Institut Pendidikan
Guru Kampus Dato'
Razali Ismail

# TSL3111 Developing and Using Resources for the Primary ESL Classroom

## Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6

Ruth Wickham, Brighton Education
Training Fellow, IPGKDRI

Student's Notes

# Contents

# TSL3111 Developing and Using Resources for the Primary ESL Classroom

## Introduction

This is a new course for the PISMP (degree course) semester 6 students in Semester 2, 2013. The semester will be intersected with an 8-week practicum period for the students, which will hopefully give great opportunities for them to use their new learning.

This module has been written by Ruth Wickham, Brighton Education English Training Fellow at IPGKDRI, in collaboration with the lecturers involved in teaching the course.

## Outcomes

Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of principles of materials selection and adaptation (1.6)

2. Evaluate and adapt teaching and learning materials (2.4, 6.3, 7.2)

3. Design and exploit materials for teaching and learning (6.3, 8.5)

This course focuses on teaching and learning materials for the language classroom, factors in selection and evaluation, evaluation and exploitation of course books and multimedia materials, selection and adaptation, technical skills and knowledge for producing materials, developing resources for teaching, exploiting teaching and learning materials, presentation and evaluation of materials produced.

## Materials

The lecturer needs a copy of this module. If possible, the lecturer should have (make, borrow, purchase) examples of materials that are discussed in the module.

Students need a copy of the students' notes, a computer with Internet access, their own notebook and writing materials, and their own materials for creating resources as the course progresses.

These materials are also available on http://ktf2013.weebly.com/tsl3111-developing-and-using-resources-for-the-primary-esl-classroom.html

## Timetable

The course is concentrated as students prepare for practicum. Instead of 3 hours per week, class time will be 6 hours per week before practicum starts.

# Topic 1: Teaching and Learning Materials for the classroom

The old-fashioned idea of 'teaching' involved the teacher at the front of the classroom talking to the students. In the popular movie "School of Rock", Jack Black who is pretending to be a teacher stands in front of the class and says, "Teach, teach, teach ..." The idea that teaching=talking is a common misconception even nowadays.

Another very old idea about teaching involves the "Eye gate" and the "Ear gate" into the mind. This suggests that there are two important ways to feed information into the student's brain, through the eyes and through the ears.

- Visual = eye gate
- Audio = ear gate

The idea is that if both entry points are involved, the student is more likely to remember what is taught.

However, we should not be limited to the two senses of seeing and hearing, when we all have five senses. We also have a 'gate' through our sense of touch, and taste, and smell. And if movement is added to learning then retention is increased even more.

## Types of Materials

The most common (and useful) materials for showing learners what they need to learn are as mentioned above:

- Audio – something to listen to
- Visual – something to look at

And if both elements are included, then that's even better.

With modern ICT there are also interactive materials – children look and listen and click or move a mouse to interact with the learning materials.

However, even old-fashioned materials – books, worksheets, games, the board – can be interactive and contain not only the 'visual' element, but also involve use of the other senses as well as movement.

## Purpose of Materials

There are materials which have the purpose of presenting content. However, especially with language learning, that is only the 'teaching' side of 'teaching and learning'. For the 'learning' part to happen we need materials which the children interact with, and which facilitate them interacting with others.

Read this passage from Jeremy Harmer's book "The Practice of English Language Teaching" in the chapter on "Educational technology and other learning resources", and answer the questions.

## The technology pyramid

(Harmer, 2007, pp. 175-6)

If you walk into some classrooms around the world, you will see fixed data projectors, interactive whiteboards (IWBs), built-in speakers for audio material that is delivered directly from a computer hard disk (rather than from a tape recorder), and computers with round-the-clock Internet access, Whenever teachers want their students to find anything out, they can get them to use a search engine like Google and the results can be shown to the whole class on the IWB.

In other classes, even in many successful private language schools around the world, there is a whiteboard in the classroom, an overhead projector (OHP) and a tape recorder. Other schools only have a whiteboard - or perhaps a blackboard - often not in very good condition. In such schools there may well not be a photocopier, though hopefully the students will have exercise books.

Finally, there are some classroom situations where neither teacher nor students have anything at all in terms of educational technology or other learning aids. Jill and Charles Hadfield represent these differing realities in a 'reversed pyramid' of resources (see Figure 1). in a world in which the pace of technological change is breathtakingly fast (so that between the writing and publishing of this book new technology will have been produced that most of us are as yet unaware of), it seems that being at the bottom of the pyramid is likely to be a bar to language learning.

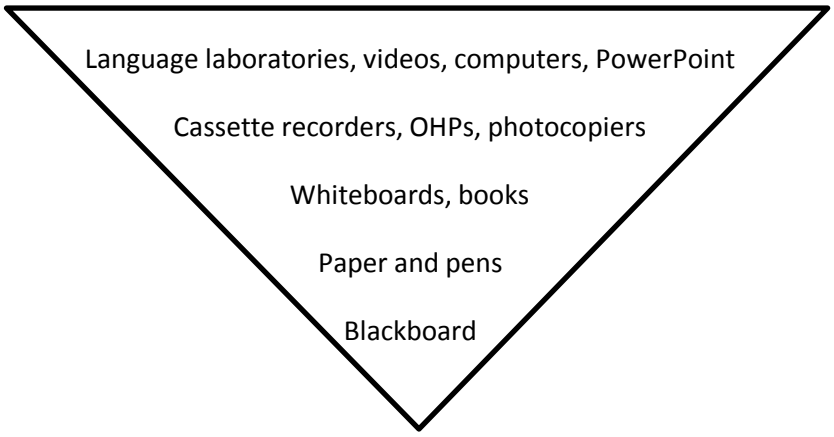



FIGURE 1: Reversed resources pyramid

However, Jill and Charles Hadfield argue passionately, this is not the case (Hadfield and Hadfield 2003a and b). There is a lot you can do with minimal or even no resources. For example, in one situation they taught in, there was a board and the children had exercise books, but apart from that there were no other educational aids, not even coursebooks. However, with the help of a washing line and clothes pegs they were able to hang up pictures for students to work with. Simple objects like a selection of pebbles became the focus for activities such as telling the story of the pebbles' existence; different words from sentences were written on pieces of paper or card and then put on students' backs - and the rest of the class had to make them stand in order to make a sentence from the word; paper bags (with faces drawn on them) became puppets; the classroom desks were rearranged to become a street plan so students could practise giving (and responding to) directions. Finally, and most importantly, the students themselves were used as source material, whether as

participants in quizzes about the real world, as informants in discussions about families or as imaginers of river scenes based on teacher description. The internal world of the student is 'the richest, deepest seam of gold that you have' (Hadfield and Hadfield 2003b: 34). Indeed, (see Figure 2) Jill and Charles Hadfield propose turning the pyramid the other way up.

The resources that are currently available are truly amazing. As we shall see, they offer an amazing variety of routes for learning and discovery. Yet we should not see them as methodologies for learning, but rather as tools to help us in whatever approaches and techniques we have chosen to use. And we need to remind ourselves constantly of the fact that many classrooms both in the 'developing' and 'developed' world do not have access to very modern technology. Yet this does not prevent students - and has never prevented them - from learning English successfully. In this chapter, therefore, we will look at a range of classroom resources (both hi- and low-tech) before considering the questions we need to ask when trying to decide whether to adopt the latest technological innovation.

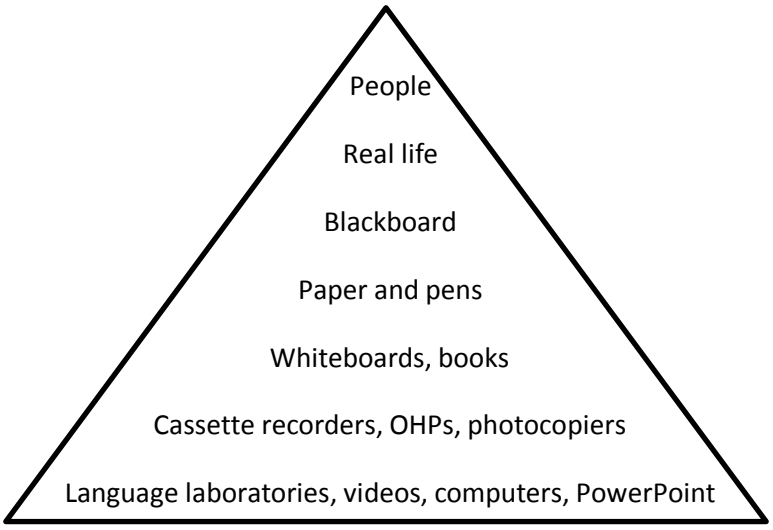



FIGURE 2: 'Other way up' resources pyramid

The **questions** below are designed to help you to read through and pick up the main points in the article.

**Questions for 'The Technology Pyramid':**

1. What might you find in a classroom with advanced technology?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. In classrooms at the 'point' of the reversed pyramid, what do students and teachers have?

.....

3. Is a lack of technology necessarily 'a bar to language learning? (Why / why not?)

.....

Give five examples (of your own or from the text) of how you can manage without technology:

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

4. What is the 'richest, deepest seam of gold' that will allow you to turn 'the pyramid the other way up'? .....

5. Give 3 examples (of your own or from the text above) of something in 'the internal world of the student' that can be used as a resource:

- .....
- .....
- .....

***Discuss your answers with your group.***

## Using Technological Equipment

Fill in the table, and then discuss with your group.

Which of the technological equipment mentioned in the article have you see in classrooms? What would you add to the list? What was each one for?

| Technology Type | Seen | Used | Use / Purpose |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blackboard | | | |
| Whiteboard | | | |
| Flipchart | | | |
| LCD projector | | | |
| Overhead Projector | | | |
| Interactive whiteboard | | | |
| Built in speakers | | | |
| Cassette player/recorder | | | |
| Language Laboratory | | | |
| Computer with Internet | | | |
| TV | | | |
| Photocopier | | | |
| Flash Cards | | | |
| Set of text books | | | |
| Library Corner | | | |
| Art materials | | | |

Would you rather teach in a fully-equipped classroom, or one with the 'bare essentials'? Why?

.....

.....

When you were at school, how well equipped were your classrooms? What effect did this have?

.....

.....

## Strengths and weaknesses of learning materials

In order to decide on the strengths and weakness of various materials, we need to be able to classify them and to know what we are talking about.

There are many ways to classify types of learning materials, such as by the materials they are made of, or the way they are used, or the skills they address, how modern they are, or even how expensive they are to acquire.

Discuss in your group the materials mentioned above and any others you are familiar with or have heard of, and decide on a system of classifying them beyond just “audio” and “visual”.

Here is one example of a way to classify materials:

**Personal** materials that the teacher carries with them – their voice, facial expression, gestures. This could extend to the teacher dressing in special ways for specific circumstances (such as telling a story or teaching vocabulary).

There are **Environmental** materials that exist in the immediate (classroom) environment – the students, their clothing, the furniture, other objects in the room, objects visible from the room through the windows or door.

There are **Traditional** materials for teaching such as pens and pencils, paper, rulers, board, chalk or markers, and exercise or note books.

There are **Published** materials such as textbooks, course books, readers, reference books (dictionary, thesaurus) and grammar books.

There are **Customised** classroom materials such as flash cards, and work sheets.

There is **Computerised** equipment such as computers, printers, scanners, LCD projector, and interactive whiteboards.

There are **Online** resources such as information sites, games sites, video and story sites.

***Now list types of materials, their purpose, and their strengths and weaknesses.***

| Type | Purpose | Strengths and Weaknesses |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

## Works cited in this topic

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Pearson Longman.

# Topic 2: Factors in Selection and Evaluation

How do we decide which materials to use in any situation? With time constraints and limited funds, a lot of the time we find ourselves just using whatever is available, but when the opportunity arises to purchase or create materials, we need to know how to recognise something worthwhile.

Here are some factors to consider:

### Level

The age of the students – and their interests – need to be considered as well as their ability. For example, stories and books that are written for the interest of native English speaker teenagers would probably be too difficult for second language speaker teenagers. However stories that are at their ability level are likely to be too 'babyish' for them to be interested.

When considering the suitable level of materials we need to think about, for example, how much new vocabulary is included, and what grammar structures predominate, and how adult the topics and content are. *(See the factors discussed in the articles below.)*

### Content – cultural, knowledge

A lot of written material, even ESL material, is designed for learners in countries like the USA and the UK. The topics and content are related to seasons and festivals in those countries and not only use related vocabulary but also make assumptions about students' understandings of and even interest in these topics. While it is good for our students to learn about other cultures, too much of these materials can be boring for them and even in some cases offensive.

### Clarity

The material needs to be clear to see (visual) or hear (audio). Blurry pictures, videos or texts, and mumbled soundtracks have little value. Also the meaning of the text should be clear, not overwhelmed with idiomatic expressions etc.

Font size can be an important factor especially for younger learners who don't have the concentration span to keep staring at the text and work their way through it. Some students may also have poor eyesight.

### Accessibility

The material is needs to be well organised, so that students can find their way around the contents of the book easily. They can see how much progress they are making and can use the material easily with or without the teacher watching.

### Practicality

Consider whether the construction or use of the material is physically possible? Sometimes teachers dream up wonderful ways to teach material, but it really is too difficult to complete. Sometimes the text includes something like a recipe – clearly beautiful but not practically possible, and very discouraging for the students. Activities that are included need to be usable in a classroom situation.

### Versatility

We should consider whether the material could be used in more than one situation. Can it be varied to suit the students or the situation? In the Malaysian school situation where you are teaching

several classes – possibly at different levels – can you use and adapt the materials for each situation without too much difficulty?

### Cost Effectiveness

Consider whether you or the school can afford these materials. Sometimes materials are quite expensive initially, but in the long term they are worth the cost. Something that may be cheaper may end up being expensive with many units being needed, or maintenance and repairs being necessary. This applies to equipment as well as books. Photocopiable resources, or books that contain photocopiable pages can be very worthwhile, or sometimes websites charge a small annual fee for access to all of their worksheets and materials.

### Durability Impact

Young learners are particularly rough on materials, testing everything to its limit. Materials need to be strong enough to last the distance. We need to consider whether to make something cheap and consumable, constantly being replaced, or durable by laminating or using sturdy materials. There are advantages for both, for example if the materials are to be consumed, then the children can keep their own copy and decorate it and make it their own.

### Authenticity

Using authentic materials simply means using examples of language produced for some real purpose of their own (for example a newspaper) rather than using language produced and designed solely for the classroom. This is also important for listening materials.

Materials produced by second language speakers often contain grammatical errors – you need to be especially careful when creating your own.

---

Read this chapter by McDonough, Shaw and Musahara on considering the contextual factors in selection and adaptation of materials. Answer the questions below.

## Selection and Adaptation – contextual factors

(McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, 2013, pp. 6-10)

**Contextual factors**

In the preceding section, we took a broad view of 'context' and included both learners and setting under this heading. Let us examine each of these in turn in a little more detail.

*Learners* It is possible to identify a number of important learner characteristics or 'variables' which, as we have suggested, influence planning decisions and the specification of goals. The relative importance of these variables, and their effect on programme design, obviously depend to a certain extent on some of the situational factors to be discussed in the next section. For example, a pupil's mother tongue may be more, or less, significant depending on whether more than one native language is represented in the classroom, or perhaps on the educational philosophy of that particular environment.

For the moment we can list here the key characteristics of 'the learner', indicating how they might affect planning and noting that they form part of our common frame of reference as language teachers, wherever we work. Some of these are characteristics of whole groups or subgroups of learners; others are individual and less open to generalization. Again, some can be known in advance and incorporated at the initial planning stage, in principle at least. Others are more appropriately assessed in the classroom environment itself, and as such are more obviously susceptible to teacher reaction and influence.

