

# **Teaching of Reading and Writing Skills**

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**(ENG515)**

## Table of Contents

| Lesson No.       | Title                                                  | Topics  | Pages |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| <b>Lesson 1</b>  | Introduction to the Course                             | 001-004 | 4-5   |
| <b>Lesson 2</b>  | Teaching Reading in another Language                   | 005-010 | 6-8   |
| <b>Lesson 3</b>  | Teaching How to Recognize and Spell Words I            | 011-015 | 9-10  |
| <b>Lesson 4</b>  | Teaching How to Recognize and Spell Words II           | 016-022 | 11-13 |
| <b>Lesson 5</b>  | Teaching Intensive EFL/ESL Reading I                   | 023-027 | 14-16 |
| <b>Lesson 6</b>  | Teaching Intensive EFL/ESL Reading II                  | 028-033 | 17-20 |
| <b>Lesson 7</b>  | Teaching Intensive EFL/ESL Reading III                 | 034-039 | 21-23 |
| <b>Lesson 8</b>  | Teaching Extensive Reading I                           | 040-044 | 24-25 |
| <b>Lesson 9</b>  | Teaching Extensive Reading II                          | 045-049 | 26-27 |
| <b>Lesson 10</b> | Issues in Extensive Reading                            | 050-054 | 28-30 |
| <b>Lesson 11</b> | Teaching How to Read Faster                            | 055-062 | 31-34 |
| <b>Lesson 12</b> | Enhancing Communicative Competence through Reading I   | 063-067 | 35-37 |
| <b>Lesson 13</b> | Enhancing Communicative Competence through Reading II  | 068-071 | 38-39 |
| <b>Lesson 14</b> | Developing Strategic L2 Readers I                      | 072-076 | 40-42 |
| <b>Lesson 15</b> | Developing Strategic L2 Readers II                     | 077-082 | 43-45 |
| <b>Lesson 16</b> | Developing Fluent Reading Skills                       | 083-090 | 46-49 |
| <b>Lesson 17</b> | Developing Fluent Reading Skills II                    | 091-097 | 50-52 |
| <b>Lesson 18</b> | Teaching Reading: Individual and Social Perspective I  | 098-104 | 53-54 |
| <b>Lesson 19</b> | Teaching Reading: Individual and Social Perspective II | 105-110 |       |
| <b>Lesson 20</b> | Research Informing L2 Reading I                        | 111-116 |       |
| <b>Lesson 21</b> | Research Informing L2 Reading II                       | 117-121 |       |
| <b>Lesson 22</b> | Assessing Reading I                                    | 122-126 |       |
| <b>Lesson 23</b> | Assessing Reading II                                   | 127-131 |       |
| <b>Lesson 24</b> | Teaching Writing I                                     | 132-136 |       |

|                  |                                                           |         |  |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------|--|
| <b>Lesson 25</b> | Teaching Writing II                                       | 137-140 |  |
| <b>Lesson 26</b> | Teaching Writing in an L2 Classroom I                     | 141-145 |  |
| <b>Lesson 27</b> | Teaching Writing in an L2 Classroom II                    | 146-150 |  |
| <b>Lesson 28</b> | The Writing Process I                                     | 151-155 |  |
| <b>Lesson 29</b> | The Writing Process II                                    | 156-159 |  |
| <b>Lesson 30</b> | Issues of Cohesion and Coherence                          | 160-164 |  |
| <b>Lesson 31</b> | Teaching the Nuts and Bolts of Writing I                  | 165-169 |  |
| <b>Lesson 32</b> | Teaching the Nuts and Bolts of Writing II                 | 170-175 |  |
| <b>Lesson 33</b> | Building the Writing Habit                                | 176-183 |  |
| <b>Lesson 34</b> | Syllabus Design and Lesson Planning for L2 Writing        | 184-189 |  |
| <b>Lesson 35</b> | Planning a Writing Course I                               | 190-198 |  |
| <b>Lesson 36</b> | Planning a Writing Course II                              | 199-206 |  |
| <b>Lesson 37</b> | Teaching Students to Self-Edit                            | 207-211 |  |
| <b>Lesson 38</b> | Theoretical and Practical Issues in ESL Writing           | 212-218 |  |
| <b>Lesson 39</b> | Responding to Written Work I                              | 219-226 |  |
| <b>Lesson 40</b> | Responding to Written Work II                             | 227-234 |  |
| <b>Lesson 41</b> | Responding to Written Work III                            | 235-240 |  |
| <b>Lesson 42</b> | Teaching Academic L2 Writing I                            | 241-247 |  |
| <b>Lesson 43</b> | Teaching Academic L2 Writing II                           | 248-253 |  |
| <b>Lesson 44</b> | Teaching Reading and Writing in the Pakistani ELT Context | 254-258 |  |
| <b>Lesson 45</b> | Integrating Receptive and Productive Skills               | 259-266 |  |

**Lesson-01****INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE****Topic-001: Introduction to the Course****Main Focus**

- Main Focus
- For teachers of English as L2 or EFL
- Practical emphasis with the use of techniques
- Balanced approach
- Framework of four strands: meaning focused input, output
- Language focused learning
- Fluency development
- Four strands & equal amounts of time

**Features**

- Beginning reading
- Extensive reading, fluency
- Assessing reading
- Writing processes
- Topic types
- Kinds of texts
- Feedback to written work
- Aim – to help you design well-balanced course

**Topic-002: Receptive & Productive Skills****Receptive Skills**

- Listening & reading
- To receive & understand
- Known as passive skills
- Can be contrasted with productive skills
- Example: begin with understanding of new items, then move on to use
- Relationship between skills complex one
- One set of skills naturally supporting another

**Productive Skills**

- Speaking & writing
- Known as active skills
- Four are interrelated

- Reciprocal relation
- Reading has greatest impact
- Connection between reading & writing is strong

### **Topic-003: Four Strands of Language Teaching**

#### **Principles**

- Meaning-focused input
- Reading for purposes: to search for information, to learn, to integrate, to critique & write
- Appropriate to level
- Meaning-focused output:
- Reading related to other skills
- Course should involve listening, speaking & writing activities related to reading (Simock, 1993)
- Language-focused learning:
- Develop skills and knowledge needed for effective reading
- Training in reading strategies
- Make learners familiar with text structures
- Fluency development:
- To help learners develop fluency in reading
- Familiar material
- Speed reading in word recognition
- Motivation
- Access to interesting texts

### **Topic-004: What is Reading?**

#### **Main Focus**

- Recent research (Anderson, 2008; Birch, 2007; Grabe, 2009) – complexities of reading
- It is conscious and unconscious thinking process
- Reader reconstructs meaning of a text
- It is done by comparing text with prior knowledge
- No single definition
- Decoding & comprehension (Nation, 2005, p. 41)
- Recognizing language
- Recognition skills
- Constructing meaning
- Comprehension process
- Interactive process: experience & prior knowledge

**Lesson-02****TEACHING READING IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE****Topic-005: Introduction to Learning to Read in another Language (I)****Numerous factors**

- Krashen (1985) – reading by reading
- Extensive reading & benefits
- Reading material need to be much more controlled
- Pre-teaching
- Finding effective methods of promoting L2 vocabulary
- Recent research on reading fluency
- Teachers need to focus on most useful words
- Direct instruction, extensive reading & multiple exposures
- Reading strategies
- It is more than translating
- Connect prior & existing knowledge

**Topic-006: Introduction to Learning to Read in another Language (II)****Numerous factors**

- L2 students need to think in English
- Reading instruction needs to focus on training students how to think about texts
- Cognitive psychologists – conscious awareness of what students doing
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**Topic-007: Principles for Teaching Reading: Meaning-Focused Input****Input**

- Meaning-focused input involves learning L2 through reading
- Main focus on understanding & gaining knowledge
- Most of what learners read is familiar
- Learners are interested in the input
- Quality of reading
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- Main focus on understanding & gaining knowledge
- Most of what learners read is familiar
- Learners are interested in the input
- Quality of reading

- Krashen's (1985) input theory
- Meaningful comprehensible input as source of L2 learning

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

#### **Output**

- Meaning-focused output involves learning through speaking & writing
- Using L2 productively
- Reading should be related to other skills
- Course should involve listening, speaking and writing activities related to reading
- Learners read, write and talk about things that are largely familiar
- Main goal is to convey the message to someone else
- Small proportion of language they need is not familiar
- Use of communication strategies
- Mixture of input and output
- Swain's (1985) output hypothesis
- Make learners produce L2
- Make them consciously notice gaps

### **Topic-009: Principles for Teaching Reading: Language-Focused Learning**

#### **Language Focused**

- Learners should be helped to develop skills needed for reading
- L2 reading course should focus on sub-skills
- Awareness of language features: phonemic awareness activities
- Phonics, spelling practice
- Vocabulary learning and grammar study
- Integrating intensive reading
- Training in reading activities
- Strategies: previewing, setting purpose, predicting...
- Posing questions, connecting to background knowledge, paying attention to text structure, guessing words from context, critiquing & reflecting

### **Topic-010: Principles for Teaching Reading: Fluency Development**

#### **Fluency Development**

- Learners should be helped and pushed to develop fluency in reading
- Reading familiar material
- Speed reading practice in word recognition & understanding
- Activities include: speed reading, repeated reading, paired reading, scanning & skimming
- Role of motivation: interesting texts

- Learners should read a lot
- Extensive reading can be monitored & encouraged
- Learners should process L2 features in deep & thoughtful ways
- It can help raise consciousness to help later learning
- Four strands and reading course



**Lesson-03****TEACHING HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND SPELL WORDS I****Topic-011: Teaching How to Recognize & Spell Words: Introduction****Introduction**

- Skill of recognizing written forms, connecting them with spoken form and their meanings
- Significance of recognizing known words & deciphering unfamiliar words
- Debates in L1 over role and nature of systematic teaching of word recognition
- Position taken in this course: balance of four strands
- Significance of formal word recognition instruction
- Principles that should guide this teaching are: paying attention to rules and items that occur frequently, simple & regular

**Topic-012: Prerequisites for Formal Reading Instruction****Introduction**

- Several components of effective reading instruction
- Phonemic awareness
- Explicit instruction in sound identification, matching to sound symbols
- Fluent word recognition depends on phonic knowledge
- Decoding word, naming it, meaning
- Beginning readers need to apply their decoding skills to fluent & automatic reading
- Importance of adequate fluency for comprehension
- Vocabulary: knowledge of meaning critical to comprehension
- Text comprehension: it depends on large working vocabulary,
- This is enhanced when teachers ensure that readers know what they are reading,
- Role of effective instruction
- Written expressions
- Motivation

**Topic-013: Prerequisites for Formal Reading Instruction: Phonemic Awareness****Phonemic Awareness**

- Understanding that words & syllables are comprised of sequence of elementary speech sounds,
- Focus of activities on sounds of words, not on letters or spelling,
- Use strategies that make phonemes prominent
- For example, ask learners to produce each sound in isolation until they understand its nature
- Begin with simple words: listen for initial /s/ in sat, sit, sad,
- Teach how to blend phonemes into words,
- Example: /m/-ilk, /s/-at,

- Identify separate phonemes within words,
- Example: what is first sound of soup
- Break up words into component sounds: /m/-/oo/-/s/ “moose”
- Make it top priority,
- Plentiful, frequent, brief and funny activities

#### **Topic-014: Prerequisites for Formal Reading Instruction: Spoken Language & Reading**

##### **Spoken & Reading**

- Experience approach
- Learners should bring a lot of experience and knowledge to reading,
- It helps focus on small amounts of new information
- Various methods;
- Each learner draws picture, illustrating something
- Learners take picture to teacher who asks what it is about
- Teacher writes description as learner said, using same words even if it is non-standard English
- This becomes learners text of day, they read it back to teacher,
- Learners take the description away to practice reading to classmates, friends and family
- These pictures and texts are gathered to be a personal reading book
- Most knowledge needed to read and comprehend text is within reader exp.

#### **Topic-015: Phonics and the Alphabetic Principle**

##### **Phonics & Decoding**

- Apart from phoneme awareness & letter knowledge, sound symbol knowledge is vital
- Accurate & fluent word recognition depends on phonics knowledge
- When good readers see unknown word, they decode it, name it & attach meaning
- Going beyond knowing names of letters,
- Sense about purpose of letters
- Engaging learners in activities to recognize letters visually
- Helping them form letters
- Teaching how to attend to sounds or phonology of lang.
- Developing students’ awareness of sounds of individual words
- Playing games with words, syllables and rhymes, move onto phonemic awareness

**Lesson-04****TEACHING HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND SPELL WORDS II****Topic-016: The Role of Phonics in a Reading Program****Various Ways**

- Word recognition is helped by familiarity with what is being read
- To recognize words as complete units
- To decode phonically
- Phonics involves spelling-sound relationships
- Significance for both learning to read and for learning to spell
- Ways how phonics can fit into:
  - Help use phonics to read specially chosen isolated words
  - Introduce phonics with known words
  - Reading interesting texts
  - Use phonics in one-to-one reading instruction
  - Teaching of the most frequent, simple, regular spelling-sound correspondences
  - Teaching them to sound out all the sounds in a word
  - Concentrate on first letters of a word
  - Use regularized English as an intermediary step
  - Allow invented spellings that follow rules – rule is more important than the items

**Topic-017: Spelling: Productive Phonics I****Significance**

- Being familiar with spelling-sound correspondences can be seen as receptive skill of reading
- Productive part is spelling, part of skill of writing
- Applied linguistics perspective: rewarding research insights
- Role of incidental learning in vocabulary & grammar items (Krashen, 1989)
- Arguments in favor of incidental learning
- Deliberate learning as secondary indirect role
- L1 research supports both
- Deliberate analytic learning can speed up learning
- It can help with learning difficulties
- Vocabulary learning and role of deliberate learning
- Learning spelling can be supported by incidental and deliberate

**Topic-018: Spelling: Productive Phonics: System & Item Learning****System vs Item**

- Some words can be dealt with by rules, (yacht)
- Others have to be learned as unique items

- Unpredictability of English spelling system is major obstacle to learning to spell
- Phonological awareness affects spelling and has long term effects
- Spelling affects word recognition
- Poor spellers have problems in writing – they use avoidance strategies
- Phonological awareness affects reading
- Complex items need to be learned through a series of stages
- Letting students invent spellings can have positive effects
- Writing system of L1 can have positive & negative effects

### **Topic-019: First Language Effects on Second Language Reading**

#### **Effects**

- Contrastive analysis hypothesis: L2 learning can strongly be affected by L1 knowledge
- If similarities between languages, L2 will be easier
- Positive and negative effects on pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar & discourse

#### **Correlation**

- Correlation between L1 and L2 reading ability
- L2 students transfer prior linguistic & cognitive skills
- Reading in both L1 & L2 involves reader, text and interaction
- L1 reading shares basic elements with reading in L2
- Reading in both contexts require knowledge of content, form & linguistic schema
- Successful L1 and L2 readers consciously or unconsciously engage in specific behaviors to comprehend text

### **Topic-020: Learning to Spell and its Significance for Teaching Reading (I)**

#### **Significance**

- English spelling difficult
- Rules & irregularities
- Poor spelling & avoidance of writing tasks
- Spelling is dealt with across four strands

#### **Spelling & Input**

- Continual receptive exposure as useful basis for later production

#### **Spelling & Output**

- Accept invented spellings as way to more accurate spelling
- Activities: copying, read and write from memory, dictation, free writing
- Important for writing
- Giving deliberate attention to spelling
- Appropriate balance of each of four strands

**Topic-021: Learning to Spell and its Significance for Teaching Reading (II)****Spelling & Learning**

- Numerous techniques for teaching spelling
- Deliberate memorization
  1. Cover & retrieve: (yacht) y, (occurrence) o
  2. Using analogies: think of known words, sharing similar spelling features
    - E.g., *apply*, learners think of known words *reply*, *supply* etc.
    - Pronouncing word in the way it is spelled
    - *Yacht* can be deliberately mispronounced
    - Visualizing
    - Tests
    - Noticing patterns: *day*, *play*, *say*, *may*, *stay*
- Studying rules:
  - Study of complicated rules – free and checked vowels
  - Strategy training
- Memorize new item
- Find spelling of needed word
- How to pronounce new word when reading

**Topic-022: Designing a Focused Spelling Program for Reading****Significance**

- Spelling issues & their positive and negative effects on learning
- Features of good intensive learning program:
  - Keep learners motivated
  - Praise success, give quick feedback
  - Do mastery testing
  - Measure progress
  - Make learning fun:
    - Use attractive materials
    - Have amusing competitions
  - Encourage thoughtful processing:
    - Use rich associations, rule
  - Visualization, deliberate learning
  - Plan for repetition & revision
  - Give regular practice
  - Train learners in strategies
  - Get them reflect on learning

## Lesson-05

**TEACHING INTENSIVE EFL/ESL READING I****Topic-023: Introduction to Intensive EFL/ESL Reading****Significance**

- It involves reading in detail:
  - Specific aims & tasks
- Extensive reading:
  - Enjoyment & general reading skills
- In the classroom intensive reading activities:
  - Skimming a text for specific information to answer

**Various ways**

- True or false statements
- Filling gaps in summary
- Scanning text to match headings to paragraphs
- Scanning jumbled paragraphs and put them in order
- Means of increasing knowledge of language features
- Improve comprehension skill
- Approaches
  - Classic approach GTM
- To determine what language features will get attention

**Topic-024: Focuses in Intensive Reading****Aspects**

- Comprehension: understanding a particular text
- Regular & irregular sound-spelling relations:
  - Through teaching phonics, spelling rules and reading aloud
- Vocabulary: attention to useful words, underlying meaning
- Grammar
- Cohesion
- Information structure:
  - Certain kinds of information
  - Example of newspaper reports, what happened, how, effects
  - Genre features: how text achieves its communicative purpose via vocabulary, grammatical features, cohesive features

**Topic-025: Features of a Good Intensive Reading Exercise****Intensive Reading**

- Good reading exercise focuses on:
  - Items
  - Strategies
- These can be applied to any text
- It requires reading text, providing useful feedback, easy to make

