

Better English:
*A Teacher's Guide to more Naturally
Efficient and Enjoyable Learning.*



By Benjamin Clarke

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PREFACE

I got to know Benjamin Clarke through an interesting conversation on how languages are learned. We were driving together to a local primary school where we provide consultation on English language teaching. As we talked, we began to realize the many commonalities and connections that exist in our experience and interests in foreign language teaching and learning.

We both agreed that the philosophy of language teaching has always been in an ongoing process of evolution. We also agreed on the importance of metaphor in determining the thoughts and actions of teachers. Surely, “the greatest thing is to be a master of metaphor”, and by choosing excellent metaphors for our teaching work we are likely to increase our effectiveness and job satisfaction. As Clarke suggests, “If we like what we do, we are likely to do”.

Better English offers some new metaphors and principles for teaching and learning English in China. It uses the simple acronym *FLOW* to summarize its philosophy and make its suggestions for teachers more memorable. The book advocates a natural, embodied and interactive approach to teaching and learning which attempts to build up learners’ confidence in a natural way by allowing them to enjoy continual success in the learning process.

Better English also “taps students powers of reflective and analytical thinking” in task-based classroom interactions. Classrooms are greenhouses for growth, and teachers are gardeners for nurturing and cultivating foreign language learners. In these greenhouses, students can grow through interactions with a foreign language and culture.

Language teaching and learning activities conducted in a classroom are intended to be rehearsals for real-time communications. Therefore emphasis is placed on accomplishing realistic language tasks and on negotiating meaning through human interaction.

The *Better English* learning system also emphasizes the importance of providing embodied and context-rich models for students. In addition, the system promotes the development of empowering metaphors for teaching and learning as it provides techniques for the development of integrated language skills: “Language skills *flow* together, because they grow together.”

Once the clay breathes, it begins to grow, and we are masters of the clay. Thus we can use the transformation of thought patterns as an essential part of our ongoing process of growth. This book is sure to guide you in the process of developing excellent educational metaphors and practices!

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One of the great myths of Western culture is the story of the completely “individual” thinker. In this narrative, we imagine that each individual develops his or her “own” ideas without reference to personal, cultural and social history. In reality, of course, our thoughts are in many ways socially created through our interactions with other speakers and thinkers.

For this reason I find it important to acknowledge the many students and teachers around the world who have helped form my sense of the nature of language learning. Though them I have found that foreign language learning can be an enjoyable process which promotes both personal and social development.

More particularly, I would like to thank the dean, vice-deans, faculty and students of the Wenzhou University Foreign Language College. They have welcomed me warmly and helped me to understand the appreciation of teachers which underlies the greatness of Chinese culture.

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On a very practical level I am indebted to the people of the United States of America. With their financial support, the U.S. Department of State has brought me to China as an *English Language Fellow* with a mission of contributing to cultural understanding and the teaching of English as a foreign language. In particular, I would like to thank Damon Anderson, our *Regional English Language Officer*, and Thomas Cooney, our regional *Public Affairs Officer*, for their ongoing guidance and support of this project and guidebook.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to thank my parents and my wife and children for their love and inspiration. As Chinese traditional wisdom suggests, it is through harmony in the family that progress in work is made possible.

INTRODUCTION

“How can I get my students to speak more English?”

“How can I get my students to speak more English?” “Is there a better way to help my students improve their English language skills?” These are questions that dedicated and intelligent EFL teachers around the world are asking themselves.

In order to help answer these important questions, I have created this guide to learning and teaching English as a foreign language. My intention is to offer a philosophy and systematic approach to the development of integrated English language skills. In addition, I intend to share a variety of specific teaching techniques and learning tasks for use in the foreign language classroom.

This guide is mainly devoted to classroom teachers of English as a foreign language. Therefore the language level in most of the descriptions is designed for advanced level speakers of English with a background in language education.

Intermediate level speakers may want to focus on the “techniques and tasks” section of the guide. In this section I present language learning tasks using the simplest language possible. At the same time I present examples of the “process language” learners will need to engage in most of the tasks. I do this so that learners can easily make and repeat connections to new language patterns while engaging in meaningful communication.

The learning techniques and tasks given in this guide allow classroom teachers to work with a full range of language learners. The “Embodied task techniques” are especially appropriate for beginners. Then, as students advance, they may gradually transition towards more emphasis on “Conversation task techniques”. For advanced students in academic settings, the focus then turns to “Text-based task techniques” which develop the text-based skills necessary for success in advanced academic and professional contexts.

This suggested progression of activities describes a **relative** emphasis on techniques and tasks according to the abilities of learners. There are elements of all three types which may be applied with the full range of learners especially when new target language patterns are being introduced.

“What is the “*Better English*” learning system?”

The *Better English* learning system comes from a deep respect for nature and a desire to work in harmony with the natural way (Tao) of things. Language learning occurs naturally in humans, and we must first understand the natural conditions of language development if we are to promote language development in an effective way. As James Asher said “If you want to learn a second language gracefully and with the minimum of stress, then invent a learning strategy that is in harmony with the biological system” (1972 p.134).

We typically learn our first language without conscious planning or effort. Like trees in the forest, our abilities grow naturally. Thanks to our genetic inheritance and the situation we are in, the ability to understand and speak our mother tongue usually develops without deliberate effort.

However, foreign language abilities are often cultivated under somewhat artificial circumstances. In a way, a foreign language classroom is like a greenhouse for growing language abilities that are not native to a given geographical area. As in all artificial cultivation, deliberate effort is required. To artificially support the life and growth of living beings, a system based on a scientific understanding of growth factors is essential.

In many ways, we foreign language teachers are like indoor gardeners. We develop living forms (language speakers) that do not grow naturally in our native climate. Although our process is somewhat artificial, we must respect the nature of the growth process and include and intensify the essential natural growth factors in our systematic approach (Asher 1972).

One of these essential growth factors for language development is embodied communicative interaction with people who speak the language we wish to develop (Brown 2001). The principle that we naturally learn language through embodied and context-rich relationships has therefore guided the development of this *Better English* foreign language learning system.

The *Better English* learning system is related to other teaching methods that are based on a **natural**, **embodied** and **interactive** approach to learning. What all of these methods (e.g. TPR, Communicative and Task Based Methods, Creative Drama) have in common is a profound respect for the nature of the learner and a commitment to educate the whole person.

In this **holistic** approach, language learning is seen as a transformation of the **entire** human nervous system. Therefore sensation, physical movement and human interaction are seen as the keys to language learning. This is because these activities involve major transformations of the nervous system, and major transformations provide more durable connections to foreign language patterns (Asher 1986).

In addition, the *Better English* learning system works by creating a sense of ease and confidence in learners. We do this by dividing a complex skill into **simple** and **feasible tasks**. Simplifying tasks allows learners to focus on one new skill at a time while maintaining the level of calmness necessary for unimpeded respiration and maximum learning readiness (Feldenkrais 1990).

This focused, unhurried method helps learners stay relaxed while practicing a new skill to mastery. Thanks to this method, learners associate using the target foreign language with the positive state of being calm and relaxed. This state of “lowered affective filter” enhances students’ learning ability (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). Also this habit of relaxation allows learners to more calmly think “on their feet” as they later adapt to real-life communicative situations.

Better English builds learner confidence in a natural way by allowing learners to enjoy continual success in the learning process. This is important if we are to develop students’ self-esteem and confidence as language learners.

We do this partly through an initial focus on simple communications about concrete things in our actual lives. We also do this by carefully **modeling** the tasks we are asking learners to perform and by explicitly teaching them the language they need for the **process of the task**.

As we expand our language abilities, we then go on to describe our habitual activities and then our future and past activities. This makes initial speaking and understanding **easier** because we talk about what we sense and know well. Also, students have more opportunities to practice these patterns because they relate to their everyday lives and communicative needs.

In addition to appealing to our more automatic and reflexive learning capabilities, *Better English* also taps learners’ powers of reflective and analytical thinking. For example, we prepare students for the language learning process through the modeling and explanation of learning strategies. Also, we provide timely explanations of grammatical patterns as they relate to meaningful language tasks.

Better English also promotes the development of empowering metaphors for learning and teaching as well as techniques for the promotion of overall learning readiness. Finally, *Better English* encourages the use of role-play, visualization and other cognitive simulations to intensify and enhance target language practice.

Part I: CONDITIONS, PRINCIPLES AND METAPHORS FOR OPTIMAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

“What is learning? How is “knowledge” really a state of connection?”

I'd like to begin our discussion of foreign language learning by asking a very general question: “What is learning?”

Often we humans spend years of our life engaged in the “learning” process without ever consciously considering this question. Let's reflect on this idea of “learning” for a moment. Sometimes people imagine learning to be like going shopping. You go to school. You get “knowledge”. You bring it home with you. Knowledge is imagined to be a tangible object.

However, unlike a bag of groceries, we never get to see the “knowledge” or hold it in our arms. In fact, although we pretend that “knowledge” is like a physical object, it is really the condition or **state of a living nervous system in relation to information or action**. In this view, learning is really the process of making and improving connections within our nervous systems. We make and enhance these connections as we have experiences and connect with the world around and within us. These connections involve our bodily movements and what we sense, feel and think (Lakoff 2007a).

The *Better English* learning system works by systematically developing connections with and within the nervous systems of learners. We teach English by connecting sensations and mental simulations to English words and by connecting these words to each other. This is the core of all our work.

“How can we help learners develop connections with foreign words and word patterns?”

We can connect words with concrete referents directly to sensations or mental simulations of sensations. Often these sensations are provided through the use of pictures or real objects in the classroom. I also connect most of the words I teach to large-scale physical movements which demonstrate the meanings of the words. By doing this I connect new words to a cluster of sensations including sight, sound and the feeling of movement (Bandler, Grindler 1975).

Later I connect the spoken words to their written forms (this provides another connection to visual sensation). I then have students write the words as a way of creating another experience of movement (kinesthetic sensation) in connection to the word to be learned.

In this associative process, I make connections in the macro-world of experience which will result in the literal clustering of neuronal connections in the micro-world of the

brain. It is these micro-connections in the brain which are the physical basis of our ability to remember how words connect to the world and other words. These micro-clusters, formed from experience in the macro world, are what in turn allow us to reconnect to the sensations and movements we need to speak or understand a language (Lakoff 2007a).

By clustering memories of sight, sound and movement around a word pattern (which is itself an even tinier cluster of memories) I do two things that enhance the probability of maintaining access to the new word/meaningful pattern:

First, I create a larger and more robust community of neuronal cells around the cluster that represents the word pattern. This means that when the death of particular cells occur, the likelihood is greater that the pattern as a whole will survive.

Second, by connecting the word cluster (or connection pattern) to a variety of other brain centers for sensation and movement, I increase the likelihood that the word cluster will be stimulated. This is because the cue for stimulation could come from a visual, auditory or kinesthetic sensation or from a related physical movement, e.g. you raise your hand and wave and the echo of the word “hello” emerges in your mind (Bandler, Grinder 1975).

As teachers we are in the business of growing strong and robust neuronal clusters that function smoothly and efficiently and survive the test of time. The variety and durability of our students’ responses to language are the fruit of this work. The high quality seeds that we sow are the strong basic connections linking the experience of our students with the language we teach.

Our work also involves connecting English words to each other. Words that describe categories of things connect groups of words referring to particular types of things. For example the, category of “toys” relates a wide variety of particular types of things children play with. Linking words like “and” and “the” also find their meaning through association with other words. Tense markers and modals like “would” “could” and “should” must also be taught as part of patterns.

Some highly abstract words like “infinite” are defined only by negating a known experience of the “finite” and so must be taught by relating them to other words. These words find their meaning in their relationships to other words. They are only meaningful as they relate to larger patterns.

Because I also connect words to other words, the clusters of neurons related to a word may also be stimulated by other words. For example, you can probably fill in the following blank based on your existing neuronal connections with language. (“Good ____” he said as he turned to leave.) You probably guessed that “bye” or “day” or “night” would all fit here. The question is how do you know this? If you did not have preexisting connections in your brain, you could not make the correct connections in this macro-world experience of written text.

Our memories of words can grow to connect with the words we have seen them with in the past. “See you” ...often is associated with “soon” or “later”. These repeated collocations over time weave very robust neuronal connections. Also, words that have similar meanings or sensory associations seem to form neuronal connections. This is evidenced by our ability to quickly list synonyms or to choose among words with the same denotation the best word for the current social context.

Finally words may be connected by similarities in sound as evidenced by puns, alliteration and rhyme. These sound connections add to the robustness of the neuronal clusters and again provide an additional avenue for stimulating the memory of a word. It is no wonder that in oral traditions the mnemonic quality of the narrative itself was enhanced by the sound based connections of meter and rhyme.

As I begin to teach word patterns, I focus on high frequency patterns that relate to my students’ interests and lives. This means I initially focus on teaching patterns that students can use for some common practical purpose of communication. This makes the target language more useful and helps to create positive feelings about the target language. These positive feelings enhance students’ chances of enjoying success in language learning (Brown 2001).

For example, in conversation classes, I first teach the patterns that students need to greet and introduce themselves to others and to form questions and comments that are common in the classroom setting. Then I teach them the patterns that are typical of classroom small-talk. This allows students to have meaningful things to say to each other before and after class. In these real-life verbal connections with classmates we see practice and repetition of target patterns emerging through spontaneous and naturalistic communication.

In order to create patterned connections that are robust and durable, we typically need many repetitions of these patterns (although sometimes an extremely emotional association is enough). This is why I first teach patterns that have a high probability of being repeated many times in a meaningful and communicative way. Also these high-context conversations help students succeed in using the target language. This success helps to develop the self-esteem and self-confidence which are so important in the language learning process (Macintyre, Dornyei, Clement and Noels 1988).

“How essential are human connections in foreign language learning?”

As mentioned earlier, one key to understanding natural language learning is to realize that we do not “get” or “acquire” a language like we pick up a physical object. In fact this common metaphor may stop us from seeing the true nature of the human connection through language process.

To understand language learning we must realize that language learning is primarily about connecting with other people through shared language patterns. Once this is clear

to us, our approach to foreign language learning becomes more obvious: We must first develop relationships with speakers (native and non-native) of that foreign language and then connect with them to the world through their word patterns (Vygotsky 1962).

After all, we humans are born to connect with other people. Like all higher primates, we are a very social species. Initially, we use the patterns of language because we want to connect with other people. (Later, of course, we will use these patterns to communicate with ourselves in the process of talking to ourselves called “thinking”.)

Since language is one of the most important ways that we naturally connect with other people, we must accept that, at least partially, learning a language is a means to this end. The deeper biological need that motivates natural language learning is our desire to connect with other people. Therefore designed or systematized (e.g. classroom type) language learning should also be highly social in order to satisfy learners’ natural desire for human connection.

