addressing the motivation issue in second language teaching and learning.

Self-determination Theory has shown that intrinsic motivation has a long-term effect on second language learning and ideally it is better if we could generate a genuine love for the second language in learners' mind. Students with intrinsic motivation are more likely to assume their responsibility in the learning process and to persist in making efforts to have a good command of English, since they inherently possess a passion for the language. Some key elements for developing intrinsic motivation in second language learners having a sense of autonomy and ability in learning and having a feeling of security and connectedness in the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to create opportunities for their students to feel they have some autonomy in their learning by giving them choices and opportunities for self-directed learning. It is also necessary to make sure that learners feel comfortable and connected in the learning environment and that they do not feel they are frequently corrected or criticised by teachers.

In Chinese context, English as a second language has been made a required subject in all high-stakes exams from primary school to the second year of undergraduate studies. Therefore, attaining a high

score in exams is usually part of Chinese learners' motivation in their learning, and so extrinsic motivation plays an important role. For the majority of Chinese English learners, English is only a foreign language taught/used within English lesson. Only in very rare cases and under very specific conditions, do students pursue the learning out of their enjoyment or love of English. Providing clear expectations and being consistent in expectations about students, and helping students recognise their progress towards their goals can help support extrinsic motivation.

However, whether motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic may not be the main issue and both sources of motivation can be effective for learners. It seems that rather than the time of motivation, it is the way the motivation is regulated (that is, what controls or influences the motivation). Intrinsically regulated motivation, that is motivation that is determined by the learners themselves is most important and extrinsically regulated motivation is less likely to sustain long-term learning. However, externally regulated motivation can also have effect on learning behaviours, although the influence tends to be of short-term. To support intrinsically regulated motivation, teachers could help learners to understand why it is good and important to learn the language in the first place and highlight things that could contribute to students' extrinsic motivation, including passing exams, getting qualifications and positive feedbacks during learning. This point is particularly relevant in China. According to a recent study in South-West China that investigated over 700 secondary school students, the majority of the low achieving students are found to have no clear reasons for learning English (Ye, 2021). If students do not have a clear reason for learning they are not likely to be motivated at all (amotivation).

By drawing upon the theory of the Second Language Motivational Self System, we know that the two future self-guides, i.e., Ideal Second Language Self and Ought-to Second Language Self can have a positive impact on learners' motivation for second language learning. There are a number of factors that are important to consider when attempting to maximise the motivational power of these two constructs:

- The learner needs to have developed a desired future self-image (they need to see themselves as using the language in the future)
- The future self-image needs to be distinct from the current self (they need to see themselves as being different in the future)
- The future self-image is detailed and clear
- The future self-image is possible and realistic
- The learner recognises that the future self-image requires real efforts being made
- There is no conflict between one's Ideal Self and Ought-to Self
- The future self-image is one of high importance to the learners themselves
- There is a concrete action plan designed that leads learners towards the goal
- The learners is aware that there are negative consequences if the realisation of the future self-image fails.

To enact the power of the Second Language Motivational Self System in motivating students to learn, teachers need to help students to develop a strong and appropriate future self-image. The learners need to be guided to have a desired future self-image regarding second language learning if it is missing. Teachers can support their students to adjust the future self-image to make it reasonable, realistic, detailed, and clear enough but also distinct from their current self, achievable but still challenging. Once the appropriate future self-image has been established, teachers need to make sure that learners

regard this goal as a priority, since negative consequences would be associated with a failure. Once a clear self-image has been established, teachers can guide the students to write up a detailed action plan with concrete procedures to achieve their goal.

But the work should not end here, for these are only the conditions for a future self-image to be valid and ready to play its motivational role. The follow-up work to ensure that learners do take actions according to the plan to make their self-image a reality and sustain such a motivation is of no less significance. Not all students will be able to act according to their plan due to weaknesses in their self-control or self-regulation.

The element of motivation that is most in control of teachers is the learning experience and this is where teachers' practice has the most impact on their learners' motivation. Teachers' need to construct their teaching so that students have a positive experience of English language learning and feel secure in using English in the classroom. Learners are likely to be demotivated if:

- Learning tasks are too far beyond students' current level and students have difficulty in doing classroom work
- The demands of the curriculum are too far beyond learners' current ability
- Classroom tasks are not stimulating and do not hold learners' attention
- Course books and other learning materials are not engaging
- Classroom activities are monotonous and lack variation in type of activity
- Students do not experience success in learning
- The classroom environment is stressful (frequent correction of errors, a focus on mistakes rather than successes, lack of time to do work, etc.)
- The relationship between teachers and students is not working well

It is important for teachers to remember that motivation is not simply a student issue but is part of the whole teaching environment and that teachers and schools themselves can be a main factor in motivating or demotivating students.

In-class tasks for teachers

Pre-lecture activities for the beginning of class

Discussion: In groups, students consider the questions: What is your own motivation for learning English? How has your motivation changed over time?

In-class activities – to be integrated into the lectures

Discussion: What things have happened in your experience of learning of English at school that have increased or decreased your motivation? What impact did changes of motivation have on your learning?

Self-reflection: Students create a table with columns marked 'Ideal L2 Self' and 'Ought-to L2 Self' and under each heading identify elements that apply to each. When they have finished their table, students reflect on where their motivation for learning comes from and how this affects the effort they make to learn English.

Follow-up tasks – homework

Reflection: How do you see your own role as a teacher when it comes to classroom motivation?

Suggested further reading

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Review and Assessment

Lesson focus

Teaching Content

1. Review the key points of the course, assessment

Learning Objectives

1. Review the key issues in teaching and learning English
2. Demonstrate understanding of how to use principles and process for teaching English according to the national curriculum

Teaching Approach

1. Lectures
2. Group activities

Time allocation: 3 hours

The aim of this week is for students to have an opportunity to return to the course material and the clarify their ideas and understanding about the concepts from the module and how they can be applied in teaching and to complete their assessment tasks.

Possible assessment tasks:

The following suggested assessment tasks adopt a practice focus are presented as alternative ways of assessing students' learning from the module. These could be used alongside other assessment approaches such as tests or in place of them.

Lesson planning

Write a set of lesson plans to teach one aspect of English language teaching (speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing). Write a commentary on the lesson plans to explain why you designed the lessons in the way you did and how you would teach these lessons.

Portfolio

Compile of portfolio based on the homework tasks given for each lesson and write a critical reflection on the portfolio and what it shows about your learning as a teacher of English.

Micro-teaching

Design a short lesson to teach some aspect of English taught in the module and implement this in micro-teaching. Write a commentary on the lesson plan to explain why you designed the lessons in the way you did and a reflection on your implementation of your lesson plan considering what worked well and what needs more improvement.

Differentiation

Select a section of a textbook and consider how you would differentiate the material in the textbook for groups of learners at different levels. Consider three levels: students who are at the level for which the tasks are designed, students who are below this level and students who are above this level. Write a commentary on the plans for differentiated teaching to explain why you designed the lessons in the way you did.

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