We consider the learner's

- *Age*: this will particularly affect topics chosen and types of learning activity, such as the suitability of games or role play.
- *Interests*: as with age, this may help in the specification of topics and learning activities.
- *Level of proficiency in English*: teachers will wish to know this even where their classes are based on a 'mixed proficiency'' principle rather than streamed according to level.
- *Aptitude*: this can most usefully be thought of as a specific talent, in this case for language learning, as something that learners might show themselves to be 'good at', perhaps in contrast to other subjects in a school curriculum. (It can be measured by formal aptitude tests, although they are not very frequently used.) The relationship between aptitude and intelligence is not clear, and is certainly not direct.
- *Mother tongue*: this may affect, for instance, the treatment of errors or the selection of syllabus items - areas of grammar or vocabulary and so on.
- *Academic and educational level*: which help to determine intellectual content, breadth of topic choice or depth to which material may be studied.
- *Attitudes to learning*, to teachers, to the institution, to the target language itself and to its speakers. This is directly related to the following point.
- *Motivation*, at least in so far as it can be anticipated. Obviously a whole range of factors will affect this.
- *Reasons for learning*, if it is possible to state them. With school-age pupils this may be less significant than with many adult learners, where it is often possible to carry out quite a detailed analysis of needs.
- *Preferred learning styles*: which will help in the evaluation of the suitability of different methods, for instance, whether problem-solving activities could be used, or whether pupils are more used to 'rote learning', where material is learned by heart.
- *Personality*: which can affect methodological choices such as a willing acceptance of role play and an interactive classroom environment

Many of these factors will affect the learners' need, and this issue will recur in the relevant sections of subsequent chapters.

*Setting* That aspect of the context that we refer to as setting is to be understood here as the whole teaching and learning environment, in a wide sense: it is the factors falling under this heading that will determine whether the aims of a language programme, defined with reference to the learners' needs and characteristics, are actually feasible and realistic. In certain situations, the setting itself may be so significant that it provides the foundation specification of aims. This might be the case, for

instance, in a country with a single political or religious ideological base, where the education system is primarily an expression of that ideology. In the majority of systems, however, the setting is more likely to condition the way in which goals are carried out, and indeed the extent to which they can be.

For most EFL/ESL teachers, therefore, the following factors, in some combination and with varying degrees of significance, will influence course planning, syllabus design, the selection of materials and resources, and the appropriateness of methods:

- *The role of English in the country*: whether it is a regular means of communication or primarily a subject taught in the school curriculum, where, in turn, it may or may not be the first foreign language. This relates to the linguistic environment, and to whether English is outside class in the community or alternatively never heard.
- *The role of English in the school*, and its place in the curriculum.
- *The teachers:* their status, both at national and institutional levels, their training, mother tongue, attitudes to their job, experience, expectations (for a discussion of teachers' needs and wants, see Masuhara, 2011). This topic will be taken up in detail in the final chapter of this book.
- *Management and administration*: who is responsible for what level of decision, particularly which are the control points for employment of staff, budgets, resource allocation and so on. Additionally, the position of teachers in the overall system needs to be understood, as does the nature of the hierarchy in any particular institution.
- *Resources available*: books and paper, audio-visual material (hardware and software for cassette and video), laboratories, computers, reprographic facilities and so on. Design and choice of teaching materials will be particularly affected by resource availability as will the capacity to teach effectively across a range of language skills.
- *Support personnel*: administrators, secretaries and technicians, and their specific roles in relation to the teaching staff.
- *The number of pupils* to be taught and the size of classes. Overall numbers may affect the total number of teaching hours available, and the large class problem is a very familiar one in many settings worldwide.
- *Time* available for the programme, both over a working year (longitudinally), and in any one week or term (intensive or extensive). Many teachers would also consider that time of day is a significant factor.
- *Physical environment*: the nature of the building, noise factors, flexibility of tables and chairs, size of room in relation to size of class, heat and cold, and so on.
- *The socio-cultural environment*: this can often determine the suitability of both materials and methods. For example, some textbooks contain topics inappropriate to the setting, and some classroom methods require an unacceptable set of teacher and learner roles.
- *The types of tests used*, and ways in which students are evaluated: assessment procedures may, for example, be formal or informal and subjective. They may also be external, in the form of a public or national examination, or internal to the institution and the course.

- *Procedures (if any) for monitoring and evaluating* the language teaching programme itself. This kind of evaluation may be imposed by 'senior management', or alternatively agreed between teachers as colleagues.

Hedge (2000) covers similar points, classifying them into social, educational, pupil and teacher variables. Nation and Macalister (2010) discuss these factors as environment analysis with three major elements: learners, teachers and situation. Holliday (1994, 2005) is particularly concerned with the need for methodology to be appropriate to its socio-cultural context, not inappropriately transplanted from a different - and often more privileged - system. We will discuss this in Chapter 11 and, to a certain degree, Chapter 12.

Teachers are affected, directly and indirectly by all these variables. Some they may be able to influence or even control: for example, the deployment of resources and materials, or the pacing of work within an overall timescale. Others, of course, arise from decisions taken far removed from a teacher's day-to-day professional life, perhaps at Ministry level, or at an earlier point in the country's educational history. Whatever their source, it is the teacher who is in the 'front line'- attempting to promote learning and fulfil the stated goals against the background of a complex network of interrelated factors. The grim reality described by Gaies and Bowers (1990: 176), with large classes, low motivation, inadequate coursebooks, poorly trained teachers, lack of resources, heavy workload and the pressure of exams may still be realities in many teaching contexts (e.g. Hu, 2003; Pham, 2007 to name two). The conclusion in Gaies and Bowers (1990) still sounds pertinent that 'by coming to grips not only with new ideas but with the evidence of what happens when they are introduced into the local context, [teachers] equip themselves with the tools for establishing an appropriate methodology that can set realistic national objectives for teacher training and education (181).We will discuss in more detail in Chapter 14 how changes and innovation affect teachers and how teachers may manage their self-development while seeking support.

---

**Questions about Contextual Factors of Selection and Adaptation:**

1. What will be affected by the learner's age and/or interests? .....

.....

2. What does it mean if a learner has an aptitude for language learning? .....

.....

3. What helps in the evaluation of the suitability of different methods? .....

.....

4. In the majority of circumstances, what does the 'setting' condition? .....

.....

5. What factors should be considered in the role of English in the country? .....

.....

.....

6. What does resource availability affect? .....

.....

7. What is a very familiar problem with the number of pupils? .....

.....

8. As well as time available for teaching, how can time affect teaching? .....

.....

9. What physical environment factors can affect teaching? .....

.....

10. What 'grim realities' are mentioned? .....

.....

.....

## Using the Factors for selection and evaluation

In your group, consider one particular resource each. (It could be a text book, or a game, or a website, or a storybook, or a song...)

***Consider each of the factors below. Compare with your group.***

| | |
|---|---|
| Level | |
| Content – cultural, knowledge | |
| Clarity | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Accessibility | |
| Practicality | |
| Versatility | |
| Cost effectiveness | |
| Durability | |
| Impact | |
| Authenticity | |

## Works cited in this topic

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Pearson Longman.

McDonough, J., Shaw, C., & Masuhara, H. (2013). *Materials and Methods in ELT (3rd Ed).* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

# Topic 3: Evaluation and exploitation of course books and multimedia materials

In the modern era of high technology, sometimes the humble textbook can be overlooked in the teacher's eagerness to get into technology. However, as we saw in the 'Technology Pyramid' in topic 1, a lot of older style materials can be equally valuable. It is unlikely that we will get away from the course textbook for quite a few years yet – in fact in Malaysia we are seeing new KSSR textbooks rolling out year by year. So we need to look at how to make good use of it and other books and materials that are available.

***Read the following chapter and answer the questions below:***

## The Coursebook as a Resource

(Harmer, 2007, pp. 181-3)

**Coursebook or no coursebook?**

The benefits and restrictions of coursebook use can be easily summarised:

- **Benefits**: good coursebooks are carefully prepared to offer a coherent syllabus, satisfactory language control, motivating texts, audio cassettes/CDs and other accessories such as video/DVD material, CD-ROMs and extra resource material. They are often attractively presented. They provide teachers under pressure with the reassurance that, even when they are forced to plan at the last moment, they will be using material which they can have confidence in. They come with detailed teacher's guides, which not only provide procedures for the lesson in the student's book, but also offer suggestions and alternatives, extra activities and resources. The adoption of a new coursebook provides a powerful stimulus for methodological development (see Hutchinson and Torres 1994).

Students like coursebooks, too, since they foster the perception of progress as units and then books are completed. Coursebooks also provide material which students can look back at for revision and, at their best, their visual and topic appeal can have a powerfully engaging effect.

- **Restrictions**: coursebooks, used inappropriately, impose learning styles and content on classes and teachers alike, appearing to be '"fait accompli" over which they can have little control' (Littlejohn 1998: 205). Many of them rely on Presentation, Practice and Production as their main methodological procedure (see Chapter 4, A2), despite recent enthusiasm for other teaching sequences. Units and lessons often follow an unrelenting format so that students and teachers eventually become demotivated by the sameness of it all. And in their choice of topics, coursebooks can sometimes be bland or culturally inappropriate.

One solution to the perceived disadvantages of coursebooks is to do without them altogether, to use a 'do-it-yourself' approach (Block 1991, Maley 1998, Thornbury and Meddings 2001). Such an approach is extremely attractive. It can offer students a dynamic and varied programme. If they can see its relevance to their own needs, it will greatly enhance their motivation and their trust in what they are being asked to do. It allows teachers to respond on a lesson-by-lesson basis to what is

happening in the class. Finally, for the teacher, it means an exciting and creative involvement with texts and tasks.

In order for the DIY approach to be successful, teachers need access to (and knowledge of) a wide range of materials, from coursebooks and videos to magazines, novels, encyclopaedias, publicity brochures and the Internet. They will have to make (and make use of) a variety of home-grown materials (see below,). They will also need the confidence to know when and what to choose, becoming, in effect, syllabus designers in their own right. This not only makes preparing lessons a very time-consuming business, but also runs the risk that students will end up with incoherent collections of bits and pieces of material. However, where there is time for the proper planning and organisation of DIY teaching, students may well get exceptional programmes of study, which are responsive to their needs and varied in a way that does not abandon coherence. Such an approach also ties in with a dialogic,'Dogme'-style of teaching (see page 75).

**Using coursebooks**

Around the world, however, the vast majority of teachers reject a coursebook-free approach and instead use them to help their learners and, what's more, to give structure and direction to their own teaching.

The most important aspect of coursebook use is for teachers to try to engage students with the content they are going to be dealing with. This means arousing the students' interest in a topic, and making sure that they know exactly what we want them to do before we get them to open their books and disappear, heads-down in the pages, while we are still trying talk to them.

Many teachers want to use their coursebooks as a kind of springboard for their lessons, rather than as a manual to be slavishly followed. In other words, while they base much of their teaching on the contents of the coursebook, they reserve the right to decide when and how to use its constituent parts. There are two main ways they can do this:

- **Omit and replace**: the first decision we have to make is whether to use a particular coursebook lesson or not. If the answer is 'no', there are two possible courses of action. The first is just to omit the lesson altogether. In this case, we suppose that the students will not miss it because it does not teach anything fundamentally necessary and it is not especially interesting. When, however, we think the language or topic area in question is important, we will have to replace the coursebook lesson with our own preferred alternative.

Although there is nothing wrong with omitting or replacing coursebook material, it becomes irksome for many students if it happens too often, especially when they have had to buy the book themselves. It may also deny them the chance to revise (a major advantage of coursebooks), and their course may lose overall coherence.

- **To change or not to change?** When we decide to use a coursebook lesson, we can, of course, do so without making any substantial changes to the way it is presented. However, we might decide to use the lesson but to change it to make it more appropriate for our students. If the material is not very substantial, we might add something to it - a role-play

after a reading text, perhaps, or extra situations for language practice. We might re-write an exercise we do not especially like or replace one activity or text with something else, such as a download from the Internet or any other home-grown items. We could re-order the activities within a lesson, or even re-order lessons (within reason). Finally, we may wish to reduce a lesson by cutting out an exercise or an activity. In all our decisions, however, it is important to remember that students need to be able to see a coherent pattern to what we are doing and understand our reasons for changes.

Using coursebooks appropriately is an art which becomes clearer with experience. If the teacher approaches lesson planning in the right frame of mind (see Chapter 21), it happens almost as a matter of course. The options we have discussed for coursebook use are summarised in Figure 4.

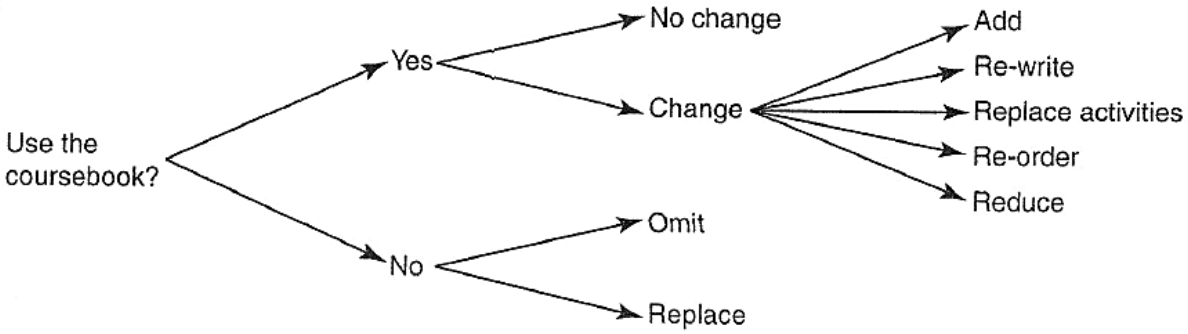



FIGURE 4: Options for coursebook use.

---

## Questions for 'The Coursebook as a Resource':

1. List some benefits of a good coursebook:

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

2. What are some restrictions of the coursebook (especially if used inappropriately)?

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

3. What are the advantages of the 'do-it-yourself' approach without a coursebook?

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

4. What is needed for the DIY approach to be successful?

- .....
- .....
- .....

5. What are some possible disadvantages of this style of teaching? .....

.....

7. What is the most important aspect of coursebook use? .....

.....

Discuss your answers with your group members. Write notes on anything useful they have to add:

.....

.....

.....

## Evaluating Coursebooks / Textbooks

Teachers should have an idea what they are looking for in good teaching and learning materials. This is especially true with textbooks and coursebooks as there are so many of them on the market.

In the Malaysian Primary School context there is one only English course textbook for each year. Is it good? Should it be used totally and exclusively? Or should it be supplemented and adapted? Why (not) and how?

1. **Consider the criteria** for evaluating the KSSR textbook – or any other English course textbook.

What do you think is important? Possibly things to consider: physical attributes (external / internal), attractiveness (to students / teachers), pictures and illustrations, cultural appropriateness, language suitability ... etc.

NOTE: This is a Pre-Use checklist, looking at a resource before you purchase / use it. What things would you look for when you pick up the book in a book-shop and thumb through it?

Brainstorm a list:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

***Discuss with your group and share ideas.***

2. **Create an evaluation instrument**. There is an example of a checklist on the pages following this, and other examples can be seen on the Internet. You can look for ideas, but do not try to copy what you find because it is unlikely that anything would be really suitable.

3. **Test your instrument** by applying it to the KSSR text as well as at least one other book which is designed for teaching English to children. (Books can be found in the IPG library!)

4. **Swap** (copies of) your instrument with those created by other students / pairs / groups and apply the new instrument(s) to the same materials.

5. **Write a short discourse** on your findings: -

- On what basis did you choose your criteria for the instrument?
- How useful was your instrument?
- How useful were your friends' instrument(s)?
- How good is the KSSR text book?
- How good is the other book?

6. **Make a short PowerPoint presentation** to share with the rest of the class.

NOTE: <u>In-use checklist</u>: What things might you notice while you are using a textbook that you didn't notice before/

For example – the children's response to it ....

.....

.....

.....

.....

<u>Post-Use checklist</u>: What things could you only look for after using a textbook for a while?

For example – the children do/don't seem to be learning (because ...?) ...

.....

.....

.....

## Example of Instrument to Evaluate General English Coursebook

This questionnaire was designed to give to teachers in a language school to examine several different books and then make their recommendations. Not all of the points in this table would necessarily be relevant in the Malaysian setting, and some relevant points may be missing.