If we remove the human connections from the language learning process, we threaten the deeper motivation of learners, and the process may become a “drag”, or, in other words, less intrinsically motivating. The fact is that the level of desire of learners to connect with people who speak a target language is a key determiner of their success in learning (Brown 2001).

At every level of the process, the quality of the connection is the key to success. For example, the quality of our connections to foreign language speakers is a huge factor in determining the development of our foreign language skills.

It is a great advantage if we have a face-to-face connection with a kind and intelligent target-language-speaker. If we are physically present with this speaker in a high-context environment, our chances of learning with ease increase even more. This is because we now have clear connections to both a speaker and the world they speak about, and these are the most natural conditions for language learning.

Virtual connections like books and audio and video recordings may be helpful for introducing language and language patterns. However, embodied practice opportunities with real people are extremely helpful, if not essential, in the development of fluent speaking skills.

If you talk with people who have become fluent speakers of a foreign language, you will find that most have interacted face-to-face with others (native and non-native speakers) who speak that language. This interaction may have occurred in a classroom or language learning club, or in other situations where the language is naturally spoken, e.g. during foreign study or in interaction with foreign visitors.

“What is the root of natural language learning?”

The root of language learning is found in our ability to focus our attention. In the case of the eyes, this means focusing on one part of our entire visual field. When we focus on the human hand, and the rest of the body is less clearly seen, we have begun the process of abstraction.

Abstraction becomes possible as we use our powers of perceptive focus to highlight one aspect of our potential experience (Feldenkrais 1990). We use this power when we, as babies, instinctively focus on the face of our mother or the familiar voice of our mother among a background chorus of less familiar voices.

This focus also occurs quite naturally when we feel pain or when we move a part of our bodies with careful attention. For example, our sense of having “hands” is supported by our ability to focus on the sensations in our hands by looking at them or moving them. This sense of the “hands” as being distinct from the “arms” may also be enhanced by the large contrast in the sensitivity of these two areas. (The hands of course have a much higher concentration of sensory connections to the central nervous system.)

In fact, the idea that there are “parts” to our bodies comes from our ability to focus our eyes and the rest of our attention (sensing-feeling ability) on one area of ourselves. This is also true when we focus our attention on any aspect of our experience. In the contrast between focused and fuzzy, we create a defined area that may then be connected with a sound. In connecting this defined area of experience to a word modeled by a caretaker we find the birth of spoken language.

Once we develop the ability to focus on one aspect of our experience, we gradually develop our comprehension of language by hearing sounds repeatedly in connection with these aspects of our experience. This ability to create a limitation in our experience and name it seems to come quite naturally to us under natural social conditions. Of course, we must have people around us who want to relate to us through language, and these (usually loving) people serve as our essential interactive partners and guides in the natural language learning process (Vygotsky 1962).

As we progress, we connect these meaning evoking sounds (words) to each other in larger patterns. As we learn patterns, we begin to understand words like “and” or “the” (whose meaning is found in linking and defining other words). We also go beyond the world of concrete language associations by naming categories of things and other abstractions.

At this point, connections between word sounds and written word forms may be made. These connections are usually formed in a classroom type environment in a systematic way. This is because literacy does not naturally occur for adult humans in the way that spoken language does. For this reason, I consider literacy training in a first language to be the usual beginning of systematic or human-designed learning for most people.

“What principles for systematic language learning come from understanding natural language learning?”

When we observe the natural flow of language learning, we soon see that there is a clear order or **flow** to how language develops. Here are a few examples:

1.) Comprehension→Production:

A young toddler can typically show understanding long before she can speak a word. For example, a father says “Come and get a cookie.” and a toddler will come running in from another room. She demonstrates understanding of language by responding to language through action. At this early stage she may not yet be able to respond verbally to her father. This silent period is part of her natural language learning process

Language teachers can flow with this natural process by first asking students to respond to language non-verbally or in writing only. Rather than demanding immediate verbal production in the classroom, Asher recommends giving learners time to comprehend a language without having to produce it orally (1972).

Asher’s decision to emulate the patterns of natural language learning is supported by research. One study found that students who initially delayed oral production by responding only through writing performed better than a control group in both syntactic control and pronunciation accuracy (Potovsky 1977). In another study, foreign language students who initially responded only through nods, pointing and gestures (Gary 1975) ultimately surpassed a control group in both listening comprehension and speaking performance.

2.) Fluency→Accuracy:

When a small child begins to speak, loving adults usually get very excited and smile and clap. They are intuitively helping to encourage the flow of words from the child. They are happy to accept the developing language (“interlanguage”) of the child even though it does not exactly match the pronunciation and grammar of mature speakers (Krashen 1982).

The main idea is that the child is moving in the right direction, and no one would dream of interrupting her flow with harsh or distracting criticism (Richard-Amato 1996). Usually, loving adults gently guide the development of a child’s language by casually repeating back corrected versions of her interlanguage (“recasting”) and only occasionally do they gently make explicit suggestions for improvement. Pronunciation “practice” is most naturally found in the form of playful activities such as tongue twisting rhymes and simple, highly repetitive songs.

3.) Concrete→Abstract:

Children naturally learn their mother tongue (first language) in a very particular order. Words for concrete things (nouns) and very tangible action words (verbs) first flow from a child's mouth. Later come the words that refer to abstract and intangible things and processes. When a child says "Mama" she has a very clear picture in mind, her mother's face. This is true **understanding**, a connection between the memory of a sensation and a word. When a child says "I want to nurse!", she is with a memory of sweet taste, and warm and sweet smelling skin. She truly understands, or literally, "stands under" and has a simulated experience of this wonderful process.

Later she will have abstract **knowledge** (which is more about how human communities name things and how these communities relate words to words and other symbols). For example, she will come to know that "love" is considered to not connect to "hate" but to connect to "care" and "nurturing". She will know the limits of what "love" can connect to (the definition), but she may never have one clear understanding or picture of what "love" means. Even if she does, her understanding may not be shared by other members of her community. This is why we humans have ongoing philosophical discussions about the meaning of "love", but we can pretty much all agree on what the word "Mama" means.

Concrete words that refer to simple and well-known things are easy to connect with memories of vivid and moving experiences. They are easier to teach in the classroom and easier for students to learn. These words form the solid foundation upon which we can later safely build the skyscrapers of abstract language through metaphor (Lakoff, 2007b)

"How can we apply these principles of natural language learning to promote systematic foreign language learning?"

In order to help teachers organize and connect to memories regarding the application of these principals, I have created a mnemonic acronym. The acronym is "FLOW" and it refers to the movements of systematic language instruction based on natural forces and principals. I believe the use of this acronym will help readers connect more fully and easily to the applications of natural learning principals.

"Flow!" can also be understood as a statement of the basic philosophy of the *Better English* learning system. At root, *Better English* is simply about allowing our language work to **flow** with the natural way of things.

The first particular association of words I will make to the acronym "FLOW" is this: **Fluent Language Ordered Work**. This describes in broad terms how we order our

curriculum in the *Better English* learning system. Following is an expansion of the description “Fluent Language Ordered Work”.

1.) We focus our language work primarily on developing **fluency** and secondarily on channeling the flow of communication into more standard target language forms (accuracy). The basic idea here is that in order to encourage confidence and a sense of accomplishment in learners we must first allow learners to succeed in performing communicative tasks. Then we can subtly model and encourage more accurate and refined performance. An analogy here would be that we must get the water flowing before we can alter the shape and direction of the stream.

2.) Our language work is **ordered** by clear task based objectives. We design our lesson plans and procedures around tasks that develop particular language skills and abilities, and we consider language “knowledge” to be a particular type of language skill. Our learning priorities are also **ordered** by principles of natural language development, e.g. high-context communication precedes low-context communication, which precedes abstract and meta-linguistic communication. The target language in our lessons is **ordered** in accordance with real language uses in the community of living target language speakers, i.e. we first teach high frequency, contemporary language forms that relate to the everyday real-life communicative tasks of learners.

3.) Whenever possible, our progress within a curriculum (which at root means the way things run or flow in education) is **ordered** or determined by our students’ ability to **fluently** perform the language tasks we assign to them. Also, when we are able to contribute to the creation of a curriculum, we do so in harmony with natural language learning principles.

Another important meaning of *FLOW* is this: **Function Links Our Words**. We group language forms as they naturally occur (around what they do or based on how they collocate in relation to specific real-life tasks).

Rather than dividing words from their natural contexts and presenting them in random lists or lists based on abstract categorization, **we present words in their natural habitats**. This approach allows contextual and narrative grouping of target language forms which in turn makes them much more memorable and useful. Again, we remember that we focus our language training on what students are being trained to **do** or, in other words, on the development of specific skills.

In another very essential meaning, *FLOW* serves as a reminder to not mistake our linguistic menu for the meal that is actual reality. For example, we often talk about the “five language skills” of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation as if they were fundamentally separate.

Sadly, we also often organize curriculum and courses as if these skills were absolutely separate. To this *FLOW* says “**Fundamental Law Overrides Words**”. In other words, just because we say these language skills are separate does not mean they are in fact

fundamentally separate. Because language skills are naturally interdependent and interrelated, our training of them in the classroom must also allow these skills to **flow** and grow together.

For example, to speak meaningfully we must first listen, and to learn to speak in the first place we must do a lot of listening in a high-context sensory environment. While reading do we not often sub-articulate or “talk to ourselves”? While writing, do we not also “talk to ourselves” as we form shapes on paper? Is it possible that these so called “distinct” skills are actually built around the essential behaviors typical of basic oral interactions? By not seeing all of these skills as connected, are we perhaps missing out on all kinds of opportunities to promote the synergistic growth of these skills?

Certainly, we may create a relative focus on a skill in our developmental tasks. However, we must acknowledge and act in accordance with the fundamental law of nature: In the natural world all of these language skills are related, and so we must relate them in our classrooms. To do otherwise is to be deceived by an illusion or spell of language while ignoring the reality that would guide us to more successful and enjoyable teaching

**“Is there a way of thinking that can help language teachers be more effective?
If so, what is it?”**

My purpose in writing this guide is mainly to help teachers of foreign languages **enjoy** more success in their teaching. So, although it has other meanings, the acronym *FLOW* here suggests that we teachers “**Fully Love Our Work**”.

For me, teaching is both a science and an art, and I am passionate about reaching our objectives efficiently as we co-create learning processes that are filled with beauty and joy. After all, as teachers, we spend much of our lives involved in the teaching process. If our teaching process is not joyful, what can be said about our lives? If we enjoy only our vacations and days off, what percentage of our lives are we enjoying?

The way of more enjoyable and successful teaching is simple: We must understand the truth about how humans learn, and we must align our thoughts and actions with this truth.

At this point you are probably wondering “What blocks the way to this simple path? Why doesn’t every teacher enjoy success in the classroom?”

The answer is this: As teachers we may suffer from ignorance of a systematic approach to language development and/or from bad ideas and bad metaphors which block our ability to understand the truth and move with it. I call ideas “bad” if they are disconnected from the actual reality of life. I call metaphors “bad” if they are disconnected from skillful action.

To address these disconnections between natural fact and pedagogical practice we repeat the following association with the acronym *FLOW*: **Fundamental Law Overrules Words**.

Fundamental Law is reality as we sense it. Thus we must be sure that our words and ideas are based on the foundation of observation of human beings in living contexts. If descriptive words do not match what we sense, they must be overruled. Also, if a metaphor does not lead to skillful teaching, we must seek and adopt a better metaphor. This is a part of the *Better English* system and the basic philosophy of *FLOW*.

“What patterns of thought concerning language training might we want to transform?”

Here are some examples of ideas about language training that we might like to transform, enhance or enrich. Although all of these metaphors have some value, the *Better English* system recommends transforming these common ideas and enriching them with some complimentary patterns.

Pattern to Transform:

Language “teaching” and language “learning” are two completely different things.

By imagining the process of language skill development holistically as “training” we connect the dynamics of teaching and learning. They are, in fact, two perspectives on the same process. “Teachers”, in fact, must be consistently sensing (learning from) “students” in order to communicatively interact with them. “Students”, in fact, must be consistently speaking to (teaching) others if they are to develop productive language skills and interact communicatively.

Of course the role of the *FLOW* trainer is also distinct in some important ways from that of trainees. For example, the *FLOW* trainer must be the clear leader and authority in the classroom in order to create optimal situations for learning. An orderly and disciplined classroom is essential to the *FLOW* method, and for the success of the process, all students must be willing to submit to the reasonable directives of the trainer.

Pattern to Transform:

The teacher is the active giver of explanations, and the students are the passive recipients of explanations.

As discussed in the preceding section, this mental image tends to unconsciously lead teachers to being overly productive in language while denying learners the opportunity for interaction and development of productive skills.

Pattern to Transform:

The teacher is the correction maker, and the students are the mistake makers.

Under the spell of this mental image, teachers unconsciously seek to engage students in overly difficult tasks for which they lack adequate preparation. This creates situations where the majority of students will try and fail at a given task. This failure allows

teachers to feel useful and important in their imagined mission as the corrector of mistakes. However, research suggests that more direct error correction (especially in the middle of conversational interactions) does not necessarily lead to greater accuracy in the target language (Richard-Amato 1996).

An additional problem is of course that student confidence and motivation to learn may be undermined while the teacher becomes more and more identified with the role of mistake corrector. The cycle continues. As the students become more and more anxious, they make more mistakes, and the teacher now has more evidence to support the idea that these students are “not good at language learning” and are, therefore, in need of constant correction. The teacher’s focus on mistake correction intensifies and on it goes.

Of course there is a place for error correction in good language teaching. I typically offer numerous corrections when students are in the process of editing a text or writing to prepare for an oral task. At these times students are not in a conversational mode, so I am not interrupting the flow of speech. Also they are focused on preparing for a task that may demand new vocabulary and sentence patterns. This is a very “teachable moment” because students are focused on preparation for accuracy and are not caught up in a communicative task.

I also offer subtle corrections during class discussions by recasting what students have said. Recasting is simply paraphrasing or repeating corrected versions of what students have said. In this way I provide excellent models and subtle corrections without explicitly drawing conscious attention to mistakes. This method keeps everything flowing in the classroom and allows students to save face while consciously or unconsciously experiencing correct language patterns.

Pattern to Transform:

The teacher is the programmer, and the students are machines to be programmed.

This (often unconsciously held) mental image leads teachers to teach as if they were programming software into computers. Instead of teaching through demonstration, example and inquiry (which would assume that students are intelligent living beings capable of figuring out some patterns and connections for themselves), the “programmer” imagines they must do all the analysis and explicit organizing of information for the students.