**What it does**

- Directs learners' attention to features of text that can be found in any text
  - Strategies for dealing with any text
  - Gain knowledge of the language & ways of dealing with language rather than focusing on message
- Directs learners' attention to the reading text:
  - Read it or part of it to do the exercise
  - Parts of text in relation to its wider context
  - Information from outside the text
- Provides useful information about learners' performance:
  - If learners not successful on some parts, what they can do different
  - Useful feedback

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

- One of the effective techniques to train in reading
- They can take many forms:
  - Yes/no questions
  - True/false statements
  - Multiple choice items
  - Blank-filling exercises
- Simple question can help check vocabulary, sentence structure, inference, supposition
- These should be local rather than general:
  - Message of a particular text
  - Interpretation of modal verbs
  - Develop language knowledge

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

- Direct learners' attention to the reading text
- Pre-tested to make sure they cannot be answered without reading text
- Make learners consider more than one sentence to answer question
- Discussion on errors in the classroom
  - Causes need to be clearly identified
  - Develop interest to find the right answer
  - Help avoid a similar error through feedback
- Difficult to make comprehension questions because it takes:
  - Skills
  - Time
  - Effort
- Useful ways of practicing reading and motivating to read



## Lesson-06

**TEACHING INTENSIVE EFL/ESL READING II****Topic-028: Comprehension of the Text (I)****Significance**

- Comprehension questions as means of comprehending text
- Reading text and answering questions

**Question types**

- Pronominal questions: *who, what, when how, why* etc
- Used to test reading & writing ability
- Ask one-word answers or copy answers
- Use of commands: *Explain, describe*
- Yes/no questions
- Need short answers so high level of writing skill not involved
- *Does, do* etc.
- True/false sentences
- True or false according to passage
- Copying true/false
- 50% chance of guessing correctly

**Topic-029: Comprehension of the Text (II)****Question types**

- Multiple-choice sentences
- Four choices given
- 25% chance of guessing correctly
- Complicated to make
- Sentence completion:
- Complete by filling empty spaces to know understanding of text
- Come after passage
- Four types:
- Exact copies of sentences in passage
- To find missing words
- Not exactly same
- Missing words not in passage

**Topic-030: The Focus of Comprehension Questions (I)****Several Schemes**

- Possible focuses (Tollefson, 1989; Day & Park, 2005)
- Literal comprehension of the text
- What text explicitly says
- Answer by quoting parts of text
- Drawing inferences from the text:
- Taking messages not explicitly stated
- Could be justified by reference to text
- Working out main idea
- Organization of text
- Writer's attitude to topic
- Working out cause and effect
- Using text for other purposes in addition to understanding:
- Apply ideas from text to solve problems
- Apply ideas to personal experience
- Comparing ideas outside text
- Imagining extensions

**Topic-031: The Focus of Comprehension Questions (II)****Several Schemes**

- Responding critically:
- evaluating quality of evidence
- Adequacy of content
- Quality of expression
- Clarity of language
- Agree or disagree
- Satisfaction with the text

**Value**

- It allows teachers to check if they are providing suitable focuses
- More demanding questions involve deeper & thoughtful processing
- To encourage to make questions rather than statements
- Title
- Theme
- Pictures accompanying text
- Predicting passage

- Directs learners attention to features of language for future use

### **Topic-032: Standardized Reading Procedures**

#### **Reading Exercise**

- Teaching series of questions which can be used with any text
- Reading skills:
- Predicting
- Skimming
- Choosing main points
- Writer's purpose

#### **Reciprocal**

- Prediction of content before reading it
- Making questions on the main idea
- Summarizing
- Seeking clarification

#### **Cori**

- Concept-oriented reading instruction (Guthrie, 2003): six strategies
- Background
- Questioning
- Searching info
- Summarizing
- Organizing
- Structuring stories
- Use of modelling, scaffolding and guided practice
- Involve 30 minutes per day
- Pictures accompanying text
- Predicting passage
- Directs learners attention to features of language for future use

### **Topic-033: Vocabulary**

#### **Opportunity**

- Work on vocabulary
- Language-focused learning strand
- Deliberate learning using word cards, training

#### **Principles**

- High frequency words (2000 academic word list) deserve sustained attention
- Low frequency words are best ignored or dealt with quickly
- Strategies: word parts, dictionary
- High frequency words (2000 academic word list) deserve sustained attention
- Low frequency words are best ignored or dealt with quickly

- Strategies: word parts, dictionary

**Options**

- Pre-teach small amount of vocabulary: meaning, forms, parts, collocations, grammar
- Read passage
- Ask about several aspects of its forms, meaning and use
- Guess from context
- Vocabulary focused strategies

**Lesson-07****TEACHING INTENSIVE EFL/ESL READING III****Topic-034: Grammar Features in the Text (I)****Significance**

- Learners' expectations in a language course
- Focusing on grammar satisfies expectations
- Deal with grammar in meaningful context

**Activities**

- High frequency grammar items need sustained attention
- Make them simple and shorter
- Low frequency grammatical features are dealt as strategies
- Parts of speech:
- Choosing words from passage
- Learners find words and say whether it is noun, verb, adjective or adverb
- Use in different contexts
- Guess from the context

**Topic-035: Grammar Features in the Text (II)****Activities**

- Recognizing part of speech in a given context has three values:
  1. Meaning guessed
  2. Easier use of dictionary
  3. Understand sentence in better way
- What does what? Exercise makes learners look for n. v. relationship
- Coordination activity:
  - Simplify sentences
  - Simplify noun groups: looking for essence of sentence
  - Makes easier to see overall plan of text
- What does what? Exercise makes learners look for n. v. relationship
- Coordination activity:
  - Simplify sentences
  - Simplify noun groups: looking for essence of sentence
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**Topic-036: Cohesive Devices (I)****Importance**

- Halliday & Hassan (1976) *Cohesion in English*
- Their model for following activities
- Cohesion: reference words, substitution, ellipsis, comparison, conjunction relationships and lexical cohesion

**Exercises**

- Exercises easy to make and help students in language use
- Reference words and substitutes:
- He, she, his, her, this that, these, those, it
- Teach signals in a sentence
- Each reference word has its own grammar
- Grammar should be used as basis for doing exercise
- Example: Their refers to plural nouns
- This refers to singular nouns, phrase, clause
- He usually refers to singular, male person

**Topic-037: Cohesive Devices (II)****Exercises**

- Ellipsis : occurs when something necessary is left unsaid
- To recover from previous part of passage
- Exercises help learner makes sense of sentences by giving them practice
- It can take form of question
- What is missing from this sentence?
- Rewrite as complete sentence.
- Comparison:
- Same, similar, identical, equal, different, other, additional, else, likewise, so, more, fewer, less
- Help learners see what is being compared in text
- Conjunction relationships: and, namely, but, in spite of this – relate sentences to each other
- To see how ideas in passage are related
- To help find meanings in context
- Helps predict what will come in text

**Topic-038: Genre Features****Significance**

- Make learners aware of vocabulary, cohesive devices, grammar work together to achieve communicative purpose

**Activities**

- Predicting activity: to use topic or first sentence to predict about text

- Example: *Limestone Caves*
- “Limestone is just one of the many kinds of rocks found in New Zealand”

### **Topic-039: Handling Exercises and Role of Teaching Exercises**

#### **Common features**

- No need of specially constructed or adapted texts
- Can be applied to any text teacher has
- Use of coding system
- Underlining for references words
- Box around part of speech
- Each exercise like a test
- Make clear to students what they are looking for

#### **Role**

- Language-focused learning activities that teach
- Make learners learn faster
- Can be done when time is short
- Where other methods have failed
- Meaning-focused input
- Input through reading that does not contain too many unknown words
- Allows how to apply what they have learned
- Develops fluency in reading

**Lesson-08****TEACHING EXTENSIVE READING I****Topic-040: Introduction Extensive Reading****Introduction**

- Source of learning & enjoyment
- It can establish previously learned vocabulary and grammar
- Careful planning and monitoring of reading program
- Extensive reading requires knowledge and skill:
- Vocabulary and substantial grammatical & textual knowledge
- Extensive reading & meaning-focused input and fluency development
- A few unknown vocabulary & grammar items provide conditions for input
- Easy and known items provide conditions for fluency development
- Look at guidelines for reading program
- Type of learning that can take place,
- Learners' existing vocabulary
- Engaging books
- Large quantities

**Topic-041: Understand the Goals and Limitations of Extensive Reading****Introduction**

- Form of learning from meaning-focused input
- Learners should be interested
- Attention on meaning of text rather than language features
- Class time and outside
- Day & Bamford (1998)
- Involves a large quantity of varied,- self-selected, enjoyable at fluent speed
- Evidence that extensive reading can result in proficiency (Elley, 1991)
- Day & Bamford (1998)
- Involves a large quantity of varied,- self-selected, enjoyable at fluent speed
- Evidence that extensive reading can result in proficiency (Elley, 1991)

**Topic-042: Finding Learners' Present Vocabulary Level****Conditions**

- Extensive reading can only occur if 95 to 98% of running words are familiar (Hu & Nation, 2000)
- Their study indicates:
  - 80% running words were known, a few learners gained comprehension
- 90 or 95%, few learners gained adequate comprehension



- No more than 2 words in every 100 running words should be unfamiliar
- Clear message – it is essential to use graded readers at elementary and intermediate levels
- In order to know level, useful to measure voc. Size
- Test by Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham (2001)

#### **Topic-043: Providing Plenty of Interesting and Appropriate Reading Texts**

##### **Interesting texts**

- Oxford Bookworms series – excellent and well-established for graded readers
- Hill (1997); Thomas & Hill (1993); Hill and Thomas (1988)
- 1650 graded readers are in print in over 40 different series
- Not important to stick to one series
- Much better to choose titles that are interesting & suitable
- Reading program must provide books that are interesting
- Teachers' judgements of books likely to be different from learners
- Learners' should get priority

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

##### **Research evidence**

- Nation & Wang (1999) suggest – learners need to read many books for control of high frequency words
- At the rate of graded readers every one or two weeks

##### **Procedures**

- In extensive reading program, reading should be main activity
- No need for elaborate comprehension tests
- Use of log
- Record their opinion • Oral book reports
- Discussion groups
- Voting on best books • Award for learners
- Arranging displays of books in attractive manner

## Lesson-09

**TEACHING EXTENSIVE READING II****Topic-045: Supporting and Supplementing Extensive Reading****Techniques**

- Extensive reading is one part
- Other parts are supporting
- Provide training in reading faster
- Texts well within learners' language knowledge
- Timed reading
- Speed & comprehension scores are recorded
- Good reading speed 250 per minute
- Essential requirements:
  1. Easy texts
  2. Regular practice
  3. A push to read faster (Quinn, Nation & Millet, 2007)
- Reading program contribute to vocabulary growth
- Make vocabulary learning more deliberate and less incidental

**Topic-046: Helping Learners Move Systematically Through Graded Reader Levels****Research Evidence**

- Nation & Wang (1999) 42 graded readers in Oxford Bookworms series suggest:
- Reading one graded reader every week
- Read five books at a level
- Read more books at the later levels than earlier
- Read 15-20 and preferably 30 readers in a year
- Work their way through the levels of graded readers at later levels
- Need to study new vocabulary at the earlier levels
- Problems of extensive reading program
- Choosing level readers on their own
- Fluency strand
- Meaning-focused input strand
- Complications attached with reading
- Affective filters

**Topic-047: Simplified and Unsimplified Texts****Criticism**

- Graded readers seen as being inauthentic, watered-down versions of richer original texts

- Vocabulary simplification may result in more complicated grammar
- These criticisms are largely true of poorest quality

### Arguments

- They are interesting and well-written
- Not simplifications but original language-learners literature
- Graded readers texts give very few low frequency words
- High frequency get plenty of repetition
- Unsimplified texts and heavy vocabulary load
- Not suitable for meaning-focused input

### **Topic-048: Various Ways of Supporting Extensive Reading**

#### Other ways

- Glossing: meaning of words in L1 or in a simple L2
- Glossing place
- Example of Japan
- May improve comprehension of text
- Research going on
- Computer-assisted reading:
- Use of concordances
- Electronic dictionary
- Hypertext glossing
- Elaboration:
- Rewriting of texts
- Adding to original text rather than removing
- Unknown words are glossed in the text
- Example of *Lord Jim*

He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight *STOOP or bend* of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging *animal like a BULL*

### **Topic-049: The Extensive Reading Program**

#### Guidelines

- Conditions for extensive reading program
- Lack of research how to organize & manage a library of graded readers
- How to obtain graded readers
- How many are needed to set up library
- Day and Bamford (1998) cover such issues
- It is worthwhile setting up an extensive reading program
- Making it substantial and obligatory
- Persisting with it in an organized way

- Results of such programs are impressive (Elley, 1991; Waring and Takaki, 2003)

## Lesson-10

### ISSUES IN EXTENSIVE READING

#### **Topic-050: Extensive Reading and the Choice of Materials**

##### **Definition**

It “involves rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer readings for general understanding, with the focus on meaning of what is being read than on language” (Carrell & Carson, 1997, pp. 49-50)

##### **Materials choice**

- Teachers build reading culture
- Materials which are motivating
- Access to good collection of books
- Entire class reading the same book
- Large amounts
- Students choose what they want to read
- Principles of language teaching and ER
- Learners self-select meaningful language

#### **Topic-051: Reading Materials in Terms of Topic and Genre**

##### **ER Materials**

- Exposure to different types of materials
- Making them familiar with different genres
- Use of fiction and non-fiction texts
- Simplified texts on law, business, technology and medicine

##### **ER & Level**

- Intensive reading: materials above students’ linguistic level
- In ER, these should be near or below students’ current level
- Notion of i+I in SLA
- Start with easier texts

##### **Post-reading**

- Summary writing or book review
- Caution while writing summary
- Role-play story
- Design poster
- Read interesting parts
- Share view about book

**Topic-052: The Student-Teacher Relationship in ER****Modeling**

- Showing texts which we have read
- Reading aloud such texts
- Encouraging them read from their favorites
- Sends strong message about value of ER

**Keep Track**

- Regular monitoring
- Inspire reluctant readers
- Keep log to check progress
- Weekly and monthly conferences to find out problems
- Monitoring is used as motivation not assessment

**Student Groups**

- Group activities support reading interest & proficiency
- These should be before, during and after ER
- Discuss what students have been reading

**Topic-053: Benefits of ER****Issues**

- Enhanced language learning: vocabulary, grammar, constructions
- Knowledge of world
- Improved reading and writing skills
- More positive attitude
- Developing reading habit

**Advantages**

- Innate potential for learning L1 and L2 (Chomsky, 1968)
- Meaningful and comprehensible input activate that potential
- Interactionist theorists (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Swain, 1999)
- Talking activities
- Talk and write what students have read
- This pushes students to move from receptive to productive competence
- Speaking can be enhanced
- Repeated exposure help fluent reading

**Topic-054: Issues in Practicing Extensive Reading****Issues**

- Why aren't we all doing extensive reading?
- How many of us implementing?
- Day and Bamford (1998): teachers' misperceptions of intensive reading
- IR will produce fluent, good readers
- IR and teacher supervision
- Teacher-centred classrooms, talking
- In ER – Role shifts as teachers become members of reading community
- Practical constraints why ER not practiced

**Significance**

- ER develops good writing style, advanced vocabulary, grammar and spelling
- It can be developed by means of continual practice

**Lesson-11****TEACHING HOW TO READ FASTER I****Topic-055: Introduction to Read Faster****Teacher's Role**

- Speed reading course: learners select texts
- Teacher counts time, writes on the board
- Text should be usually around 500-600 words long
- After finishing, students answer ten questions
- Answer key can be provided
- Maintaining speed reading graph
- Putting comprehension score on the graph
- Teacher moves around, looks at graph and gives comments
- Whole activity can take seven minutes
- Repeat activity two or three weeks in the same week
- Seven weeks to do 25 texts
- Our focus: to discuss why to have such course
- How to increase reading speed

**Topic-056: The Nature and Limits of Reading Speed****Physical Nature**

- Physical nature of reading and its relationship to reading speed
- Three types of actions:
  - Fixations on words
  - Jumps to next item to focus on
  - Regressions

**Slow R Symptoms**

1. Fixating on units smaller than a word
2. Spending a lot of time on fixations
3. Making many regressions

**Factors**

- Reading speed can be affected by:
  - Purpose of reading
  - Difficulty of the text
  - Vocabulary
  - Grammatical constructions, discourse and background knowledge

**Topic-057: The Nature of Fluency Development****Mental Processes**

- Role of decoding: turning written form of a word into familiar spoken form with known meaning
- Two ways to develop this skill:
- Practice
- Changing size of a basic unit

**Activities**

- Two paths to fluency
- Well-beaten path – repetition of the same material
- Rich and varied map
- Doing things which differ slightly but draw on same kind of knowledge
- Use of extensive reading
- Reading lots of graded readers at the same level
- Stories differ but same vocabulary and grammatical constructions reoccur
- To develop rich range of associations with words and constructions

**Topic-058: The Nature of Fluency Development Activities****Conditions**

- Repeated reading
- Its results in L1 (Samuels, 1979)
- Learner reads text (50-300 words long) aloud
- Teacher listens
- Re-reading text soon after within day
- It should be above learner's present level
- Most running words should easily be recognized
- Texts can be like poems, plays, jokes or stories
- Focus on message
- Material should be easy
- Pressure to perform at a faster than normal speed
- Quantity of practice: lot of reading practice

**Topic-059: Increasing Oral Reading Speed****Read Aloud**

- Significance for L2 reading
- Convey message of text to interested listener
- in small classes, teacher can listen
- It can be done through pair work



**Paired Reading**

- Form of assisted reading
- Pairing with most proficient reader
- Sitting side by side and reading same text
- Problems explained by proficient reader
- 15 to 30 minutes activity

**ER Aloud**

- **Set aside class time for ER aloud**
- **Students reading to each other**
- **Or one learner reading to a small group**
- **Story needs to be easy**

**Topic-060: Increasing Careful Silent Reading Speed****Conditions**

- To increase reading speed – speed reading course:
- Course has timed readings and comprehension steps
- Have controlled vocabulary
- Edward Fry (1967) first course
- Easy ER another way to increase speed
- Use graded reader books
- This gives meaning focused input
- Read large quantities and reread what was enjoyable
- Fluency development through no unknown words
- Re-reading texts is important
- Set goals within given timing
- Different topics: pollution, global warming, oil, traffic accident etc

**Topic-061: Increasing Silent Expeditious Reading Speed****Kinds**

- Skimming and scanning
- Major goal – increase skimming
- What is skimming? Gist of the text
- Let them talk what the text is all about
- Activate background knowledge – helps read faster
- 300-400 word per minute result of skimming, not careful reading
- Useful skill – to identify which part needs to be read carefully
- Texts should be at least 2000 words long
- Topics familiar
- Comprehension questions

- Scanning – searching for particular information
- Searching text for quotation, name, date or number

### **Topic-062: Frequently Asked Questions About Reading Speed**

#### **Comprehension**

- What about comprehension?
- It is very important when developing fluency
- Score 7 or 8 out of 10 in careful silent reading

#### **Fluency**

- How can reading fluency be measured?
- Typical task is word per minute (Lennon, 1990)

#### **Progress**

- One minute reading: read text with set time
- Teacher can give feedback
- Reading logs: noting name of book, time taken
- Speed reading graphs

#### **Reading Speeds**

- Around 150 words per minute
- Careful silent 250 words
- Skimming 500 words
- Given texts contain no unknown words or grammar

Advantages and disadvantages of reading faster

**Lesson-12****ENHANCING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH READING I****Topic-063: Introduction Enhancing Communicative Competence through Reading****Questions**

- How much has the view of reading changed over past decades?
- How much has reading instruction changed?
- How to make reading instruction communicative?