**Name of Book:** .....
Publisher: Level :
Other levels available:

Target group(s)
Level: Age: Size of group:

Teacher Evaluating Book
Name : Job position:

*Use of Book*: _ Main Core _ Supplementary _ Other .....

| Evaluation Scale | | | Extremely useful 10 9 8 7 6 | Useful with adaptation 5 4 3 2 1 | Not useful 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Attributes | Looks good, feels good, durable | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Lies flat when open | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Good size for carrying | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Presentation clear, not cluttered | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| Availability of Copies | Locally available | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Reasonably priced | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| Support Materials | Available but not essential | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Teachers Book | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Audio materials on CD | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Student Workbook (Consumable) | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Vocabulary Book/Student Dictionary | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Interactive Materials / CD Rom | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Test book / CD | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Other..... | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| Teacher's Book | Could be used by inexperienced teachers | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Audio files clearly indexed to book | | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | Teachers Book contains useful | Teaching strategies | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | | Additional activities | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | | B/L masters | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |
| | | Tests | 10 9 8 7 6 | 5 4 3 2 1 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student's Book | Clear instructions | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Space to write | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Self-assessment possible | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Clear reference pages for grammar | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Easy to find reference pages and vocab lists | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Content | Clear scope and sequence page | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Cross-referenced to common frameworks | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | In line with appropriate syllabus | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Suitable for this culture | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Suitable for different learning styles | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Spiralling progression | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Activities | Practical | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Communicative | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Versatile for group size | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Versatile for ability levels | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Opportunities to practice | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Opportunities for personalization | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Texts for Reading | Interesting, engaging | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Authentic | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Informative | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Appropriately illustrated | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Good quality audio available | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| RECOMMENDATION | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall the book is | | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| I recommend: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other comments: | | | | | | | | | | | | |

***Read the chapter below about exploiting a coursebook which is not 100% suitable by adapting it in various ways. Answer the questions below.***

## Reasons for Adapting Materials

(McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, 2013, pp. 67-8)

We have just asked you to consider your reasons for needing to make modifications to your own materials, and some of the changes you would wish to make. These reasons will depend, of course, on the whole range of variables operating in your own teaching situation, and one teacher's priorities may well differ considerably from those of another. It is certainly possible that there are some general trends common to a large number of teaching contexts: most obviously there has been a widespread perception that materials should aim to be in some sense 'communicative' and 'authentic'. Nevertheless, it is worth bearing in mind that priorities are relative, and there is no absolute notion of right or wrong, or even just one way of interpreting such terms as 'communicative' and 'authentic'. It is also the case that priorities change over time even within the same context. For instance, decontextualized grammar study is not intrinsically 'wrong' in a communicatively oriented class, just as role play is not automatically 'right'. Nor does a need to adapt necessarily imply that a coursebook is defective.

It will be useful to compare your own reasons with those in the following list. The list is not intended to be comprehensive, but simple, to show some of the possible areas of mismatch ('non congruence') that teachers identify and that can be dealt with by adaptation:

- Not enough grammar coverage in general.
- Not enough practice of grammar points of particular difficulty to these learners.
- The communicative focus means that grammar is presented unsystematically.
- Reading passages contain too much unknown vocabulary.
- Comprehension questions are too easy because the answers can be lifted directly from the text with no real understanding.
- Listening passages are inauthentic, because they sound too much like written material being read out.
- Not enough guidance on pronunciation.
- Subject matter inappropriate for learners of this age and intellectual level.
- Photographs and other illustrative material not culturally acceptable.
- Amount of material too much or too little to cover in the time allocated to lessons.
- No guidance for teachers on handling group work and role-play activities with a large class.
- Dialogues too formal and not representative of everyday speech.
- Audio material difficult to use because of problems to do with room size and technical equipment.
- Too much or too little variety in the activities.
- Vocabulary list and a key to the exercises would be helpful.
- Accompanying tests needed.

Undoubtedly much more could be added to this list, but it serves as an illustration of some of the possibilities. All aspects of the language classroom can be covered: the few examples above include (1) aspects of language use, (2) skills, (3) classroom organization and (4) supplementary material. Cunningsworth (1995) seems to generally agree with the list above but adds learner perspectives to his list such as expectations and motivation. Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004:12) summarize what factors may trigger feelings of incongruence among teachers. They categorize the sources as

- teaching contexts (e.g. national, regional, institutional, cultural situations)
- course requirements (e.g. objectives, syllabus, methodology, assessment)
- learners (e.g. age, language level, prior learning experience, learning style)
- teachers (e.g. teaching style, belief about learning and teaching)
- materials (e.g. texts, tasks, activities, learning and teaching philosophy, methodology).

Islam and Mares (2003) discuss principles and procedures of adaptation and provide three scenarios (i.e. materials for public junior high schools in Japan, materials for an adult language school in Spain, materials for university English as a second language in the United States) and their more learner-centred adapted version for each case. Some practical and useful examples of adaptation using task-based learning can be found in Willis and Willis (2007), who also offer some articles on Task-Based Teaching and lesson plans on their web site (http:/lwww.willis-elt.co.uk). Saraceni (2003) advocates learner-centred adaptation and explores this promising new area. She reports that there is very little, if any, literature showing how exactly students could be involved in the adaptation process. She argues that learners as well as teachers should develop awareness of principles of learning and materials design through adapting and evaluating courses. She then proposes a model of adapting courses and provides an example of materials in which activities are designed to be adapted by the learners.

---

**Questions about 'Reasons for Adapting Materials':**

1. According to 'widespread perception', what two attributes should materials have? .....

.....

.....

2. What do you understand by 'decontextualized grammar'? .....

.....

.....

3. What is said about 'decontextualized grammar' in a communicative classroom? .....

.....

.....

4. Look at the list of possible reasons for adapting materials. Choose 5 that you can relate to or that you feel might be relevant in the Malaysian Primary school text-book / coursebook situation.

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

5. Anything that you could add to the list? .....

.....

6. Have you ever had 'feelings of incongruence'? .....

This term is used to 'describe feelings of depression and unhappiness caused by not living the life we really want to.'

The source of these feelings are categorised as: teaching contexts, course requirements, learners, teachers, and materials.

Choose two of these which you think will be most likely to cause 'feelings of incongruence' in a Malaysian Primary School teacher. Explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Multimedia materials

There is an ever-increasing amount of Multimedia materials available for teachers and students, especially in the form of videos and audio materials from the Internet. Obviously, it is a great place to find authentic listening materials.

It has been said: 'Teachers should never expose children to multimedia items which they have not watched and listened to themselves.'

Do you think this is true? Why is it said?

.....

.....

***Discuss with your group.***

**Brainstorm with your group** the relevant factors in choosing multimedia materials such as:

- Videos, movies, movie clips – fiction and non-fiction
- Cartoon movies and clips
- Video-clips of songs
- Cartoons of songs
- Podcasts of stories or information
- Websites for information
- Online learning games
- PowerPoint shows
- Sound files (songs)
- More?

Are any of the criteria the same as for coursebook materials?

**Create an instrument for evaluating multi-media materials.**

Your textbook/coursebook evaluation instrument should be a good place to start.

Also look at the following material from Elissavet and Economides. (Elissavet & Economides, 2003) Skim through the article be to get some ideas for creating your instrument. Use a highlighter pen to mark the parts that may be useful to you. (Don't worry if you don't understand all of it.)

## Evaluation Instrument for Hypermedia Courseware

The criteria selected from the literature for every sector of the evaluation framework were used as the basis for the design of the initial version of the evaluation instrument. This initial version was disseminated for comments to academics, postgraduate students and researchers in the field of educational technology at the University of Macedonia, Greece. This effort was under a project run for two years (2000-2001) by the University of Macedonia called EPENDISI that aimed to train secondary schoolteachers in the use of ICTs in the classroom and also to build a database that contains information and resources on several evaluated educational software on almost all secondary school subjects. Taking into consideration the comments provided the instrument was revised and its final form is presented here.

The instrument has the form of a suitability scale questionnaire with five points; where figure (1) is assigned to strongly agree and figure (5) to strongly disagree. The scale also includes the figure (0) for those items in the questionnaire that cannot be evaluated, as they do not apply during the evaluation of particular hypermedia courseware. One hundred and twenty four items are included in the instrument and they cover both cases of stand-alone and web-based hypermedia courseware. The one hundred items refer to both stand-alone and web-based ones and the extra 24 items refer only to web-based ones, as these applications have some distinct characteristics regarding screen design and technical support and update processes. However, the instrument does not include items regarding the Social Acceptability because the criteria for such an evaluation cannot have universal application, as different educational systems have different beliefs on what is socially acceptable or unacceptable; therefore these criteria should be determined every time from the evaluators of each educational system.

The different sections of the instrument and the items included are presented next. It has to be noted at this point that the numeration of the items continues from each previous section in order to be more helpful to potential evaluators.

### A. Evaluation of the content

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. The content is reliable | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. The origin of information is known | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. The authors and the publishers are reputable | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Balanced presentation of information | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Bias-free viewpoints and images | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Balanced representation of cultural, ethnic and racial groups | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Correct use of grammar | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Current and error-free information | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Concepts and vocabulary relevant to learners' abilities | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Information relevant to age group curriculum | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. Information of sufficient scope and depth | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. Logical progression of topics | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. Variety of activities, with options for increasing complexity. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

## B. Organization and Presentation of the Content

### B.1 Pedagogical Parameters

#### B.1.1. Instructional Theories – Curriculum

| | |
|---|---|
| 14. The design of the hypermedia courseware is based on reliable learning and instructional theories and is directly related with the content of the curriculum. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. The application of the hypermedia courseware is possible in various topics of the curriculum | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. The application of the hypermedia courseware is possible on issues related with the curriculum | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. The hypermedia courseware can be used by learners alone, without the need of other instructional objects (i.e. book) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

**B.2.1.2. Navigation:** The Hypermedia Courseware includes:

| | |
|---|---|
| 45. Help key to get procedural information | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 46. Answer key for answering a question | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 47. Glossary key for seeing the definition of any term | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 48. Objective key for reviewing the course's objectives | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 49. Content map key for seeing a list of options available | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 50. Summary and review key for reviewing whole or parts of the lesson | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 51. Menu key for returning to the main page | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 52. Exit key, for exiting the program | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 53. Comment key for recording a learner's comment | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 54. Example key for seeing examples of an idea | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 55. Key for moving forward or backward in a lesson | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 56. Key for accessing the next lesson in a sequence | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

#### B.2.1.3. Feedback

| | |
|---|---|
| 57. The H.C. provides feedback immediately after a response | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 58. The placement of feedback is varied according to the level of objectives. (Provide feedback after each response for lower level objectives, and at the end of the session for the higher level ones) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 59. The H.C. provides feedback to verify the correctness of a response | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 60. For incorrect responses, information is given to the student about how to correct their answers, or hints to try again | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 61. The H.C. allows students to print out their feedback | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 62. The H.C. allows students to check their performance | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 63. The H.C. allows students to measure the time they consume in a certain on-line assignment | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

#### B.2.2 Screen Design

| | |
|---|---|
| 64. Screens are designed in a clear and understandable manner | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 65. The presentation of information can captivate the attention of students | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 66. The presentation of information can stimulate recall | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 67. The design does not overload student's memory | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 68. The use of space is according to the principles of screen design | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 69. The design uses proper fonts in terms of style and size | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 70. The use of text follows the principles of readability | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 71. The colour of the text follows the principles of readability | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 72. The number of colours in each screen is no more than six | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 73. There is consistency in the functional use of colours | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 74. The quality of the text, images, graphics and video is good | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 75. Presented pictures are relevant to the information included in the text | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 76. The use of graphics support meaningfully the text provided | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 77. A high contrast between graphics and background is retained. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 78. There is only one moving image (animation and/or video) each time on the same screen | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 79. Video enhance the presentation of information | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 80. Sound is of good quality and enhances the presentation of information | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 81. Sound is an alternative means of presenting information and not a necessity (except for music and language courses) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 82. The integration of presentation means is well coordinated | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

## C. Technical Support and Update Process

| | |
|---|---|
| 83. The content has durability over time | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 84. The content can be updated and/or modified with new knowledge that will appear soon after the purchase of the courseware | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 85. Technical coverage is offered from the production company | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 86. The courseware can be used in different platforms | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 87. Documentation exist regarding technical requirements for software and hardware needed | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 88. There are instructions for the installation and use of the courseware | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 89. There is a review of the courseware's contents for use by the instructor | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 90. Documentation exists regarding the use of the courseware in the classroom with teaching plans and related activities | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 91. The updating, modifying and adding procedures are relatively easy for the average user | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 92. The H.C. provides printing capabilities | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 93. The H.C. allows to keep (save) every step of the activities | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

## D. Evaluation of learning

### D.1 The process of learning

| | |
|---|---|
| 94. The H.C. is easy to learn; the user can quickly get some work done with it | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 95. The H.C. is efficient to use; once the user has learnt it, a high level of productivity is possible | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 96. The H.C. is easy to remember; the casual user is able to return to using it after some period without having to learn everything all over | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 97. The structure of the H.C. is comprehensive and the average performance learners can easily follow it | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 98. Users do not make many errors during the use of the H.C. or if they do so they can easily recover them | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 99. Users are subjectively satisfied by using the H.C | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 100. Users find the H.C. interesting | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

In cases when the **hypermedia courseware is web-based** then additionally the following items are examined as well for the Screen Design section.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. The speed of the program (download) is satisfactory | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Horizontal scrolling bars are not used | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. The hypermedia courseware includes local links in order to facilitate navigation | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. The H.C. is flexible and allows students to access all its contents | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. The first page is understandable | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. The H.C. in general has a distinct and easily recognized character | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. The information is organized into small and functional units | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. The H.C. includes alternative ways of presentation (e.g. with or without graphics) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. The H.C. includes content map | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. The H.C. includes search engine | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. The main navigation tools are always on display to increase speed of use and save from backtracking | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. The way that the navigation tools work is easily understandable from the students | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. Each learning unit is presented under the same design principles (consistency) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. External links are loaded in a separate window | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. The H.C. includes synchronous communication channels | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. The H.C. includes asynchronous communication channels | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

Moreover, for **web-based hypermedia courseware** the following items need examination for Technical Support and Update Process section.

| | |
|---|---|
| 17. The H.C. includes information regarding how often is updated | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. The H.C. includes information regarding its latest update | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. The links are stable | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. The frequency of malfunction is rare | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 21. The courseware includes mirror sites | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22. The content is updated regularly | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 23. The management and the maintenance of the site is satisfactory | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 24. The H.C. includes archives from previous editions | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

## Evaluation Process and Analysis of the Results

As shown from the items included in the instrument, during the evaluation of a hypermedia courseware application a number of people should be involved, i.e. content experts, instructional technologists, educators and interface designers. However, the items are quite straightforward and as a result the instrument can be used from educators with no particular knowledge on instructional technology, as a structured way of assisting them during the initial evaluation of a new piece of courseware that want to use in their teaching. After this initial stage, an evaluation with the students is required in order for educators to have a better understanding of the courseware's value and potential.