For example, rather than giving an example of how to teach a good lesson or brainstorming with students to figure out the key elements of a good lesson, the “programmer” will simply “download” a description of the key elements into student “memory cards” through lecture in the classroom. This is often seen as a “timesaver” by the programmer.

After all it takes time for people to observe and think about things, and we don’t want to “waste” time on these things when our essential function is to “download” or transfer

information. In any case, the programmer has doubts about the “students” capacity for creative thought: “How can a machine write a program for itself? Without a programmer or an official school program, human learning would be completely impossible, right?”

Of course, part of our role as teachers is to explain or “download” textual information patterns. One of the things that make language teachers different from those who unconsciously use language is that we can describe what we are doing. This verbal awareness (meta-linguistic awareness) allows us to consciously direct the development of language skills in others. Therefore the ability to explain is important in classroom language teaching. However to maximize the effectiveness of our explanations we need to create experiences which will make our explanations more welcome and understandable. Also, we need to trust students’ ability to figure some things out for themselves, and realize that the answers we figure out for ourselves are generally more memorable than the answers someone else gives us ready-made.

The name for the general educational approach of asking questions and assigning tasks as a way of teaching is called the “process-inquiry” method. Explanation is still used and valued, but the direct experience of students through personal inquiry is considered to be the most essential element in learning.

“What mental patterns might be particularly useful to language trainers?”

In one sense, the *FLOW* philosophy of *Better English* begins by transforming the flow of words and images in the minds of language trainers. This is because the metaphors we choose for teaching and learning have a powerful impact on our imagination, perception and action (Lakoff 2007b). As we become conscious of the mental images and words that we have used unconsciously in the past, we become more able to create more useful mental patterns for the future.

The greatest thing is to be a master of metaphor, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity of dissimilars. –Aristotle

Pattern to Consider: The Trainer as Leader:

In order to help create situations that stimulate the development of language skill development, the trainer must be the authority in the classroom. Without the power to ensure cooperation of trainees, the trainer cannot ensure optimal development for all participants. In order to be responsible for the development of skills, the trainer must develop clear cues for organizing trainees’ behavior and must have the ability to respond to non-cooperative behavior.

Thankfully, in my experience, most mature learners in the *FLOW* classroom are happy and grateful to be enjoying the rapid development of language fluency, and they joyfully and willingly cooperate with my instructions. In the few cases where I have had behavior issues, I have simply taken the trainees aside and explained how their cooperation is essential for the success of the entire class. I then explain how it would be unfair of me to sacrifice the happiness or so many willing learners for the sake of one unwilling learner.

With older trainees, if problems persisted, I would ask them to either opt for full and enthusiastic participation in learning or to accept exclusion from the class. In the case of younger trainees, I would include parents in the discussion process, and involve all administrative allies in helping trainees see the benefits of full cooperation.

Of course with young learners we must be sensitive to the limits of their attention spans, and we must be sure that our lessons engage the majority of the class the majority of the time. In addition, we must cooperate with other teachers to create cooperative habits in our students and link them to easily recognizable cues. For example, I teach students that a double clap is a call for silence, and this helps capture attention in a classroom where a lot of conversation is flowing.

The good news is that when we help others succeed in developing fluency through highly structured communicative tasks that are of natural interest to them, we **naturally earn** their loyalty and respect. Out of this loyalty, respect and joy in learning, cooperation usually flows naturally.

Pattern to Consider: The Trainer as Model:

Modern neurological research documents the existence of “mirror” neurons which connect areas of the brain active in sensing with areas of the brain active in creating corresponding changes in muscular pattern (Lakoff 2007a). This means that the very act of seeing someone perform an action simultaneously creates neurological connections needed for the performance of a corresponding action. Thus modern neurological science confirms the traditional folk wisdom of “Monkey see, monkey do.”

As a trainer, I model firm but kind leadership which respects the basic biological and social needs of trainees. For example, I make sure that trainees are allowed to regularly enjoy movement and a variety of activities. Everyone is allowed to drink water and use the bathroom when necessary. I also make sure that their social needs are met by including lots of peer interaction in the training process. I model inclusive treatment, attentive listening and respectful communication at all times, and I demand the same from trainees. In this way I encourage the development of desired learning behaviors through the natural tendency of learners to do as they see done.

Also, we as trainers must, of course, model target language patterns and language based tasks. As a general principle, I only ask trainees to perform tasks that I have first

modeled, sometimes repeatedly, for them. By modeling, I activate the mirror neuron connections which initiate corresponding patterns in their body/minds. This is much more useful and natural preparation than merely explaining the procedure and hoping that students can create their own images to mirror in action. Typically it is also much more time effective to model than to explain. As the traditional proverb says “A picture is worth a thousand words.”

Pattern to Consider: The Trainer as Interactive Coach:

After modeling performance of target language and tasks, the trainer must interact with students to guide their repetition and creative adaptation of the performance. This interaction includes remodeling key aspects of the performance, presenting successful examples of student performance, recasting student language and shaping student awareness and action through verbal pointers (skillful comments and questions).

The interactive coach must have a quick mind and a clear sense of the students in order to provide helpful responses to them in real-time. Through interaction, the coach provides tips on learning strategies, refining suggestions and helpful experiences to students. Also, the coach provides the encouragement which students need to maintain their confidence and motivation to learn.

“How about a quick recap of the *FLOW* philosophy to get us ready for applying specific techniques in the classroom?”

The main guiding philosophical principle in all our *Better English* procedures is *FLOW*:

Word and sense *flow* together:

What makes a word different from other sounds is that, when we hear a word, we “understand” it by associating it with an actual sensation. Later when the actual sensation is absent, the word itself will activate a similar virtual sensation. Thus we become able to “remember” the meanings of words. These “meanings” or virtual sensations may include images and other forms of virtual experience. As we develop a wide variety of these meanings our language may become more abstract and distant from its basic roots in actual sensation.

However, as language trainers we must retrace these basic natural steps in language development. At root, language learning is essentially the process of connecting sensations with the sounds a human culture associates with them. Thus, we first link a new word (or phrasal chunk) to a related sensation (“the sense” or “meaning” of the word). These connections (meanings) include sensations of movement, sight, sound, feeling, taste and smell.

To make sure that beginning students connect words to the appropriate sense or (or core meaning), we introduce one new word (or phrasal chunk) at a time. By only introducing one new thing at a time, we make it easier for students to understand the new meaning from context. This pattern of demonstration to imitation to simple variation helps clarify meanings for students. This allows us to reduce the use of translation and explanation.

Words *flow* naturally as they occur in authentic communication:

We link new words to actions and other words in natural and authentic ways. For example, commands lead to actions, and questions lead to related answers. We connect new words to other words which collocate with them in high frequency in authentic settings. Whenever possible, we teach words and word combinations which are useful and important to our students' practical use of the language. For example, we first teach the words that students can regularly use in their classroom and schoolyard interactions. In this way we increase the likelihood of naturalistic use (meaningful repetition) of target language patterns.

Language skills *flow* together, because they grow together:

What people call "separate" language skills are in fact interrelated and interdependent in all authentic communication. In reality, we cannot absolutely separate speaking skills from listening skills and reading skills from writing skills.

Educated language users in a literate culture also must connect spoken and written language skills. The connection between a sensation and a sound is a spoken word, and in a literate culture, this spoken word also connects to a visual symbol or written word. When we offer learners meaningful connections to both sounds and written symbols, learners' overall connections to meaning are increased. Thus we integrate spoken language skills with written language skills, and in so doing, we benefit from an overall synergistic increase in meaningful connections.

We also naturally integrate pronunciation skill development whenever we correctly use spoken language. Focused pronunciation practice will naturally occur in the choral repetition of meaningful sounds and in the teaching of rhymes, chants and songs. Some focused modeling of isolated phonemes may occur, but this type of practice should generally be deemphasized, allowing learners to focus on the more natural uses of language while unconsciously improving pronunciation.

In regards to grammar, we may say that grammar training flows naturally with our communicative language activities. When a speaker consistently uses target language patterns in a correct way, we can say that this speaker demonstrates an implicit understanding of the grammar. In fact, many language speakers are very competent language users even though they have never developed an ability to explicitly describe their own understanding of the rules that govern their language use (grammar). We could

say that these speakers are unconscious masters of the language, and for real-time performance of communicative tasks, unconscious mastery is what is essential.

Therefore, at basic levels, we focus our training on using language for practical communicative purposes. In doing so, we understand that whenever we train correct language patterns, we implicitly teach grammar. Students may also benefit from explicit discussion and analysis of grammar when it is appropriate to their level of development, and useful in their current communicative activities (Richard-Amato 1996). The key in grammar instruction is to give it at “teachable moments” when it will be helpful for completing a meaningful task. When given in small chunks in a communicative context, explicit grammar instruction will be more understandable, memorable and welcome.

At the same time we recognize that certain institutional requirements may compel us to prematurely develop our students’ ability to explicitly describe their understanding of language patterns. We can of course do this, but it is important for us to first help students develop some fluency in the performance of language based tasks. If our students have no basic language patterns flowing from them, they will not have the understanding and confidence needed to take on the more abstract and difficult task of explaining their own understanding.

Part II: TECHNIQUES AND TASKS FOR THE SYSTEMATIC DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

“What specific techniques and tasks does the *Better English* system use to promote the development of integrated language skills?”

The *Better English* system adopts a wide variety of techniques, many of which are already well established in the foreign language training community. *Better English* groups these techniques in terms of the order in which they would most naturally be used in the development of integrated language skills. For example, there is an emphasis on Embodied Task Techniques with beginning learners although other techniques may also be applied.

1.) Embodied Task Techniques (ETT)

These are excellent for true beginners of all ages and especially excellent for young children. They provide robust neurological connections for new information and high context for communication. Also, they appeal simultaneously to visual (seeing), auditory (hearing) and kinesthetic (feeling/moving) styles of learning while reducing the affective filter (nervous tightness of the body/mind). If you want to see a joyful classroom full of students having fun speaking, use some of these. I use some of them even with advanced adult speakers when introducing new material. Here are some examples

a. Total Physical Response (TPR): Pioneered by James Asher. This technique involves giving instructions to students who first respond by doing a corresponding action. (This imitates the natural language learning process by first asking for a physical rather than verbal response).

Although this technique may sound simple, using it well requires some intensive study and practice. I highly recommend reading Asher’s guidebook (1986) and practicing the techniques in an informal setting before using them in the classroom.

By delaying students’ speech production through TPR we intentionally imitate natural language learning. In doing so we create several advantages for learners:

First, students experience new language patterns which relate to their actual situations and actions. This clarifies the meaning of new patterns and provides rich sensory associations with them.

Second, by responding physically to language we activate the sensory-motor areas of the brain in conjunction with the areas for the auditory processing of language. These robust

connections with posture and action then serve as cues for the capacity to mirror these language patterns in speech (Lakoff 2007a).

Third, the students are able to hear the target language correctly many times before being asked to produce a simulation of the teacher's pronunciation. This lowers the stress-level of learners and increases the likelihood of students internalizing more correct pronunciation patterns.

Asher recommends at least three weeks of intensive TPR as the learning base for beginning students (1986). We as teachers must of course adapt our use of TPR to our particular curriculum and learning objectives. I find that TPR is a very useful technique for introducing new vocabulary and language patterns, and I typically use it for as long as it takes for students to become comfortable with a given pattern. With advanced learners this is sometimes just a matter of minutes, but with beginning students more time is often required.

Once students are comfortable with a given pattern, I have them take on the role of the instruction giver. Once we have practiced this, I have them give instructions to each other in a game I call "Master and Robot". This is simply a role play where the "Master" gives instructions and the "Robot" follows them. (You can make this even more fun by moving and speaking in a mechanical way when you are the "Robot".)

"Simon Says" is another fun variation of an instruction giving and receiving game. In this game one person is chosen to give instructions. Players must only follow instructions if they are preceded by "Simon says...". Players must ignore all other instructions. If a mistake is made, the person who makes it is "out" until the next round. Usually the player who lasts the longest then becomes the instruction giver, and the game goes on. Depending on target language goals the instructor can limit the type of instructions that may be given. This allows for focused practice relative to given curriculum goals.

Following is an example of a part of a lesson plan using a highly abridged version of TPR to teach basic actions typical of the classroom and the names of common classroom objects:

Total Physical Response (TPR) instructions with student to student follow-up practice:

- Trainer models various common classroom actions with various common classroom objects. Trainer gives students action instructions and students respond to commands through actions, e.g. Right now I'm touching the door. Now you touch the door.

-Trainer asks a confident learner to take on the role on instruction giver. Trainer then models receiving and responding physically to instructions. This is repeated until all students can at least give some simple instructions.

-Trainer introduces and models the game of “Master and Robot”. In this variation one student will give the instructions and the other student will respond physically to them.

-Students take turns in each role enjoying both speaking and listening practice. Creativity and innovation is modeled and encouraged. Respectful boundaries are modeled and explicitly requested.

b. Total Physical Response Storytelling®: Pioneered by Blaine Ray. This technique teaches gestures and movements with each part of a story. Stories are designed around curriculum goals and students quickly learn the stories through actions and then may go on to create versions of their own. This technique can be adapted for use with a wide variety of students and levels. (Check the following web address for Blaine Ray’s explanation of this technique:

<http://www.blaineraytprs.com/pages.php?page=explanationpage>).

c. Sign-to-Speak: This is technique which I first saw used in the TPR Storytelling® process. I have been experimenting and with it and developing the technique over the past ten years to present and practice conversational patterns. The basic idea is that as we introduce new words and word patterns, we connect them to larger body movements based on *American Sign Language* and our own invented mime and gesture. (The more obviously connected to meaning the better.)

The difference between this technique and classic TPR is that *Sign-to-Speak* is done **while** speaking as a way of clarifying and reinforcing the meaning of the words. Instead of moving as a way of non-verbally responding to language, we move as we verbalize to clarify communication and intensify the learning process

My hypothesis is that larger body movements have a larger and more widespread impact on the human nervous system. This in turn creates more robust neurological connections for new language patterns which facilitates language retention and use (Lakoff 2007a).

Also, the *Sign to Speak* technique appeals simultaneously to visual (seeing), auditory (hearing) and kinesthetic (feeling/moving) styles of learning while reducing the affective filter (nervous tightness of the body/mind). Finally, the gestures provide high context and clear illustration of the core meaning of target language patterns (including individual words and grammatical patterns such as tense and voice).

Also, by shifting the conscious focus off language and on to another task we mimic how language is most often used in natural situations. Some theorists believe that this unconscious “acquisition” of language is actually more crucial for fluency than conscious “learning” of language (Krashen 1981). In addition, this technique allows for lots of repetition of target language without boring students who are now consciously occupied with learning gestures. This is particularly true in the case of young learners. They are

often taught songs through the use of movements, and they enjoy and become very engaged in the process of making the gestures.