**Essential skill**

- To read in L2 is considered essential skill
- Primary way for independent L2 learning (Carell and Grabe, 2002)
- Research is reading: how our notion has changed from passive to active
- Examine advances in learning L2 reading
- Influences from variety of disciplines
- Examine reading from communicative perspective

**Topic-064: Reading Within Environmentalist Approach****L2 learning**

- 1960s and dominance of environmentalist ideas
- L2 reading was viewed from this perspective
- Modelling and practicing correct structures
- Reading was seen passive & perceptual

**Perspective**

- Readers as decoders of symbols
- Translating symbols into corresponding sounds
- Then construct intended meaning (Carell et al., (1988)
- Readers as decoders of symbols
- Translating symbols into corresponding sounds
- Then construct intended meaning (Carell et al., (1988)
- Reading was seen as decoding skill
- Error was prevented to achieve oral correctness
- Look and say method
- Less emphasis to comprehension

**Topic-065: Reading within an Innatist Approach****Cognitive**

- Reading as passive was challenged by Chomsky (1957, 1965)
- Criticized behaviorists' models
- Notion of predisposition of language acquisition
- Reading within this approach

**Psycholinguistics**

- Influence of psycholinguistics (Goodman, 1967)
- Reading from context
- Psycholinguistic guessing game
- Cue systems
- Graphonic cues (visual and phonemic) features
- Semantic cues
- Syntactic cues
- Background knowledge given emphasis
- Reading by doing (Krashen, 1988)
- Active readers
- Text processor and move from text itself

**Topic-066: Reading within an Interactionist Approach****Comprehension**

- **1970s – identify comprehension skills**
- **Change grew out of interactionist approach**
- **Processes in reading – what happened during reading**

**Schema theory**

- 1970-80 schema theory came on the scene
- Relation between background knowledge and text comprehension
- Any text does not carry its meaning in itself
- Cognitive structures
- Reading as interactive process (Grabe, 1980)
- Dynamic interaction between writer and reader
- Text-reader interaction
- Role of cultures
- Different cultures different contexts

**Topic-067: Teaching Reading within a Communicative Competence Framework****Notion of CC**

- Hymes (1971) language use in social practice
- Grammatical competence in social context and norms of appropriacy (Canale and Swain, 1983)
- Role of reading skill in developing CC
- Discourse, linguistic, strategic, pragmatic and intercultural competence
- Discourse: markers, cohesion, formal schemata
- How and why discourse features are used
- Reader's active role

**Lesson-13****ENHANCING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH READING II****Topic-068: Teaching Reading and Linguistic Competence****Significance**

- Linguistic system such as grammar rules and knowledge of vocabulary
- To decode the written text
- Linked with discourse competence
- Failure to identify cohesive links may cause problems of interpretation of text
- Vocabulary as critical area in reading process
- Knowing lot of vocabulary does not help comprehension of text
- Extensive knowledge is needed
- Word recognition and effective reading comprehension
- Word recognition automaticity helps fluent reading comprehension
- Matching language of text with linguistic level of learners is needed

**Topic-069: Teaching Reading and Pragmatic Competence****Significance**

- Understanding contextual issues within which utterance takes place
- Politeness issues
- Essential to understand spoken discourse
- Understand intended meaning
- How to interpret communicative intention of given written text
- Readers must be aware of a set of graphic, syntactic and linguistic devices
- Typographical issues
- Lexical issues such as choice of verbs, adverbs
- Syntactic issues such as cleft constructions
- Clues knowledge helps facilitate infer what is intended

- Recent phenomenon (Kern 2000)

### **Topic-070: Teaching Reading and Intercultural Competence**

#### **Significance**

- Refers to socio-cultural knowledge or context
- Knowledge of cultural factors such as background of target community
- Dialects
- Cross-cultural awareness
- Knowledge of cultural factors can help possible misinterpretations of text (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurall, 1995)
- Social perspective in reading (Grabe, 2004)
- Teaching of L2 reading should not be detached from its social context

### **Topic-071: Teaching Reading and Strategic Competence**

#### **Significance**

- Crucial to development of reading skills (Anderson, 1999)
- L2 readers should possess both communication and learning strategies
- Make up for interpretation problems
- Enhance communicative act between writer and reader
- Reading strategies include metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective

#### **Conclusion**

- Reading is seen as interactive, decoding process
- Constructive and contextualized process to make meaning
- Linguistic, psychological and socio-cultural factors

**Lesson-14****DEVELOPING STRATEGIC L2 READERS I****Topic-072: Introduction to Developing Strategic L2 Readers****Significance**

- Learning to read – a type of problem solving
- Strategies in reading and their significance
- How strategies are teachable to developing readers
- Strategic competence in L2 reading
- Which sort of strategy is more effective and which less
- Reading involves comprehending or creating meaning
- Background knowledge and comprehension strategies
- Skilled readers and background knowledge
- Inferring points
- Prior knowledge and use of strategies
- Strategies mean approaches, skills and techniques

**Topic-073: Reading Strategies (I)****Key strategies**

- Research over 30 years
- Metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective strategies
- How to focus on learning from text, interact with author and text, unknown words and prior knowledge

**Metacognitive**

- Reminding oneself about purpose of text
- Deciding whether text relevant to one's purpose
- Reflecting how well objectives were met
- Evaluating text quality
- Assessing comprehension



- Repair strategies

**Cognitive**

- Reading slowly and quickly
- Skimming for general idea and scanning for specific information
- Re-reading
- Ignoring certain texts or parts
- Reading aloud
- Critiquing author, text
- Asking questions

**Topic-074: Reading Strategies (II)****Evidence**

- Strong pattern of findings in L2 (Barnett, 1989; Kern, 1989 & Oxford, 1990)
- Strategies result in improved comprehension and self-confidence
- Make skilled L2 readers
- Carell (1998, p. 4): “Strategic reading is prime characteristic of expert readers because it is woven into the fabric of reading for meaning. Strategies enhance attention, memory, communication and learning – allow readers to elaborate, organize & evaluate information”

**Topic-075: Reading in L2 Classrooms (I)****Instruction**

- What does effective use of reading strategies involve?
- How can instruction in their use be integrated into L2 classrooms of today?
- L2 classroom research and wide variety of methods – effective & less
- Reading for teaching grammatical structures
- Use of dictionaries, meaning, translations
- Short texts, each on different topic
- Use of comprehension questions
- Reasoning – students can learn vocabulary of different areas

- This type of instruction little relevant to how we read in real life: wide-ranging purposes, organize information

### **Topic-076: Reading in L2 Classrooms (II)**

#### **Instruction**

- Practicing reading in an artificial context
- Little relation with what we have to do in real life
- Much instruction in L2 classrooms may not prepare for reading in real life contexts (Leki, 1993, p. 13)
- Reading instruction should focus on teaching specific strategies:
- Skimming & scanning
- Purpose-oriented reading
- Allow students to develop their own strategies
- How reading be taught to prepare L2 students to be able to handle demands of real-life reading?
- How can reading strategies be taught effectively?
- How will a focus on strategies bring us to real-life reading processes?

**Lesson-15****DEVELOPING STRATEGIC L2 READERS II****Topic-077: How Do Good Readers Use Reading Strategies?****Usefulness**

- How strategies can be used most effectively in reading?
- Develop understanding how and where to use them
- No strategy is good or bad (Anderson, 1991)
- Effective for one context
- How to obtain meaning
- Making aware of the purpose of reading
- Overviewing a text to decide its relevance
- Reading selectively
- Make use of prior knowledge
- Know and use multiple strategies
- Using effective strategies for handling unknown words
- Differ in their use, depending on gender, language, age, beliefs, cultural background and motivation

**Topic-078: Skimming and Scanning****Usefulness**

- Why we read, what we want to do with text, what information to be obtained
- Reading as performance
- List of classroom activities teachers can use
- Reading for specific purposes require students to do something with information
- In real life, we read in different ways for different purposes
- Teachers can determine what strategies to use
- Reading for specific purposes benefits
- Not all reading should be performed in same way
- It depends what our purpose is

**Topic-079: The Importance of Reading for a Purpose****Purpose**

- Neglected area in L2 classrooms is purpose for which one reads
- Use of TBLT “an activity in which meaning is primary, there is some sort of relationship to real world; task completion has some priority” Ellis, 2003, p. 4
- Reading in real world
- Different purposes: guidebook, train schedule, purchase ticket
- Real-world reading needs to be focused on purposes

- This approach helps develop strategies
- Reading for purpose increases a reader's interest, provides built-in motivation
- Personal example

### **Topic-080: Fostering Effective Reading Strategy Instruction**

#### **Significance**

- Teaching L2 learners strategies improve their comprehension
- How we can make strategy instruction effective?
- Focus on establishing a purpose for reading
- Extend over time
- Multiple strategies
- Be different for different learners
- Involve either explicit explanation or modeling
- Help students where and when to use strategies
- Teach students to monitor strategies
- Include specific information about benefits of strategies
- Teach students non-strategic knowledge along with strategies

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

#### **Significance**

- Design overall curriculum supporting real-life reading
- Sustained content instruction
- Narrow reading
- TB reading
- Teach what strategies are useful

#### **Ways to do this**

- Collect variety of materials around single theme
- Use of news articles on a single topic
- Select longer novel, non-fiction
- Begin each lesson with a purpose
- Make purpose fit students' needs for learning L2
- Academic? Business? Travel?

### **Topic-082: Using Purposeful Reading to Develop Strategic L2 Readers (II)**

#### **Significance**

- Guiding purpose to accomplish task can aid strategies
- Purposeful reading & motivation, interest
- Provide real-world tasks & reasons for reading

**Activities**

- Read business report to make business decision
- Decide which candidates to vote for
- Read a non-fiction book
- Read and compare a novel
- Read news articles
- Research company to apply for job
- Prepare for a test to obtain driver's license
- Read a travel guide

**Lesson-16****DEVELOPING FLUENT READING SKILLS I****Topic-083: Defining Fluent Reading****Questions**

- What is fluent reading?
- Is it learned or developed?
- How does long it take to become fluent reader?
- Can every student become a fluent reader?

**Definition**

- Is it someone who seems to devour material for all kinds in L2?
- Is it one who can remember, summarize and discuss what was read?
- Someone who loves to read?
- Grabe & Stoller (2002, p. 110) “cognitive abilities to process visual & semantic information efficiently, combining automatic and attentional skills most appropriately for the task involved”
- Not just decoding words but clear understanding of text
- Appropriate interpretation of text
- Complex process that involves cognitive, cultural, world and linguistic knowledge

**Topic-084: Barriers to Achieving Fluent L2 Reading****Questions**

- When do students become fluent users of a language?
- What is crossover point?
- Does it happen in class or everyday language use?
- How long it takes?
- What triggers change?
- Why do some students make it and some don't?
- Some make the leap, some never do?
- One fails the other succeeds?
- What barriers, hurdles?

**Barriers**

- Study intensely and to the point of exhaustion
- Tackle increasingly difficult materials, far above one's current L2 level
- Translate all texts
- Memorize technical or specialized words
- Study only authentic materials at highest levels
- Avoid long texts in favor of short

- Read only to study never for pleasure
- Slow reading, using pencil or finger to keep track

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

#### **L1 & L2**

- Learners' dependence on L1 as a base for L2
- CLT encourages use target language ASAP
- Without constant, simultaneous translation, learners are well on way
- In the face of complex grammar, they should not fall back

#### **Role of teachers**

- Learners should not be exposed to higher levels of reading
- Fast, efficient, flexible, strategic reading will not result from decoding, grammatical analysis and translation
- Learners should become aware of giving up dependence on translation
- They should be made aware of strategies to overcome barriers

### **Topic-086: Vocabulary Acquisition & Automaticity**

#### **Fluent Reading**

- General & specialized vocabulary
- Select texts which match reader's level
- Disadvantages of difficult texts
- Zamel & Spack (1998, p. 97) "its not actual scientific terms such as repression, schizophrenia, psychosis but its descriptive & elaborative terms – to coax, gnawing discomfort, remnants, fervent appeal, instead.
- L2 knowledge is crucial to fluent reading
- Extensive reading & automaticity
- Confidence is built over time
- Materials must be selected with care, to promote reading habit
- To help reading speed

### **Topic-087: L1 Environment Vs L2 Environment**

#### **Significance**

- Fluency & role of environment
- Krshen (1988): it is boos to listening & speaking
- Counter argument – language environment doesn't insure L2 acquisition

#### **Reading**

- Environment doesn't insure fluency in L2 reading as compared to other skills (Anderson, 2003)
- Availability of texts & internet have diminished differences in both settings

**Input role**

- More critical is nature, appropriateness & interest of texts
- Being fluent means large quantity of input to develop automaticity
- Role of texts in word recognition & confidence

**L1 vs L2**

- L1 reading & L2 differences in vocabulary knowledge, sentence pattern
- Cultural attitudes
- Exposure to L1 with appropriate texts

**Topic-088: How to Build Reading Fluency****Teachers' beliefs**

- Teachers need to consider their own fluency – how they became?
- Abilities, beliefs and strategies in L1 & L2
- What barriers kept them from fluency
- Fluency does not come overnight

**Role model**

- Reading in front of students
- Carrying English newspaper, novels, essays or other texts
- Modelling for students
- Emphasis on frequently reminding fluency
- Teachers' own experiences

**Guidance role**

- Teachers guidance
- Improve strategies
- Metacognitive awareness
- Emphasis on focused study

**Topic-089: Provide Plenty of Appropriate Materials****Teachers' role**

- Allow students to pick materials which interest them
- However, they may pick too far above or below their reading levels



- Teachers can help with graded reading from newspapers, internet

**Authentic texts**

- Pick materials from magazines for young people, textbooks
- Beware of authentic texts
- Day (2003) “A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing”
- If level is too high, danger of translation, decoding & other strategies

**Topic-090: Provide Continuous Motivation****Time & Effort**

- Substantial time and effort required
- Role of motivation, self-discipline & clear goals
- Fear and threats seldom work
- Motivation – internal, positive and sustained

**Teacher’s role**

- Day & Bamford (1988), guidelines on extensive reading and apply these for attaining fluency
- Motivation arising from stress, worry or fear is short-lived and external
- Realistic understanding of time and effort can help
- Students’ willingness to adjust their learning methods
- Fluency is acquired gradually
- Negative effect of translation

**Lesson-17****DEVELOPING FLUENT READING SKILLS II****Topic-091: Vocabulary II****Significance**

- Gap between fluent & non-fluent readers is English vocabulary (Grabe & Stoller, 2002)
- Collocations are key to fluency (Lewis, 2000, p. 55)
- “Advanced students do not become more fluent by being given lots of opportunities to be fluent. They become more fluent when they acquire more chunks of language for instant retrieval”
- What kind of curriculum be designed to teach chunks?
- Where is the path through this difficult patch in their language learning?
- Fluent readers need automatic recognition of many words and word combinations
- Exposure to specialized and functional vocabulary in different situations

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

- An interactive process involving bottom-up & top-down activities
- Bottom-up – to learn language by looking at individual meanings or grammatical units of most basic units of texts
- Contrast with top-down approach
- Use of exercises such as reading aloud
- Push learners to recognize and process words quickly (Birch, 2002)
- Rapid and repetitive exposure
- Training is necessary

**Topic-093: Lexical Approach for Developing Fluent Reading****Automaticity**

- Extensive reading and word recognition (Grabe & Stoller, 2002)
- Learners need to be reading at or below their reading ability to develop fluency & confidence

**Collocation**

- Use of collocation study
- Help students understand different meanings and definitions in actual contexts
- Help learn multi-word units or ready-made chunks of language
- Focusing on chunks of language and phrases help recognize packages of texts
- Help process words faster and read more fluently

**Topic-094: Narrow Vs. Wide Reading****Narrow**

- Study plan must focus on specialized vocabulary such as computer science, business, economics
- Helps them recognize quickly words in their academic or career area (Shmitt & Carter, 2002)