In order to analyse the results the evaluators have to consider that not all the factors have the same weight; and content is the most important of all. If the content does not meet the educator's criteria then there is no need to further evaluate the organization and the presentation of the educational material. However, to have an overall idea regarding the value of the courseware at the end of the evaluation process for a particular courseware the sum of the score in all items - except those resulted from the evaluation of the content - and its comparison with the total sum, that is the maximum of the marks in all items is required. Therefore, by excluding the 13 items for the evaluation of content the total sum for stand-alone applications is 435 (87*5) and 555 (111*5) for web-based ones (Table 1). These two figures need alteration in the case that not all the items were used during the evaluation, as some of them could not find application in certain pieces of hypermedia courseware. For example, if only 80 items are used then the total sum is 400 (80*5).

| Stand-alone | | Web-based | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total sum | Score | Total sum | Score |
| 435 | | 555 | |

*Table 1.* Assessment table for all the items of the evaluation instrument

When evaluating two or more courseware on the same subject, then the above figures can be a useful starting point in determining the most appropriate one. Yet, the most important part of the evaluation is the examination of the scores resulted from the evaluation of the four different sectors separately: a) content, b) presentation and organization of the content, c) technical support and update processes and finally, d) the evaluation of learning. The examination of these scores is important in order to secure the case that an application is technically sound but does not have a pedagogical value and vice versa. Table 2 can be used to compare the results.

| | Assessment of the Different Sectors | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Stand-alone | | Web-based | |
| | Total sum | Score | Total sum | Score |
| A. Content | 65 | | 65 | |
| B. Organisation and Presentation of the content | 340 | | 420 | |
| B1. Pedagogical Parameters | 120 | | 120 | |
| B2. Design factors | 225 | | 305 | |
| C. Technical Support and Update Process | 55 | | 95 | |
| D. Evaluation of learning | 35 | | 35 | |

*Table 2.* Assessment table for the different sectors of the evaluation instrument

It has to be mentioned that in order to ensure high quality of hypermedia courseware the evaluators' team (or the teacher) potentially could agree on some standards and set a threshold to the comparison of the results. For example, if the score resulted from the evaluation of an application is not equal with the two thirds of the total sum in all sectors then the application cannot be used for teaching and learning.

## Summary

This paper presented an evaluation instrument for hypermedia courseware that is designed according to an evaluation framework developed from the integration of a number of important issues emerged from research on instructional design and system evaluation the past fifteen years and is concerned with both social and practical acceptability of hypermedia courseware. One hundred and twenty four items are included in the instrument that has the form of a suitability scale questionnaire that are concerned with the evaluation of four main sectors: a) content, b) presentation and organization of the content, c) technical support and update processes and finally, d) the evaluation of learning.

Postgraduate students and secondary schoolteachers in the University of Macedonia, Greece, used the instrument during 2001, in order to evaluate hypermedia courseware on almost all secondary school subjects of the Greek curriculum. This effort was under a project run for two years (2000-2001) by the University of Macedonia, Greece called EPENDISI that aimed to train secondary schoolteachers in the use of ICTs in the classroom and also to build a database that contains information and resources on several evaluated educational software on secondary school subjects. During the evaluation period users of the instrument express their opinion on the instrument itself during debriefing sessions. In general, they agreed that it was easy to use as most of the items included are clear-cut and also the analysis of the results was a simple process that gives relatively quickly an overall idea of a particular courseware's value. Moreover, secondary schoolteachers stated that the first time they used the instrument they felt a bit frustrated as they had little knowledge on instructional design and they usually were consumers of the product rather than evaluators. However, after using the instrument for more than three times they had a better understanding of instructional design and system's evaluation and as a result they felt comfortable with the evaluation process. However, most of the instrument users stated that in order to determine the real value of a particular courseware evaluation with the end-users (i.e. students) is essential.

As research progresses in the field of hypermedia courseware evaluation new items can be added to the presented instrument. Therefore, it is a flexible tool that could be easily adapted in an educational environment and its improvement could be an ongoing process.

## Works cited in this topic:

Elissavet, G., & Economides, A. A. (2003). An evaluation Instrument for Hypermedia Courseware. *Educational Technology & Society, 6*(2), 31-44.

Harmer, J. (2007). The Practice of English Language Teaching. Pearson Longman.

McDonough, J., Shaw, C., & Masuhara, H. (2013). *Materials and Methods in ELT (3rd Ed).* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

# Topic 4: Selection and Adaptation

In topic 2 and 3 we already looked at factors to consider when we evaluate and select coursebooks and multimedia materials.

We will never find materials that are perfect for every class and every situation. Even the KSSR textbooks that are written especially for Malaysian primary schools will sometimes need to be adapted in the various ways listed in the chapter.

***Read the chapter below about adapting materials, and then answer the questions.***

## Principles and Procedures for Adapting Materials

(McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, 2013, pp. 69-78)

### 4.4 Principles and Procedures

The reasons for adapting that we have just looked at can be thought of as dealing with the modification of content, whether that content is expressed in the form of exercises and activities, texts, instructions, tests and so on. In other words, the focus is on what the materials contain, measured against the requirements of a particular teaching environment. That environment may necessitate a number of changes that will lead to greater appropriacy. This is most likely to be expressed in terms of a need to personalize, individualize or localize the content. We take 'personalizing' here to refer to increasing the relevance of content in relation to learners' interests and their academic, educational or professional needs. 'Individualizing' will address the learning styles both of individuals and of the members of a class working closely together. 'Localizing' takes into account the international geography of English language teaching and recognizes that what may work well in Mexico City may not do so in Edinburgh or in Kuala Lumpur. Madsen and Bowen (1978) include a further category of 'modernizing', and comment that not all materials show familiarity with aspects of current English usage, sometimes to the point of being not only out of date or misleading but even incorrect. Islam and Mares propose and explain some additional principles including 'Catering for all learner styles', 'providing for learner autonomy', and 'Making the language input more engaging' (Islam and Mares, 2003: 89-90). Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) demonstrate how incorporating systematic as well as impressionistic evaluation helps adaptation to be more principled and coherent. They also show how the principles of evaluation as part of the adaptation process can be different from those for selection and adoption purposes.

In this section we shall now look at questions of procedure - at the main techniques that can be applied to content in order to bring about change. There are a number of points to bear in mind. Firstly, this can be seen as another kind of matching process or 'congruence', where techniques are selected according to the aspect of the materials that needs alteration. Secondly, content can be adapted using a range of techniques; or, conversely, a single technique can be applied to different content areas. For example, a reading passage might be grammatically simplified or its subject matter modified, or it can be made shorter or broken down into smaller parts. The technique of simplification can be applied to texts, to explanations and so on. Thirdly, adaptation can have both quantitative and qualitative effects. In other words, we can simply change the amount of material, or we can change its methodological nature. Finally, techniques can be used individually or in

combination with others, so the scale of possibilities clearly ranges from straightforward to rather complex. All these points will be raised again in the discussion of individual techniques.

The techniques that we shall cover are as follows:

Adding, including expanding and extending
Deleting, including subtracting and abridging
Modifying, including rewriting and restructuring
Simplifying
Reordering

Each will be briefly introduced, and a few examples given. There are implications for all of them in Parts II and III of this book where we consider language skills and classroom methodology. Readers interested at this stage in more detailed examples of procedures for adaptation are referred to the 'Further reading' at the end of this chapter. The first references have broadly similar lists of techniques, and offer a large number of worked examples.

**Adding**

The notion of addition is, on the face of it, straightforward, implying that materials are supplemented by putting more into them, while taking into account the practical effect on time allocation. We can add in this simple, quantitative way by the technique of extending, and might wish to do this in situations such as the following:

- The materials contain practice in the pronunciation of minimal pairs (bit/bet, hat/hate, ship/chip) but not enough examples of the difficulties for learners with a particular L1. Japanese speakers may need more l/r practice, Arabic speakers more p/b, Spanish speakers more b/v and so on.
- A second reading passage parallel to the one provided is helpful in reinforcing the key linguistic features - tenses, sentence structure, vocabulary, cohesive devices – of the first text.
- Our students find the explanation of a new grammar point rather difficult, so further exercises are added before they begin the practice material.

The point to note here is that adding by extension is to supply more of the same. This means that the techniques are being applied within the methodological framework of the original materials: in other words, the model is not itself changed.

Another, more far-reaching perspective on addition of material can termed expanding. Consider these possibilities:

- The only pronunciation practice in the materials is on individual sounds and minimal pairs. However, this may be necessary but not sufficient. Our students need to be intelligible, and intelligibility entails more than articulating a vowel or a consonant correctly. Therefore, we decide to add some work on sentence stress and rhythm and on the related phenomenon of

'weak' and 'strong' forms in English. A further advantage is that students will be better able to understand naturally spoken English.

- If there is insufficient coverage of the skill of listening, the reading passage provided may also be paralleled by the provision of listening comprehension material, using the same vocabulary and ideas but presented through a different medium, making sure that it is authentic in terms of the spoken language.
- Although the new grammar material is important and relevant, the addition of a discussion section at the end of the unit will help to reinforce and contextualize the linguistic items covered, particularly if it is carefully structured so that the most useful points occur 'naturally'.

These kinds of additions are not just extensions of an existing aspect of content. They go further than this by bringing about a qualitative as well as a quantitative change. Expanding, then, as distinct from extending, adds to the methodology by moving outside it and developing it in new directions, for instance, by putting in a different language skill or a new component. This can be thought of as a change in the overall system. Note that there are some minor terminological issues between writers on adaptation techniques (e.g. McGrath, 2002; Islam and Mares, 2003; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2004). For example, McGrath advocates that creative addition involving qualitative changes should be called 'exploitation'. What matters, however, is not so much the art of categorization but that teachers can make creative use of the techniques described in their own adaptations.

Finally in this section, it is worth pointing out that additions do not always have to be made onto the end of something. A new facet of material or methodology can be introduced before it appears in the framework of the coursebook. For example, a teacher may prepare the ground for practice in an aspect of grammar or communicative function determined by the syllabus through a 'warm-up' exercise involving learners talking about themselves and their everyday lives.

**Deleting or omitting**

Deletion is clearly the opposite process to that of addition, and as such needs no further clarification as a term. However, although material is taken out rather than supplemented, as a technique it can be thought of as ‘the other side of the same coin'. We saw in the previous section that material can be added both quantitatively (extending) and qualitatively (expanding): the same point applies when a decision is taken to omit material. Again, as with addition, the technique can be used on a small scale, for example, over part of an exercise, or on the larger scale of a whole unit of a coursebook.

We shall refer to the most straightforward aspect of reducing the length of material as subtracting from it. The following kinds of requirement, might apply:

- Our pronunciation exercises on minimal pairs contain too much general material. Since our students all have the same mother tongue and do not make certain errors, many of the exercises are inappropriate. Arabic speakers, for example, will be unlikely to have much difficulty with the l/r distinction.
- Although a communicative coursebook has been selected as relevant in our situation, some of the language functions presented are unlikely to be required by learners who will

probably not use their English in the target language environment. Such functions as 'giving directions' or 'greetings' may be useful; 'expressing sympathy' or 'ordering things' may not.

Deletion in these cases, as with extending, does not have a significant impact on the overall methodology. The changes are greater if material is not only subtracted, but also what we shall term abridged:

- The materials contain a discussion section at the end of each unit. However, our learners are not really proficient enough to tackle this adequately, since they have learnt the language structures but not fluency in their use. The syllabus and its subsequent examination does not leave room for this kind of training.
- Students on a short course are working with communicative materials because of their instrumental reasons for choosing to learn English; some of them wish to travel on international business, others plan to visit a target language country as tourists. The lengthy grammatical explanations accompanying each functional unit are therefore felt to be inappropriate.

Addition and deletion often work together, of course. Material may be taken out and then replaced with something else. Where the same kind of material is substituted, as for instance one set of minimal pairs for another, the internal balance of the lesson or the syllabus is not necessarily altered. The methodological change is greater when, for example, grammar practice is substituted after the omission of an inappropriate communicative function, or when a reading text is replaced by a listening passage. This takes us directly into the next section.

**Modifying**

'Modification' at one level is a very general term in the language applying to any kind of change. In order to introduce further possibilities for adaptation, we shall restrict its meaning here to an internal change in the approach or focus of an exercise or other piece of material. It is a rather important and frequently used procedure that, like all other techniques, can be applied to any aspect of 'content'. It can be subdivided under two related headings. The first of these is rewriting, when some of the linguistic content needs modification; the second is restructuring, which applies to classroom management. Let us look at some examples of each of these in turn. You will undoubtedly be able to think of many more.

***Rewriting*** Currently the most frequently stated requirement for a change in focus is for materials to be made 'more communicative'. This feeling is voiced in many teaching situations where textbooks are considered to lag behind an understanding of the nature of language and of students' linguistic and learning needs. Rewriting, therefore, may relate activities more closely to learners' own backgrounds and interests, introduce models of authentic language, or set more purposeful, problem-solving tasks where the answers are not always known before the teacher asks the question. Islam and Mares (2003) provide an extensive discussion and examples for making textbooks more learning-centred through rewriting.

It is quite common for coursebooks to place insufficient emphasis on listening comprehension, and for teachers to feel that more material is required. If accompanying audio material is either not

available, or cannot be purchased in a particular teaching context, then the teacher can rewrite a reading passage and deliver it orally, perhaps by taking notes from the original and then speaking naturally to the class from those notes.

Sometimes new vocabulary is printed just as a list, with explanatory notes and perhaps the mother tongue equivalent. We may wish to modify this kind of presentation by taking out the notes and writing an exercise that helps students to develop useful and generalized strategies for acquiring new vocabulary. Equally a text may have quite appropriate language material for a specific group, but may not 'match' in terms of its cultural content. For example, a story about an English family with English names, living in an English town, eating English food and enjoying English hobbies can in fact be modified quite easily by making a number of straightforward surface changes.

A last example here is that of end-of-text comprehension questions.

Some of these are more like a test, where students can answer by 'lifting' the information straight from the text. These questions can be modified so that students have to interpret what they have read or heard, or relate different sections of the text to each other. Chapter 6 looks at these kinds of tasks.

The point was made in the introduction to this chapter that content changes are not always written down. Adaptation of linguistic content may just require rewording by the teacher as an oral explanation.

***Restructuring*** For many teachers who are required to follow a coursebook, changes in the structuring of the class are sometimes the only kind of adaptation possible. For example, the materials may contain role-play activities for groups of a certain size. The logistics of managing a large class (especially if they all have the same L1) are complex from many points of view, and it will probably be necessary to assign one role to a number of pupils at the same time. Obviously the converse - where the class is too small for the total number of roles available - is also possible if perhaps less likely.

Sometimes a written language explanation designed to be read and studied can be made more meaningful if it is turned into an interactive exercise where all students participate. For instance, it is a straightforward manner to ask learners to practise certain verb structures in pairs (say the present perfect: 'Have you been to/done X?'; or a conditional: 'What would you do if . . . ?'), and it can be made more authentic by inviting students to refer to topics of direct interest to themselves.

Modifying materials, then, even in the restricted sense in which we have used the term here, is a technique with a wide range of applications. It refers essentially to a 'modality change', to a change in the nature or focus of an exercise, or text or classroom activity.

**Simplifying**

Strictly speaking, the technique of simplification is one type of modification, namely a 'rewriting' activity. Since it has received considerable attention in its own right, it is considered here as a separate procedure. Many elements of a language course can be simplified, including the instructions and explanations that accompany exercises and activities, and even the visual layout of

material so that it becomes easier to see how different parts fit together. It is worth noting in passing that teachers are sometimes on rather dangerous ground, if a wish to 'simplify' grammar or speech in the classroom leads to a distortion of natural language. For example, oversimplification of a grammatical explanation can be misleadingly one-sided or partial: to tell learners that adverbs are always formed by adding'-ly' does not help them when they come across 'friendly' or 'brotherly', nor does it explain why ,hardly, cannot be formed from 'hard'. A slow style of speech might result in the elimination of the correct use of sentence stress and weak forms, leaving learners with no exposure to the natural rhythms of spoken English.

However, the main application of this technique has been to texts, most often to reading passages. Traditionally the emphasis has been on changing various sentence-bound elements to match the text more closely to the proficiency level of a particular group of learners. Thus, for instance, we can simplify according to

**1. Sentence structure.** Sentence length is reduced, or a complex sentence is rewritten as a number of simpler ones, for example, by the replacement of relative pronouns by nouns and pronouns followed by a main verb.

**2. Lexical content**, so that the number of new vocabulary items is controlled by reference to what students have already learned.

**3. Grammatical structures**. For instance, passives are converted to actives; simple past tense to simple present; reported into direct speech.

These kinds of criteria form the basis of many of the published graded 'simplified readers' available for English language teaching.

Simplification has a number of further implications. Firstly it is possible that any linguistic change, lexical or grammatical, will have a corresponding stylistic effect, and will therefore change the meaning or intention of the original text. This is particularly likely with literary material, of course, but in principle it can apply to any kind of text where the overall 'coherence' can be affected. Widdowson (1979) goes into these arguments in more detail.