Following is a part of a lesson plan using the Basic *Sign-to-Speak* technique:

Basic *Sign-to-Speak* instructions with student to student follow-up practice:

(Gestures may be improvised by trainer or may be found on-line by searching for a visual American Sign Language dictionary. Here's the web address for one I like:
<http://www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi>)

-The target language "My name is Professor Clarke. What is your name?" is demonstrated through the use of gesture and mime. (Adapt the order of gestures to match the grammar and word order of English. Have one sign to correspond to each English word accepting that this deviates from standard American Sign Language usage.)

-Students repeat target language and corresponding physical movements.

-A complete conversation is modeled by trainer with several different students.

-Students practice conversation with a variety of partners.

-Trainer circulates to assess student progress and offer corrections.

d. Songs, dances and finger-plays: These all involve the body more intensely than normal speech. For thousands of years these activities been used by literate and pre-literate cultures as a way of helping individuals remember their cultural heritage. Like other embodied techniques, they are particularly effective because they go with the flow of natural learning processes, i.e. through mimicry of visible movement, emotion and repetition they create more integral and robust transformations of the human nervous system.

I am aware that older students usually prefer songs that are more typical of adult themes, and the following examples are given with primary school students in mind. (Check the web for audio and video recordings of songs, dances and finger-plays. You can use them to learn these and many other excellent patterns.)

Examples of easy songs suitable for young learners include:

- Old Macdonald
- Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
- Skip to my Lou

Examples of easy danceable songs for young learners include:

- The Hokey Pokey (Uses classic TPR instructions)
- Head Shoulders Knees and Toes (Great for teaching body parts)
- Go Bananas!
- Ring around the Roses

Examples of easy finger-plays for young learners include:

-Here is the church (palms and fingers facing together pointing up). Here is the steeple (interlace all fingers except the index fingers which continue pointing up to form the steeple). Open the doors (separating thumbs as palms are turned upward), and see all the people (wiggle interlaced fingers)!

-The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout (alternately touching thumb to opposite hand pinkie in an upward walking motion). Down came the rain and washed the spider out (wiggling fingers downward. Out came the sun and dried up all the rain (joining opposite hands at fingertips to form a round shape and holding it up high), and the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the spout again (repeat initial thumb to pinkie upward walking motion).

-This little piggy went to market (grasping the thumb with the opposite hand). This little piggy went home (grasping the index finger with the opposite hand). This little piggy had roast beef (grasping the middle finger with the opposite hand). . This little piggy had none (grasping the ring finger with the opposite hand). . This little piggy went *wee wee wee* all the way home (grasping the pinkie finger with the opposite hand and then quickly grasping and shaking each finger on the way back to the thumb).

e. Rhymes and rhythmic chants: These may also be included under the category of embodied techniques. Although the connection to the category may not be so easily seen, I believe that the regular repetition of mouth and tongue and body movements demanded to create rhythmic patterns and matching sounds, e.g. mat cat hat may be considered as a kind of embodied instruction. I think many adult learners will enjoy the benefits of jazz chants and rhyming and metered poetry as long as the content seems interesting and appropriate to their level of maturity.

Examples of easy rhymes for young learners include:

-Jack and Jill went up a hill to fetch a pail of water. Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after.

-Rain rain go away. Come again some other day. (May be chanted.)

-Jack Sprat could eat no fat. His wife could eat no lean, and so between the two of them, they licked the platter clean.

Examples of rhyming proverbs that adults might enjoy:

A stitch in time saves nine.

-Benjamin Franklin

It's not what you don't know that gets you. It's what you know that ain't so.

-Mark Twain

We are the flow, we are the ebb. We are the weaver, we are the web.

-Shekinah Mountainwater

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

-Benjamin Franklin

If we like what we do, we are likely to do.

-Benjamin Clarke

2.) Conversation Task Techniques (CTT)

A. Explicitly teaching common classroom language:

Conversation based tasks become important after learners have established some basic fluency and confidence in the understanding and use of target language forms. Since I ask that mature students use the target language in all classroom conversations, it is my duty to first understand the basic conversation scripts which will be needed for basic classroom conversations. I then model and explicitly train these conversations skills. This way I can have a reasonable expectation that my students are capable of speaking only the target language in class, and I can insist on them doing so.

In his book “The Art of Teaching Speaking”, Keith Folse gives some really excellent descriptions of conversation based tasks. He also describes the importance of explicitly teaching the language students will need to complete conversational tasks (2006).

Since communicating with others in the classroom is in itself an important communicative task, I take the time to teach the necessary language patterns. Here are some examples of important classroom **process** language:

Common questions which typical college students might want to ask in class:

You want to interrupt the teacher with a question. You raise your hand and when the teacher gives you permission you say:

Excuse me, may I ask a question?

(If the answer is yes)

Could you explain a little more about...?

What do you think about...?

The teacher is talking too fast. What is a polite question to ask the teacher to let him know he is talking too fast?

Excuse me, could you speak a little more slowly, please?

Could you please slow down a little?

Could you say that a little more slowly? I'm having trouble understanding you.

You couldn't understand the teacher, and you want to him to repeat what he said.

Excuse me, could you repeat that please?

I couldn't understand you. Could you say that again?

You couldn't hear what the teacher just said. You want to ask your classmate to repeat what was said. What do you say?

What did he say?

I didn't catch what he said? Did you?

Could you repeat what he just said?

You don't understand the teacher's instructions for homework or an in-class activity. What do you say?

What are we supposed to do for homework?

What are we supposed to be doing right now?

Do you understand the directions for this activity? Can you explain them to me?

You really have to go to the bathroom, and you can't wait for break time. What do you ask the teacher?

Excuse me, could I go to the bathroom please?

Could I be excused for a few minutes?

Excuse me, but I need to go to the restroom. May I be excused?

Common comments which typical college students might want to make in class (and might be tempted to make in their native language if they don't know them in English):

Comments on other students:

***Appearance**

Look at her shoes! I really like them.

He looks really good in what he's wearing today.

She looks great in pink.

She is very fashionable.

He is really cute (handsome).

She is really pretty (good looking).

I really like her glasses.

What a nice hairstyle! I really like how she has her haircut.

He looks like he exercises a lot. I think he must be very athletic. He's in great shape

***Behavior (actions)**

He is really funny! That guy makes me laugh. What a funny guy!

They are really interesting people. I like talking with them.

He is really crazy (in the positive sense). He is fun and really creative.

He is such a good listener. He really pays attention when people talk. I like that about him.

Her English is really fluent. She speaks English really well!

She is so easygoing. I like being around her.

She is really brave. She's always willing to try new activities and do things in front of the class.

She is so kind. She is always nice to everyone.

He is so polite. He always speaks in a very nice way.

What a helpful student! He really listens to what our professor asks us to do.

He is really rude! He talks when the teacher is talking, and when other students speak, he is busy sending messages on his cell phone! Terrible! What a horrible example for other students!

Comments on the teacher:

***Teaching style/Behavior:**

I really like his teaching style! I really like the activities he chooses.

He's talking too fast. I'm having trouble understanding him.

I'm not interested in this! I wish we could talk about something else.

***Appearance**

He looks tired today. I wonder if he's been working too hard.

I think he's getting angry. Maybe we'd better speak English.

Professor Clarke looks happy today. We must be excellent students!

Comments about ourselves and our feelings:

I'm feeling really excited! This class is so interesting!

I'm feeling really good today. I did some Chi-Gung (yoga) (exercise) (Tai Chi) this morning, and I had a really good breakfast.

Oh! I'm feeling (I feel) so tired today. I was up late last night studying (writing a paper), and I'm completely exhausted today.

I'm starving! Oh! I'm so hungry. I feel like I haven't eaten in days. I was so busy this morning that I didn't get to eat breakfast.

I'm feeling a little stressed about my homework. There is so much to do and so little time.

I'm a little worried about my friend. She is having a lot of problems right now.

I'm a little upset today. I did something that I wish I had not done.

I'm feeling a little puzzled. I don't know why our teacher wants us to do this.

Once students have learned the basic **process language** needed to perform basic classroom conversations, we are ready to conduct lower context conversations. There are many excellent communicative tasks that can be used to stimulate meaningful conversations between students who have some background in a foreign language. Examples would include the following:

B. Research and reporting tasks.

-Interviews with follow-up reports:

These can be simple task assignments like “Ask your partner what she does everyday and report to the class.” This task requires only use of the simple present tense and ability to use first, second and third person pronouns and verb forms. As students develop fluency, these tasks simply become more and more complex.

-Find someone who...

Brainstorm a list of sentences that match your target language goals. For example, if your objective is to teach students how to talk about their routine activities, you might create a sentence like the following: Find someone who gets up before 7:00 a.m. every morning. Find someone who usually exercises every day. Find someone who likes to stay up late at night.

Then you model the language needed to conduct the survey (the “process language”), e.g. Question: *Do you get up every day before 7:00 a.m.?* Answer: *Yes, I do.* or *No, I don't.* Then you, the trainer, model the language needed to document the survey results, e.g. *Susan gets up every morning before 7:00 a.m.*

Students then get up and circulate in the classroom asking only one question of each student at a time. Their task is to ask other students questions using the target language given and to record the results. The objective of the task is for them to find students who match the descriptions given in the “find someone who...” sentences. When they have matched a student with every description and recorded the information in writing, they are ready to discuss their results with the entire class (as a model) and then in small groups (for additional practice).

The trainer models the following process language: Question: *Who gets up every morning before 7:00 a.m.?* Answer: *Susan does.* or *Susan gets up every morning before 7:00 a.m.* Question: *Does John?* Answer modeling a possible negative response: *No. He doesn't.* or *No. John doesn't get up before 7:00 a.m.* Question modeling a possible negative question form: *He doesn't?* Answer modeling the correct response in confirmation of a negative question in English: *No. He doesn't.*

Following is an example of a “find someone who” task relating to food preferences:

Find someone who...(exercise on foods).

1. Make list of instructions for “find someone who”.

- Find someone who loves pizza.
- Find someone who hates hot dogs.
- Find someone who eats noodles every day.
- Find someone who rarely eats fried chicken.
- Find someone who...
eats meat.
hates fried food.
only eats vegetables.
eats dumplings every day.
loves raw honey.
drinks green tea.

2. Practice process language.

Do you eat meat?

Yes, I do.

No, I don't

3. Interview people and write the names of people who...

Sylvia eats meat.

No one eats dumplings everyday.

John eats noodles every day.

4. Report your results to a group of four classmates.

C. Description of hidden information activities:

These include a wide variety of situations where a student is asked to describe hidden information to another student or group of students. A typical example includes one student having a picture that the other student cannot see. The student with the picture must communicate descriptive information to the student without the picture (No peeking!). The objective is for the student with the hidden information to guide the student without the information in the creation of a near copy of the original picture.

A variation of this type of activity is when two students have slightly different versions of a similar picture and they must both ask questions to create a complete version. This variation allows students to alternate in their roles as giver and seeker of information.

Similar communication exchanges can be created using transportation schedules, guides to entertainment events, maps and other visual and textual information sources where an “information gap” can be created. One important thing is to model both the target language needed for the exercise, e.g. “tree” if the picture includes a tree, and the process language needed to exchange the information e.g. Question: *What can you see in your picture?* Answer: *I can see a tree.* or *I can see some trees.*

Following is an example of a basic hidden information activity involving a description of a classroom scene or set of objects invisible to the person who is drawing:

-Interactive Drawing to Speak Task:

In English describe to your partner what you can see from your point of view. Your partner should draw a sketch of what you describe without turning around! Now change roles and repeat. Be prepared to share your sketches and to speak in English about your experience with the class.

Examples of Process Language Needed for this Task:

Directly behind you I see...(a desk, some pictures on the wall, two people etc.)

To your left (my right) I see...

To your right (my left) I see...

Is that right?

Yes, that's good enough.

Yes, that's right.

No, it's more towards the center (or left or right).

No, it's bigger (or smaller) than that.

No, there are three chairs not two.

-20 questions and other guessing games.

20 questions is a simple guessing game which can be used in reference to a variety of topics and content areas. For example, groups of four students are formed, and one student might be asked to think of a famous leader in Chinese history. The other students then ask yes/no questions and try to guess the leader's name. Only yes/no questions may be asked, such as "Did this leader live in the 20th century?"

When one student guesses correctly, that student takes over the role of question receiver, and the game continues on like this until the trainer changes topics or moves on to another activity.

Other guessing games can be as simple as guessing what your partner did last night to as complex as guessing what a partner would do if chosen as an important political leader. The fun is that the process of guessing provides a sense of mystery which stimulates curiosity. Students then engage in meaningful communication as guesses are confirmed, negated and discussed.

D. Negotiation based tasks

-Identify the lie (lie identification is negotiated by group)

Students write and present a list of five statements on a given topic. Four of these are facts and one is a lie. The task of the "liar" is to write statements that are not obviously false and present them in a way to "fool" the other students.

The instructor models this presentation process with the entire class. Opinions are questioned and reasons asked. Students are asked to discuss and negotiate in a small group to form a consensus on which one of the instructor's statements is a lie. Following the discussion and reporting of group opinions, the instructor reveals (with some dramatic flourish) the truth.

Then, in a small group, students present their statements and other students must evaluate the truthfulness of the statements and discuss the reasons for their opinions. Following the discussion each student reveals the truth. After each student has presented, the group discusses and negotiates the question of who was the best liar and why.

Following is an example of an “identify the lie” task involving students’ childhood experiences.

Find the Lie About Our Past:

Find the lie: One of the following statements about my past is not true. Which one do you think is false and why?

1. My father was a high-school history teacher.
2. I grew up with two sisters. One was older and one was younger.
3. I enjoyed playing in the woods when I was a child.
4. My favorite toy was my bow and arrow set.
5. I once had a pig named “Brutus”.

Now write five statements about your childhood. Make sure that only one is false. Then you will tell them to a group of classmates, and they will try to guess which statement is a lie.

After your classmates guess “true” or “false”, you can ask them the reason for their choice, and discuss the reason together as a group.

Process language for this task:

Why do you think this is true?

Why do you think this is false?

I think this statement is a lie because...

I think this statement is true because...

I disagree because...

I agree with Susie because...

I partially agree with John, but I disagree with him about...

This is true!

This is the truth!

This is false!

This is a lie!

(Sometimes you can say “*I don’t know. I just have a feeling.*” Or “*It’s my intuition.*” Or “*I just have a gut feeling.*” Or “*I can’t tell you why, but I just feel this way.*”)

When everyone has had a chance to guess about which statement is the lie, you can tell them the truth.