**Role of teacher**

- Design narrow reading exercises
- Gather materials on one topic
- Re-enforce familiarity with specialized vocabulary
- Reading newspaper articles specifically in their areas
- Specialized vocabulary must occur with general
- Extensive reading as a powerful tool for improving reading skills
- Choose materials at or below reading level
- Helps improve speed, word recognition & fluency

**Topic-095: Grammar Knowledge and Reading Fluency****Significance**

- Learning to read fluently means recognizing word groups and sentence patterns and process them quickly
- Rules of grammar and students efforts to complete grammar exercises
- Fluent readers process sentences with increasing speed, competence and automaticity
- Grammar and syntax of text below their technical understanding of L2
- Graded readers series help move from simple to complex structures
- Level 1 vs level 2
- Language and grammar of Level 2 introduce few new elements – but not too many

**Topic-096: Metacognitive Strategy Training for Fluent Reading****Strategies**

- Reading program focus on strategies and metacognitive awareness
- Useful strategies: comprehension monitoring, connecting synonyms, outlining, highlighting, pre-reading questions
- Awareness about structure of texts and its cross cultural features
- Know organization of scientific article
- Career people should know how memos, proposal and projects are organized
- Teachers should bring helpful materials – theoretical texts, business report
- All this help become familiar with structural and cultural patterns of text (Connor, 1996)

**Topic-097: Program for Developing Reading Fluency****Elements**

- Time: daily, weekly and monthly commitments
- Four to six months
- Motivation: role of teacher and motivation within student
- Role of rewards, working in groups, record keeping
- Metacognitive awareness: nature of reading, process, effective strategies, cultural and rhetorical patterns
- Appropriate materials: graded readers, articles, internet, books to students special needs
- Willingness to change: flexibility to use new methods of teaching and learning
- Confidence in program: depends on students and teachers
- Model reading
- Lengthy and difficult journey
- Role of teacher

**Lesson-18****TEACHING READING: INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE I****Topic-98: Introduction: Individual and social perspective****Two views**

- Narrow & broad perspectives
- Narrow focuses upon abilities of individuals
- Broad sees reading as literacy practices in society
- It sees reading from communicative competence lens
- Narrow deals with what & competencies readers need
- How these are deployed in comprehension
- Reading ability and language proficiency role
- Research has suggested strategies
- Most research has seen reading & writing separately
- Broad perspective sees reading as socially situated
- Review of these two perspectives

**Topic-99: Reading: The Narrow Perspective****Components**

- Reading & language component
- Hoover & Turner (1993, p.1) “reading consists of only two components, one that allows language to be recognized through graphic representation & another that allows language to be comprehended”
- Reading as a linguistic skill
- Language in terms of syntax and lexis and contribution to meaning making

**Topic-100: Syntax in Reading****Debates**

- Syntax and its implications for reading
- Adequate competence in L2 syntax is necessary
- Syntax definition
- School vs advanced level experience of reading

**Strategies**

- Provide opportunities in word decoding
- Make decoding skills automatic so students can focus on entire sentence
- Explicit instruction about rule of grammar
- Examples of different ways sentences may be combined

- Practice of syntactically re-arranged sentences: “the dog chased the cat” with “the cat was chased by the dog”
- Give increasingly complex sentences and ask to interpret different possible meanings

### **Topic-101: Vocabulary and Background Knowledge**

Much research with L1 English primary schoolchildren provides support for the relationship between lexical development and reading ability. A number of studies cited by Vellutino and Scanlon (1982) find substantial correlations between measures of vocabulary and reading. In addition, research into L2 reading has highlighted the crucial importance of vocabulary (see Grabe; Field this volume), while surveys among L2 learners invariably reveal vocabulary to be an important concern for L2 readers.

In deciding which vocabulary to teach language learners, an important and justifiable criterion has been frequency. A finding repeated over several decades (Richards 1974; Nation and Waring 1997) is that the 2,000 most common words (including grammatical function words) account for approximately 80% of the total number of words in most prose texts. However, the other 20% of these texts, that is, one word in every five, roughly two words per line, is made up of the remaining words of the English language (several hundred thousand, according to McArthur 1992: 1091). Thus we have a “frequency paradox”, namely that, since the 2,000 most frequent words are common to most texts, the crucial contribution to the message uniqueness of texts is not the 2,000 most common words, but rather the words that constitute the remaining 20%, some of which may be extremely infrequent. Poor vocabulary knowledge, especially in the case of L2 readers, has implications for the advice that readers should guess the meanings of unknown words from context: in order to be able to do this, it has been estimated that readers need to know over 95% of the other words in a text (Hirsh and Nation 1992).

### **Topic-102: Reading Ability in L2 Reading**

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

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

A number of studies have investigated the relative contributions of “reading ability” and “language proficiency” to reading: Bernhardt and Kamil (1995) administered reading tests in English and Spanish to 187 English L1 speakers at 3 levels of Spanish instruction, and concluded that both factors were important, although they found that language proficiency played a greater part than did ability in L1 reading. Carrell (1991) administered reading tests in English and Spanish to 45 native speakers of Spanish

and 75 native speakers of English. She concluded that while both L1 reading ability and L2 proficiency level are significant in L2 reading ability, the relative importance of the two factors varied: for the Spanish group reading English texts, differences in reading ability in the L1 (Spanish) appeared to be more important than differences in proficiency in English. However, for the English group reading Spanish texts, the position was reversed, with proficiency levels in the L2 (Spanish) being more important than were differences in reading ability in their L1 (English). Thus the results of the Spanish group tend to support the transfer of skills hypothesis, while the results of the English group support the language proficiency hypothesis. The reason advanced for this is that the English group was below the “language threshold” required by the Spanish test, and not in a position to utilise their reading skills; the Spanish group, on the other hand, were above the level required by the English texts, and accordingly the “language threshold” was not in evidence in their results.

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

Educational surveys confirm the experimental findings that using an L2 in reading tends to produce poor results. Elley (1994) reports on a survey of 32 countries which found that children whose home language differed from the school language performed less well on reading tests than those who were tested in their home language. In sub-Saharan Africa where excolonial languages (mainly English, French and Portuguese) dominate the education system, there is special cause for concern: in Zambia most primary school pupils are not able to read adequately in the official language of instruction, English (Williams 1996; Nkamba and Kanyika 1998), while in Zimbabwe, Machingaidze, Pfukani, and Shumba (1998: 71) claim that at year 6 over 60% of pupils did not reach “the desirable levels” of reading in English.

### **Topic-103: Reading for Language Learning**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Topic-104: Process Models of Reading**

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

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



**Lesson-19****TEACHING READING: INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE II****Topic-105: Data Driven Models**

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

**Topic-106: Concept-Driven Models**

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

**Topic-107: Interactive Models**

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

Stanovich's model claims a reader's lack of ability at one level may be compensated for by proficiency at another. Thus a reader may compensate for weakness at word meaning level by drawing on appropriate background knowledge. There are clear advantages of such a view for L2 reading.

### **Topic-108: Reading: The Broad Perspective**

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

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

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

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

As far the relationship between literacy and economic development is concerned, there has long been a belief that investment in education would have a beneficial effect in developing countries, similar to that claimed for developed countries – Denison (1962), for example, claimed that between 1930 and 1960, 23% of annual growth in the US national income could be attributed to education. As to how literate the population of a country should be, Anderson (1966) estimated that an adult literacy rate of

about 40% of was needed for economic development, although he adds that that level would not be sufficient if societies lacked other support systems. Indeed, the failure of the Experimental World Literacy programme, (organized by UNESCO in 11 countries from 1967 to 1972) to generate economic growth in those countries, proved that literacy alone cannot be a causal factor in development. In their evaluation of the programme, UNESCO concluded that, if development is to occur, then the literacy programme should be integrated with economic and social reforms (Lind and Johnson 1990: 71-75).

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

### **Topic-109: Literacy and Reading**

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

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

The approach may critique not only the language and sentiments expressed in texts, but also the ideological and/or the historical assumptions underpinning them as revealed through the writing, whether these assumptions were intended or not by the writer. This type of analysis is socially engaged in that it claims to reveal how readers may be unwittingly manipulated by powerful political or economic forces. Critical reading claims to "look beyond the classroom to the way in which reading [...] practices are carried out and perceived in the wider society" (Wallace 1996: 83). Critical reading, while probably not suited to low level EFL learners, is claimed to be both possible and desirable for learners with adequate English: in some respects the teaching of critical reading resembles the teaching of literature, for it involves close reading of, and reflection upon, the text. A range of texts and procedures for teaching critical reading in EFL classes is provided in Wallace (1992: 102-124).

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

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

### **Topic-110: Literacy and Implications for Teaching Reading**

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

A very direct attempt to take account of L2/FL learning through this approach to literacy is provided by Kern (2000: 129-170), who takes the four components listed above and applies them to reading, giving many examples of activities within each component: for Kern, “situated practice” is largely student-centered activity, with group predictions and negotiations about the meaning of texts; overt instruction consists of work on lexical choices, syntactic relations and discourse structure of texts; critical framing involves the students distancing themselves from the text through critical questioning and summarising work; transformed practice is essentially a matter of writing, and Kern suggests translation and the transforming of a text into a dialogue as possible activities. Although these activities are reasonably well-known to EFL teachers, what the approach stresses is the critical perspective through comparing and discussing the interpretations of students and teachers, rather than extracting fixed

meanings from text, and through encouraging students to be aware of the social context in which the text was produced, as well as the social context in which they as L2 readers are interpreting the text.

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

**Lesson-20****RESEARCH INFORMING L2 READING I****Topic-111: Introduction to Research Informing L2 reading**

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

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

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

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

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



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

### **Topic-112: Implications for Reading Instruction from Reading Research**

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

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

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

### **Topic-113: Ensure Word Recognition Fluency**

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

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

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

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

#### **Topic-114: Creating Vocabulary Rich Environment**

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

In L2 settings, Droop and Verhoeven (2003) demonstrate a powerful relation between vocabulary knowledge and later reading ability with 3rd and 4th grade language minority children in Holland. Pike (1979) reported corrected correlations between vocabulary and reading on a TOEFL administration on the order of .84 to .95. Laufer (1997) cited several assessment studies with strong correlations between



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

### **Topic-115: Activate Background Knowledge in Appropriate Ways**

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

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

### **Topic-116: Language Knowledge and General Comprehension Skills**

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

While relatively few research studies of reading development include grammar measures, a recent L2 study by Van Gelderen et al. (2002) examined the relations between linguistic knowledge, metacognitive knowledge (what we know about how we use language and how we read), and word processing speed, on the one hand, and reading comprehension on the other. They reported a very strong correlation between EFL L2 (Dutch students) grammar knowledge and reading abilities (correlation of .73) and an even stronger correlation between EFL L3 (Turkish students in Holland) grammar knowledge and reading (correlation of .78). As further support for this relationship, Alderson (1993) reported correlations between reading and grammar of .80. Pike (1979) reported corrected correlations among sub-

sections of a TOEFL test of (.80 to .85). Enright et al. (2002) reported a very strong relationship between the structure and reading subsections of the current TOEFL ( $r=.91$ ) and a strong relationship between the structure section of the current TOEFL and the piloted reading section of the New TOEFL ( $r=.83$ ).

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

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

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

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

**Lesson-21****RESEARCH INFORMING L2 READING II****Topic-117: Teach Text Structure and Discourse Organization**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Topic-119: Building Reading Fluency and Rate**

The importance of reading fluency has taken on much greater importance in the past few years, particularly in L1 settings. Because reading fluency, as opposed to automatic word recognition, is not a commonly discussed factor in reading development, it is useful to provide a careful definition. Reading fluency involves both word recognition accuracy and automaticity; it requires a rapid speed of processing across extended text (i.e., reading efficiency); it makes appropriate use of prosodic and syntactic structures; it can be carried out for extended periods of time; and it takes a long time to develop (National Reading Panel 2000; Segalowitz 2000; Kuhn and Stahl 2003).

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

There is relatively little L2 reading research on reading fluency training, though this issue has recently emerged as a goal for instructional practices in L2 settings (Anderson 1999; Hulstijn 2001; Nation 2001). The best ongoing exploration of Fluency development is the work of Taguchi (1999, Taguchi and Gorsuch 2002). Both studies have shown that the practice of repeated reading of short graded readers leads to improvement in reading fluency. The more recent study, in particular, showed that students read significantly faster in the post-reading test than the pre-reading test while demonstrating the same levels of comprehension.

**Topic-120: Promote Extensive Reading**

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

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

In L2 settings, Elley (2000) provides the strongest on-going evidence for the effect of extensive reading (and fluency training), although he reviews book flood approaches that also include a range of additional instructional practices, and not just the effect of extensive reading. Reporting on a series of large-scale curricular research studies, he has demonstrated that modified book floods – along with careful attention to training teachers to use the books effectively in class – lead consistently to significant results in comprehension development (reporting on major studies in Niue, Fiji, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and Solomon Islands, 1977-1998). There are a number of additional brief reports and small-scale studies on the effectiveness of extensive reading, but there are no other major research studies that provide strong evidence for the influence of extensive reading on reading comprehension abilities (see Day and Bamford 1998).

### **Topic-121: Develop Intrinsic Motivation for Reading**

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

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



## Lesson-22

## ASSESSING READING I

**Topic-122: Introduction to Assessing Reading**

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

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

**Topic-123: Motivation as an Informal Assessment**

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

**Table 6.1** Goals, Purposes and Means of Reading Assessment

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

**Topic-124: Measuring Achievement**

Measures of achievement focus on the learning done in a particular course. If a course has focused on speed reading, then the achievement measure would be a speed reading measure even though speed of reading is only a part of the larger picture of reading proficiency. Similarly, if the course has focused on reading academic texts, the achievement measure could be a comprehension measure using academic texts. Achievement measures are thus closely related to the course of which they are part. They need to have a high level of face validity; that is, they should clearly look like what they are supposed to

be measuring. Since reading comprehension is a common goal of reading courses we will focus on that in this section. Achievement tests, however, could test various reading strategies, speed of reading, word recognition, reading aloud, or note-taking from reading, depending on the goals of the course.

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

### **Pronominal Questions, Imperatives**

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

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

### **Topic-125: Multiple Choice Questions**

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

Multiple-choice questions can focus on details (microstructure) and on more general aspects (macrostructure) of the text, although some researchers have found difficulty in using multiple-choice to measure global comprehension. Multiple-choice tests only involve reading and so the measurement is less likely to be affected by writing skill than it is in a short answer test. If a multiple-choice test has not been well prepared, learners may be able to get a reasonable score without reading the text, and part of the preparation of a good test involves checking this. Multiple choice questions can be checked by checking



the length of the answers to make sure that the correct answer is not always shorter or longer than the distractors, asking a native speaker to answer the test to see if they get all of the answers correct, getting a colleague to look critically at the items to see if they can see any problems with them, and looking at learners' answers to the items to see if some items are too easy or too hard or if the learners are all choosing the same wrong choice.

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

### **Information Transfer**

Incomplete information transfer diagrams can be used to measure comprehension of a text. See Figure 6.1 later in this chapter for an example. The learners read the text and fill in the diagram with short notes. The advantages are that the information the learner produces can cover a lot of points and yet need not involve a lot of writing. The disadvantage is in gaining consistency in marking.

### **Topic-126: Diagnosing Problems**

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

There are four general principles that should be followed. First, diagnosing problems should be done on an individual basis. That is, diagnostic testing should be done with the teacher sitting next to the individual learner and carefully observing what happens. There are several reasons for this. If testing is done with the whole class, individual learners may not give their best effort. In addition, a teacher needs to be able to observe what aspects of the diagnostic task are causing difficulty, and should be able to adjust the testing procedure during the process to get the best information about an individual's problems. Second, diagnosing problems should begin with the smallest units involved and go step by step to the larger units. From a reading perspective, this means starting with word identification, moving to vocabulary knowledge, then to comprehension of single sentences, and then to text comprehension and reading speed. The assumption behind this progression is that the various smaller units combine to contribute to the larger units. Third, as much as possible, learners should feel comfortable with and relaxed during diagnostic testing. This is a difficult principle to apply because in such testing it is obvious to the learner that they are being evaluated in some way. The principle, however, can be applied by the teacher beginning with very easy tasks where the learner can be successful, giving praise for effort and success, being friendly, and frequently taking small breaks to help the learner relax. Fourth, do not rely on only one test. Even where it seems obvious where the problem lies, use a different kind of test possibly at a different level of unit size to double check. Decisions about a learner's level of skill can have far-reaching effects on their learning. It is worth spending time to get the best possible information.

**Lesson-23****ASSESSING READING II****Topic-127: Reading Aloud**

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

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

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

**Topic-128: Vocabulary Tests**

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

**The Bilingual Levels Tests**

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

- 1 could
- 2 during dapat, bisa
- 3 this selama
- 4 piece supaya
- 5 of
- 6 in order to

These are tests of the first and second 1,000 words of West's (1953) *General Service List*. They are available in the following languages—Japanese, Indonesian, Thai, Korean, Chinese (traditional and

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

### **The True/False Vocabulary Test**

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

When something falls, it goes up.  
Most children go to school at night.  
It is easy for children to remain still.

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

### **Topic-129: Tests of Grammatical Knowledge**

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

I was very surprised by\_\_\_\_\_.

It made me\_\_\_\_\_.

I \_\_\_\_\_waiting for at least an hour.