Secondly some teaching situations require attention to the simplification of content when the complexity of the subject matter is regarded as being too advanced. This could be the case for some scientific explanations, for example, or for material too far removed from the learners' own life experiences.

Thirdly, simplification can refer not only to content, but also to the ways in which that content is presented: we may decide not to make any changes to the original text, but instead to lead the learners through it in a number of graded stages. We shall come back to this notion of 'task complexity' in the chapters on reading and listening comprehension.

**Reordering**

This procedure, the final one discussed in this section, refers to the possibility of putting the parts of a coursebook in a different order. This may mean adjusting the sequence of presentation within a

unit, or taking units in a different sequence from that originally intended. There are limits, of course, to the scale of what teachers can do, and too many changes could result, unhelpfully, in an almost complete reworking of a coursebook. A reordering of material is appropriate in the following kinds of situations:

- Materials typically present 'the future' by 'will' and 'going to'. However, for many learners, certainly at intermediate level and above, it is helpful to show the relationship between time reference and grammatical tense in a more accurate way. In this example we would probably wish to include the simple present and the present continuous as part of the notion of 'futurity', perhaps using *'Next term begins on 9 September'* or *'She retires in 2015*' as illustrations.
- The length of teaching programme may be too short for the coursebook to be worked through from beginning to end. It is likely in this case that the language needs of the students will determine the sequence in which the material will be taken. There is little point in working systematically through a textbook if key aspects of grammar vocabulary or communicative function are never reached. For instance, if the learners are adults due to study in the target language environment, it will be necessary to have covered several aspects of the tense system and to have introduced socially appropriate functions and frequently used vocabulary.
- Finally, 'reordering' can include separating items of content from each other as well as regrouping them and putting them together. An obvious example is a lesson on a particular language function felt to contain too many new grammar points for the present proficiency level of the learners.

### 4.5 A Framework for Adaptation

There are clear areas of overlap among the various techniques discussed in this section, but it would be beyond the scope of this chapter to try to cover all the combinations and permutations. The intention here has been to offer a workable framework into which the main possibilities for adaptation can be fitted (not to offer some 'how to do' recipes, which are well covered elsewhere). Figure 4.2 shows how the considerations on which the principle of adaptation is based fit together:

1 **Choose** some materials with which you are familiar, or any others you would like to work with. (If you do not have any to hand, look back at the unit reprinted at the end of Chapter 2.)

2 **Decide** on any features of the material you would like to change because it is not entirely suitable for your own teaching situation.

3 Referring as much as possible to the techniques we have been discussing, draw up some **suggestions** for how to adapt the material to achieve greater 'congruence'.

4 If possible, **discuss** with other colleagues the reasons for your decisions.

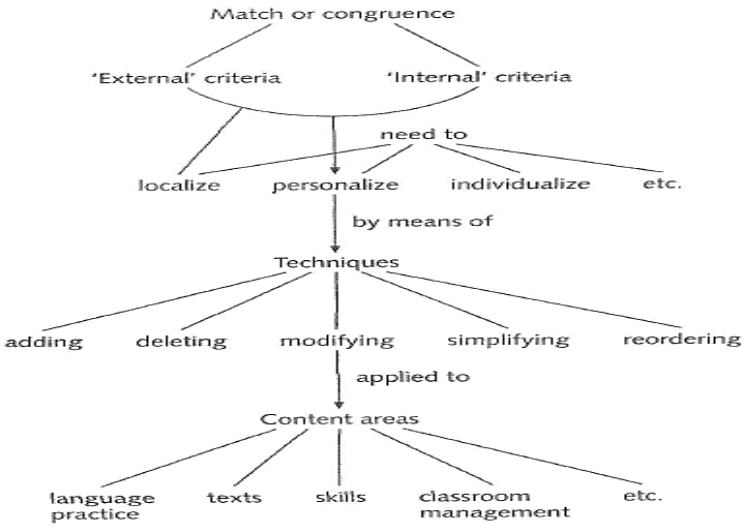



Figure 4.2 a framework for adaptation

## 4.6 Conclusion

At one end of the scale, adaptation is a very practical activity carried out mainly by teachers in order to make their work more relevant to the learners with whom they are in day-to-day contact. It is, however, not just an exercise done in self-contained methodological isolation. Like all our activity as teachers, it is related, directly and indirectly, to a wider range of professional concerns. Adaptation is linked to issues of administration and the whole management of education, in so far as it derives from decisions taken about material to be adopted. Further, the need to adapt is one consequence of the setting of objectives in a particular educational context. Finally adaptation can only be carried out effectively if it develops from an understanding of the possible design features of syllabuses and materials.

This chapter completes our discussion of the principles on which materials and methods are based. In Part II, we shall show how some of these principles have been expressed in relation to the concept of language skill.

## Questions for 'Principles and Procedures for Adapting Materials':

1. What has been the main focus when looking at reasons for adapting materials? .....

.....

2. What three changes might the teaching environment necessitate to lead to greater appropriacy?

.....

3. What does each of these refer or relate to?

Personalise: .....

Individualise: .....

Localise: .....

**Adding:**

4. What is adding by extension? .....

5. What kinds of change does expanding bring about? .....

.....

6. What does McGrath call this kind of creative addition? .....

**Deleting or omitting**

7. What is meant by subtraction of materials? .....

.....

8. What is meant by materials being abridged? .....

.....

**Modifying**

9. What does the term modification refer to in this article *?* .....

.....

10. What is the meaning of rewriting? .....

.....

11. What is the meaning of restructuring? .....

.....

**Modifying: Rewriting**

12. Suggest three things that rewriting may involve:

.....

.....

.....

13. What do coursebooks commonly place insufficient emphasis on? .....

.....

14. What may adaptation of linguistic content require? .....

.....

**Modifying: Restructuring**

15. Give an example of restructuring that relates to class size? .....

.....

**Simplifying**

16. Name some elements of a course that can be safely simplified. .....

.....

17. What can result if teachers try to 'simplify' grammar or speech? .....

.....

18. How can we change sentence-bound elements to simplify according to:

a) Sentence structure: .....

.....

b) Lexical content: .....

.....

c) Grammatical structure: .....

.....

19. **Simplify the following story** for young Malaysians to read using any or all of the points above:

**The Real Spiderman**

Alain Robert has climbed over 70 of the world's tallest buildings, including the Empire state Building in New York, the Eiffel Tower in France and the 508-metre Taipei 101 Tower in Taiwan. It's not surprising people call him 'The Real Spiderman'.

Alain began climbing on cliffs near where he lived in Valence, France. One day, when he was 12, he got home and realised that he'd forgotten his keys. So he climbed up the side of the building and into his family's flat through the window – which was eight floors up. That was when he decided to become a professional climber. (Redston & Cunningham, 2006)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Reordering:**

20. What may 'reordering' of the parts of a coursebook mean? .....

.....

21. Put these sections in an order that seems appropriate:

| Number | Topic | Learning Areas |
|---|---|---|
| | "Being Healthy" | Modals (must, should) |
| | "Having Fun" | Leisure activities, possessive pronouns |
| | "My Cousins, My neighbour" | Adjectives, describing people |
| | "It's story time" | Simple past tense |
| | "Fresh fruits" | Colours, giving instructions (imperative) |
| | "Things I do" | Routines, telling time |
| | "From the sea" | Simple present tense |
| | "Pet's world" | Pet vocabulary, Verbs |
| | "People around me" | Occupations, 'this' and 'that' |
| | "I see numbers" | Counting, dates, times |
| | "A ride in the safari park" | Introduction to prepositions |
| | "In school" | Giving Directions, using prepositions |

Reasons

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Works cited in this topic

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Pearson Longman.

McDonough, J., Shaw, C., & Masuhara, H. (2013). *Materials and Methods in ELT (3rd Ed).* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Redston, C., & Cunningham, G. (2006). Superheroes: The Real Spiderman. In *Face to Face: Intermediate Student's Book* (p. 97). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# Topic 5: Technical skills and knowledge for producing materials

Most of the time the exact materials for the exact lessons the teacher wants to present are not commercially available – or if they are, they are way too pricey for a humble teacher's budget. Part of the fun of teaching is producing customised materials in order to present lively engaging lessons for our young students.

## Selection of raw materials

The bookshop and stationery shop is a favourite haunt of many a primary school teacher who loves to create beautiful display charts and cards for practice. Many teachers save recyclable cardboard boxes, packets, and pictures or pretty paper whenever they find them.

Students brainstorm in their discussion groups where they could find materials for the following classroom activities – some suggestions are offered here:

**Posters/Displays:** .....

.....

**Making Puppets**: .....

.....

.....

**Creating storybooks**: .....

.....

.....

**Creating Big Books**.....

.....

.....

**Drama**: .....

.....

**Craft materials**: .....

.....

**Play Dough**.....

.....

**Realia**.....

.....

**Worksheets:** .....

.....

**NOTE**: teachers need to be proficient in the use of WORD in order to create quality worksheets. Do you know how to create worksheets? Fill in the table, add any extras you think of at the bottom.

Can you:

| Skill | I can do this | I'm not sure how to | I don't think I need to |
|---|---|---|---|
| Insert pictures | | | |
| Edit pictures | | | |
| Insert a screen shot | | | |
| Insert clip art | | | |
| Insert Word Art | | | |
| Insert a text box | | | |
| Insert shapes | | | |
| Insert a table | | | |
| Edit a table | | | |
| Add borders | | | |
| Change font/size | | | |
| Add lines for writing | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

***Discuss with your group. Help each other with skills anyone may not yet have.***

## Assembling of raw materials

So you have acquired / purchased all sorts of stationary materials and now you are ready to create teaching aids.

Here are some ideas about creating a **Teaching Pack** (notes from the Songs and Poetry unit).

### Creating a Teaching Pack

All teacher trainees are asked to prepare a teaching kit before heading out on Practicum. Some amazing kits have been created, but here are a few of the fundamental problems that have been observed in some of them:

#### *K.I.S.S*

Everyone knows that these letters stand for "Keep It Simple Stupid" – right? 'Complicated' and 'Great' are not the same thing! That doesn't mean it can't be big, and colourful, and interesting ... just avoid complicated.

#### *Check Everything*

A great many of the kits have basic grammar and spelling errors in the songs and poems. How can people who are going to be teachers of English make these basic mistakes? One of the easiest ways to check something is to type it into WORD, especially if it is an original work. Make sure that the language setting on the tool bar at the bottom is set to 'English', whether UK, USA or Australia – but NOT 'English (Malaysia)'! Then observe the red, green and blue underlines. They are not *always* correct, but more often than many of us!

#### *Use Lower Case*

When we learn to read, we use the overall shape of each word as a clue. Only words written in lower case have this shape. Capital letters just look like a rectangle – 'BLOCK CAPITALS'. So anything that you want the children to practice reading should be in lower case – except the capital letter at the beginning when it is appropriate.

#### *Big Enough*

Sometimes when you are sitting at your desk and you create a picture it seems really big on A4 paper. However, if you put that same picture at the front of the classroom it looks pitifully small from the back. Possibly the best way for children in a classroom to view a picture is with an LCD projector because it is not only large but also well-lit. Failing that (as few Primary School classrooms come equipped with LCD projectors!) the pictures need to be really (really) big. If A4 is as big as possible, then maybe the children need to be brought down to the front of the class (bring their chairs, or sit on a mat) for the song/poem/story. (A picture which is smaller than A4 should not even be considered.)

#### *Durable or Disposable*

If you put a lot of work into your teaching materials, you don't want them to be destroyed by many small grubby hands, and you will probably be reluctant to hand them over to the children – each and every one of whom wants to have 'a go'. You have two choices: Either create your teaching aids durable enough to withstand many, many uses – for instance, laminate everything, or make everything cheap and disposable. Have plenty of copies so everyone can have one.

### *No child left out*

If there is an activity, every child wants a turn. Make sure you have sufficient copies / items / materials so that every child has an opportunity to participate. This is something to consider when planning your lesson – if it is going to be too difficult to supply enough for everyone, choose a different activity, or work out how to do it in pairs / groups and share.

### *Hit the ground with your feet running*

At the start of your lesson, you need to "hit the ground with your feet running". (This is an expression that refers to some animals that are literally born ready to run away from danger.) You need to be ready to start your lesson straight away, and the class should never have to sit and wait while you prepare things – it is not only impolite on your part, but you will straightaway start losing control of the class.

So if there is something that you have to do such as putting up materials or laying things out, give the children something to be busy with while you do it. Plan ahead, or else plan how to get the children to do it with you or for you.

### *Don't waste your time on the packaging*

Some trainee teachers produce beautiful Teaching Kits - lovely wrapping paper, a clever container or box - but there is very little of value inside. There is no harm in having a beautifully packaged kit, but only if we still have time to put the good stuff inside it. Work on the insides first, and wrap it up nicely if you still have time.

### *Keep Focussed on the Children*

Some kits are prepared simply to impress the lecturer who will be marking it. Stay focussed on the children and the lessons you are planning.

### *Kids need to DO something*

Make sure there are activities for the children to do, and not just listening to you. As well as singing, moving, and even playing something as a percussion instrument, it's good to let them create something physical such as drawing, colouring, origami, puppet-making, play-dough ... if possible steer away from reading and writing exercises.

### *Allow for low tech*

Here at the IPG we get used to having lots of technology available to us, but out in the schools these things are not always readily available. If you plan to use technology, make sure you have a low-tech option available too.

### *Use your body and your voice*

In Speaking and Listening and Language Arts lessons, you want the children to learn the songs / poems / stories and sing or say them too. You are the model; you need to use your voice and your body. It's ok to use video and audio assistance – some of the time – but don't leave it at that. Transmit your enthusiasm to the children by putting your voice and your body on the line. If you feel you are doing a bad job, once one or more of the children get the hang of it, they can stand alongside you and hep or even take the lead for you.

***Avoid using reading and writing***

For Speaking and Listening lessons, and most Language Arts lessons, the children do not need to be able to read the words of a song/poem/story in order to learn from it. In fact, educationally it is better to start by just listening without the 'help' of written words, just a picture or some other visual aid.

---

Considering all that you have learnt so far, you would soon realise that as a classroom teacher you need to be able to create games that are best suited to the needs of your class. There are many types and variations of games.

Read the notes below, and then answer the questions.

## Devising Language Games

by Ruth Wickham, ELTF at IPGKDRI.

**The Purpose of Language Games:**

- **Increase Motivation** – keep students interested and happy, competition motivates any students to try harder (and maybe there is a 'prize' at the end).
- **Make Language Learning Authentic** – they are practicing language for a particular situation, not just doing an exercise.
- **Thinking in English** rather than translating. In the middle of the game they need to come up with a fairly automatic response, there isn't time for translating.

**Some Types of Language Games**

There are many types of language games, all of which are adaptable to many situations. Some games can fit into several of these categories.) These include:

**1. Board games:** There are so many different board games available, you can easily make your own, and there are even templates available for making your own. A board game can be played with a partner, or in a group, or as a class with the 'board' drawn on the white/black-board.

- Students need counters – they can draw their own characters on paper/card, or use buttons/shells/rocks/whatever – or you can use magnetic buttons or 'tack' a piece of cardboard on the board, or just draw the counters as they move.
- There can be traps along the way – like the 'snakes' in 'Snakes and Ladders' – and rewards – like the 'ladders' – along the way.
- It's good if there is a language task each time they move along – they have to say something when they land on a square – with possibly a penalty (don't move/move back) if they fail.
- You need some kind of randomizer – a dice, or one/two coins, or some other clever method.