After everyone has had a turn you will discuss and decide as a group who is the best liar and why.

-Ranking activities

In ranking activities students are asked to negotiate with one another as they create a written list of items in ranked order. Following is an example of this type of activity with some of the process language that students need to know in order to negotiate

Ranking Activity on the Professor’s Favorite Foods with Process Language:

Professor Clarke’s Favorite Foods:

(Students begin by guessing/brainstorming a list together as a class. Below is an example of a list brainstormed by Chinese college students.)

beef/steak/hamburger
hot dog
roast duck
rice
noodles
chicken
fish
cabbage
cucumber
pickles
porridge
pizza
dumplings
fried chicken (KFC)
spaghetti

The teacher then asks:

Out of this list what are my favorite foods? Rank my favorite foods. What is my most favorite food? What is my second most favorite food? What is my third most favorite food?

Process language for ranking task is modeled and practiced with gestures:

I think his (Professor Clarke's) most favorite food is _____.

I think his second most favorite food is _____.

I think his third...fourth...fifth...sixth...most favorite food is...

I disagree. I think....

I think you are wrong because...

I think we should change the ranking. I think beef should be third and rice should be first because...

The instructor then reveals a list of his six favorite foods given in an incorrect order.

Students are given the task below:

Your task: Work with a partner to rank the foods below in the correct order.

Beef

Roast duck

Rice

Fish

Asparagus

Raw Honey

Next task: With your partner join with another pair and negotiate a single list. These lists will then be written on the board for group discussion. Finally, your teacher will present the facts for comparison and discussion.

Here is the factual ranking of his food preferences:

1. Raw Honey
2. Roast duck
3. Asparagus
4. Beef
5. Rice
6. Fish

-Budgeting for values (negotiated by group).

Students create a list of their most cherished values in regards to different areas of life, e.g. love, marriage, work, parenting, learning etc. They then are given a budget, (e.g. \$100) and asked to assign a numerical value to each of their values. They must verbally negotiate with other group member in order to create consensus on how to budget for these values. Of course, this budget represents how much of their life energy they would devote to the promotion of these values, and so the activity and negotiation become meaningful and relevant to the students' lives.

-Role Plays and Creative Dramas

These plays may include a wide variety of simulated negotiations. The trainer simply creates an imaginary scenario where students must take the roles of participants in negotiations. Example roles may include buyer/seller, employer/employee, husband/wife, parent/child etc. Students may also be asked to reenact historical or literary events in support of class content based objectives. Following is an example of this type of activity.

**Role Play on Health Advice:
Practicing Hypothetical Speech**

Role 1: The Help Seeker.

You are a person who wishes to become healthier and happier. You seek the advice of a specialist in health and happiness. You want to know what the expert would do in the situations you describe.

Write five hypothetical questions like these.

Examples:

If you were me...

What would you do if you were really hungry?

What would you do if you had two hours of free time every day?

How would you become physically stronger?

How would you avoid sickness?

When would you go to bed at night?

Where would you live?

Who would you spend time with?

Role 2: The Health Expert.

You are an expert in health and happiness. You want to share your knowledge and experience with this other person. Tell them what you would do in various situations related to their questions.

Examples:

What would you do if you were really hungry?

I would find some healthy food that helped me to feel good.

What would you do if you had two hours of free time every day?

I would do some physical exercise. For example, I would go running in the park.

I would take a long nap.

I'd go shopping.

I'd spend time meditating on my breath.

What would you do to handle stress?

I would take herbs recommended by traditional Chinese medicine.

I'd spend some time outside in a natural place.

I'd sing some happy songs.

Now with a partner take turns assuming these roles and asking and answering questions. Feel free to improvise and expand the conversation as you go.

E. Process language in conversation tasks:

In regards to all of these conversation tasks, I recommend that the trainer carefully model the communicative task. This modeling should include all the language needed to engage in the **process** of the task as well as language related to the topic of discussion.

The following textually supported *Sign-to-Speak* technique is a good way to reinforce the language patterns modeled in the trainer's modeling of task performance. This focused practice in new language allows students to develop some fluency in basic language performance before being asked to engage in the **process** of a given conversation or communicative task. This step-by-step process teaches each element of a phrase and the relationship between phrases. Later these simple dialogues that can be creatively applied in language task performance through the use of personalized substitutions (some options modeled) and transformations (some options modeled).

Textually Supported *Sign-to-Speak* with Interactive Small Group Exercises:

- Target language is introduced in written form (if possible based on the age and literacy skills of learners). As an option, students may participate in brainstorming written examples in order to assess their current knowledge and performance ability. (Either of these steps may be eliminated or delayed if they are found to be counterproductive in any way. For example, in some cases, written English is so far from being phonologically correct (e.g. “sword”) that it actually misleads students in their initial pronunciation. In these cases, I think it is sometimes best to practice the pronunciation first and then introduce the written form.)
- Target language is demonstrated with the use of gesture and mime.
- Students repeat target language and corresponding physical movements.
- A complete conversation is modeled by trainer with several different students.
- Students practice conversation with a variety of partners.
- Trainer circulates to assess progress and offer corrections.
- Trainer selects students at random for capability assessment.
- Practice continues if necessary.
- Trainer models substitutions, transformations and high frequency variations of the conversation.
- Target language is demonstrated through the use of gesture and mime.
- Students may then create and perform their own versions of the basic target conversation.

3.) Text-based Task Techniques (TTT).

We introduce text associations from the very beginning of our integrated language skills training. However, as learners advance in their understanding and communicative abilities we are free to focus more on text based activities. Our text-based task techniques stimulate the natural curiosity and seeking instincts of students and give them models for ordering and prioritizing information.

A. Basic reading skills development.

Below I offer a model for developing basic reading skills. The model focuses initially on whole word recognition in meaningful contexts. As familiarity with high frequency words develops, associations with individual phonemes and letters are simultaneously made. In this way readers develop the ability to instantly recognize high-frequency words as they also learn to sound out unfamiliar words.

-Better English Reading: Whole Word to Sound Recognition Method.

Principles:

- A. Our primary connections in language are to meaningful units such as words.
- B. Words are easier to attend to and recognize than meaningless sounds.
- C. We base our learning of reading on recognition of whole words.
- D. We teach phonemic patterns in the recognition of whole words.
- E. Our learning to read process allows consistent success through simplified steps.
- F. Our reading process reflects learners' interests and ability to practice.

-Teachers Action Plan.

1.0 Meaningful Visual Units Come First.

1.1 Make the unit easy to see and recognize.

- 1.1.1 Make it big (e.g. 200 pica points)
- 1.1.2 Make it clear with an easy to read common font (e.g. Times New Roman).
- 1.1.3 Make it distinct by separating it from other unit patterns in space and time (e.g. one word per page at first).
- 1.1.4 Make it consistently recognizable (e.g. by using same font and keeping all lower case letters regardless of position in sentence.) Capitalized forms are introduced in a separate step.

- 1.2 Connect the unit to sound and meaning at the same time.
 - 1.2.1 Show the unit while saying the sound and indicating the meaning.
 - 1.2.2 Meaning may be indicated by juxtaposing an image of the meaning (e.g. photograph or drawing or mime).
 - 1.2.3 Learners demonstrate understanding of the meaning through action (e.g. miming back the meaning while saying the sound and looking at the picture or touching the picture while saying the sound and looking at the target visual unit).
- 2.0 Enhance visual unit recognition by attention to the parts, i.e. phonemic constituents. (This also begins to train phonemic recognition for later sounding out of unknown words.)
 - 2.1 Major phonemic cluster are isolated and associated with sound. (Cover the other clusters of the unit to clarify attentive focus.)
 - 2.2 Clusters are recombined to form the whole sound of the unit.
 - 2.3 Individual letters are isolated and associated with sound. (Give the sound they represent in this context rather than their names as listed in the alphabet.)
 - 2.4 Letters are recombined to form the whole sound of the unit as the meaning is reviewed.
- 3.0 Connect visual units to other visual units in logical and interesting ways.
 - 3.1 Form and read model sentences.
 - 3.2 Form meaningful and logical sentences for the learner to read.
 - 3.3 Repeat symbol-sound-meaning connections as necessary.
 - 3.4 Encourage learner to form and read sentences
- 4.0 Add punctuation and reduce font size (e.g. 24 pica points) as you present again the sentences you have practiced with the learner.
 - 4.1 Model reading the sentences you have combined into paragraphs on a page.
 - 4.2 Cue connections to visual units by indicating the units as you read.
 - 4.3 Have the learner read.
 - 4.4 Repeat symbol-sound-meaning connections as necessary.
 - 4.5 Isolate, repeat and recombine phonemic clusters as necessary.
- 5.0 Introduce capitalized visual units as in step 1.0
 - 5.1 Form model sentences are formed demonstrating the use of capitalized units.
 - 5.2 Learner creates sentenced demonstrating the use of capitalized units.
 - 5.3 Repeat steps 4.0 through 4.5.
- 6.0 Continue to develop your sentences into an extended narrative which relates to the experience and interests of learners.
- 7.0 Repeat entire process while expanding language content.
 - 7.1 Move from known to unknown.
 - 7.1.1 Choose target content that relates to learners' experience and interests.
 - 7.1.2 As you develop new narratives recycle familiar words from known narratives.

7.2 Move from concrete to abstract.

7.2.1 Focus first on words that are easy to draw, mime and visualize

7.2.2 Focus first on content words rather than articles and linking words.

7.3 Move from simple to complex.

7.3.1 Start with simple present indicative descriptive paragraphs. (Make the use of “to” plus verb one of the first steps toward complexity.)

7.3.2 Move to simple future narratives. (Just add “will”.)

7.3.3 Move to present progressive descriptions (just add “is/are” and “-ing” as meaningful visual units and include examples of both present and future functions).

7.3.4 Move to past progressive descriptions (just add “was/were” as meaningful visual units).

7.3.5 Move to simple past narratives (teach “-ed” and irregular forms as meaningful visual units.)

7.3.6 Combine simple past narratives and past progressive descriptions into engaging narratives.

7.3.7 Teach modals, e.g. would, could, should, have to, must etc.

7.3.8 Teach perfect tenses in order of frequency and complexity (e.g. teach present perfect before present perfect progressive).

For additional practice in whole word, phoneme and letter recognition I highly recommend the child friendly games located on-line at the following address: (pbskids.org). This site is sponsored by the Public Broadcasting System which is a non-profit organization partially supported by the U.S. government. The games are well designed from a pedagogical perspective, and they are very engaging and fun for kids.

B. *Write to Speak* scaffold for class discussions and partner activities.

As students advance in their English speaking skills, we expand their capabilities by asking them to engage in more and more challenging tasks. When we are asking students to respond to novel questions and tasks, we do well to support their understanding by presenting the questions and task instructions in written form.

Also, if a question is intended to be formative (ability expanding) for our students, then we should consider giving them the time and means to formulate high quality responses. Rather than asking a question and only stimulating the off-the-cuff remarks of a few quick responders, we should consider engaging and challenging the **entire** class with the following technique:

-Trainer asks a question orally and then presents the question in written form.

-Trainer models some language related to the process of answering the question in oral and written form.

-Students take out paper and pens and begin to outline and write their responses. They may consult dictionaries and other references as a means of improving the quality of their responses and the learning value of the activity.

-Trainer circulates offering pointers and answering student questions.

-When every student has written a response, students present their ideas out loud to a partner without consulting their paper (This exercises recall of new language forms and promotes the student's ability to paraphrase and improvise. Also, if the objective of the activity is the enhancement of a discussion with a partner then the activity may end here.)

-Otherwise, having carefully reflected, organized and practiced their responses, students have truly earned the "right to speak" to the class as a whole.

-The trainer selects students to share their responses with the group and additional discussion may follow.

***C. Reason to Read* written text comprehension demonstration technique:**

-Trainer selects texts with an eye for students' interests and developmental needs.

-Trainer models "skimming" of a text and gives pointers on guessing meaning based on context, font size and type, and non-textual features.

-Trainer models the writing of gist statements.

-Ss. brainstorm other gist statement options.

-Trainer models the writing of guiding questions.

-Ss. brainstorm other guiding questions.

-Ss. scan text for answers to their most interesting guiding questions.

-Trainer models discussion of answers with entire group.

-Group divides into fours to continue discussion.

-Trainer models the writing of an outline of the text.

-Ss. emulate basic model and expand.

-Trainer models the writing of a summary.

-Ss. emulate basic model and expand.

-Ss. writing is assessed by peers in groups of two using a trainer generated rubric. (There is a rubric in the appendix section on tools for assessment which you may use for this purpose. It is entitled “E. Rubric for the Evaluation of Written Assignments”.)

-Trainer circulates to assess participation and progress and address questions within a small group format.

-Written samples may be collected for additional detailed assessment by trainer.

Following is an example of the technique applied to the study of early American history:

Reason to Read or How to Read for a Reason:

1. Quickly skim (scan quickly) a unit of text.
2. Guess what the text is about, the topic, e.g.

General Topic:

Early American History relating to the colony of Virginia around the time of 1676.

Specific Topic: *p. 38-39*

Bacon’s Rebellion

Specific Topic: *p. 40-41*

How the rebellion happened, the background and causes.

3. Write a few guiding questions:

Examples:

p.38-39

What was Bacon’s rebellion?

What was Nathaniel Bacon like?

Why did Bacon create this rebellion?

p. 40-41

What was another different report about Bacon’s death?

Why were slaves, servants and many white frontiersmen ready to follow Bacon?

What was the relationship between Bacon and the native people (“Indians”) of Virginia?

4. Slowly scan for a particular purpose: To answer your own very interesting questions.
5. Write the answers to your own questions.

Examples:

p. 38

Bacon's rebellion was a rebellion of white frontiersmen supported by slaves and servants. It happened in Virginia in 1676.

Bacon was about 35 years old, pensive, dark-haired, tall and slender and prone to an atheistic philosophy.

6. Now, if you want more information, you can silently read the entire text (guessing the meaning of words from context).
7. Now write a statement about the "gist" or essence of this text.

Gist (Summary) of text on page 38-39:

The gist of this text is that a rebellion, known as Bacon's Rebellion occurred in 1676 in the British colony of Virginia. The text describes the rebellion and the leader of the rebellion, Nathaniel Bacon.

Gist of text (summary) on pages 40-41:

This text describes the process of the rebellion and some important things that happened to Bacon. It also explores the relationships between the different classes in Virginia and their roles in the rebellion.

8. If you really want to deeply understand all the parts of the text and how they relate to the text as a whole, then it's time to make a written outline.