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

### **Topic-130: Measuring Reading Proficiency**

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

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

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

#### **Cloze Tests**

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

#### ***Return Ticket, Please!***

by David Hill

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

As he stepped out (1)\_\_\_\_\_ his spacecraft, he said, "(2)\_\_\_\_\_ 's one small step (3)\_\_\_\_\_ a man; one giant (4)\_\_\_\_\_ for mankind." What would (5)\_\_\_\_\_ say if you were (6)\_\_\_\_\_ first person ever to (7)\_\_\_\_\_ onto another planet? The (8)\_\_\_\_\_ States, working with other (9)\_\_\_\_\_, is planning a new (10)\_\_\_\_\_ to Mars by the (11)\_\_\_\_\_ 2020. And this time, (12)\_\_\_\_\_ 'll be people on (13)\_\_\_\_\_. Spacecraft without crews have (14)\_\_\_\_\_ landing on Mars since (15)\_\_\_\_\_ 1970s. In 1997, the (16)\_\_\_\_\_ Pathfinder landed on Mars, (17)\_\_\_\_\_ a small, six-wheeled (18)\_\_\_\_\_ called Sojourner trundled around, (19)\_\_\_\_\_ rocks and measuring the (20)\_\_\_\_\_ speed. A trip to (21)\_\_\_\_\_ takes a long time. (22)\_\_\_\_\_ astronauts who walked on (23)\_\_\_\_\_ moon took three days (24)\_\_\_\_\_ get there, travelling at (25)\_\_\_\_\_ km/h in their Apollo (26)\_\_\_\_\_. At the same speed, (27)\_\_\_\_\_

would take them twenty (28)\_\_\_\_\_ to reach Mars. Even (29)\_\_\_\_\_ today's more powerful rockets, (30)\_\_\_\_\_ could take at least seven months to reach Mars. (adapted from *The School Journal* 2000: Part 2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Selective Cloze

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

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

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

Two old men lived near small town.

They were friends they were small children. But

one man bought a car, his friend bought

one too. He was not if his friend was

better him.

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

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

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

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

likely effect of background knowledge because any one learner is unlikely to have good background knowledge of all the texts in the test.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Should Learners be Allowed to Use Dictionaries?**

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

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

The idea behind allowing learners to use the first language to answer questions is that this is more likely to directly measure comprehension. When the learners have to read second language questions and write their answers in the second language, comprehension of questions and second language writing skill are playing a part in measuring comprehension. Do the learners make poor answers because of poor reading comprehension of the text, poor comprehension of the questions, poor skill in writing answers in

the second language, or any combination of these? If the learners feel comfortable with first language questions they could be worth using.

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

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



**Lesson-24****TEACHING WRITING I****Topic-132: Introduction to Teaching Writing**

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

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

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

**Topic-133: Principles for Teaching Writing**

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

**Meaning-focused Input**

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

**Meaning-focused Output**

- Learners should do lots of writing and lots of different kinds of writing. There are many elements of the writing skill which are peculiar to writing and so time spent writing provides useful practice for these elements. This is a very robust principle for each of the four skills. Different genres use different writing conventions and draw on different language features (Biber, 1989)

and so it is useful to make sure that learners are getting writing practice in the range of genres that they will have to write in.

- Learners should write with a message-focused purpose. Most writing should be done with the aim of communicating a message to the reader and the writer should have a reader in mind when writing. In the following chapters we will look at ways of doing this.
- Writing should interest learners and draw on their interests. • Learners should experience a feeling of success in most of their writing.
- Learners should use writing to increase their language knowledge. The section on guided tasks in this chapter focuses on this.
- Learners should develop skill in the use of computers to increase the quality and speed of their writing. As we shall see, computers provide very useful ways of providing feedback, especially when the learners submit their writing as a computer file.
- Writing instruction should be based on a careful needs analysis which considers what the learners need to be able to do with writing, what they can do now, and what they want to do.

### **Language-focused Learning**

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

### **Fluency Development**

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

### **Topic-134: Designing Tasks**

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

1. She could think of a topic that the learners are very familiar with, such as a recent exciting event. She then gets the learners talking about the event so that the ideas and the organization of the ideas are clear and so that the learners have an oral command of the language needed to describe the event. When all this previous knowledge has been stimulated, the learners are then told to put it in writing. As the ideas, organization and necessary language are all

familiar to them, the learners have only to concentrate on turning these ideas into a written form.

2. The teacher could think of a topic and then put the learners into groups of three or four. Each group has to plan and produce one piece of writing. By helping each other, the learners in each group are able to produce a piece of writing that is better than any one of them could have produced by working alone.
3. The teacher finds or makes a guided composition exercise, such as a series of pictures with accompanying questions and useful language items.
4. The teacher chooses a topic and then lets the learners get on with their writing. They may ask for help if they need it, but they are mainly left to work independently.

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

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

### **Experience Tasks**

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

### **Topic-135: Bringing Tasks within the Learners' Experience**

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

In Chapter 2 we saw another way of doing this for reading which is often used in New Zealand primary schools. The teacher sits with a learner who has just drawn a picture. The learner tells the teacher the story of the picture and the teacher writes down the learner's story in the learner's words. This story then becomes the learner's reading text. It is not difficult for the learner to read because the language, the ideas in the story and the sequence of ideas in the story are all within the learner's experience. The

unfamiliar part of the task, which is also the learning goal of the activity, is the decoding of the written words.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Table 7.1** Ways of Providing Experience

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Lesson-25

## TEACHING WRITING II

**Topic-137: Shared Tasks**

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

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

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

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

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

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

To make a **blackboard composition** the whole class works together. The teacher or the learners suggest a subject and a rough plan for the composition. Members of the class raise their hands and suggest a sentence to put in the composition. If the sentence is correct it is written on the blackboard. If it is not correct, the class and the teacher correct it and then it is written on the board. In this way the composition is built up from the learners' suggestions and the learners' and the teacher's corrections. When the whole composition is finished, the learners read it and then it is rubbed off the blackboard. The learners do not copy it in their books before this. Then the learners must rewrite it from memory. This

last part can be done as homework (Radford, 1969). The teacher has only to prepare a subject. Marking is easy as the learners usually make very few mistakes when rewriting.

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

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

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

### **Topic-138: Guided Tasks**

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

1. First, as we have seen, the task is narrowed. That is, the learners only do a part of the work that would normally be required in such an activity. This is good if that part of the task is worth focusing on and helps learners achieve a useful learning goal. It is not good if the narrowed task results in learners doing things that bear little relation to the normal wider task. Substitution exercises have often been criticised for this reason.
2. A second effect of the support given during guided tasks is that it allows grading and sequencing of tasks. Experience tasks require the teacher to be sensitive to learners' familiarity with parts of a task and to provide and stimulate previous experience where necessary. Guided tasks, on the other hand, are designed so that guidance is provided as a part of the activity. It does not have to be provided by the teacher. For this reason, most course books for English language teaching contain a lot of guided tasks. For the same reason, teachers may be reluctant to make their own guided tasks because of the amount of skill and work that has to go into making them.
3. A third effect of the support given during guided tasks is the high degree of success expected. If learners make errors in guided tasks this is often seen as a result of a poorly made task; that is, the guidance was not sufficient.



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

### Identification

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

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

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

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

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

### Understanding Explanations

In some techniques the learners follow explanations and descriptions and act on them. Here are some examples. (1) The teacher explains a grammar rule to help the learners make correct sentences following a rule. The teacher says, "When we use going to talk about the future, going to is followed by the stem form of the verb, for example, I am going to see it. The subject of the sentence should agree with the verb to be which comes in front of going to. Now you make some sentences using going to." (2) The teacher tells the learners a rule, for example a spelling rule or a rule about singular countable nouns, and the learners apply the rule to some material.

**Writing with grammar help** involves guided compositions which are based on special grammar problems. Usually the rules are given first for the learner to study and then they must use the rules when doing the composition. Here is an example based on countable and uncountable nouns. The first part just



deals with countable nouns. The second part deals with uncountable nouns and the third part mixes both together. Only part one is shown here. Other exercises like this can be made for verb groups, joining words, *a* and *the*, and so on.

### Countable nouns

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

### Uncountable nouns

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

### Part 1

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

***language, country, word, kind, world, people, dictionary.***

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

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

### Answering Questions

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

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

### Good and Bad Guests

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

### Correction

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

- underlining or circling them
- writing the corrected item.

### Completion

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

For **complete the sentences** the learners are given sentences with words missing. They must put the correct words with the correct form in the empty spaces. A few words can fill all the empty spaces. This type of exercise is used to practice *a* or *the*; *some*, *any*, etc.; prepositions, etc. The missing words can be given at the beginning of the exercise.

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

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

5. It begins midnight.

In another form of the exercise each missing word is given but the learners must use the correct form. This type of exercise is used to practise tense, verb groups, singular/plural, pronouns, questions, etc.

1. One of the was there. (boy)
2. Every tried to get as many as possible. (person)

When verb groups are being practised the learner sometimes has to add other words.

1. you to leave now? (want)
2. you him last week? (meet)

Some explanation of the grammar can be given at the beginning of the exercise.

In **backwriting** the learners read a passage. After they have understood the text, they copy some of the key words from the passage onto a sheet of paper. Only the base form of the word is copied (i.e. *walk not walking*). The learners then put the text away and write what they remember of the passage filling in around the key words that they copied.

### Ordering

In ordering techniques the learners are presented with a set of items in the wrong order which they must rearrange in the desired order. For example, the learners are presented with a set of letters *o k o b*. They must rearrange these letters to make a word, *book*. Words can be rearranged to make a sentence, sentences to make a passage, pictures to make a story, and so on. Ordering techniques can easily be combined with other types of actions. For example, the learners are presented with a set of letters that can be rearranged to make an English word. The learners respond by giving the first language translation of the word.

With **put the words in order** the learners are given sentences with the words in the wrong order. They must rewrite them putting the words in the correct order.

is city it very a important

**Follow the model** shows the learners a pattern and gives them a list of words. They must use the words to make sentences that follow the same pattern as the model.

He made them cry.

saw I laugh let she go her fight heard him

Instead of all the words, just the content words can be provided.

Some ordering techniques, like the examples given above, can be done without the learners referring to any other clues. Other ordering techniques contain extra information so that the learners can do the ordering correctly. For example, the learners are given a set of words. The teacher reads the words quickly in a different order and while listening to this information the learners number or put the words in

the same order as the teacher says them. Here is another example. After the learners have read a passage, they are given a set of sentences containing the main points in the message. The learners must put these sentences in the right order so that the order of the main points in the sentences is the same as the order in the passage.

### Substitution

In substitution techniques the learners replace one or more parts of a word, sentence, passage, picture, story, etc. So, the input of a substitution technique has two parts, the frame which contains the part where the substitution must be made, for example a word, sentence, etc., and the item which fits into the frame. So, if the frame is a sentence, *He seldom goes there*. The teacher can give the item *often* which is substituted for *seldom* in the frame to give the response *He often goes there*.

The learners can write sentences from a **substitution table**.

| 1    | 2         | 3    | 4                      |
|------|-----------|------|------------------------|
| He   | said      |      | it was not a problem.  |
| They | agreed    | that | it was the right time. |
| I    | decided   |      | nothing could be done. |
| We   | pretended |      |                        |

The substitution table gives the learners the chance to practice making correct sentences, and to see different words that can be in each place in the sentence (George, 1965).

In **What is it?** The teacher writes some sentences on the blackboard. The sentences describe something or someone.

### Transformation

In transformation techniques the learners have to rewrite or say words, sentences, or passages by changing the grammar or organization of the form of the input. This type of technique also includes rewriting passages, substitution where grammar changes are necessary and joining two or more sentences together to make one sentence.

In **change the sentence** the learners are given some sentences and are asked to rewrite them making certain changes. Here are some examples.

Rewrite these sentences using the past tense.

1. He wants to see me.
2. Do you like it?

Make these sentences passive. *Do not use the subject of the active sentence in the passive sentence.* The arrow wounded him. He was wounded.

1. Some people pushed her over the bank.

2. The noise frightened her.

For **join the sentences (sentence combining)** the learners are given pairs of sentences. They must join together the two sentences to make one sentence. This type of exercise is used to practise conjunctions, adjectives + to + stem, relative clauses, etc. Here are some examples.

This coffee is hot. I can't drink it.

This coffee is too hot to drink.

1. She is still young. She can't marry you.

2. He is tired. He can't go.

I met the man. You talked about him before.

I met the man who you talked about before.

1. Your friend is waiting near the shop. The shop is next to the cinema.

2. I will lend you the book. You wanted it.

There has been a lot of first language research on sentence combining generally showing positive effects (Hillocks, 1984; Hillocks, 1991). The motivation for sentence combining for first language learners is that the most reliable measure of first language writing development is a measure related to the number of complex sentences (the T-unit). Sentence combining is thus seen as a way of focusing directly on this aspect of writing development.

In **writing by steps** the learners are given a passage. They must add certain things to it, or make other changes. Here is an example from Dykstra, Port and Port (1966). The same passage can be used several times for different exercises at different levels of difficulty

In guided activities a large part of the writing has already been done for the learners and they focus on some small part that they must do. The activity provides support while learners do the writing.

With **marking guided writing** guided compositions can be marked by a group of learners using model answers before they are handed to the teacher. The teacher just checks to see that the learners have done the marking correctly.

**Topic-139: Independent Tasks**

Independent tasks require the learners to work alone without any planned help. Learners can work successfully on independent tasks when they have developed some proficiency in the language and when they have command of helpful strategies. These strategies can develop from experience, shared, or guided tasks. Let us look at learners faced with a difficult independent reading task, such as writing an assignment.

1. **An experience approach.** The learners could write several drafts. During each rewriting, the learners have the experience gained from the previous writings and preparation.
2. **A shared approach.** The learners could ask the teacher or classmates for help when they need it.
3. **A guided approach.** The learners could guide their writing by asking questions, by using an information transfer diagram or a well worked out set of notes that they have prepared, or by finding a good example of the kind of writing they want to do. o

A good independent task has the following features: (1) it provides a reasonable challenge, i.e. it has some difficulty but the learners can see that with effort they can do it; (2) it is a task that learners are likely to face outside the classroom.

The difference between an experience and independent task lies in the control and preparation that goes into an experience task. Experience tasks are planned so that learners are faced with only one aspect of the task that is outside their previous experience. Independent tasks do not involve this degree of control and learners may be faced with several kinds of difficulty in the same task.

**Topic-140: Using the Four Kinds of Tasks for Teaching Writing**

The aim in describing the four kinds of tasks is to make teachers aware of the possible approaches to dealing with the gap between the learners' knowledge and the knowledge required to do a task, and to make them aware of the very large number of activities that can be made to help learners. When teachers are able to think of a variety of ways of dealing with a problem, they can then choose the ones that will work best in their class. Let us end by looking at another example of the range of tasks available in a particular situation.

Your learners need to write about land use in the Amazon basin. For several reasons this task will be difficult for them. There are new concepts to learn, there is new vocabulary, and the text should be written in a rather academic way. What can the teacher do to help the learners with this task?

The first step is to think whether an experience task is feasible. Can the teacher bring the language, ideas, needed writing skills, or text organization within the experience of the learners? For example, is it possible to bring the language within the learners' proficiency by pre-teaching vocabulary or discussing the topic before going on to the writing? Is it possible to bring the ideas within the learners' experience by getting them to collect pictures and read short articles about the Amazon basin? Can the possible organization of the text be outlined and explained to the learners? If these things are not possible or if more help is needed, then the teacher should look at making the writing a shared task.

The writing could be made into a shared task in several ways. The class work together doing a blackboard composition, or they form groups with each group working on a different aspect of the content. If this is not possible or further help is needed, guided help can be given.

Some of the simpler guided tasks could involve answering a detailed set of questions to write the text, completing a set of statements, adding detail to a text, writing descriptions of pictures of the Amazon, and turning an information transfer diagram into a text.

The distinctions made here between experience, shared and guided tasks are for ease of description and to make the range of possibilities clearer. Experience or guided tasks can be done in small groups as shared tasks, just as experience tasks may have some guided elements.

One purpose of this chapter is to make teachers aware of the variety of ways in which they can support learners in their writing. Another purpose has been to describe some major task types that teachers can use to give them access to the large range of possibilities that are available to them when they try to close the gap between their learners' proficiency and the demands of the learning tasks facing them. The job of these tasks is to help learners gain mastery over the language, ideas, language skills and types of discourse that are the goals of their study.

**Lesson-26****TEACHING WRITING IN AN L2 CLASSROOM I****Topic-141: Introduction to Teaching Writing in an L2 classroom**

“Most of the people won’t realize that writing is a craft. You have to take your apprenticeship in it like anything else” Katharine Ann Porter.

- Writing for learning
- Writing for writing
- The tasks of the teacher in writing

**Topic-142: Writing For Learning**

Writing (as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing) has always formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English. However, it can be used for a variety of purposes, ranging from being merely a ‘backup’ for grammar teaching to a major syllabus strand in its own right, where mastering the ability to write effectively is seen as a key objective for learners.

The importance given to writing differs from teaching situation to teaching situation. In some cases it shares equal billing with the other skills; in other curricula it is only used, if at all, in its ‘writing-for-learning’ role where students write predominantly to augment their learning of the grammar and vocabulary of the language.

Partly because of the nature of the writing process and also because of the need for accuracy in writing, the mental processes that a student goes through when writing differ significantly from the way they approach discussion or other kinds of spoken communication. This is just as true for single-sentence writing as it is with single paragraphs or extended texts. As we saw in Chapter 1 of the book ‘How\_to\_Teach\_Writing’ by Jeremy Harmer, writing is often not time-bound in the way conversation is. When writing, students frequently have more time to think than they do in oral activities. They can go through what they know in their minds, and even consult dictionaries, grammar books, or other reference material to help them. Writing encourages students to focus on accurate language use and, because they think as they write, it may well provoke language development as they resolve problems which the writing puts into their minds. However, this is quite separate from the issues of writing process and genre that we discussed in the first two chapters, since here students are not writing to become better writers. They are writing to help them learn better.



**Topic-143: Reinforcement Writing**

Reinforcement writing has always been used as a means of reinforcing language that has, been taught. In its simplest form, teachers often ask students to write sentences using recently learnt grammar. Suppose, for example, that intermediate students have recently been practicing the third conditional (If + had (not) done + would (not) have done), they might be given the following instruction:

Write two sentences about things you wish had turned out differently, and two sentences about things you are pleased about.

‘The teacher hopes, then, that students will write sentences such as:

(things you wish had turned out differently)

If I hadn't failed my exams, I would have gone to university.

(things you are pleased about)

If I hadn't gone to that party, I wouldn't have met my boyfriend.