**2. Card games:** This can involve using

- Playing Cards as a randomizer (each number has a meaning, requires a particular response),
- specially designed Language Cards (a word or sentence or letter on each) for games designed like 'Snap' (turn over cards one at a time and say 'snap' when you see two the same, or two that match in some way), or 'Happy Families' (players try to collect sets of cards).
- Regular classroom Flash Cards with a word / sentence / letter on each. As a whole class activity – besides holding them up and asking the class to call out the answer –it can become a competitive or cooperative game. Individual/pairs/groups/teams of students can be asked to match the card(s), put them in a particular order, find the correct card from a display or heap, throw the card into a hoop or bin, guess what is on the card, draw or describe a picture for another to draw … the list is endless. (The cards may need to be laminated to make them durable, or just accept that you need to keep making more – especially as once the game is played many of the words will be 'known' and new ones will be needed anyway.)

**3. Dice games:** Obviously dice can be used for randomizing movements of counters in board games and the like, but they can be used for other specific language ideas as well.

- Create a largish dice out of card, and write a question word (who, what, why, where, when, how) - or other prompt for a different aspect of learning - on each face. Students / pairs / groups / teams have to use the appropriate prompt after throwing the dice.
- More than one dice can be used – maybe with a different letter on each, or a noun on one and adjective on another, or a word on one and an instruction on another.
- You can get dice with a lot more than 6 sides, for instance one for each letter of the alphabet – if you get one of these, there are obvious games you can play.

**4. Word-Making Games:** Commercial games such as 'Scrabble' and 'Boggle' can be played in the classroom in pairs/groups if you have enough sets. You could have several different games and groups rotate in different sessions. This type of game can also be played using cards with letters on (instead of the little tiles in something like Scrabble) and words can be formed on the floor or a desktop.

- Whole class games at the black/white-board can also be devised along these lines with a pool of letters that they need to make into words, or making little words out of a big word.

**5. Circle games** are especially relevant for young children but can also be used with good results with older children (and even adults!) In the circle it is easier for the teacher to maintain control of the game, and develops cooperation and community feel among the participants. If the class is too big, or the space not suitable, the game can be played in 2 or more smaller groups, although this is harder to maintain control of, and loses some of the community feel.

- The game can involve a song/chant which everyone joins in and then each participant in turn has to sing/say something.

- The game can involve changing seat/position in response to certain prompts – this can for part of the reward/penalty. There can be one less seat than the number of participants.
- There are many possibilities for cumulative circle games where one person makes a statement mentioning one object (such as "I went shopping and I bought … an egg") and subsequent participants have to repeat all previous items and then add one of their own. The game is cooperative, and keeps going as long as the group can manage it.
- Some examples of good circle games are "I like People Who …" (where participants who fit the description have to quickly change places, and the slowest one ends up standing and making the next statement) and "What are you doing?" (where participants each mime the action from the previous participant while naming a different action for the following participant to mime).
- Games like "who stole the cookie" – where participants pat knees/clap/click a rhythm and pass turns by calling someone's name – can be adapted to use other parts of language. Students can even each wear a word on a flashcard to be referred to and respond to.

**6. Role play games** are an obvious extension to conversational/speaking topics. These can be easily set up as a 'line-up role-play' where each student is part of a group which plays a particular role.

- For example: In a shopping role-play some students are sellers and some are buyers. Sellers need to have a list/pictures/objects to sell, and buyers have money and shopping lists. It can become competitive as individuals/pairs/groups endeavour to buy/sell a certain amount first.
- Other simple role-plays could include various community places/events such as doctor's rooms, post office, travel agent, hotel lobby, library, marketplace, student services.

**7. Discussion games** can be another type of role-play.

- For example: "Alibi". In this game a student/pair/group are accused of a crime and have to get together to clarify their 'story' of exactly where they were and what they were doing at the time of the 'crime' including as many details as possible. Other class members in pairs/groups are the police who will separate and question each of the suspects who rotate around the groups, and see if their stories match.
- Another discussion game can involve reading two texts (fiction or non-fiction). Half of the class reads one text and the other half reads the other. Then the papers are removed, and the students pair up with someone who read the other text. Each carefully tells their partner everything they can remember about their text. Then they swap to another partner who read the other text, and they are given a list of questions with which to test their new partner on what they have been told.

**8. 'Game Show' and Quiz games** can be a great whole class learning activity. Examples are

- 'Typhoon' (where each team has to answer a question and can then choose a box from the grid. The box may contain points, or an opportunity to 'blow away' someone else's points),
- 'Jeopardy' (modelled on the TV show of the same name),
- 'Wheel of Fortune' (from the TV show), or a similar 'Hangman'.

- All of these simply create a framework for winning points so that the students work together with their team and are motivated.
- 'Celebrity Heads' can also be played by the whole class with 2/3/4 … students at the front facing the class with a famous name worn (as a crown, maybe) around their heads so that they can't see it (or it can be written carefully on the board behind them as long as they don't turn round to look …) They take it in turns to ask questions of the class in order to discover who they are. (They must be yes/no questions, and a 'yes' response means they can then ask another before their turn ends).

**9. Drawing games:** One well-known game is 'Pictionary' where one student/pair/team is shown a word/phrase/sentence and they have to draw something until the other student/pair/team guesses what it is. There are lots of ways to adapt this to learning objectives.

- To give practice in describing, a simple picture or drawing can be pinned to the back of a chair so that a person at the white/black-board cannot see it but the class can. They then have to explain to the draw-er what to draw. There can be rules about who explains, or they can just call out. There can be two draw-ers, and it can be made into a competition.

**10. Vocabulary games:**

- In the game of "Scattergories" players have to come up with vocabulary words which start with a particular letter. First of all select your categories (eg an animal, a fruit, a vegetable, a form of transport, a country, a body part, …etc). Then devise a method for choosing the letter – you can ask a student to say the alphabet silently in their head and someone says "Stop!" and the letter they are on is the one you use – or any method that works. Players/pairs/groups then rush to choose a word for each, and when the first one shouts to say they have finished then everyone must stop (or use some other time limit). Players get (for example) 5 points for any correct word no one else has, and only one point if someone else has the same word. Maybe swap papers to let someone else mark so less cheating!
- In the game "taboo" you need to prepare papers/cards with a target word (or phrase) and a number (usually 3) of 'taboo' words. The team/player has to explain the target word so that the other team/player can guess it, but is not allowed to mention the taboo words (all of which are the most obvious important words to the explanation.) Students/groups can be set the task of creating taboo cards for a future game.
- Bingo (below) is an excellent way to learn a body of vocabulary.

**11. Competitions:** Not all 'games' are competitions; sometimes the students must endeavour to cooperate rather than compete. Even in a competition, however, if the students are working in pairs/groups, they are still learning cooperation within their team. Anything can be made into a competition. "Let's see who can ……. the _____est" makes any simple activity into a game or competition. It is good to make sure that you don't do this all of the time, or maybe sometimes surprise them by going for the 'slowest' or 'smallest' so that they work carefully, and so that anyone has the possibility of being a winner.

**12. Racing / Running / Jumping Games:** Where children are the students, sometimes they just have too much spare energy. With care and planning, it is possible to play educational language games that allow them to run off a little of that energy, without doing damage to themselves, other students, or school property!

**13. Singing / Chanting Games:** Many of these are 'circle games', but singing and chanting games do not always have to be done in a circle. As a listening/speaking activity students can 'fill in the gaps' in a song once they have learnt it. The teacher/another student/a group can sing the song and stop and various students/groups have to carry on or fill in the words.

**14. Games of Chance:** Everybody loves 'Bingo', and this game can be adapted so many ways. There are programmes available on the Internet where you can enter (9/16/)25 words, and the programme will randomise the words so that every card contains the same words in a different order. Or you can add more than the required number, and then the students won't be sure if the word is on their card or not. There are other ways to play, too, where the caller does not read the words that are on the cards, but a clue or question for which the answers are in the grid on the cards. Students will need some form of counters to use as bingo markers (sunflower seeds work well – but you have to decide whether the students are allowed to eat them), rather than marking the cards, so that they can play the game several times over.

**15. Story Games:** Games can be created around well-known / traditional / recently studied stories, especially if there is a repetitive action or character to be named. Listeners must wait for a particular cue, and then perform a specific action. An example could be: the teacher tells the story of the 3 little pigs. Participants/groups are assigned particular characters (mother pig, 1st little pig, big bad wolf etc.) The group sits in a circle around the storyteller, and as the story is told, if their character is mentioned they must stand, turn around, and sit down again. The storyteller holds a (flimsy, harmless) roll of paper and attempts to swipe the backside of students as they turn. The story as it is told can be varied to have (for example) Mother Pig popping up repeatedly and unexpectedly. Alternatively, (for example) a student could tell the story, several students are assigned each character, and must swap places and risk losing their seat … the one left standing must continue the story.

**Rewards and Penalties**

In most cases, the chance to play the game is reward enough for young students (and even older ones)!

Within the game there must be a structure for some kind of reward to encourage both competition and cooperation, and the sense of penalty, some impending doom, adds to the excitement and urgency of the game. It is important that the penalty does not lead to embarrassment and belittling, that 'winners' and 'losers' both walk away happy, and that all students learn something whether they realise it or not.

The element of chance, along with the need to perform in some way, increases the fun and reduces the embarrassment of losing – after all it could happen to anyone.

If the class seems to be becoming jaded, even with games to play, sometimes an actual reward can be added – something insubstantial like being allowed to leave the room first at the end, or being clapped by the other team, or a small treat. If the same game is played again, make sure that the teams are mixed around.

---

**Questions for 'Devising Language games':**

1. What are three important reasons for using Language Games?

- .....
- .....
- .....

2. What 3 ways can you play board games in the classroom?

- .....
- .....
- .....

3. Explain how to make/find and use these 4 necessities for a **board game**:

- counters: .....

.....

- traps and rewards: .....

.....

- language tasks: .....

.....

- randomiser: .....

.....

4. How can you use regular playing cards in the classroom? .....

5. What are two games you can play with Language Cards containing words or phrases?

- .....
- .....

6. Name 5 ways (your own ideas or from the text) that you could use 'Flash Cards' in the classroom.

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

7. How can you use a dice to teach question words?

.....

.....

8. How could you use more than one dice?

.....

.....

9. Name two word-making games that can be adapted in various ways.

.....

10. What is so good about circle games? .....

.....

.....

11. Give five examples (from your own ideas or from the text) of circle games.

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

12. Name four possible community places or events (from your own ideas or from the text) that could become a 'line-up role-play'.

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

13. What language would students especially learn / practise with the discussion game 'Alibi'?

.....

.....

14. What would the discussion game 'Two texts' help students to learn / practise?

.....

.....

15. What are the advantages of 'Game Show' type games?

.....

.....

16. Give examples (from your own ideas or from the text) of three Game Shows.

- .....
- .....
- .....

17. What do drawing games give practice in?

.....

.....

18. What is a well-known commercial version of a drawing game?

.....

19. What do players have to come up with in the vocabulary game 'Scattergories'?

.....

.....

20. How do you prepare for a game of 'Taboo'?

.....

.....

21. What do the players have to do in a game of 'Taboo'?

.....

.....

22. What game is an excellent way to learn a body of vocabulary? .....

23. Which is better, competition or cooperation?

.....

.....

24. Why is it good to have energetic games sometimes?

.....

25. Give an example of a game to play with a song.

.....

## Activity

### 1. Assembling raw materials

Work as a group to design at least one of each of the following teaching materials. You could actually create each object, or just write / prepare a presentation (not necessarily PowerPoint – be creative) to demonstrate how you would / could do it.

It might be worthwhile deciding on a topic/lesson/subject-area and age-group before you start.

#### *a. Board Display*

Design a display for a backboard or white board for teaching a lesson on a particular topic (maybe choose a topic from the KSSR text book). There is not generally time before a lesson to get everything onto the board, so plan what you will add at each point in the lesson (and parts you may need to erase as you go). You may include a game and/or opportunities for the children to add something.

#### *b. Flash Cards*

Design a set of flashcards to be used with a game. They may have something different on each side (e.g. a picture on one side and word on the other). Consider how big they would be, and what materials you will use and where you would obtain the materials. Explain how you would play the game.

#### *c. Worksheet*

Design a worksheet to suit a particular topic. Include a picture to colour in, and some words to write or copy (maybe in answer to a question. Create the worksheet yourself, do not download it!

#### *d. Game*

Design a game to be played during a lesson related to a particular topic. Describe all of the materials you need to involve all children in your game and explain the rules and purpose of the game.

### *e. Language Arts lesson using Play Dough*

Find out how to make (not buy) cooked OR uncooked play dough in several colours. Design a lesson where you can make good use of this product. Explain how much you would need to make for each child to be involved, and the educational outcomes of such a lesson.

### *f. Puppet(s)*

Describe how you would make (not buy) and use a puppet of a set of puppets. This could be for your performance as a storyteller and/or for the children to make and use. Explain the materials you would need, where you would get them, and how the puppet is created as well as the purpose or objectives of the lesson.

### *g. Story book(s) / Big Book*

Describe how you would prepare materials for a shared reading session. This could be a Big Book (big enough for the children at the back to easily see) and/or a set of smaller books so that the children can each have and hold their own. Explain what the story / content is and how you would use it.

### *h. Movie / Slides plus audio*

From still photos or scans create (or explain how you would create) a movie or presentation of a story being read. This could be done with something like MovieMaker or you could use PowerPoint with a set time on each slide (as in a Pecha Kucha presentation). You would need to read the story aloud, or have someone do it. The children should be able to watch the presentation on a computer or LCD projection.

### *i. Masks*

Design masks for children to make and use, or for the teacher to make for a class production. Explain how you will make the masks comfortable enough for the children to wear while still being able to see and to say their lines. Describe the materials you would use. Explain what characters you would create and why.

## 2. Evaluation of prepared materials

Firstly create a checklist or rubric for evaluating the materials. Discuss as a group how the materials should be evaluated.

## Extra Activity

This material relates more to finding information than finding teaching material for primary school.

Your main source of 'Raw Material' as far as information is concerned will be the Internet. In fact teachers nowadays often download lesson plans and ready-made worksheets from the Internet.

Johnson and Lamb write about things to consider when downloading information.

### Web Evaluation

(Johnson & Lamb, 2013)

Criteria for Evaluation

Students need to learn to evaluate the quality of information they find on the web as well as other information resources such as books, magazines, CD-ROM, and television. Ask students to be sceptical of everything they find. Encourage them to compare and contrast different information resources. Consider the following ideas:

**Authority.** Who says? Know the author.

- Who created this information and why?
- Do you recognize this author or their work?
- What knowledge or skills do they have in the area?
- Is he or she stating fact or opinion?
- What else has this author written?
- Does the author acknowledge other viewpoints and theories?

**Objectivity.** Is the information biased? Think about perspective.

- Is the information objective or subjective?
- Is it full of fact or opinion?
- Does it reflect bias? How?
- How does the sponsorship impact the perspective of the information?
- Are a balance of perspectives represented?
- Could the information be meant as humorous, a parody, or satire?

**Authenticity.** Is the information authentic? Know the source.

- Where does the information originate?
- Is the information from an established organization?
- Has the information been reviewed by others to insure accuracy?
- Is this a primary source or secondary source of information?
- Are original sources clear and documented?
- Is a bibliography provided citing the sources used?

**Reliability**. Is this information accurate? Consider the origin of the information.

- Are the sources trustworthy? How do you know?
- Who is sponsoring this publication?
- Does the information come from a school, business, or company site?
- What's the purpose of the information resource: to inform, instruct, persuade, sell? Does this matter?
- What's their motive?

**Timeliness**. Is the information current? Consider the currency and timeliness of the information.

- Does the page provide information about timeliness such as specific dates of information?
- Does currency of information matter with your particular topic?
- How current are the sources or links?

**Relevance**. Is the information helpful? Think about whether you need this information.

- Does the information contain the breadth and depth needed?
- Is the information written in a form that is useable (i.e. reading level, technical level)?
- Is the information in a form that is useful such as words, pictures, charts, sounds, or video?
- Do the facts contribute something new or add to your knowledge of the subject?
- Will this information be useful to your project?

**Efficiency**. Is this information worth the effort? Think about the organization and speed of information access.

- Is the information well-organized including a table of contents, index, menu, and other easy-to-follow tools for navigation?
- Is the information presented in a way that is easy to use (i.e., fonts, graphics, headings)?
- Is the information quick to access?