This will help you more deeply understand and remember the text. You can look begin looking up words in the dictionary if you have not yet guessed their meaning from context.

Here's an example of an outline:

- A. Bacon's Rebellion
 - 1.) Occurred in 1676
 - 2.) Was led by Nathaniel Bacon
 - a. Around 35 years old
 - b. Dark haired, tall and slender
 - c. Described as an atheist

- 3.) Results of the rebellion
 - a. The governor had to flee the capital
 - b. England sent 1,000 soldiers to suppress
 - c. Bacon and many associates were killed
 - d. The rebellion was crushed

- B. Causes and process of the rebellion
 1. Causes
 - a. Widespread poverty
 - b. Bacon's desire for personal power
 - c. A bad crop

 2. Process of rebellion
 - a. Bacon elected to legislature
 - b. Bacon organizes militia
 - c. Bacon attacks Native Americans
 - d. Bacon attacks capital
 - e. Bacon gets sick and dies
 - f. The rebellion is crushed by British troops

D. Reason to Write Composition Technique:

Here's a detailed description of a technique that may be applied to a variety of written tasks. In order to scaffold the writing process, we initially choose topics that are familiar to students. In this way we combine a familiar topic with what may be an unfamiliar process: writing a composition in a foreign language. We also choose topics that have emotional value for students. In this way we channel the energy we all naturally have for expressing ideas we really care about. This adds motivation and focus for what otherwise might be an overly challenging task. Of course the teacher models the process and creates scaffolds (such as basic introduction and sequencing process language) for initial student writing.

Following are some corresponding procedures:

-Trainer and students create a model composition together including:

- a. A simple core message that has some emotional value for the group.
- b. An outline of key points to cover.
- c. An outline of further research to be done if necessary.
- d. Credible narratives to support core message if possible.

e. Analogies based on common concrete experiences to clarify more abstract points.

-Students emulate and expand on the model.

-Assessment may include any and all of the following participants: self, peer, trainer and extended community.

E. Using creative drama to enhance understanding of the written word. (I highly recommend reading “Words Come Alive” by Joan Robinson (2006). This book provides a detailed blueprint for using drama based techniques as a way of enhancing reading comprehension.)

-Dramatic performance related to texts. Following is an example from a lesson on American history:

Role-Play: We will pretend to be people from the Colony of Virginia in 1676.

You will pretend to be newspaper reporters. Your job is to write a story about Nathaniel Bacon and his rebellion in Virginia in 1676. You are very lucky to be able to interview Nathaniel Bacon in person and ask whatever questions you find important.

Step 1:

Write five questions, based on your reading of the text for Nathaniel Bacon.

Examples:

Why did you want to lead a rebellion?

Why did so many people support you so quickly?

Did you suffer greatly during the rebellion? In what ways?

Step 2:

Your teacher will play the role of Nathaniel Bacon and you get to ask your questions.

Step 3:

Role-play with a partner. One person will be Nathaniel Bacon and the other will be a newspaper reporter. Ask your questions and discuss. Then change roles and do another role-play.

You will pretend to be newspaper reporters. Your job is to write a story about Governor William Berkeley and his governance of Virginia as it relates to the rebellion. You are very lucky to be able to interview Governor William Berkeley in person and ask whatever questions you find important.

Step 1:

Write five questions, based on your reading of the text for Governor William Berkeley.

Examples:

What do think of the idea of “leveling” or sharing more of the land and wealth with a larger number of people?

What do you think is the most important duty of the governor?

Why does the government want to suppress the rebellion as quickly as possible?

What have been some of the results of the rebellion?

Why do you want to protect Native American land rights?

Step 2:

Your dedicated teacher will play the role of the Virginia Governor, William Berkeley and you get to ask your questions.

Step 3:

Role-play with a partner. One person will be Governor Berkeley and the other will be a newspaper reporter. Ask your questions and discuss. Then change roles and do another role-play.

Homework (play?):

Make an appointment to meet with a partner for at least an hour. You will first role-play a meeting between Governor William Berkeley and Nathaniel Bacon. In the role play you will attempt to negotiate a truce agreement and compromise to peacefully end the rebellion. Think carefully before beginning, and write down what you see happening, how you feel and what you want. Do this from the perspective of both roles:

Examples:

From Bacon’s Perspective:

I see many poor people without land who are starving and desperate. I feel angry that our Virginia leaders are not willing to help with this problem. I want to seize Indian lands for myself and other colonists. I want to be in charge of an independent Virginia.

From Berkeley’s Perspective:

I see the order and prosperity of our colony being threatened. I feel angry that Bacon is not respecting the legal authorities of Virginia and the King. I want Bacon to stop organizing the people to take Indian lands and rebel against my authority.

Each person should play both roles in two separate role plays. Then make a written record of some of your favorite parts of the dialogue. Practice this so that you can perform it without looking at a paper. This will be presented at our next class meeting.

-Teaching in Role

- a. Interviews-(With the teacher acting the role of a character from a reading.)
- b. Improvised dialogues-(With the teacher acting the role of a character to model an improvised dialogue with a student.)

-Student performances

- a. Repeating and Exploring Key lines.
- b. Repeating and Exploring Key scenes
- c. Creating imaginary spaces and objects related to particular scenes.
- d. Dramatic presentation of narratives.

**Part 4: APPENDIX OF TOOLS FOR TEACHERS:
(Assessment Tools, Examples of Lesson and Class
Plans, and More Examples of Learning Tasks and
Process Language)**

**1.) Assessment Tools: Formats and Rubrics for Responding to Student
Participation and Performance.**

A. Format for Feedback on EFL Classroom Performances.

Observation Based Feedback:

Constructive Responses to EFL Classroom Performances.

(This format is loosely based on the “Critical Response Process” developed by Liz Lerman)

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Step One: Audience shares actual observations:

The audience shares **actual observations** with the performer. Actual observations include **only** what the audience members **sensed** and **felt** during the performance. Outer actual observations include what we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, smell with our noses and touch with our skin. Inner actual observations include sensations of temperature change within the body (including sweating and shivering), sensations around the rate and depth of breathing, feelings of muscular tension or relaxation, and all other sensations which may be located at a specific point within the body.

For example, “I saw you holding the poster up for the class to see.” or “I heard you say ‘Let’s all speak English’.” or “When you showed us that picture of the snake I began to sweat.”

Write below at least three actual observations that you made during this performance.

Step Two: Performer asks audience specific observation-based questions:

This is an opportunity for the performer to gather observation-based feedback. Questions may relate to all specific observations, both actual and virtual (actual=relating to sensations and feelings and virtual=relating to thoughts and ideas).

For example, questions could include the following: “Did you feel tightness in your bodies when I asked you to sing that song?” or “Could you hear my voice when I was talking?” or “What thoughts came to your mind when I showed you the picture of the apple?”

Record at least three questions asked by this performer to the audience.

Step Three: Audience asks performer kind and positive questions:

Here the audience can ask questions about the creative choices of the performer in a kind and positive way. For example, we can ask “Why did you choose to speak at the volume you did?” rather than “Why did you speak so softly?” For another example, we can ask “What percentage of the time were you looking at the floor?” rather than “Why do you look at the floor all the time?”

Write below at least three examples of kind and positive questions for the performer.

Step Four: Performer asks audience for suggestions related to specific creative choices:

At this point the performer may ask for suggestions related to the audience’s non-evaluative questions, e.g. “I would like to hear suggestions relating to the volume of my voice during this presentation.” or “Please give me your suggestions regarding my use of gaze and eye contact.” The performer may also ask for other specific suggestions relating to other areas of interest to the performer, e.g. “I wonder if you could give me some suggestions relating to how to involve the audience more with this performance.”

Note below at least three examples of requests for suggestions made by this performer.

CATEGORIES:	COULD BE GREAT! (79% or less)	WILL BE GREAT! (80-89%)	IS GREAT! (90-100%)
Topic: <i>(Interesting?)</i>	Topic is not very interesting or not appropriate to assignment.	Topic is interesting and is appropriate to assignment and academic setting.	Topic is extremely interesting and is very appropriate in all senses.
Logic: <i>(Makes sense?)</i>	Words lack connection to ideas or the world we sense.	Words connect well to common sense and to the function of the presentation.	Words connect well in all senses and are especially appropriate to the mentality of the audience.
Preparation: <i>(Ready?)</i>	Unprepared and/or uses no multimedia, e.g. chalkboard, audio/video recordings and Power Points	Organized and prepared with some visual aids such as maps, posters and computer based imagery	Organized and prepared to delight the audience, e.g. with three dimensional and interactive demonstrations
Voice: <i>(Understandable and Appropriate?)</i>	Voice is too soft to be understandable or too loud to be polite.	Voice is appropriate in volume and speed, and pronunciation is easily understandable.	Voice is correct in all senses and enhances meaning through pause and shifts in volume and speech rate.
Posture and Movement: <i>(Useful and Communicative?)</i>	Posture or movements threaten credibility of the speaker, e.g. slouched, frozen or spastic.	Posture and movements enhance credibility of the speaker.	Posture and movements enhance credibility of the speaker and clarify and enhance the meaning of the presentation.
Connection with Audience: <i>(Interactive?)</i>	There is little eye contact and/or	Eye contact is made and audience	Connections are made on multiple levels including

B. Rubric for the Evaluation of Oral Presentations

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C. Rubric for the Evaluation of Dialogues and Creative Drama

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CATEGORIES:	COULD BE GREAT! (79% or less)	WILL BE GREAT! (80-89%)	IS GREAT! (90-100%)
Dialogue: <i>(Understandable and appropriate?)</i>	Dialogue is not understandable or not appropriate to assignment.	Dialogue is understandable, grammatically correct and appropriate.	Correct and well pronounced dialogue evokes evidence of strong emotion in audience, e.g. laughter, tears, trembling.
Interaction: <i>(Interplay and improvisation?)</i>	Actors show little awareness of others' movements and cues and they hesitate to improvise.	Actors show awareness of others' cues and movements and are able to improvise when necessary.	Actors connect fully with one another in creative and interesting ways that enhance the meaning and power of the performance.
Voice: <i>(Understandable and Appropriate?)</i>	Voices are too soft to be understandable or too loud to be polite.	Voices are appropriate in volume and speed and intonation is used for dramatic effect.	Voice use is appropriate in every respect and contributes to the feeling and meaning of the drama.

Posture and Movement: <i>(Useful and Communicative?)</i>	Posture or movements exclude the audience or do not match the emotions and actions of the character portrayed.	Posture and movements match the emotions and actions of the character portrayed, and the blocking contributes to the beauty and meaning of the drama.	Posture, movements and blocking not only contribute to the beauty and meaning of the drama, but also show evidence of a playful, creative and innovative spirit.
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D. Rubric for the Evaluation of Class Participation

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CATEGORIES:	COULD BE GREAT! (79% or less)	WILL BE GREAT! (80-89%)	IS GREAT! (90-100%)
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English Use: (Essential!)	Almost always uses English in class	Always uses English in class	Always uses English in class and often uses English with classmates outside of class
Participation in Class Activities: (Active!)	Participates in all activities	Actively participates in all activities	Actively participates in all activities and encourages and helps other students to do likewise
Communication: (Attentive!)	Somewhat involved in class discussions; sometimes turns to face speaker and makes eye contact	Participates in class discussions; usually turns to face speaker and makes eye contact; adopts upright and alert posture	Actively participates in class discussions while respecting participation of others; listens actively (back-channeling) and attentively
Preparation: (Ready!)	Prepared for class by reading and completing assignments	Prepared for class and has interesting questions or relevant points to raise about assignments	Fully prepared and has done additional research or exercises based on own initiative

E. Rubric for the Evaluation of Written Assignments

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CATEGORIES:	COULD BE GREAT! (79% or less)	WILL BE GREAT! (80-89%)	IS GREAT! (90-100%)
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Topic: <i>(Interesting?)</i>	Topic is not very interesting or not appropriate to assignment.	Topic is interesting and is appropriate to assignment and academic setting.	Topic is extremely interesting and is very appropriate in all senses.
Logic: <i>(Makes sense?)</i>	Words lack connection to ideas typical of the language speaking community and/or the world we sense.	Words connect well to ideas, to common sense and to the objectives of the writer.	Words connect well in all senses and examples given are especially appropriate to background of the target audience.
Editing: <i>(Ready to read?)</i>	Text is apparently unedited, and has many easily correctable errors.	Text shows evidence of careful editing; there are some mistakes but no easily correctable errors.	Text shows evidence of careful editing and near mastery of necessary language skills.
Effectiveness: <i>(Understandable and successful in meeting the writer's objectives?)</i>	Writer's objectives are either unclear or basically unattained.	Writer's objectives are clear and partially attained. Language register and metaphors may not be appropriate to the target audience.	Writer's objectives are clear and fully attained. Apt metaphors and concrete analogies ground the reader's full understanding.
Aesthetics: <i>(Balance? Creativity? Pleasurable and joyful reading process for the reader?)</i>	Readers report a feeling of imbalance or discomfort related to the construction of sentences or paragraphs.	Readers enjoy a balance of sentence length and type. Paragraphs correspond well to units of meaning.	Readers find the text well balanced in all senses, and they enjoy evidence of a creative and playful spirit in the writer.

2.) Combining *Better English* Techniques in a *FLOW* Based Lesson Plan:

Following is a very basic level lesson plan designed for primary school students. Because the students are true beginners, we focus on high-context embodied techniques while adding in a bit of conversation, writing and singing. In the actual performance of this lesson we encourage adaptation and improvisation in accordance with *FLOW* principles and the actualities of the teaching situation.

***FLOW* Lesson Plan**
for Primary School Integrated Language Skills Training: Module
One
(Focusing on Embodied Training Techniques
Using TPR and Textually Supported Sign-to-Speak)

Designed by: Benjamin Clarke and Zhou Ling

Objectives:	<p>Task-based:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students demonstrate understanding through physical response to the following directives: stand up, sit down; attention, at ease; turn left, turn right, about face; come here/go away, go there, go to the door, draw, read, chant, sing. 2. Students recognize and physically and verbally respond (in the affirmative to simple questions of ability “Can you touch the sun?”-“Yes, I can.” 3. Students recognize and physically respond to directives using the following words: lyrics, rhythm, sing as they learn to sing a simple song, “Rain rain go away”. 4. Students draw images of the moon and sun and write the corresponding texts “moon” and “sun” beside the images.
	<p>Target language forms:</p> <p>English Class Content: (I can....Can you...?) + touch, look, listen, go, come, fold, draw, write, sing, come here, go away</p> <p>Art Content: rain sun</p> <p>Music Content: lyric, rhythm</p> <p>P. E. Content: attention, at ease; come here, go there, go back, turn left, turn right, turn around, face forward,</p>
Instruction Time	35 minutes
Students	Class 1, 2, 3 Grade 1

Teaching Materials	Essential: paper, pencils, blackboard, chalk Optional: posters, Computer based images and audio, song recordings etc.
Overview of Activities in Relation to Core Academic Subjects	Activity 1: Body Moving, Question/Answer on ability. (P.E.) Activity 2: Draw, Read, Write, Move, Question/Answer on ability. (Art) Activity 3: Song Time, Question/Answer on ability. (Music)
Visual Documentation of Ss Skill Development	Notebook page divided in two with picture of moon and text on one side and picture and text of sun on the other
Song/ Chant	Rain, Rain, Go Away Rain, rain, go away. Come again some other day. Little Johnny wants to play. Rain, rain, go away.