The same kind of sentence writing can be used to get students to practice or research vocabulary, as the following exercise shows:

Write a sentence about a friend or a member of your family using at least two of these character adjectives: proud, kind, friendly, helpful, impatient..

Reinforcement writing need not be confined to sentence writing, however. Students can also be asked to write paragraphs or longer compositions to practice certain recently focused-on aspects of language or paragraph and text construction. Students might be asked to write a story about some' that happened to them (or that is based on a character or events in their course book) as a good way of having them practice past tenses. They could be asked to write a description of someone they know because this is a good way of getting them to use the character and physical description vocabulary they have been studying.

**Topic-144: Preparation Writing**

Writing is frequently useful as preparation for some other activity, in particular when students write sentences as a preamble to discussion activities. This gives students time to think up ideas rather than having to come up with instant fluent opinions, something that many, especially at lower levels, find difficult and awkward. Students may be asked to write a sentence saying what their opinion is about a certain topic. For example, they may be asked to complete sentences such as:

I like/don't like going to parties because...

This means that when the class as a whole is asked to talk about going to parties they can either read out what they have written, or use what they thought as they wrote, to make their points. Another technique, when a discussion topic is given to a class, is for students to talk in groups to prepare their arguments. They can make written notes which they may use later during the discussion phase. In these

cases, where writing has been used as preparation for something else, it is an immensely enabling skill even though it is not the main focus of an activity.

### **Topic-145: Activity Writing**

Writing can also, of course, be used as an integral part of a larger activity where the focus is on something else such as language practice, acting out, or speaking. Teachers often ask students to write short dialogues which they will then act out. The dialogues are often most useful if planned to practice particular functional areas, such as inviting or suggesting. Students work in pairs to make the dialogue and, where possible, the teacher goes to help them as they write. They now have something they can read out or act out in the class.

‘Writing is also used in questionnaire-type activities. Groups of students may be asked to design a questionnaire, for example about the kind of music people like. The teacher then asks them all to stand up and circulate around the class asking their colleagues the questions they have previously prepared. They write down the answers and then report back to the class on what they have found out.

Once again, writing is used to help students perform a different kind of activity (in this case speaking and listening). Students need to be able to write to do these activities, but the activities do not teach students to write.

It will be clear from the above that not all writing activities necessarily help students to write more effectively, or, if they do, that is a by-product of the activity rather than its main purpose. However, the ‘writing-for-learning’ activities we have discussed so far do depend on the students’ ability to write already. There is no attempt to teach a new writing skill or show students how to work in unfamiliar genres, for example.

Teaching ‘writing for writing’ is entirely different, however, since our objective here is to help students to become better writers and to learn how to write in various genres using different registers. General language improvement may, of course, occur, but that is a by-product of a ‘writing-for-writing’ activity, not necessarily its main purpose. The kind of writing teaching with which this book is mostly concerned is quite separate and distinct from the teaching of grammatical or lexical accuracy and range, even though both may improve as a result of it.

Although, as we shall see in the next chapter, it is important to help students with matters of handwriting, orthography (the spelling system), and punctuation, teaching writing is more than just dealing with these features too. It is about helping students to communicate real messages in an appropriate manner.

## Lesson-27

## TEACHING WRITING IN AN L2 CLASSROOM II

**Topic-146: Writing Purposes (I)**

When teaching ‘writing for writing’ we need to make sure that our students have some writing aim. As we saw previously, effective writers usually have a purpose in mind and construct their writing with a view to achieving that purpose.

The most effective learning of writing skills is likely to take place when students are writing real messages for real audiences, or at least when they are performing tasks which they are likely to have to do in their out-of-class life. The choice of writing tasks will depend, therefore, on why students are studying English. ‘There are three main categories of learning which it is worth considering:

- **English as a Second Language (ESL)** - this term is normally used to describe students who are living in the target language community and who need English to function in that community on a day-to-day basis. Recent immigrants and refugees, for example, will have specific writing needs such as the ability to fill in a range of forms, or write particular kinds of letters (depending upon their exact needs and circumstances), alongside the need for general English development.
- **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)** - many students study English for a particular (or specific) purpose. People who are going to work as nurses in Britain or the USA, for example, will study medical English. Those who are going to study at an English-medium university need to concentrate on English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Business students will concentrate on the language of management and commerce, and so on,

‘The choice of topics and tasks for such students should not only develop their general language competence but also be relevant to their reason for study. For example, writing tasks for business students can have a high face validity if the students can see that they are writing the kind of letters and documents which they will be writing in their professional life. Likewise nurses in training, when asked to write up a simulated patient record in their English class, will clearly see the value of such a task.

- **English as a Foreign Language (EFL)** - this is generally taken to apply to students who are studying general English at schools and institutes in their own country or as transitory visitors in a target-language country. ‘Their needs are often not nearly so easy to pin down as the two categories we have mentioned above.

While it is perfectly possible to ask school students what their needs are or will be it is unlikely that it will be easy to make a list of any but the most general aims. In the case of adult students, it is often hard to find writing tasks that are directly relevant to the varying needs of a class full of students from different backgrounds and occupations. Nevertheless, it may well be possible to arrive at a set of tasks that are a useful compromise between the competing claims of the individuals in a class.

**Topic-147: Writing Purposes (II)**

‘The best thing we can do is to concentrate on a repertoire of writing tasks that it is reasonable to assume that most speakers of English may have to take part in at some stage in their English-speaking lives. Most of such writing activities fall on a cline somewhere between real purpose versus invented purpose tasks. Real purpose tasks are precisely the ones that we can predict our students will probably need to perform at some stage. The letters we looked at in this chapter (on pages 35-38) fall near the ‘real purpose’ end of our cline since it is likely that our students will, at some stage, have to write formal and semi-formal letters of the same type. Similarly, we might well get our students to look at the language of e-mails and have them practice writing their own, or get them to write a report of a process or situation.

Invented purposes, on the other hand, are those which, however engaging, are unlikely to be directly relevant to our students’ future needs. A popular activity in many classrooms is to have students write letters to imaginary magazine problem pages and then have other students reply in the guise of ‘agony aunts’. Students will probably never need to write ‘agony’ letters in English, but such an activity will provoke them into thinking about how to best express themselves in writing, and how to format a letter, for example. In the same way, we might have students look at the kind of lonely hearts’ advertisements that appear in many newspapers and magazines, not because our students will need to write such advertisements, but because by looking at them with a quizzical eye they can develop their genre-analyzing habits. This, in turn, may help them to write the kind of telegraphic writing that is common in advertisements and newspaper headlines. On top of that, if students find the activity amusing and engaging it will help to build in them a positive attitude to writing (a skill often viewed with less enthusiasm than, say, speaking)

One other skill needs to be discussed here, and that is exam writing. Although many tests are becoming computerized and heavily reliant on multiple-choice questions, many still have a writing component designed to discover the candidate's integrative language abilities ~ that is, their ability to write texts displaying correct grammar, appropriate lexis, and coherent organization. Integrative test items (which ask students to display all these skills) are different from discrete test items where only one thing, for example a grammar point, is tested at one time. Whereas the former test ‘writing for writing’, the latter use writing only as a medium for language testing.

**Topic-148: Creative Writing**

Creative writing is one area (like painting and composing) where the imagination has a chance to run free. The world is full of people who achieve great personal satisfaction in this way. In their book *Process Writing*, the authors Ron White and Valerie Arndt describe an approach that ‘views all writing — even the most mundane and routine ~ as creative’. Such an approach would even include, at some level, the putting together of a shopping list. But we are concerned here with tasks that provoke students to go beyond the everyday, and which ask them to spread their linguistic wings, take some chances, and use the language they are learning to express more personal or more complex thoughts and images. ‘We can ask them to write stories or poems, to write journals, or to create dramatic scenarios. This will not be easy, of course, because of the limitations many students come up against when writing in the L2. Nor will all students respond well to the invitation to be ambitious and to take risks, but for some, the provision of genuinely creative tasks may open up avenues, they have not previously travelled down either in the L1 or the L2.

Creative writing tasks are nearer the ‘invented purpose’ end of our purpose cline, but they can still be very motivating since they provide opportunities for students to display their work - to show off, in other words, in a way that speaking often does not. The writing they produce can be pinned up on notice-boards, collected in class folders or magazines, or put up as a page on a class site on a school intranet or on the World Wide ‘Web itself. Nor should we forget that this use of writing is one of the few occasions that students write for a wider audience; for once it may not just be the teacher who will read their work.

**Topic-149: The Tasks of Teacher in Writing (I)**

‘When helping students to become better writers, teachers have a number of crucial tasks to perform. This is especially true when students are doing ‘writing-for-writing’ activities, where they may be reluctant to express themselves or have difficulty finding ways and means of expressing themselves to their satisfaction. ‘Among the tasks which teachers have to perform before, during, and after student writing are the following:

- **Demonstrating** — since, as we have said, students need to be aware of writing conventions and genre constraints in specific types of writing, teachers have to be able to draw these features to their attention. In whatever way students are made aware of layout issues or the language used to perform certain written functions, for example, the important issue is that they are made aware of these things - that these things are drawn to their attention.
- **Motivating and provoking** — student writers often find themselves ‘lost for words’, especially in creative writing tasks. This is where the teacher can help, provoking the students into having ideas, enthusing them with the value of the task, and persuading them what fun it can be. It helps, for example, if teachers go into class with prepared suggestions so that when students get stuck they can immediately get help rather than having, themselves, to think of ideas on the spot. Time spent preparing amusing and engaging ways of getting students involved in a particular writing task will not be wasted. Students can be asked to complete tasks on the board or reassemble jumbled texts as a prelude to writing; they can be asked to exchange ‘virtual’ e-mails or discuss ideas before the writing

activity starts. Sometimes teachers can give them the words they need to start a writing task as a way of getting them going.

### **Topic-150: The Tasks Of Teacher in Writing (II)**

- **Supporting** — closely allied to the teacher's role as motivator and provoker is that of supporting. Students need a lot of help and reassurance once they get going, both with ideas and with the means to carry them out. Teachers need to be extremely supportive when students are writing in class, always available (except during exam writing of course), and prepared to help students overcome difficulties.
- **Responding** — the way we react to students' written work can be divided into two main categories, that of responding and that of evaluating. When responding, we react to the content and construction of a piece supportively and often (but not always) make suggestions for its improvement. When we respond to a student's work at various draft stages, we will not be grading the work or judging it as a finished product. We will, instead, be telling the student how well it is going so far. 'When students write journals (see Chapter 8) we may respond by reacting to what they have said (e.g. 'Your holiday sounds very interesting, Silvia. I liked the bit about running out of petrol but I didn't understand exactly who went and got some petrol. Could you possibly write and tell me in your next journal entry?') rather than filling their journal entry full of correction symbols. We might also make comments about their use of language and suggest ways of improving it (e.g. 'Be careful with your past tenses, Nejati, Look at the verbs I've underlined and see if you can write them correctly.' but this is done as part of a process rather than part of an evaluation procedure.
- **Evaluating** — there are many occasions, however, when we do want to evaluate students' work, telling both them and us how well they have done. All of us want to know what standard we have reached (in the case of a progress/achievement test). When evaluating our students' writing for test purposes, we can indicate where they wrote well and where they made mistakes, and we may award grades; but, although test-marking is different from responding, we can still use it not just to grade students but also as a learning opportunity. When we hand back marked scripts we can get our students to look at the errors we have highlighted and try to put them right — rather than simply stuffing the corrected pieces of work into the back of their folders and never looking at them again.

**Lesson-28****THE WRITING PROCESS I****Topic-151: Introduction to the Writing Process****The Parts of a Writing Programme**

With writing, as with the other skills of listening, speaking and reading, it is useful to make sure that learners are involved in meaning-focused use, language-focused learning, and fluency development. It is also important to make sure that the uses of writing cover the range of uses that learners will perform in their daily lives. These can include filling forms, making lists, writing friendly letters and business letters, note-taking and academic writing. Each of these types of writing involves special ways of organizing and presenting the writing and this presentation also deserves attention.

**Meaning-focused Writing**

Writing is an activity that can usefully be prepared for by work in the other skills of listening, speaking and reading. This preparation can make it possible for words that have been used receptively to come into productive use. For example, in English for academic purposes programme, learners can be involved in keeping **issue logs** which are a kind of **project work**. At the beginning of the programme each learner chooses a topic or issue that they will follow through the rest of the programme — for example, terrorism, rugby, or Burmese politics. They become the local expert on this topic. Each week they seek information on this subject, getting information from newspapers, TV reports, textbooks and magazines. They provide oral reports on latest developments to other members of their group, and make a written summary each week of the new information. The reading, listening and spoken presentation provide good support for the writing. Writing is easier if learners write from a strong knowledge base.

**Topic-152: The Parts of Writing Process****The Parts of the Writing Process**

One way of focusing attention on different aspects of writing is to look at writing as a process. One possible division of the writing process contains the following seven subprocesses.

- considering the goals of the writer
- having a model of the reader
- gathering ideas
- organizing ideas
- turning ideas into written text
- reviewing what has been written
- editing.

There are several important points that can be made about these subprocesses.

1. They do not necessarily occur in a certain order. For some writers, organizing ideas may occur after they have been written. For many writers there is movement from one stage to another in a continuous cycle.

2. The effects of these subprocesses can be seen in learners' writing and in their spoken comments while and after they write. Several studies (Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1983; Arndt, 1987) have observed and analyzed the performance of second language teachers' writing and have described typical behavior of experienced and inexperienced writers in relation to the parts of the process.
3. Help and training can be provided for any of the subprocesses. The main goal of a process approach is to help learners improve their skills at all stages of the process. In this chapter, the descriptions of the techniques to improve skill in writing make use of the subprocesses to describe the subskills.
4. Awareness of the subprocesses can help teachers locate sources of difficulty that learners face in their writing. A learner may have no difficulty in gathering ideas but may experience great difficulty in turning these ideas into written text. Another learner may have difficulty in organizing ideas to make an acceptable piece of formal writing but may have no difficulty in getting familiar and well-organized ideas written in a well-presented form.
5. There are many ways of dividing the process into subprocesses. From the point of view of teaching techniques, the best division is the one that relates most closely to differences between teaching techniques.

The main idea behind a process approach is that it is not enough to look only at what the learners have produced. In order to improve their production, it is useful to understand how it was produced. Let us now look in detail at each of the seven subprocesses.

### **Topic-153: Considering the Goals of the Writer and Model of the Reader**

Written work is usually done for a purpose and for a particular audience. For example, a friendly letter may be written to keep a friend or relative informed of you and your family's activities. When a letter like this is written, the writer needs to keep the goal in mind as well as suiting the information and the way it is expressed to the person who will receive it.

Once again, an important way of encouraging writers to keep their goals and audience in mind is to provide them with feedback about the effectiveness of their writing. This feedback can be direct comment on the writing as a piece of writing or it can be a response to the message. For example, Rinvolucris (1983) suggests that the teacher and learners should write letters to each other with the teacher responding to the ideas rather than the form of the letter.

Teachers should also check their writing programme to make sure that learners are given practice in writing for a range of purposes to a range of readers. The following list, adapted from Purves, Sofer, Takala and Vahapassi (1984), indicates how wide this range can be.

#### **Purpose**

- to learn
- to convey, signal
- to inform
- to convince, persuade
- to entertain
- to maintain friendly contact



- to store information
- to help remember information

**Role**

write as yourself

write as some other person

**Audience**

- self specified individual
- specified group
- classmates
- general public

**Type of writing**

- a note or formal letter
- a formal letter
- résumé, summary, paraphrase
- narrative
- description
- exposition, analysis, definition, classification
- narrative, description, with evaluative comment
- argument
- literary
- advertisement, media
- journal writing

**Topic-154: Gathering Ideas**

Leibman-Kleine (1987) suggests that techniques for gathering ideas about a topic can be classified into three groups. The first group consists of open-ended, free-ranging activities where all ideas are considered or the learners follow whatever path their mind takes. Typical of these are **brainstorming** and **quickwriting**. These activities could be preceded by relaxation activities where learners are encouraged to use all their senses to explore a topic. The second group consists of systematic searching procedures such as **questioning** (who, why, where, when . . .) or filling in an information transfer diagram. In all cases the learners have set steps to follow to make sure they consider all the important parts of the topic. Research by Franken (1988) has shown that when learners are in command of the ideas in a topic, the grammatical errors are significantly reduced in their writing. The third group consists of techniques which help learners gather and organize ideas at the same time. These include using tree diagrams and concept diagrams or maps. These all involve arranging ideas into relationships, particularly according to importance and level of generality. One of the biggest blocks in writing is a lack of ideas. Techniques which help learners gather ideas will have good effects on all other aspects of their writing.

For **group brainstorming** the learners get together in small groups and suggest as many ideas about the writing topic that they can think of. At first no idea is rejected or criticized because it may lead to other ideas. One person in the group keeps a record of the ideas.

With **list making** before writing, each learner makes a list of ideas to include in the writing. After the list is made then the learner attempts to organize it and this may lead to additions to the list.

**Looping** is when each learner writes as quickly as possible on the topic for 4 or 5 minutes. Then they stop, read what they have written, think about it and write one sentence summarizing it. Then they repeat the procedure once more.

**Cubing** is when the learners consider the topic from six angles: (1) describe it; (2) compare it; (3) associate it; (4) analyse it; (5) apply it; (6) argue for and against it. They note the ideas that each of these points of view suggest and decide which ones they will use in their writing. Other similar procedures include asking, “who, what, when, where, how, why”. So, for the topic “Should parents hit their children?”, the learners work in small groups and (1) describe what hitting involves, (2) compare it with other kinds of punishment, (3) associate it with other uses of physical force such as capital punishment, (4) analyze what cause–effect sequences are involved in hitting, (5) apply the idea of hitting to various age levels, and (6) make a two-part table listing the pluses and minuses of hitting. After doing this the learners should have a lot of ideas to organize and write about.

**Using topic type grids.** Information transfer diagrams based on topic types (Chapter 9) are a very useful way of gathering information before the writing is done (Franken, 1987). They can also be used as a checklist during writing.