Finding Website Evaluation Information

As you explore information on the web, keep in mind that there are many different types of information from research data to opinions. Start with an overview of the contents of the page. Can you determine the purpose and audience of the page? Does the page focus on information, news, advocacy, sales, or a mixture?

**Search for Clues**. Start by examining the page itself. Look at the web address (URL). What kind of domain (.edu, .gov, .org, .net, .com) is it? This doesn't always help, but it may provide an indication of the sponsor. Is it a government site, school resource, museum, commercial or private web project? Try to determine who published the page. Is it an individual or an agency? Can you find a name attached to the page? Look at the core page for the entire website (everything between the http:// and the first /) and see who sponsored the site and how information was selected. You might also try truncating the website address to see each level between slashes.

Sometimes you can answer these questions by reading the creation information at the bottom of the main page. Look for a name, organization, or email address. If you can't find the answer there, see if you can locate a page that tells "about the website." Sometimes there's a "contact us" page. The author of the page and the webmaster may or may not be the same person.

For information about the content of the page, look for a link to an author biography, philosophy, or background information.

Another hint about the quality of the website is the copyright date. When was the page originally posted? When was the last time the page was updated? This information is generally at the bottom of each page or at least the first page of the website.

**Look for sponsors**. Does the site use banner sponsors? What do they sell? Is a well-known organization a sponsor? Consider whether the site's sponsors could impact the perspective to the website. In most cases, a company wants the information at their site to reflect positively on them.

**Ask Questions**. If you still can't determine the quality of the information, consider emailing the webmaster and asking about the site's content. Students will be amazed at the range of answers that will be provided. Some webmasters post anything that's given to them, while others are experts in a content area field.

**Track Backward and Forward.** Another way to learn more about a website is to see "who links to them" and "who they link to." Use a search engine to search for the "URL" or author of the website in question. Does it appear on a "favourites" list? If so, whose list? Is this list credible? If the site has won an award, what are the criteria for the award and how is the award given? You can also track forward. In other words, look at the links that are used by the web developer of your site. Do they go to good or poor quality sites? Is this website cited in subject guides such as About.com or Librarian's Index?

**Cross-Check Data**. In addition to the act of evaluating a single page, students also need to learn to cross-check information. In other words, there should be three independent resources confirming each piece of questionable data. This cross-checking can be done different ways. For example, if students are creating a graphic organizer, they could star each item that has been doubled or triple checked. Consider using a variety of information formats including encyclopaedia, magazine articles, videos, experts, and web pages.

**Filtering Information**. When filtering information, students need to understand the spectrum of options between fact and opinion. Issues of perspective, point of view, and bias must be discussed. One of the advantages of using the Internet with students is the availability of so many examples. Students can see misinformation and propaganda in action. Give students the opportunity to question their findings and discuss their concerns.

**Questions for 'Web Evaluation':**

Start with a question. For example: "What is the best way to teach reading?" (Write your own Q!)

**Question**: .....

Do a Google (or other) search. **How many hits** were there? .....

**Choose** (at least) two (2) sites. (Partners / group members could work on one site each.) Fill in as much information as you can to compare the sites.

Find the website information:

| | |
|---|---|
| Overview of contents: What is the purpose / Who is the audience? (e.g. information / news / advocacy / sales / mixture) | |
| Clues: What kind of domain is it? (e.g. government / school / museum / commercial / private) | |
| Who published the site? (e.g. individual / agency) | |
| Look at info at bottom of main page: Is there a link to author / biography / background info? When was page originally posted? When was the site/page last updated? | |
| Are there sponsors / Banner sponsors? Could sponsors impact perspective? | |
| Who links to them? Who do they link to? Cross-check information – do other (reliable) sites back up the information? | |

Now answer these questions about the page / site and information.

| | |
|---|---|
| Authority<br>Who created this information and why? | |
| Do you recognize this author or their work? | |
| What knowledge or skills do they have in the area? | |
| Is he or she stating fact or opinion? | |
| What else has this author written? | |
| Does the author acknowledge other viewpoints and theories? | |
| Objectivity<br>Is the information objective or subjective? | |
| Is it full of fact or opinion? | |
| Does it reflect bias? How? | |
| How does the sponsorship impact the perspective of the information? | |
| Are a balance of perspectives represented? | |
| Could the information be meant as humorous, a parody, or satire? | |
| Authenticity<br>Where does the information originate? | |
| Is the information from an established organization? | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Has the information been reviewed by others to insure accuracy? | |
| Is this a primary source or secondary source of information? | |
| Are original sources clear and documented? | |
| Is a bibliography provided citing the sources used? | |
| Reliability<br>Are the sources trustworthy? How do you know? | |
| Who is sponsoring this publication? | |
| Does the information come from a school, business, or company site? | |
| What's the purpose of the information resource: to inform, instruct, persuade, sell? Does this matter? | |
| What's their motive? | |
| Timelessness<br>Does the page provide information about timeliness such as specific dates of information? | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Does currency of information matter with your particular topic? | |
| How current are the sources or links? | |
| Relevance<br>Does the information contain the breadth and depth needed? | |
| Is the information written in a form that is useable (i.e. reading level, technical level)? | |
| Is the information in a form that is useful such as words, pictures, charts, sounds, or video? | |
| Do the facts contribute something new or add to your knowledge of the subject? | |
| Will this information be useful to your project? | |
| Efficiency<br>Is the information well-organized including a table of contents, index, menu, and other easy-to-follow tools for navigation? | |
| Is the information presented in a way that is easy to use (i.e., fonts, graphics, headings)? | |
| Is the information quick to access? | |

**Report on your Web Evaluation:**

As a group/pair prepare a report on your evaluation of at least two web sites/pages. Your report should include:

- Your Question and how many hits you had on your search.
- The names and URLs of the websites, and a brief statement of why you chose those ones.
- A brief report on the 'website information' that you discovered.
- A comment on each of the following:
    - Authority
    - Objectivity
    - Authenticity
    - Reliability
    - Timelessness
    - Relevance
    - Efficiency
- Your recommendations

## Works cited in this topic

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Pearson Longman.

Johnson, L., & Lamb, A. (2013). *Evauating Internet Resources.* Retrieved April 21, 2013, from Teacher Tap: http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic32.htm

McDonough, J., Shaw, C., & Masuhara, H. (2013). *Materials and Methods in ELT (3rd Ed).* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Redston, C., & Cunningham, G. (2006). Superheroes: The Real Spiderman. In *Face to Face: Intermediate Student's Book* (p. 97). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# Appendix to Topic 5: Play Dough Recipe

This **play dough recipe** is the cooked version, which uses cream of tartar. It tends to be smoother than the non-cooked play dough recipe, but it is more work and takes longer due to cooking and cooling. If you cannot get cream of tartar, don't worry. You can also add peppermint oil or vanilla powder, but this increases the temptation for children to snack on the play dough which is not dangerous but can lead to upset stomachs.

**Play dough Recipe**

**Ingredients:**

1 cup flour
½ cup salt
1 cup water
1 Tablespoon oil
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
Food colouring by drops

**Directions:**

1. Combine all ingredients in a pan and stir. Cook over low heat, stirring until a ball forms.
2. Add food colouring and mix thoroughly until desired colour.
3. Cool. Store in covered container (in the fridge is best).

NOTE: To increase – or decrease – the quantity, remember:

X amount of flour, X amount of water, and ½ X amount of salt.

This is an easier to make version of a play dough recipe, there is no cooking involved.

**No-Cook Play dough Recipe**

**Ingredients:**

1 cup salt
1 ½ cups flour
½ cup water
2 Tablespoons oil
A few drops of food colouring

**Directions:**

Mix all ingredients very well and store in plastic bag or covered jar.

# Topic 6a: Developing Resources for Teaching

The following articles by Harmer and Dobbs contain useful ideas for using resources. Read them and answer the questions below. *(It may be worthwhile reading this unit ahead of some of the others.)*

## The Children as a Resource

(Harmer, 2007, pp. 176-7)

The Students Themselves

By far the most useful resources in the classroom are the students themselves. Through their thoughts and experiences they bring the outside world into the room, and this is a powerful resource for us to draw on. We can get them to write or talk about things they like or things they have experienced. We can ask them what they would do in certain situations or get them to act out scenes from their lives. In multilingual classes (see page 132), we can get them to share information about their different countries.

Students can also be very good resources for explaining and practising meaning. For example, in young learner classes we can get them to be 'living clocks'. They have to demonstrate the time with their arms (using a pointing finger for the minute hand and a fist for the hour hand) and the other students have to say what the time is. We can also get them to stand in line in the order of their birthdays (so they have to ask each other '*When is your birthday?*') or in the order of the distance they live from the school. They can be made to stand in the alphabetical order of their middle names (so they have to ask), or in the order of the name of another member of their family, etc.

Students can elect one of their number to be a 'class robot'. The others tell him or her what to do. Students can mime and act out words and phrases (e.g. *Hurry up! Watch out!*) for the rest of the class to guess. They can perform dialogues taking on the personality of some of the characters the other students know (e.g. for 10 - and 11-year-old beginners, Clever Carol, Horrible Harvey, etc.), and the rest of the class have to guess who they are. Most students, especially younger learners, enjoy acting out.

---

### Questions for 'The Children as a Resource':

1. How do the children bring the outside world into the room? .....

.....

2. What can we get children to talk/write about? .....

.....

3. What can we ask the children to act out? .....

.....

4. How can children act as 'living clocks'? .....

.....

5. They can stand in line in order of their birthdays, or distance from the school. Think of another.

.....

.....

6. What can children learn from the 'class robot' game? .....

.....

7. Give four examples of words or phrases they can act out for others to guess:

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. What characters would Malay students know that they could 'act out'? .....

.....

.....

# Objects as Resources

(Harmer, 2007, pp. 177-181)

### Objects, pictures and things

A range of objects, pictures, cards and other things, such as Cuisenaire rods, can be used for presenting and manipulating language, and for involving students in activities of all kinds. We will look at four of them.

### Realia

We mentioned above how a simple pebble can be used as a stimulus for a creative activity. However, this is only one possible use for real objects: realia. With beginners, and particularly children, using realia is helpful for teaching the meanings of words or for stimulating student activity; teachers sometimes come to class with plastic fruit, cardboard clock faces, or two telephones to help simulate phone conversations.

Objects that are intrinsically interesting can provide a good starting-point for a variety of language work and communication activities. Jill and Charles Hadfield suggest bringing in a bag of 'evocative objects' that have a 'story to tell' (Hadfield and Hadfield 2003b; 32). These might be a hair ribbon, a coin, a button, a ring, a paperclip, an elastic band, an old photo frame, a key and a padlock. Students are put into groups. Each group picks an object from the bag (without looking in first). Each student in the group then writes one sentence about the object's history as if they were that object. Members of the group share their sentences to make the object's autobiography. They then read their autobiographies to the rest of the class.

We can find an object with an obscure use and ask students to speculate about what it is for (*it might/could/probably is*) and or design various explanations to account for it (*it is used for -ing*). The class could vote on the best idea. If we bring in more than one object, especially when they are not obviously connected, students can speculate on what they have in common or they can invent stories and scenarios using the various objects. They can choose which three from a collection of objects they will put in a time capsule, or which would be most useful on a desert island, etc.

Some teachers use a soft ball to make learning more enjoyable. When they want a student to say something, ask a question or give an answer, they throw a ball to the student, who then has to respond. The student can then throw the ball to a classmate who, in turn, produces the required response before throwing the ball to someone else. Not all students find this appealing, however, and there is a limit to how often the ball can be thrown before people get fed up with it.

The only limitations on the things which we bring to class are the size and quantity of the objects themselves and the students' tolerance, especially with adults who may think they are being treated childishly. As with so many other things, this is something we will have to assess on the basis of our students' reactions.

**Pictures**

Teachers have always used pictures or graphics - whether drawn, taken from books, newspapers and magazines, or photographed - to facilitate learning. Pictures can be in the form of flashcards (smallish cards which we can hold up for our students to see), large wall pictures (big enough for everyone to see details), cue cards (small cards which students use in pair- or groupwork), photographs or illustrations (typically in a textbook). Some teachers also use projected slides, images from an overhead projector (see E2 below), or projected computer images (see E4 below). Teachers also draw pictures on the board to help with explanation and language work (see E1 below).

Pictures of all kinds can be used in a multiplicity of ways, as the following examples show:

- **Drills**: with lower-level students, an appropriate use for pictures - especially flashcards - is in cue-response drills (see Chapter 12, B2). We hold up a flashcard (the cue) before nominating a student and getting a response. Then we hold up another one, nominate a different student, and so on. Flashcards are particularly useful for drilling grammar items, for cueing different sentences and practising vocabulary.

Sometimes teachers use larger wall pictures, where pointing to a detail of a picture will elicit a response, such as '*There's some milk in the fridge'* or '*He's just been swimming'*, etc.

We can show large street maps to practise shop vocabulary or to get students giving and understanding directions.

- **(Communication) games**: pictures are extremely useful for a variety of communication activities, especially where these have a game-like feel, such as 'describe and draw' activities, where one student describes a picture (which we have given them) and a partner has to draw the same picture without looking at the original. We can also divide a class into four groups (A, B, C, D) and give each group a different picture that shows a separate stage in a story. Once the members of the group have studied their picture, we take it away. New groups are formed with four members each - one from group A, one from group B, one from group C and one from group D. By sharing the information they saw in their pictures, they have to work out what story the pictures together are telling.

Teachers sometimes use pictures for creative writing. They might tell students to invent a story using at least three of the images in front of them. They can tell them to have a conversation about a specified topic and, at various stages during the conversation, to pick a card and bring whatever that card shows into the conversation.

- **Understanding**: one of the most appropriate uses for pictures is for the presenting and checking of meaning. An easy way of explaining the meaning of the word, aeroplane, for example, is to have a picture of one. In the same way, it is easy to check students' understanding of a piece of writing or listening by asking them to select the picture (out of, say, four) which best corresponds to the reading text or the listening passage.
- **Ornamentation**: pictures of various kinds are often used to make work more appealing. In many modern coursebooks, for example, a reading text will be adorned by a photograph

which is not strictly necessary, in the same way as happens in newspaper and magazine articles. The rationale for this is clearly that pictures enhance the text, giving readers (or students) an extra visual dimension to what they are reading.

Some teachers and materials designers object to this use of illustrations because they consider it gratuitous. But it should be remembered that if the pictures are interesting, they will appeal strongly to at least some members of the class. They have the power (at least for the more visually oriented) to engage students.

- **Prediction**: pictures are useful for getting students to predict what is coming next in a lesson. Thus students might look at a picture and try to guess what it shows. (Are the people in it brother and sister, husband or wife, and what are they arguing about - or are they arguing? etc.) They then listen to an audio track or read a text to see if it matches what they predicted on the basis of the picture. This use of pictures is very powerful and has the advantage of engaging students in the task to follow
- **Discussion**: pictures can stimulate questions such as: What is it showing? How does it make you feel? What was the artist's/photographer's purpose in designing it in that way? Would you like to have this picture in your house? Why? Why not? How much would you pay for the picture? Is the picture a work of art?

One idea is to get students to become judges of a photographic competition. After being given the category of photographs they are going to judge (e.g. men in action, reportage, abstract pictures), the students decide on four or five characteristics their winning photograph should have. They then apply these characteristics to the finalists that we provide for them, before explaining why they made their choice.

Pictures can also be used for creative language use, whether they are in a book or on cue cards, flashcards or wall pictures. We might ask students to write a description of a picture, to invent the conversation taking place between two people in a picture or, in one particular role-play activity ask them to answer questions as if they were the characters in a famous painting.

We can make wall pictures, flashcards and cue cards in a number of ways. We can take pictures from magazines and stick them on card. We can draw them. We can buy reproductions, photographs and posters from shops or we can photocopy them from a variety of sources (though we should check copyright law before doing this). It is possible to find pictures of almost anything on the Internet and print them off.