Training Procedures with Script and Action Descriptions:

(Trainers may and should vary and improvise upon these scripts depending on their particular classroom situations. As long as they are in accordance with the basic principles of FLOW, trainers are encouraged to flow with their own creativity and innovations. In order to encourage student confidence and motivation for learning, the pace of the lesson should always be based upon the fluent performance of language based tasks by students.)

Step I: Greetings & Physical Response to Language.

(Initial action directives have already been taught and here are being reviewed and used to create a pattern of student obedience and participation.)

T: Stand up. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: Hello, I'm Miss Zhou. Students: Hello, Miss Zhou.
T: Sit down! Students: (Students respond with action)

T: Stand up. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: I'm Miss Zhou. Hi! Students: Hi, Miss Zhou.
T: How are you? Students: Fine, thank you. And you?
T: I'm fine, too. Sit down! Students: (Students respond with action)

T: (Here T. begins to model new target language/actions. In this activity a more advanced English speaker is assisting the teaching in order to model both verbal and physical responses to language.)

I can stand at attention. I can stand at ease. Can you?

Model: Yes, I can. (Model responds with action.) (Model does action.)

T: Stand up. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: Attention. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: At ease. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: Sit down! Students: (Students respond with action)

(Trainer repeats action/language pattern as much as necessary to ensure that all students understand. Students who grasp the pattern more quickly may be pointed out as models to other students.)

T: I can turn left. Can you?

Model: Yes, I can. (Model responds with action.)

T: Stand up. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: Turn left. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: Sit down! Students: (Students respond with action)

T: I can turn right. Can you?

Model: Yes, I can. (Model responds with action.)

T: Stand up. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: Turn right. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: Sit down! Students: (Students respond with action)

T: I can turn around. Can you? Model: Yes, I can. (Model responds with action.)

T: Stand up. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: About face. Students: (Students respond with action)
T: Sit down! Students: (Students respond with action)

T: I can turn left, turn right, turn around. Can you? Model : Yes, I can.

T: Turn left. Students: (Students respond with action) (4 times)
T: Turn right. Students: (Students respond with action) (4 times)
T: About face. Students: (Students respond with action) (4 times)
T: Sit down! Students: (Students respond with action)

(T. then repeats questions given to model but this time to students. Individuals who respond correctly are pointed out or brought forward as models. If no teaching

assistant is available, trainer may hold “can you” questions until the end of this section and then demonstrate the question and answer process with hand gesture dialogues using different tones to represent questioner and responder. Also the trainer may find more advanced students able to serve as models, and in this case, the advanced Ss. may serve in the role of model.)

Step II Draw, Read, Write, Move

Draw

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can draw rain.

I can draw “rain”. (T draws “cloud and rain” on the blackboard.)

I can draw rain. Can you draw rain? Now, show me your paper and your pencils.

Now you draw rain.

Students: (Perform the action of drawing rain.)

T: You can draw rain.

T: Can you draw rain? Yes or no? (Ask model. Model responds. Ask a S. S. responds.)

Students: Yes, I can draw rain.

T: Good.

T: Look at me-look at me. Look at me- look at me.

I can draw a “sun”. (T draws “sun” on the blackboard.)

I can draw a “sun”. Can you draw a “sun”? Now, show me your paper and your pencils. Let’s draw a sun.

Students: (Draw sun.)

T: You can draw a sun.

T: Can you draw a sun? Yes or no? (Ask model. Model responds. Ask a S. S. responds.)

Students: Yes, I can draw a sun.

T: Good. (Showing thumbs up gesture.)

Read

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

T: I can read “rain”. Rain. Can you read it?

Let’s read it one by one.

(Students respond individually.)

Let’s read it together.

(Ss. respond in chorus.)

T: Ah, good. You can read “rain”.

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can read “sun”. Sun. Can you read it?

Let’s read it one by one.

Let's read it together.

T: Ah, good. You can read "sun".

Write T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can write "rain". Can you write "rain"?

(Students write "rain".)

T: Great! You can write "rain."

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can write "sun". Can you write "sun"?

(Students write "sun".)

T: Ah, good. You can write "sun".

Move T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can raise my hand. I can touch my arms. And this is the rain gesture. Can you do this?

(Students act out "rain" gesture)

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can raise my hand. I can touch my arms. And this is the sun gesture. Can you do this? (Students do "sun" gesture)

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can raise my hand. I can touch my arms. Can you come here? Thank you. (S. comes here)

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can raise my hand. I can touch my arms. Can you go back? (S. goes back to his/her seat.)

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can raise my hand. I can touch my arms. Can you come here and then go back? (Students come here then go back.)

Step III Song Time

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can read "Here, here come here. Back, back, go back." Can you read it?

(Students read "Here, here come here. Back, back, go back.".)

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can read "Little Johnny". Can you read it?

(Students read "Little Johnny".)

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)

I can read “wants to play” .Can you read it?
(Students read “wants to play”.)

T: Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. (Using associated gestures.)
I can sing “Rain, Rain, Go Away” .Can you sing it?
Now let’s learn this song “Rain, Rain, Go Away”. Here are the lyrics. Let’s say the lyrics together.

Rain, rain, go away.
Come again some other day.
Little Johnny wants to play.
Rain, rain, go away.

(Students and T. say the lyrics.)

T: Let me show you the rhythm. Ba-Ba-Ba-Ba.....

T: Let me show you the rhythm with claps. Ba-Ba-Ba-Ba.....+ claps

T: Now let’s do the rhythm together. Are you ready? (Students respond with action)-One-Two-Three-Go

(Students and Teacher do the rhythm.)

T: I can sing this song. Can you sing it? Let’s learn the song. Listen carefully.
(Students watch the multimedia song presentation. T. organizes students with rhythmic claps.)

T: Let’s sing the song together. Are you ready? Rain, rain... (Students respond with singing and actions.).

3). Framework for a *Better English* College Conversation Class Semester Plan.

The following document is intended to serve as a kind of general framework for the flow of activities in a college level conversation class. The standards and objectives are based on the Chinese Ministry of Education's guidelines for the development of oral skills in English for college students.

The initial lessons are intended as a review for more advanced students. This review helps to ensure confidence and proficiency for all class members in basic classroom communication tasks. Movement forward in the class curriculum should of course be based on fluent performance of task objectives by the vast majority of students.

The framework of course needs to be adapted to the needs of particular students. A survey of student interests and abilities can help the trainer flesh out the plan in greater detail. Also, reviews and variations of activities may be necessary as the class proceeds and ongoing student performance is assessed.

Weeks/ Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Methods	Homework
<p>(Chapter references are not applicable to initial language learning goals and objectives.)</p> <p>Week 1</p>	<p>(Basic goals apply to all classes and are prerequisites for effective work in more advanced academic content areas. For advanced classes these will mainly be review and will be covered more quickly.)</p> <p>A. Develop communicative fluency in basic classroom functions.</p>	<p>(Objectives are described in terms of functions and tasks that students perform.)</p> <p>1. Introduce self and others. Respond to introductions.</p> <p>a. Learn others students' names.</p> <p>b. Learn other student's hobbies and interests.</p>	<p>Textually Supported Sign to Speak with Interactive Small Group Exercises:</p> <p>-Target language is introduced in written form. As an option students may participate in brainstorming to assess current knowledge and performance ability.</p> <p>-Target language is demonstrated through the use of gesture and mime.</p> <p>-Students practice target language and corresponding physical movements.</p> <p>-A complete conversation is modeled by teacher with several different students.</p> <p>-Students practice conversation with a variety of partners.</p> <p>-Teacher circulates to assess progress and offer corrections.</p> <p>-Teacher selects students at random for capability assessment.</p> <p>-Practice continues if necessary.</p> <p>-Teacher models substitutions and high frequency variations of conversation.</p> <p>-Target language is demonstrated through the use of gesture and mime.</p>	<p>Repeat to Create© Conversation Exercise:</p> <p>Students form practice pairs and repeat conversations outside of class.</p> <p>Students create and perform their own variations of conversations. (Typically students will research and write out these variations prior to rehearsal. The teacher may collect these as another opportunity for assessment)</p> <p>Students meet with members of their "quad" (group of four) to perform pre-modeled and self-created conversations and be assessed by peers.</p> <p>Random groups will be selected by teacher to perform for entire class and allow for teacher assessment and group feedback. Feedback will be based on the <i>Critical Response</i></p>

<p>Week 2</p>	<p>A. Develop communicative fluency in basic classroom functions</p>	<p>2. Speak English in and about the classroom:</p> <p>a. Name and interact with objects in the classroom.</p>	<p>Total Physical Response (TPR) instructions with student to student follow-up practice:</p> <p>- Teacher models various common classroom actions with various common classroom objects. Teacher gives students actions instructions and students respond to commands through actions.</p> <p>-Teacher introduces and models the game of “Master and Robot”.</p> <p>-Students take turns in each role enjoying both speaking and listening practice. Creativity and innovation modeled and encouraged. Respectful boundaries modeled and explicitly requested.</p> <p>Optional Micro-TPR: Draw to Write Exercise.</p> <p>Optional Game of “Simon Says”.</p>	<p><i>Process</i> and will be explicitly taught and modeled by teacher.</p> <p>Mirror to Movement© Activity Exercise.</p> <p>Quads make appointments to repeat the activity in small groups.</p> <p>Group members individually brainstorm and research to create new variations. (Written reports may be assigned and collected by teacher for additional assessment and student writing practice.)</p> <p>Group members meet to perform and assess each member’s progress.</p> <p>Teacher may select groups to perform innovative variations.</p>
<p>Week 3</p>		<p>b. Gain attention politely and ask questions of students and teachers.</p>	<p>Textually Supported Sign to Speak with Interactive Small Group Practice: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>	<p>Teacher may request a spokesperson’s assessment of group activity.</p> <p>Repeat to Create Conversation Exercise: (See preceding introduction of</p>

<p>Week 4</p>	<p>A. Develop communicative fluency in basic classroom functions.</p>	<p>c. Greet classmates in variety of ways and inquire about recent and future activities.</p>	<p>Textually Supported <i>Sign to Speak with Interactive Small Group Practice:</i> (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>	<p>category for detailed description.)</p> <p><i>Repeat to Create Conversation Exercise:</i> (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>
<p>Week 5</p>		<p>d. Use conversational strategies to initiate, maintain and close a conversation.</p>	<p>Textually Supported <i>Sign to Speak with Interactive Small Group Practice:</i> (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>	

Week 6		<p>1. Making contacts and appointments:</p> <p>a. Exchange phone numbers and e-mail addresses.</p> <p>b. Tell time.</p> <p>c. Leave phone messages</p>		
Week 7	<p>B. Develop communicative fluency in high-frequency, basic* conversational functions. (*Relative to the Chinese MOE <i>College English Curriculum Requirements</i> for Speaking.)</p>	<p>2. Get around:</p> <p>a. Give and get directions.</p> <p>b. Give and get instructions while driving.</p> <p>c. Get travel info.</p> <p>3. Shop:</p> <p>a. Inquire about prices.</p> <p>b. Discuss and negotiate prices.</p> <p>c. Ask for a bill and about payment options.</p>	<p>Textually Supported Sign to Speak with Interactive Small Group Practice: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>	<p>Repeat to Create Conversation Exercise: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>
Week 8				

<p>Week 9</p>		<p>1. Practice key elements of harmonious communication. (Based on Rosenberg's <i>NVC</i> Model).</p> <p>a. Share observations.</p> <p>b. Discuss feelings.</p> <p>c. Make requests</p> <p>d. Practice empathic listening:</p>	<p>Textually Supported <i>Sign to Speak</i> with Interactive Small Group Practice: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>	<p>Repeat to Create Conversation Exercise: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>
<p>Week 10</p>	<p>C. Develop communicative fluency in high-frequency, intermediate* conversational functions. (*Relative to the Chinese MOE <i>College English Curriculum Requirements</i> for Speaking.)</p>	<p>2. Tell a personal story.</p> <p>3. Describe future plans in terms of wishes, hopes and obligations.</p> <p>4. Politely express opinions, agreement disagreement and partial agreement.</p>	<p>Tell to Remember mnemonic narrative technique based on <i>TPR Storytelling</i>® but adding a storyboard creation step and <i>Sign to Speak</i> dialogue to scaffold the learning process.</p>	<p>Repeat to Create Conversation Exercise: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>

<p>Week 11</p>			<p><i>Reason to Read</i> written text comprehension demonstration technique:</p> <p>-Teacher selects texts with an eye for student interests and developmental needs.</p> <p>-Teacher models scanning of a text and gives pointers on guessing meaning based on context and non-textual features.</p> <p>-Teacher models the writing of gist statements.</p>	
<p>Week 12</p>	<p>D. Develop communicative fluency in high-frequency, advanced*/academic conversational functions. (*Relative to the Chinese MOE <i>College English Curriculum Requirements</i> for Speaking.)</p>	<p>1. Identify the gist and major points of extended written dialogues and reports.</p> <p>a. Write gist statements.</p> <p>b. Write guiding questions in order to read for a purpose.</p> <p>c. Scan for specific information.</p> <p>c. Identify implications based on explicit statements.</p> <p>d. Write summaries and outlines of texts.</p>	<p>-Students brainstorm other gist statement options.</p> <p>-Teacher models the writing of guiding questions.</p> <p>-Student brainstorm other guiding questions.</p> <p>-All scan text for answers to guiding questions.</p> <p>-Teacher models discussion of answers with entire group.</p> <p>-Group divides into fours to continue discussion.</p> <p>-Teacher models the writing of an outline of the text.</p> <p>-Students emulate basic model and expand.</p> <p>-Teacher models the writing of a summary.</p>	<p>Students repeat in-class techniques at home with assigned texts and texts of particular interest to them.</p>