**Reading like a writer** is when the learner reads an article or text like the one they want to write. While reading the learner writes the questions that the writer seemed to be answering. These questions must be phrased at a rather general level. For example, the first question that might be written when reading an article might be “Why are people interested in this topic?” The next might be “What have others said about this topic before?”. After reading and making the questions, the learner then writes an article or text by answering those questions. The learners make concept diagrams or information trees to gather, connect and organize ideas about the topic they are going to write about.

With **add details** the teacher gives the learners several sentences that contain the main ideas of a story. Each sentence can become the main sentence in a paragraph. The learners add description and more detail. The learners can explain the main sentence in a general way and then give particular examples of the main ideas.

**Quick writing (speed writing)** is used with the main purpose of helping learners produce ideas. It has three features, the learners concentrate on content, they do not worry about error or the choice of words, and they write without stopping (Jacobs, 1986). They can keep a record of their speed in words per minute on a graph.

For **expanding writing** the learners write their compositions on every second line of the page. When they have finished writing they count the number of words and write the total at the bottom of the page. Then they go over their writing using a different coloured pen and add more detail. They can make use of the blank lines while they do this. They then count the total number of words again. Further

additions can be made using yet another coloured pen. The teacher can then check the work and get the learners to write out their final draft (Chambers, 1985).

### **Topic-155: Organizing Ideas**

The way learners organize ideas gives them a chance to put their own point of view and their own thought into their writing, particularly in writing assignments and answering examination questions. Often the ideas to be included in an assignment do not differ greatly from one writer to another, but the way the ideas are organized can add uniqueness to the piece of writing. Two possible ways of approaching the organization of academic writing is to rank the ideas according to a useful criterion or to classify the ideas into groups. The use of sub-headings in academic writing is a useful check on organization.

With **projection into dialogue** the learners look at a model letter and list the questions that the writer of the letter seemed to be answering. They then use these questions to guide their own writing. After the learners can do this with model texts, they can apply the same procedure to their own writing to see if it is well organized (Robinson, 1987).

**Lesson-29****THE WRITING PROCESS II****Topic-156: Ideas to Text and Reviewing**

Some learners are able to say what they want to write but have difficulty in putting it into written form. That is, they have problems in translating their ideas into text. Some learners can do this but are very slow. That is, they lack fluency in turning ideas to text. A possible cause is the difference between the writing systems of the learners' first language and the second language. Arab learners of English have greater difficulty in this part of the writing process than Indonesian or French learners do because of the different written script. If the learners' first language uses a different writing system from English, then there is value in practising the formal skills of forming letters of the alphabet and linking these letters together. There is also value in giving some attention to spelling. Some learners will find problems even in saying what they want to write. One cause may be lack of practice in writing in any language. Each cause requires different techniques to deal with it and teachers need to consider how to discover the causes and how to deal with them.

**Reviewing**

An important part of the writing process is looking back over what has been written. This is done to check what ideas have already been included in the writing, to keep the coherence and flow of the writing, to stimulate further ideas, and to look for errors. Poor writers do not review, or review only to look for errors. Chapter 10 looks at responding to written work. One way of encouraging learners to review their writing is to provide them with **checklists** (or scales) containing points to look for in their writing. Research on writing indicates that such scales have a significant effect on improving the quality of written work (Hillocks, 1984). In **peer feedback** learners read their incomplete work to each other to get comments and suggestions on how to improve and continue it. The learners can work in groups and read each other's compositions. They make suggestions for revising before the teacher marks the compositions (Dixon, 1986). Learners can be trained to give helpful comments and can work from a checklist or a list of questions (Pica, 1986).

**Topic-157: Editing I**

Editing involves going back over the writing and making changes to its organization, style, grammatical and lexical correctness, and appropriateness. Like all the other parts of the writing process, editing does not occur in a fixed place in the process. Writers can be periodically reviewing what they write, editing it, and then proceeding with the writing. Thus, editing is not restricted to occurring after all the writing has been completed. Learners can be encouraged to edit through the feedback that they get from their classmates, teacher and other readers. Such feedback is useful if it occurs several times during the writing process and is expressed in ways that the writer finds acceptable and easy to act on. Feedback that focuses only on grammatical errors will not help with editing of content. Teachers need to look at their feedback to make sure it is covering the range of possibilities. Using a marking sheet divided into several categories is one way of doing this. Figure 8.1 is such a sheet for learners writing university assignments. It encourages comment on features ranging from the legibility of the handwriting to the quality of the ideas and their organization.

**Topic-158: Diagnosing Control of the Parts of the Writing Process**

An advantage of seeing writing as a process consisting of related parts is that a writer's control of each of the parts can be examined in order to see what parts are well under the writer's control and which need to be worked on. Poor control of some of the parts may lead to a poor performance on other parts of the process.

There are three ways of getting information about control of the parts

- looking closely at the written product, that is, the pieces of writing that the writer has already written
- questioning the writer
- Observing the writer going through the process of writing.

Here we will look at the types of information that can be gathered by looking closely at the written product. For each part of the writing process, we will look at the kinds of questions a teacher can seek answers for by analyzing a piece of writing.

**Topic-159: Diagnosing from the Written Product****The Goals of the Writer**

The questions try to find out if the writer is writing with a communicative purpose. Poor performance in this part of the process is signalled by the lack of a cohesive purpose.

- Does the piece of writing have a clear goal, such as presenting a balanced picture of a situation, or convincing the reader of a point of view, or providing a clear description of a situation?
- Has the writer clearly stated the goal and is this statement a true reflection of what the piece of writing does?

**A Model of the Reader**

These questions try to find out if the writer has a clear and consistent picture of who he or she is writing for. Poor performance in this part of the process is signalled by inconsistent style, lack of detail where the reader needs it and too much information where the reader already knows it.

- Is the degree of formality or informality consistent throughout the piece of writing?
- Is the amount of detail suited to the knowledge that the reader will bring to the text?
- If the writing is based on a set question, does the degree of formality in the writing match the level of formality in the question?

**Gathering Ideas**

These questions try to find out if the writer has included enough ideas in the piece of writing. Poor performance in this part of the process is the result of not having enough to say.

- Does the piece of writing contain plenty of relevant, interesting ideas?

- Does the range of ideas provide a suitably complete coverage of the parts of the topic?
- Does the piece of writing draw on a range of sources of information, for example personal opinion or experience, information gathered from reading, or original data?

### Organizing Ideas

These questions try to find out if the piece of writing is well organized. Poor performance in this part of the process results in a piece of writing that is difficult to follow, that does not try to grab the reader's attention, and that is annoyingly unpredictable.

- Are there clear parts to the piece of writing? • Are these parts arranged in a way that is logical and interesting?
- Are the parts clearly signalled through the use of sub-headings or promises to the reader?
- Would it be easy to add sensible, well-sequenced sub-headings to the piece of writing?

### Ideas to Text

These questions try to find out if the writer is able to express his or her ideas fluently and clearly. Poor performance in this part of the process is signalled by a short piece of writing, poorly expressed sentences, a large number of spelling, grammar and vocabulary errors, and a poorly connected piece of writing.

- How much was written in the time allowed?
- Are the ideas well expressed and easy to follow?
- Are the parts of the piece of writing clearly signalled?
- Is the writing largely error free?

### Reviewing

These questions try to find out if the text has gone through several drafts and if the writer has looked critically at all parts of the text and writing process. Poor performance in this part of the process is signaled by a poorly organized and poorly presented text.

- If the teacher has seen previous drafts of the text, does the present one represent an improvement over the previous drafts?
- In what aspects are there improvements? In what aspects are there no real improvements?
- Is the text clear, well organized and well presented?

### Editing

These questions try to find out if the writer can systematically make corrections and improvements to the text. Poor performance in this part of the process is signalled by the failure to respond to feedback, repeated errors, careless errors, references in the text not in the list of references, and inconsistencies in the list of references.

- Are there signs of self-correction?
- Is the text free of spelling errors, including those that a spellchecker would not find (e.g. *form-from*)?

- Is the text well formatted and consistently formatted?

The idea behind all these questions is that teachers of writing should be able to look at a piece of writing and make judgments about a writer's control of each of the parts of the writing process. The teacher should also be able to give useful feedback to writers about their strengths and weaknesses in relation to these parts, and provide useful suggestions for improvement. This feedback should involve strategy training where, eventually, learners are able to question themselves about each part of the process so that they can prepare for, monitor, and evaluate their own written work and the written work of others.

**Lesson-30****ISSUES OF COHESION AND COHERENCE****Topic-160: Teaching Text Construction I**

The intended reader of the letter also recognizes instantly what kind of letter it is because it is typical of its kind (both in terms of construction and in choice of language), just as the advertisement was typical of its kind for the same reasons. We call these different writing constructions advertisements, 'letters, etc.) genres, and we refer to the specific choice of vocabulary within genres as the register that the text is written

"Newspaper advertisements' and formal 'letters of notification' are not the only genres around, of course. 'Literary fiction' is a genre of English which is different from, say, 'science fiction'. The characteristics of the latter may well differ in a number of ways from the former, and a specific genre may influence the writer's choice of register. 'Newspaper letters' are recognizable genres, different from the notification letter above and different again from 'holiday postcards' or 'application letters'. 'Scientific reports' represent a genre of writing, just as film criticism' is a genre all of its own.

Knowledge of genres (understanding how different purposes are 'commonly expressed within a discourse community) is only one of the many 'knowledges' or 'competences' that a reader brings to the task of reading, which a writer assumes the reader will know. Without these 'knowledges ' a 'communication like the notification letter above would have little chance of success.

These 'knowledges' (which we can group under the general heading of schematic) comprise:

- a knowledge of
- general world
- sociocultural knowledge (that is the social and cultural knowledge which members of a particular social group can reasonably be expected to know)
- topic Knowledge (that is knowing something about the subject being discussed).

All of this is exemplified in the following newspaper headline taken from The Observer newspaper:

**Move over, Big Brother. Now**

**politics is the latest reality TV**

Because of our knowledge of genres we recognize this collection of words as, 4 newspaper headline. However, in order to make sense of them we need more than this. Someone who did not have the relevant knowledge might need to be told firstly that reality TV involves cameras watching people who have been put, on purpose, in difficult situations (as survivors on a desert island, for example) and secondly that the most successful of all these programmes was called Big Brother, where contestants were crammed into a use, filmed all the time, and voted out of the house one by one by the viewers. Of course, it might be possible to deduce some of this information: we could, for example, recognize that the capital letters of Big Brother suggest that it is the name of something. But members of the discourse community do not have to make that effort because of their shared sociocultural and topic knowledge.



**Topic-161: Teaching Cohesion**

When we write text we have a number of linguistic techniques at our disposal to make sure that our prose ‘sticks together’. We can, for example, use lexical repetition and/or ‘chains’ of words within the same lexical set through a text to have this effect. The topic of the text is reinforced by the use of the same word more than once or by the inclusion of related words (e.g. water, waves, sea, tide). We can use various grammatical devices to help the reader understand what is being referred to at all times, even when words are left out or pronouns are substituted for nouns.

‘We can see lexical and grammatical cohesion at work in the extract from a newspaper article on the page opposite.

**Lexical cohesion** is achieved in the article by the use of two main devices:

- Repetition of words - a number of content words are repeated throughout the text, e.g. grandparents (twice), grandchildren (twice), people (five times), etc.
- Lexical set ‘chains’ - the text is cohesive because there are lexical sets (that is words in the same topic area) which interrelate with each other as the article progresses, e.g. (1) grandparents, daughters, sons, grandchildren, relative, grandchild; (2) work employers, staff employees, retired employment; (3) two-thirds, one-third, 60%, one in three, one in ten; etc.

**Topic-162: Teaching Grammatical Cohesion**

Grammatical cohesion is achieved in a number of different ways too:

- **Pronoun and possessive reference** — at various points in the text a pronoun or more frequently a possessive is used instead of a noun. In the first sentence (Growing pressure on people in their SOs and 60s ...) there is used to refer back to people,

Like most texts, the article has many examples of such pronoun and possessive reference. The second *their* in paragraph 1 refers back but this time to the noun grandparents, whereas *their* in paragraph 2 refers back to employers. Such anaphoric reference can operate between paragraphs too. This which starts paragraph 3 refers back to the whole of paragraph 2, whereas *they* in paragraph 4 refers back to researchers from the Institute of Education in the previous paragraph.

- **Article reference** - articles are also used for text cohesion. The definite article (*the*) is often used for anaphoric reference. For example, in paragraph 4 the writer refers to retired local authority staff; but when they are mentioned again in paragraph 6 the writer talks about the local authority staff, and the reader understands that he is talking about the local authority staff who were identified two paragraphs before.

However *the* is not always used in this way. When the writer talks about the national census, he assumes his readers will know what he is referring to and that there is only one of it. Such exophoric reference assumes a world knowledge shared by the discourse community who the piece is written for.

- ‘Tense agreement — writers use tense agreement to make texts cohesive. In our ‘grandparents’ article the past tense predominates (It found) and what is sometimes called the ‘future-in-the-past’ (would make) also occurs. If, on the other hand, the writer was constantly changing tense, the text would not hold together in the same way.
- Linkers ~ texts also achieve coherence through the use of linkers — words describing text relationships of ‘addition’ (and, also, moreover, furthermore), of ‘contrast’ (however, on the other hand, but, yet), of ‘result?’ (therefore, consequently, thus), of ‘time’ (first, then, later, after a while), etc.
- Substitution and ellipsis — writers frequently substitute a short phrase for a longer one that has preceded it, in much the same way as they use pronoun reference (see above). For example, in He shouldn't have cheated in this exam but he did so because he was desperate to get into university the phrase did so substitutes for cheated in his exam. Writers use ellipsis (where words are deliberately left out of a sentence when the meaning is still clear) in much the same way. For example, in Penny was introduced to a famous author, but even before she was she had recognized him the second ‘clause omits the unnecessary repetition of introduced to a famous author.

### **Topic-163: Teaching Coherence**

The cohesive devices we have discussed help to bind elements of a text together so that we know what is being referred to and how the phrases and sentences relate to each other. But it is perfectly possible to construct a text which, although it is rich in such devices, makes little sense because it is not coherent. The following example is fairly cohesive but it is not terribly coherent:

*This made her afraid. It was open at the letters page. His eyes were shut and she noticed the Daily Mail at his side. She knew then that he had read her contribution. Gillian came round the corner of the house and saw her husband sitting in his usual chair on the terrace. She wished now that she had never written to the paper.*

As we can see, for a text to have coherence, it needs to have some kind of internal logic which the reader can follow with or without the use of prominent cohesive devices. When a text is coherent, the reader can understand at least two things:

- **The writer's purpose** - the reader should be able to understand what the writer's purpose is. Is it to give information, suggest a course of action, make a judgment on a book or play, or express an opinion about world events, for example? A coherent text will not mask the writer's purpose.

- **The writer's line of thought** - the reader should be able to follow the writer's line of reasoning if the text is a discursive piece. If, on the other hand, it is a narrative, the reader should be able to follow the story and not get confused by time jumps, or too many characters, etc. In a descriptive piece the reader should know what is being described and what it looks, sounds, smells, or tastes like.

Good instruction manuals show coherence at work so that the user of the manual can clearly follow step-by-step instructions and therefore complete the assembly or procedure successfully. Where people complain about instruction manuals it is often because they are not written coherently enough.

Coherence, therefore, is frequently achieved by the way in which a writer sequences information, and this brings us right back to the issue of genre and text construction. It is precisely because different genres provoke different writing (in order to satisfy the expectations of the discourse community that is being written for) that coherence is achieved. When writers stray outside text construction norms, coherence is one of the qualities that is most at risk. Indeed our description of paragraph constructions on page 21 is, more than anything else, a demonstration of how coherence is achieved.

However, it must not be assumed that genre constraints serve to stifle creativity — or that the need for coherence implies a lack of experimentation. Whether or not writers choose to accept or violate genre constraints (and thereby, perhaps affect the coherence of their texts) is up to them.

#### **Topic-164: Implications for Learning and Teaching**

We have seen that writing in a particular genre tends to lead to the use of certain kinds of text construction. This must have implications not only for the way people write in their first or main language, but also for the ways in which we teach people to become better writers in a foreign language. Since people write in different registers depending on different topics and on the tone they wish to adopt for their intended audience, then students need to be made aware of how this works in English so that they too can choose language appropriately. If, for example, a class of people studying business English need to learn how to write job application letters, then clearly they will need to know how, typically, such application letters are put together and what register they are written in ~ something that will depend, often, on the kind of job they are applying for. If our students wish to learn how to write discursive essays for some exam, then it follows that they will benefit from knowing how, typically, such essays are constructed.

Students will also benefit greatly from learning how to use cohesive devices effectively and from being prompted to give a significant amount of attention to coherent organization within a genre. It would be impossible to explain different genre constructions or to demonstrate text cohesion devices without letting students see examples of the kind of writing we wish them to aim for. Writing within genres in the language classroom implies, therefore, a significant attention to reading.

- **Reading and writing** — students might well enjoy writing 'lonely hearts' advertisements for example. It would, anyway, provide vocabulary practice but it might also allow them to be imaginative and, hopefully, have some fun. However, the only way to get them to do this is to let them read examples of the kind of thing we want them to do before we ask them to write.

If we ask our students to read 'lonely hearts' advertisements (because, later, we are going to ask them to write their own versions), we can ask them to analyze the texts they have in front

of them. In order to draw their attention to the way the texts are structured, we might ask them to put the following genre elements in the order they occur in the texts:

*Contact instruction (e.g. Write Box 2562) Description of advertiser (e.g. Good-looking 35-year-old rock climber and music lover) Description of desired responder (e.g. young woman with similar interests) For (description of activities/desired outcome) (e.g. for relaxation, fun, friendship) 'Would like to meet' (e.g. WLTM)*

We can then ask them to find the language which is used for each element. Now, as a result of reading and analyzing a text (or texts ~ e.g. a number of different advertisements of the same type) they are in a position to have a go at writing in the same genre themselves.

Obviously, we would only ask students to write 'lonely hearts' advertisements for fun. When we ask them to write a business letter, however, we will do so because we think they may need to write such letters in the future. Thus we will let them read a variety of letters, drawing their attention to features of layout (e.g. where the addresses go, how the date is written). We will make sure they recognize features of text construction (e.g. how business letters often start, what the relationship between the paragraphs is, how business letter writes sign off) and language use (e.g. what register the letters are written in). We may also have students analyze the letters to spot examples of cohesive language. They will then be in a position to write their own similar letters obeying the same genre constraints and employing at least some of the same language.

'We do not have to tell the students everything. We can, for example, get them to look at five or six versions of the same news story. It will be their job to identify any similarities of construction and to find the vocabulary items and phrases which occur on more than two occasions. They will then be able to use these when writing their own similar newspaper articles.

At lower levels (e.g. beginners and elementary), we may not be able to expect that students can analyse complete texts and then go on to write imitations of them. But we can, through parallel writing, get them to look at a paragraph, for example, and then, having discussed its structure, write their own similar ones. By using the same paragraph construction (see page 21) and some of the same vocabulary, they can, even at this early stage, write well-formed paragraphs in English.

In other words, where students are asked to write within a specific 'genre, a prerequisite for their successful completion of the task will be to read and analyse texts written within that same genre. However, there is a danger in concentrating too much on the study and analysis of different genres. Over-emphasis may lead us into the genre trap.

- The genre trap - if we limit students to imitating what other people have written, then our efforts may end up being prescriptive (you must do it like this) rather than descriptive (for your information, this is how it is often done). Students may feel that the only way they can write a text or a paragraph is to slavishly imitate what they have been studying. Yet writing is a creative undertaking whether we are designing an advertisement or putting up a notice in school. Unless we are careful, an emphasis on text construction and language use may lead to little more than text 'reproduction'.

A focus on genre can avoid these pitfalls if we ensure that students understand that the examples they read are examples rather than models to be slavishly followed. This is more

difficult at beginner level, however, where students may well want to stick extremely closely to paragraph models.

A way out of this dilemma is to make sure that students see a number of examples of texts within a genre, especially where the examples all have individual differences. This will alert students to the descriptive rather than prescriptive nature of genre analysis. Thus when students look at newspaper advertisements, we will show them a variety of different types. We will make sure they see a variety of different recipes (if they are going to write recipes of their own) so that they both recognise the similarities between them, but also become aware of how, sometimes, their construction is different. For each genre that they encounter, in other words, we will try to ensure a variety of exposure so that they are not tied to one restrictive model.

‘We will also need to accept that genre analysis and writing is not the only kind of writing that students (or teachers) need or want to do. On the contrary, we may often encourage students to write about themselves, including stories about what they have done recently. Sometimes, in our lessons, we should get students to write short essays, compositions, or dialogues straight out of their heads with no reference to genre at all.

‘We need to remind ourselves that understanding a genre and writing within it is only one part of the picture for our students. As we saw in Chapter 1, we can help them enormously if we focus on the actual process of writing. Reconciling a concentration on genre with the desirability of involving students in the writing process.

**Lesson-31****TEACHING THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF WRITING I****Topic-165: Introduction**

Writing is a medium of human communication that represents language with signs and symbols. For languages that utilize a writing system, inscriptions can complement spoken language by creating a durable version of speech that can be stored for future reference or transmitted across distance. Writing, in other words, is not a language, but a tool used to make languages readable. Within a language system, writing relies on many of the same structures as speech, such as vocabulary, grammar, and semantics, with the added dependency of a system of signs or symbols. The result of writing is called text, and the recipient of text is called a reader.

**Topic-166: Teaching Mechanics of Writing**

‘Writing, like any other skill, has its ‘mechanical’ components. These include handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and the construction of well-formed sentences, paragraphs, and texts. Such things are the nuts and bolts of the writing skill and they need to be focused on at certain stages of learning to write in English. The greater the difference between the student’s L1 and English, in some or all of these areas, the bigger the challenge for student and teacher alike.

‘The activities in this chapter - which are designed to help students overcome problems with handwriting and spelling, for example — are enabling exercises on the way to developing an overall writing ability. Similarly, the techniques which are described here, such as copying and parallel writing (imitating a written model), help to give students a basic mechanical competence which they can then put to use when they write more creatively.

**Topic-167: Teaching Handwriting**

Although a lot of writing is typed on computer keyboards, handwriting is still necessary and widespread, whether in exam writing, postcards, forms (such as application forms), etc. It should be remembered too, that however fast computer use is growing it is still, in world terms, a minority ‘occupation.

Handwriting can be particularly difficult for some students. For those who are brought up using characters such as in Chinese or Japanese or using very different scripts as in Arabic or Indonesia, writing in Roman cursive or joined-up lettering presents a number of problems. Areas of difficulty can include producing the shapes of English letters, not only in upper case (capitals) but also in their lower case (non-capital) equivalents. The relative size of individual letters in a word or text can cause problems, as can their correct positioning with or without ruled lines.

For students accustomed in their L1 to from right to left, ‘Western script, which of course goes in the opposite direction, can involve not only problems of perception but also necessitates a different angle and position for the writing arm. For students who have trouble with some or all of the above aspects of English handwriting, teachers can follow a two-stage approach which involves first the recognition and then the production of letters. If students are to form English letters correctly, they have to recognize them first. For example, they can be asked to recognize specific letters within a on sequence of letters.

**Topic-168: The Spelling Challenge**

Many people say that English spelling is irregular and therefore difficult, and they make a feature of the lack of spelling-sound correspondence which, although not unique, is a feature of English. They point out that the same sounds can be spelt differently, as in *threw* and *through* which both sound as /θru:/; and the same spelling can be pronounced differently, as in *threw* and *sew* 'səʊ or *through* and *trough* /troʊf/ which are said with completely different vowel sounds. English spelling is complex but it is not completely random and is, in fact, fairly regular, there are usually clear rules about when certain spellings are and are not acceptable.

English spelling rules do often have exceptions but these usually only apply to a small number of individual words. A standard regularity such as the fact that *gd* at the end of words is silent, for example, is broken by words like *enough*; yet *enough* is only one of seven words that behave in such a way. In the same way many English language spellers know the rule 'i before e except after c' to explain the spelling of *believe* vs. *conceive*, but there are exceptions to this familiar rule (e.g. *seize*, *weird*, *species*, *Neil*). However, it is worth remembering that exceptions which cause confusion are just that ~ exceptions.

Learners of English need to be aware about how we use different spellings to distinguish between homophones (words that sound the same but are spelt differently) such as *threw* and *through*, Pairs of words that sound identical — like *sun* and *son*, *sew* and *so*, *threw* and *through* — are immediately differentiated in writing. What can be seen as a disadvantage in terms of sound and spelling correspondence, in other words, is actually serving an important and useful purpose.

Spellings make English relatively easy to read. Word roots, for example, are always recognizable even when we add affixes: prefixes (like *wn-*, *dis-*) or suffixes (like *-ist*, *-able*, and *-ed*). It is easy to perceive the connection between *sing* and *singing*, or between *art* and *artist*, or *rule* and *ruler*. And similarly, the function of affixes is reflected in their spelling. For example, the *-ist* and *-est* endings are pronounced the same (/ist/) in the words *artist* and *fastest*; it is the spelling that makes it clear that whereas the first ending denotes someone who does something (ar4) the second gives a one-syllable adjective its superlative form.

**Topic-169: Teaching Spelling**

The best way of helping students to learn how to spell is to have them read as much as possible. Extensive reading (reading longer texts, such as simplified readers, for pleasure) helps students to remember English spelling rules and their exceptions, although many students may need some encouragement to do this kind of reading.

However, as teachers we can be more proactive than this. We can raise the issue of sound and spelling correspondence, give students word formation exercises, get them to work out their own spelling rules, and use a number of other activities to both familiarize themselves with spelling patterns and also practise them. Here are some ideas:

- ✚ Students hear words and have to identify sounds made by common digraphs (pairs of letters commonly associated with one sound, e.g. *ck* pronounced /k/) and trigraphs (three letters usually pronounced the same way, e.g. *tch* pronounced as /tʃ/).



- ✚ Although reading aloud may have some disadvantages (without preparation students tend to read falteringly), nevertheless it can be very useful when the teacher takes students through a short text, getting them to listen to words and then repeat them correctly, and then coaching them in how to read the passage ‘with feeling’. If the text has been chosen to demonstrate certain spellings (as well as being interesting in itself), it can focus the students’ minds on how specific spellings sound or indeed on how specific sounds are spelt.
- ✚ Students can read and listen to a series of words which all share the same sound (*e.g. small, always, organised, four, sort, and more*) and then identify what the sound is (/s:/). They can go on to see if the sound is present or not in other similarly spelt words (*e.g. call, our, work, port*). Such an activity raises their awareness of the **convergence** and **divergence** of sounds and their spellings.

The same effect can be achieved by focusing on a particular letter rather than on a particular sound. Students can be asked to listen to a number of different words containing the same letter and they then have to say what the sound of the letter is in each case. If the letter in question is a, for example, students can say for each word they hear whether a sounds like the a in *cat*, or in a *bottle*, or in *man*y, or in *sa*y, or whether it sounds like the o in *or*. They then read sentences such as the following:

Tony loves playing golf much more than other games.

He thinks it’s absolutely fascinating.

He thought Saturday’s game on TV was amazing.

I thought it was rather boring when I saw it.

When he starts, Has anybody seen that film about golf?’,  
everybody begs him not to go on!



## Lesson-32

## TEACHING THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF WRITING II

**Topic-170: Teaching Punctuation (I)**

Using punctuation correctly is an important skill. Many people judge the quality of what is written not just on the content, the language and writers handwriting but also on their use of punctuation. If capital letters, Commas, full stops, sentence and paragraph boundaries, etc are not used correctly, this can not only make a negative impression but can, of course, also make a text difficult to understand.

Where writers are using e-mail communication, the need for accurate punctuation (or spelling) does not seem to be so great. Features such as capital letters and apostrophes are frequently left out. However, even emails can sometimes be more formal or official and then such careless use of the computer keyboard may make a poor impression. If we want our students to be good writers in English we need to teach them how to use punctuation conventions correctly (see Appendix A). This ‘means teaching aspects of the system from the very beginning so that by the time they have reached upper intermediate level, students can do a revision exercise such as this one with ease.

**Topic-171: Teaching Punctuation (II)**

Here are some ideas for getting students to recognize aspects of punctuation and be able to use them:

- ✚ Students at elementary level can study a collection of words and identify which ones are written with capital letters, e.g.

*Anita, and, apple, April, Argentina, art, Australian, Andrew, act, at, in, island, I, ice, Iceland*

They then work out why some words have capital letters and some do not.

- ✚ Once students have had full commas, and capital letters explained to them, they can be asked to punctuate a short text such as this:

*they arrived in Cambridge at one o'clock in the morning was cold with a bright moon making the river  
cam silver andrew ran to the water's edge angela hurrying to keep up with him ran straight into him by  
mistake and pushed him into the river*

- ✚ Students can be shown a and asked to identify what Tease ee res ee tal sad aye a procedure for helping students to write direct reported speech.

The teacher gives the students an extract like this one (preferably from a book (renders) they are currently reading):

*'I'm sorry to keep you waiting,' a voice said. The speaker was a short man with a smiling, round face and a beard. 'My name's Cabinda,' he said. 'Passport police.'*

*'I can explain,' Monika said quickly. 'My hair. It's not like the photograph. I know. I bought hair color in South Africa. I can wash it and show you.'*

*Cabinda looked carefully at Monika and then at the photo. 'No, that's OK. I can see that it's you,' Cabinda said. "There's one more thing. You need a visa. It's ten dollars. You can pay the passport officer. Welcome to Mozambique!"*

### **Topic-172: Copying**

The copying activities we have looked at so far in this chapter have involved copying single and 'joined-up' letters, copying words from a list, and rewriting words in different columns. The intention in each case was to have students learn how to form letters and words from a given model.

Quite apart from its potential for helping students to learn (as we have seen with handwriting and spelling), copying is an important skill in real life too. Some students, however, are not very good at it. In part this may be due to an inability to notice key features of English spelling or to a general difficulty with attention to detail. Matters are not helped by the computer: the ability to copy and paste chunks of text into any document means that there is no need to take account of the ways the words themselves are formed. Graeme Porte, who was working at the University of Granada in Spain, found that some of his 'underachieving' students had great difficulty copying accurately when making notes or when answering exam questions, for example. As a result he had these same students, under time pressure, copy a straightforward text which was set out in fairly short lines. They copied line by line, but at any one time they covered the whole text apart from the line they were working on. This meant that they could give their whole concentration to that one line. Their ability to copy accurately improved as a result of this activity.

### **Topic-173: Teaching Sentence Writing**

Students need to learn and practise the art of putting words together to form well-formed sentences, paragraphs, and texts. One way of doing this is parallel writing where students follow a written model, as the following examples will show:

#### Sentence production (elementary)

The most basic form of parallel writing is the kind of sentence writing that is often used for grammar reinforcement. Students are given one or two model sentences and then have to write similar sentences based on information they are given or on their own thoughts.

In this topic, students are given information about a particular character. They then see how this information can be combined in sentences with **and** and **but**. They have to write similar sentences about themselves.

### **Topic-174: Teaching Paragraph Construction**

Paragraph construction can be done through a practice drill. This example employs a 'substitution-drill' style of procedure to encourage students to write a paragraph which is almost identical to one they have just read. This is like a substitution drill in that new vocabulary is used within a set pattern or patterns. Students read the following paragraph:

*William Shakespeare is England's most famous playwright. He was born in Stratford-on-Avon in 1564, but lived a lot of his life in London; He wrote 37 plays including Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Henry V, and Twelfth Night. He died in Stratford-on-Avon in 1616.*

After the teacher has made sure they have understood the information about Shakespeare, students are given the following table of information and asked to write a similar paragraph about Jane Austen:

*Name: Jane Austen*

*Occupation: one of England's most famous writers*

*Date of birth 1775*

*Place of birth: Steventon, Hampshire*

*Lived: Bath and Southampton (cities in the south of the UK)*

*Examples of work: six novels, including Emma and Mansfield Park*

*Died: 1817, Winchester*

### **Topic-175: Teaching Text Construction II**

#### **Controlled text construction**

The logical organization of ideas (coherence) applies not just to paragraphs but to whole texts as well.

In this example the students focus on the genre of 'report writing'. In Activity 1 they work out the appropriate sequence for a report's five elements. This raises their awareness about a typical organization for such a report. In Activity 2 they look at a particular language issue (linking words) before moving on to Stages 1-3 to write a similar report to the one they first put in sequence.

*Wheels*

#### Writing: A Report

**Before you start**

1. Read these extracts from a report and put them in the correct order.

(A)  
There are several positive things.  
a) There is a train station plus a free car park. Trains are regular and in addition there is a frequent service at weekends and at holiday times.  
b) There is a good bus service from the main square to all parts of the town. The bus fares are also quite cheap.  
c) There is a good bicycle track which runs by the side of the river.

(B)  
To: the School Magazine  
From: Malcolm Ryan  
Date: 15.01.01  
Subject: The local transport situation

(C)  
To sum up, on the one hand Ludford is an attractive town with good shops and many places of interest. On the other hand, the local councils need to do something to control the traffic which passes through the town.

(D)  
The aim of this report is to examine the transport situation in Ludford, a small market town in the north of England.

(E)  
However, there are many things which could be improved.  
a) A main road goes through the town centre. It causes a lot of traffic jams as well as a lot of pollution.  
b) A lot of heavy traffic comes through the town. The lorries damage the historic buildings and they are dangerous too.  
c) Traffic goes round the main square but it goes past the school and there have been fatal accidents recently.  
d) Although there is a bicycle track near the river, it is dangerous to ride a bike in the centre of town.

➡ Check your answers in the Writing Help 3 (layout), page 121.

#### Linking

2. Find these linking words in the report.  
and, but, although, however, in addition, plus, also, on the one hand/on the other hand, as well as, too

Which do we use:  
a) to list ideas?  
b) to contrast ideas?

**Write a report for your school magazine about the transport situation where you live. Follow the stages below.**

**Stage 1**  
Think about the area where you live. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of the transport system. Think about the following things:  
buses, trains, bicycles, cars, roads, pedestrian areas, car parks.

| Advantages | Disadvantages |                |
|------------|---------------|----------------|
| buses      | cheap         | not very clean |
| trains     |               |                |

**Stage 2**  
Use the information to write a report. Think of how things have changed in the last few years (e.g. roads, numbers of cars).  
➡ Writing Help 3 (layout, vocabulary, linking).

**Stage 3**  
Check your report.

From *Opportunities Intermediate* by Michael Harris, David Mower, and Anna Sikorzyńska

**Free text construction**

This final example uses the technique of parallel writing but it leaves the students free to decide how closely they wish to follow the original model. Instead of being bound by the layout and construction of the original they use it as a springboard for their imagination.

Students first read the following story about Stig, a large Alsatian dog:



## ***A lucky escape***

**Stig was a big Alsatian dog who was becoming a bit of a problem.** He lived with the Svensson family in their eighth-floor flat in Malmo in Sweden, but he was growing too big for the flat. The Svenssons were also worried that Stig was a danger to their two-year-old daughter, Mariette.

Then one day something extraordinary happened. Leif Svensson walked into the bedroom and noticed that the window was open. To his horror he saw that Mariette was crawling along the narrow ledge outside and Stig the

Alsatian was following her along the ledge, only centimetres away. Leif shouted for his wife. When she arrived, Stig was next to Mariette. Leif and his wife were beginning to fear the worst when suddenly the dog took the little girl's trousers in his teeth and started to walk slowly backwards along the ledge. Stig carried the child back to the open window and Leif pulled them both inside.

'We can never repay Stig,' said Leif later. 'He saved Mariette's life. From now on we're going to feed him the best steak money can buy!'