<p>Week 13</p>	<p>D. Develop communicative fluency in high-frequency, advanced*/academic conversational functions. (*Relative to the Chinese MOE <i>College English Curriculum Requirements</i> for Speaking.)</p>	<p>1. Identify the gist and major points of extended written dialogues and reports.</p> <p>a. Write gist statements.</p> <p>b. Write guiding questions in order to read for a purpose.</p> <p>c. Scan for specific information.</p> <p>c. Identify implications based on explicit statements.</p> <p>d. Write summaries and outlines of texts.</p> <p>2. Identify the gist and major points of extended spoken dialogues and reports.</p>	<p>-Students emulate basic model and expand.</p> <p>-Students writing is assessed by peers in groups of two using teacher generated rubric.</p> <p>-Teacher circulates to assess participation and progress and address questions within small group format.</p> <p>-Written samples may be collected for additional detailed assessment.</p> <p>Reason to Listen spoken text comprehension demonstration technique: (See preceding introduction of <i>Reason to Read</i> written text comprehension demonstration technique and substitute “spoken text” for “written text”.</p>	<p>Students repeat in-class techniques at home with assigned texts and texts of particular interest to them.</p> <p>Students repeat in-class techniques at home with assigned texts and texts of particular interest to them.</p>
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Week 14		<p>3. Discuss academic topics with peers.</p> <p>a. Demonstrate understanding.</p> <p>b. Seek clarification or elaboration.</p> <p>c. Ask for examples and analogies.</p> <p>d. Question information sources.</p>	<p>Textually Supported Sign to Speak with Interactive Small Group Practice: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p> <p>Write to Reason Composition Technique:</p> <p>-Teacher and students create a model composition together including:</p> <p>a. A simple core message that has some emotional value for the group.</p> <p>b. An outline of key points to cover.</p> <p>c. An outline of further research to be done if necessary.</p> <p>d. Credible narratives to support core message if possible.</p>	<p>Repeat to Create Conversation Exercise: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>
Week 15	<p>D. Develop communicative fluency in high-frequency, advanced*/academic conversational functions. (*Relative to the Chinese MOE <i>College English Curriculum Requirements</i> for Speaking.)</p>	<p>4. Make academic presentations.</p> <p>a. Present an effective and concise summary.</p> <p>b. Present an academic thesis paper at an academic conference.</p> <p>c. Write an article for submission to a professional journal.</p> <p>d. Participate in a debate on an academic subject.</p>	<p>e. Analogies based on common concrete experiences to clarify more abstract points.</p> <p>-Students emulate and expand on model.</p> <p>-Assessment may include any and all of the following participants: self, peer, teacher and extended community.</p>	<p>Students expand on in-class writing on topics assigned by the teacher or of particular interest to them.</p>

<p>Week 16</p>	<p>D. Develop communicative fluency in high-frequency, advanced*/academic conversational functions. (*Relative to the Chinese MOE <i>College English Curriculum Requirements</i> for Speaking.)</p>	<p>5. Apply for jobs in academic settings:</p> <p>a. Research prospects.</p>	<p>Reason to Read written text comprehension demonstration technique: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>	<p>Students repeat in-class techniques at home with assigned texts and texts of particular interest to them.</p>
<p>Week 17</p>	<p></p>	<p>b. Write CV or resume.</p> <p>c. Write general and tailored cover letters.</p> <p>d. Conduct interviews.</p>	<p>Write to Reason Composition Technique: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p> <p>Textually Supported Sign to Speak with Interactive Small Group Practice: (See preceding introduction of category for detailed description.)</p>	<p>Students expand upon in-class work to create real CVs, resumes and general and tailored cover letters.</p> <p>Students arrange practice interviews with peers, mentors and potential employers.</p>

Weeks/ Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Methods	Homework
	<p><i>(Use the blank space provided below to brainstorm some ideas for your own class plan!)</i></p>			

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4). More Examples of English Language Learning Tasks.

A. Make a name card with a symbol and introduce yourself:

A basic “get-to-know-you” task which can be used as an icebreaker for the first day of an English language class for intermediate to advanced learners.

**Language Learning Task:
Make a name card with a symbol and introduce yourself.**

Name:

What do you like to be called in English class?

Do you have an English nickname?

Examples:

Jane

Robert

Susan

John

Do you prefer to use your Chinese family name with a title?

Examples:

Mr. Huang

Miss Zhu

Ms. Wang

Mrs. Liu

Write the name you would like to use in class across the top of your name card. Make the letters large and thick so they are easy to read. Use about one third of your name card for this.

Now choose or create a symbol that you like a lot. A symbol is an image that represents something else.

Examples:

+ =plus

@ =at

∞=infinity

\$ =U.S. dollars

Draw the symbol on your name card. You can use the rest of the space, so make the symbol large enough to see easily.

Now, let's talk with partner about our symbol and practice a short speech of self-introduction.

First we discuss the symbol we have chosen with a partner.

Symbol:

Can you tell me about your symbol?

This is a... It represents... This is a... It means...

This makes me think of ... I like this symbol because...

Next we will use our symbol in a short speech of self-introduction

First write an opening for a speech of self-introduction. Include a greeting and compliment to the audience. You will present this speech in groups of four.

Example:

Good afternoon ladies and gentleman. I'm very happy to have the opportunity to speak with you today.

Then you will begin your speech by explaining your symbol.
You can choose what you want to include after that.

For example you may include the following:

You may include information about your character, interests and major experiences. You may also include stories and examples from your life.

You may also focus on the following basic information:

- Basic Information: name, nationality, birthplace, major, job
- Major experiences of work and education.
- Your family.
- Descriptions of your childhood and events that helped you mature.
- Your hobbies
- Your most important friendships
- Your dreams and ambitions
- Ideas that mean a lot to you

The Ending of your Speech of Self-Introduction:

1. Sum-up your speech in one sentence
2. Thank the audience for listening.

**B. A role-play task on meeting and English speaking person:
This can also serve as a “get-to-know-you” opportunity for learners ranging from beginning to advanced.**

**Meeting an English Speaking Person:
A Basic Conversation.**

Imagine that you have just sat down near a foreign looking person on the bus. This person smiles at you and politely begins to ask you some questions. Luckily these questions are very common ones that you can easily answer.

Opening Questions:

Excuse me. Do you speak English?

Yes, I speak some English.

Yes, I speak a little English.

Name:

What’s your name? What should I call you?

My name is...

You can call me...

I’m ...

I’d like to be called...

My friends call me...

Occupation:

What do you do? What do you do in life?

I work in business.

I’m a salesperson.

I work for an electrical equipment manufacturer.

I’m a manager in a manufacturing company.

I’m a student.

I’m studying “English Literature” at Wenzhou University.

I’m currently a student at Wenzhou University.

From: Where are you from?

I’m from Wenzhou.

I’m from Taizhou.

I come from Jiayuguan in Gansu province.

(Do you speak Mandarin Chinese?)

Hobbies: What do you do in your free time?

I enjoy spending time with my family.

I really enjoy playing cards and Chinese chess.

I usually play basketball and watch movies.

I like to read and talk with my friends.

*My hobby is collecting coins.
I enjoy playing chess and cards.
I'm really into music. I like to play the guitar and sing.
I'm into Yoga and meditation.
I'm into Chinese philosophy and martial arts.*

Conversation Closing:

*Well, it's time for me to get going.
Well, I really should be going now*

*It's been very nice talking with you.
I really enjoyed talking with you.*

(Oh. I really enjoyed talking with you too).

*I really enjoyed our conversation.
(Me too!)*

*I hope we can talk again some time.
(Me too!)*

Okay...see you later...bye bye...take care.

C. An interview and reporting task on our dreams for the future:
This involves narration in the first and third person relating to the future. This task can also serve as a “get-to-know-you” opportunity for intermediate to advanced learners.

**Interview and Report:
Our Dreams for the Future.**

In this communicative task we will interview a partner and take note on the responses. Then we will give a short oral report to a small group about the interview results.

Brainstorming:

Let's make a list of questions that we can ask in our interview. All of these questions should relate to our partner's plans or dreams for the future.

Examples:

*What are your dreams for the future?
What do you most want to do in the future?
What do you want to do in life?
Do you want to get married?
Do you want to have a child or children?
Where do you want to live?*

*What kind of job do you want to have?
What kind of friends do you want to have?*

*How old would you like to be when you get married?
How long will you work before you retire?
If you want to join the army, when will you do so?
If you want to marry, who do you want to marry?
Why do you want to be a....teacher, business person, soldier, etc.
How do you want to die?
Where do you want to die?
How would you like to be remembered?
Are there things you would like to change about the world before you die?*

Now interview your partner and make sure you take careful notes on the responses. You will use your notes to give an oral report on the interview.

Process Language: Introduction of an oral report on an interview.

Good morning/afternoon. I would like to tell you a little about the dreams and future plans of _____. He/She has many dreams and plans for the future. For example,

Thank you for your attention to this presentation on the future of _____.

D. An interview and reporting task on early life experiences: This involves narration in the first and third person relating to the past. This task can also serve as a “get-to-know-you” opportunity for intermediate to advanced learners.

Interview and Report: Childhood and Life Experiences.

In this communicative task we will interview a partner and take note on the responses. Then we will give a short oral report to a small group about the interview results.

Brainstorming:

Let's make a list of questions that we can ask in our interview. All of these questions should relate to our partner's childhood, process of growing up and background experiences.

Examples:

So, where did you grow up?

*What's your background?
Where were you raised?
What's your life story?
What was your family like growing up?
Where is your family from?
How did your parents discipline you?
When did you leave your hometown?
Who did you fear the most as a child?
Who influenced you the most?
Who did you most admire and respect?
What did you learn from your parents as a child?
Who did you play with as a child?
Which of your teachers do you remember most clearly? What was that person like?
Who were some of your friends at school? What were they like?
What did you do after school in your free time?*

Process Language: Introduction of an oral report on an interview.

Good morning/afternoon. I would like to tell you a little about the background and childhood of _____. He/She has had many interesting experiences so far in life. For example, _____.

E. A role play task involving a tourist and a tour guide: This task involves use of modal patterns for giving advice. This task is based on aspects of Chinese culture which should be familiar to Chinese high school and college students. This is an example of easing the introduction of a new language form by using it to talk about a familiar subject.

Role Play: The Tourist and the Tour Guide.

The Tourist:

You are an American who is very interested in China. You will be able to visit China for one month. You want to know when you should come and what you should do while you are in China. You also want to know what you ought to do, read and study before you come. You are very excited and happy to find out about this great country!

Process language for asking questions:

*What should I do before I come to China?
Where should I go when I'm in China?
Where can I learn Chinese to prepare for my trip?
How can I get along with Chinese people?
What are the most important things to do in China?*

What do you think I should read before visiting China?
If you were me, what would you do in China?
What do you recommend reading before I come to China?
What should I know about politeness in China?

The Tour Guide:

You are a native of China and an expert on Chinese culture. You have been hired by an American tourist as a guide to China. You must give advice and suggestions to the tourist for planning the trip. In this way you can give suggestions about when to visit China, and what to do to prepare for the trip. Be sure to share very specific ideas for actions to take and experiences to have. You are very happy to share the wonders of your home country.

Process Language for giving advice:

You should eat Peking Duck while you are in China!
You ought to come to China during the Spring Festival. It's a wonderful time to visit.
You have to see the Great Wall of China.
The Forbidden City is also a must-see.
If I were you, I'd get some acupuncture and do some Kung Fu at the Shaolin Temple.
I recommend that you come during the mid-autumn festival.
You could come in the springtime.
You might want to visit Beijing.
I recommend that you see Pandas in the wild.
I suggest that you visit a Taoist temple.
I recommend that you bring an umbrella.
I think you should study Tai Chi before you come.
You should study Mandarin Chinese (Potungwha) before you come.

Role Play Preparation for Guide:

Write six suggestions/recommendations for the American tourist.

Role Play Preparation for Tourist:

Write six questions that the American tourist might want to ask about China.

Homework:

Write a three paragraph description on an important aspect of Chinese Culture.

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About the author:
English Language Fellow Benjamin Clarke



After many years of serving as a foreign language teacher of both English and French, I was selected by representatives of the U.S. Department of State to come to China for an academic fellowship. This fellowship involves two missions. The first is to contribute to the field of English language teaching in China. The second is to work for mutual understanding and harmony between the people of China and the United States.

As part of this mission, I teach classes to undergraduates in the Foreign Language College of Wenzhou University in Wenzhou, Zhejiang. I am also active in providing teacher training here at the Foreign Language College and at high schools and primary schools in the surrounding area.

One of my favorite current projects is to guide student teachers in the design and performance of English language lessons for students in a local experimental primary school. Since I regularly go to the school to teach model lessons for the student teachers and school faculty to observe, I am getting a lot of direct contact with primary school students. This means that my teaching experience in China includes students of a wide variety of ages who speak English at a wide variety of levels. This variety of experience is part of what inspires me to write this guide with an audience of Chinese EFL teachers in mind.

My own educational background includes a Masters Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language (MATESL) from St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont. After

completing my Master's I continued to study at St. Michael's towards a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Educational Curriculum. The lessons I learned in my academic studies at St. Michael's College continue to guide my work and inspire my ongoing research, inquiry and experimentation. I am deeply grateful to my dedicated teachers for all that they shared with me.

In addition to my academic training, I have a history of language teaching which began over 20 years ago. Thus I am able to draw from a broad range of experiences as I share my ideas with language learners and teachers.

Also, I have had my share of experience as a foreign language **learner**. As a result, I can understand how different approaches to foreign language teaching can feel to the learner.

The first foreign language I learned was Latin. This was taught to me purely through a grammar/translation method, and I came to understand how difficult it can be to learn a language merely through an analysis of grammar and vocabulary. Ouch!

I then studied French more communicatively in high school and in college. After this, I went on to study French language and civilization at the *Université de la Sorbonne* in Paris, and I taught English in the French public school system and then in the private sector.

Later, I lived and worked in South Korea and learned enough Korean to live and work in Seoul and enjoy my experience of Korean culture. A few years later, as a practicum for my Master's degree, I lived and taught in Bogota, Colombia for six months. There I got the chance to continue developing fluency in Spanish as I learned *Salsa*, *Meringue* and other great Latin American dances.

For the next eight years, I taught French as a foreign language and English as a second language at my alma mater, St. Michael's College. During this time I engaged in a great deal of experimentation with and development of language teaching techniques (especially relating to working with the learning differences of extremely challenged learners).

Now I am again learning a foreign language. This time it is Chinese. So if you see me in the future, please come and give me a lesson! Every little bit of practice helps!

In closing, I would like to thank you for your interest in this guidebook. I hope you will carefully consider the ideas that I share. If they make sense to you, I hope you will put them to the true test by using them in your English teaching process. Then you will see for yourself if this *Better English* guide is helping your students learn in a way which is more naturally efficient and enjoyable!