The choice and use of pictures is very much a matter of personal taste, but we should bear in mind three qualities that pictures need to possess if they are to engage students and be linguistically useful. In the first place, they need to be appropriate not only for the purpose in hand but also for the classes they are being used for. If they are too childish, students may not like them, and if they are culturally inappropriate, they can offend people.

Ultimately, the most important thing is that pictures should be visible. They have to be big enough so that all our students - taking into account where they will be sitting - can see the necessary detail.

Lastly, we will not want to spend hours collecting pictures only to have them destroyed the first time they are used! Thought should be given to how to make them durable. Perhaps they can be stuck to cards and protected with transparent coverings.

**Cards**

Apart from flashcards with pictures on them, cards of all shapes and sizes can be used in a variety of ways. Cards, in this sense, can range from carefully prepared pieces of thick paper which have been laminated to make them into a reusable resource to small strips of paper which the teacher brings in for one lesson only.

Of the many uses for cards, three are especially worth mentioning:

- Matching and ordering: cards are especially good for matching questions and answers or two halves of a sentence. Students can either match them on the desk in front of them (perhaps in pairs or groups), or they can move around the classroom looking for their pairs. This matching can be on the basis of topic, lexis or grammatical construction.

We can also use cards to order words into sentences or to put the lines of a poem in order. Using cards in this way is especially good for kinaesthetic learners, of course (see page 89). But it is good for everyone else, too, especially if we can get students walking around the classroom for at least a brief period.

- **Selecting**: cards work really well if we want students to speak on the spot or use particular words or phrases in a conversation or in sentences. We can write words on separate cards and then, after shuffling them, place them in a pile face down. When a student picks up the next card in the pack, he or she has to use the word in a sentence. Alternatively, students can choose three or four cards and then have to incorporate what is on the cards into a story.

Students can also pick up a card and try to describe what the word on it feels, tastes or smells like so that the other students can guess it.

- **Card games**: there are as many card game possibilities in language learning as there are in real life. We can turn the card selection into a game by introducing a competitive element - having students in pairs play against each other or against other pairs.

A simple vocabulary game can be played in which students have cards with pictures on one side and words on the other. If they pick the picture side, they have to produce the word. If they pick the word side, they have to draw it and then compare it with the original picture. The old game of Snap can be adapted so that two players have a set of cards, with the same objects, etc., but whereas one player has only pictures, the other has only words. The cards are shuffled and then the players put down the cards one at a time. If a picture and word card match, the player who shouts '*Snap!*' first wins all the cards on the table. The object of the game is for one player to end up with all the cards.

**Cuisenaire rods**

Originally invented by the Belgian educator Caleb Gattegno (see the Silent Way on page 68), these small blocks of wood or plastic of different lengths (see Figure 3) were originally designed for maths teaching. Each length is a different colour. The rods are featureless, and are only differentiated by their length and colour. Simple they may be, but they are useful for a wide range of activities. For example, we can say that a particular rod is a pen or a telephone, a dog or a key so that by holding them up or putting them together a story can be told. All it takes is a little imagination.

The rods can be used to demonstrate word stress, too: if one is bigger than the others (in a sequence representing syllables in a word or words in a sentence), it shows where the stress should be (see Chapter 2, F5 and Chapter 15, B2).

We can also assign a word or phrase to each of, say, five rods and the students then have to put them in the right order (e.g. '*I usually get up at six o'clock*'). By moving the '*usually*' rod around and showing where it can and cannot occur in the sentence, the students get a clear visual display of something they are attempting to fix in their minds.

Rods can be used to teach prepositions. Teachers can model with the rods sentences like '*The red one is on top of/beside/under/over/behind (etc.) the green one'.* They can show rods in different relative positions and ask students to describe them. Students can then position the rods for other students to describe (in ever more complex arrangements!).

Cuisenaire rods are also useful for demonstrating colours (of course), comparatives, superlatives, and a whole range of other semantic and syntactic areas, particularly with people who respond well to visual or kinaesthetic activities.

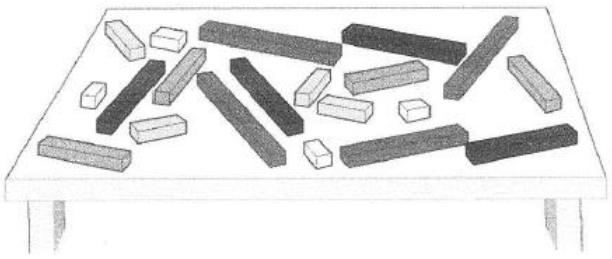


FIGURE 3: Cuisenaire Rods

---

## Questions for 'Objects as Resources':

1. What are the two main purposes of using these objects? .....

.....

**Realia**

2. What does the word 'realia' refer to? .....

.....

3. What two things are realia useful for with young children? .....

.....

4. What could you do with 'evocative objects'? .....

.....

5. List five possibly evocative objects (not mentioned in the text) that you could use in the local context. .....

.....

6. What could you do with one or two 'obscure' objects? .....

.....

7. Can you think of a possible object to use? .....

.....

8. How could you use a soft ball? .....

.....

9. What could you use instead of a 'soft ball'? .....

.....

**Pictures**

10. How can pictures be used for drills? .....

.....

11. How could a large wall picture be used? .....

.....

12. How could you use a large street map? .....

.....

13. What happens in a 'describe and draw' activity? .....

.....

14. How can you use four pictures from a story and four groups of students? .....

.....

15. What is one way to use pictures for creative writing? .....

.....

16. If you are using pictures to present meaning, how could you check understanding? .....

.....

17. Why would a reading text be adorned with a photo that is not strictly necessary? .....

.....

18. How does asking students to predict a text by looking at a picture help the students in their reading or listening? .....

.....

19. How can you stimulate questions in a discussion? .....

.....

20. What are the three qualities that pictures need to possess if they are to engage students and be linguistically useful?

- .....
  .....
- .....
  .....
- .....
  .....

**Cards**

21. How can cards be used for matching and ordering? .....

.....

.....

22. How can using cards be good for kinaesthetic learners? .....

.....

.....

23. How can cards be used to help students select topics or words? .....

.....

24. Describe a vocabulary game using cards with pictures on one side and words on the other.

.....

.....

.....

.....

25. What are Cuisenaire rods? .....

.....

Have you ever seen / used Cuisenaire rods? .....

Have you ever seen these rods available in schools or shops in Malaysia? .....

26. Read the description of how rods can be used. What could you use if rods were not available?

.....

.....

# Using the Board in the language Classroom

(Dobbs, 2001, pp. 1-11)

**Introduction**

As far as we know, the first teacher who wrote on classroom walls was the Reverend Samuel Reed Hall (1795 – 1877), an innovative educator and minister who is said to have first written on a piece of dark paper when teaching a mathematics lesson in Rumford, Maine, in 1816. Later Hall moved to Concord, Vermont, where, it is believed, he had the plaster in his classroom painted black. Soon, many other teachers, following Hall's example, painted plaster walls or plain boards black to create a visual teaching aid. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, enamelled walls and then slate boards dominated American classrooms. Hall, who is also credited by American historians with inventing the blackboard eraser and with introducing many other educational innovations, has been honoured by the state of Vermont with a memorial in Concord bearing the inscription including the words "pioneer in the use of the blackboard as a schoolroom appliance.

In today's classrooms, of course, it is possible to find not only black chalkboards but also green, blue, or other colours, as well as boards of different types of composition such as whiteboards that require dry ink markers instead of chalk. In some classrooms, one also finds flip charts, large tablets of paper used for many of the same purposes and activities as boards. From here on I shall refer to public writing space of these different kinds simply as *the board*.

In spite of the availability of these various kinds of public writing space, however, I have noticed recently that board use in many US schools is declining. In some schools, old boards are being allowed to decay; in many new classrooms, space devoted to boards is decreasing. The reason is not hard to find: Many classrooms now have overhead projectors, movie screens, and TV and computer monitors for student and teacher use. A few even have electronic whiteboards. Because such equipment not only is expensive to buy and maintain but requires electricity, varying degrees of technological skill, and accessories such as transparencies, film, and software programs, many classrooms – even some in affluent countries – will continue to operate with few or no high-tech tools.

Even when classrooms have access to high-tech tools, however, we should not use these tools at the expense of boards. Boards provide a public writing space that is immediately accessible to both teachers and students. Teachers can use the board to record messages they especially want their students to remember, to present new information, and to record what students say. Writing on the board is an active, public, physical activity: Students not only can see something happening, they can physically make it happen themselves. Students writing publicly can receive immediate, personal, face-to-face responses from the teacher and from their peers. Teachers can see not only what students are producing (or not producing) but also can read their body language.

Moreover, because different students rely on different learning strategies, they need a variety of learning experiences. When the teacher writes on the board, students whose learning is strengthened by visual stimuli benefit. When students write on the board, students whose learning is strengthened by hands-on, kinaesthetic experiences, benefit.

When a number of students write on the board simultaneously and the others write at their desks, elements of competition and immediacy are introduced into the classroom chemistry that heighten students' interest.

**Teacher use of the board**

The board can help teachers manage the classroom, can be a valuable teaching tool, and can be a way to record student input.

**Using the board to help manage classrooms**

Classroom experience soon teaches us that when we have an important message to convey to our students, we may need to write the message as well as say it so that our students will have a better chance of understanding and remembering it – and so that they can write it down if they need to. This is especially true of homework assignments, announcements of plans or of items to be brought to class for special purposes, schedules and timetables, and special class rules, if we have them. When students are assigned to groups, confusion may be avoided if we post the names of each group's members as well as each person's duties: Who will lead the discussion, who will record it, who will report it, and who will keep track of the time and keep people focused on the task. If students have special classroom roles or duties on a rotating basis such as attendance taker or clean-up, we can record them on the bard. Without being intrusive, we can keep students informed of how many minutes remain in times activities and tests; or we can post scores for competitive activities. It is sometimes effective to display outlines of lesson plans and agendas: If students can see that a fun activity is planned for the end of a class period, they may help us keep to a busy schedule in order to ensure that there will be sufficient time left for it. Or we may want to display information mainly as a reminder to our students and/or ourselves.

Many of these housekeeping messages need to be communicated on a daily basis to keep the class well organized and running efficiently. Writing them on the board can help ensure that our students understand, follow remember, or record important information; moreover, messages can be used to prevent confusion and to save valuable class time.

**Using the board as a teaching tool**

In preparation for the day's class, we can use the board for a "get-ready-to-learn" tool. We can write, before or at the beginning of class, provocative quotations or questions, riddles, tongue - twisters, scrambled vocabulary words or scrambled sentences. These types of activities give students who arrive early something to get started on, and they help get everyone focused on English, although, of course, these activities can be used not only as a warm-up but any time during class.

For beginning levels, we might head the board with the day and date. And for all levels, just for fun, we can write greetings and draw illustrations to observe special occasions such as local, national, or religious holidays, birthdays of famous people, and our students' birthdays. Or we can invent occasions like 'Happy Heat Wave!' or 'Celebrate Spring!' or 'Let's Sing Day'.

There are many ways the board can be used during class to support teaching. We can, for example, draw stick figures or abstract forms on the board and have students compose oral or written stories

about them. Or, we can write vocabulary words or questions or statements drawn from a course book reading or other sources and then ask students to respond orally or in writing in appropriate ways. You might want to browse through the index of this book at this point for additional, more specific ideas of board activities you might use to support your own teaching.

Using the board helps students focus on what we are saying when we introduce them to new language concepts, and it helps them understand and remember what they hear. Presenting new material "live" on the board obviously takes longer than giving students a handout with the material already prepared – pre-packaged as it were. But in most cases, this additional time is time well invested. As we draw or write on the board, we can explain what our drawing or writing means. When the board is used, students get the information gradually, so that they have the time to question anything they do not understand. If the information is complex, the students have time to grasp small pieces of it as it evolves, rather than looking at a sheet of paper bearing long lists of vocabulary words or complicated instructions or rules. If students then transcribe the information from the board to their notebooks they make it their own. They write down as little or as much of the information as they feel they need; they process the information as they reproduce it.

In addition to using the board to present new concepts to students, we can use it to explain, clarify, illustrate, emphasize, organize, drill, and list information. We can write key words or a brief outline of our complete presentation. We can give examples of how to use new vocabulary. We can draw stick figures to illustrate grammar points and webs to show relationships between concepts. We can use the board to amplify and highlight the most important information in our presentations. Students may then elect to copy some or all of this supplemental information into their notebooks. Supplying them with a visual record is extremely important because many students are unable to listen to information delivered in a second language, evaluate what they hear in order to extract the most important information, and then record it.

We can also use board work to determine students' readiness for new material, to review new material, and to assess students' success at mastering this material. Frequent, quick, informal checks of students' achievements, which many of the board activities in this book can provide, help to keep us abreast of students' progress, or their lack thereof, easily and without the stress to students that accompanies quizzes and tests although tests certainly have their place in the curriculum. Furthermore, students may benefit from seeing how well they do in comparison to their peers because it helps them to assess their own achievements more realistically.

Finally we can use the board to quickly summarise the day's important activities, to review a language concept that we have just introduced, or as a lead-in to the next day's class.

**Using the board to record student input**

Just as we use the question-and-answer method to involve our students and enliven and enhance our presentations of new concepts, we can also elicit input from students to make our use of the board more collaborative. We can ask students to brainstorm a topic while we record what they say. We can record questions and record student's answers.

Michael O'Hare, a supporter of this method of teaching, points out in his article "Talk and Chalk: The Blackboard as an Intellectual Tool" (1993) that the advantage of making a board record is that it can be referred to as long as it remains visible. "What is said out loud," he writes, "must be said to all, but any participant can interrogate the board privately at any time" (p 241). But, O'Hare warns, teachers should record "participants' contributions in their own words," because if teachers rephrase, students will feel that their comments were somehow "wrong". He also believes that when teachers paraphrase students' comments, they are exerting a type of control over their students' discourse that tends to "dump them back into 'you talk we listen' mode" (p 245). O'Hare however, is not writing specifically about ESL/EFL students, who make a larger number of erroneous contributions than native speakers do. An exception needs to be made, therefor, to allow for the elimination or correction of erroneous statements. When a student's contribution is not in error but a native speaker might use an idiomatic expression or choose a more precise word, we may want to supplement the student's phrasing with this information in the hope that the student will make it his or her own because it expresses his or her own idea. Of course, one way to avoid the possible problems of paraphrasing, as well as to increase student participation further, is to let students do their own recording.

It is the rare teacher – experienced, new, or in training – who has not used the board as a language teaching tool or been taught by a teacher writing on the board. Thinking back on five years of high school and college-level foreign classes, I find it difficult to recall ever writing on the board as a student I now see, however, that my own students look forward to activities that put them at the board and that when they become comfortable using it at my direction, they sometimes initiate using it on their own.

**Student use of the board**

For students, writing on the board is a hand-on, learning-by-doing activity. What they write publicly usually gets read and responded to immediately. Not only the teacher but also peers become involved in what has been written. It is advantageous, therefore, to have not only individual student scribes use the board, but also groups of students working simultaneously while the rest of the students write at their desks. In this way, all members of the class are challenged by the same questions. Students writing at the board often comment spontaneously on each other's content and each other's language. Furthermore, students writing at the board often invite their peers' comments because their work is on display and their need to know is great. As they compare their work with that of their peers, their critical faculties are heightened. They learn from their peers' successes and mistakes. Making comparisons, alterations, and corrections helps students become more aware of what revision means. They collaborate and compete. And they become teachers.

Some advantages of having groups of students write publicly at the board are as follows:

- A different atmosphere is created. A group writing at the board is a public group within the whole class, and the students interact not only with those in their group but with the whole class. In contrast, when students collaborate in small groups at their desks, usually little or no interaction takes place between groups.

- No single student can become disengaged and "disappear" without the teacher's notice, as can students in groups at their desks.
- A student cannot monopolise the discourse because written discourse cannot dominate "air time' the way oral discourse can.
- Spontaneous collaboration at the board is a voluntary process in which students can participate or leave at will, unlike the process that occurs when students are grouped at their desks for the specific purpose of editing each other's work or discussing content.
- The teacher's monitoring ability increases. A teacher can "sit in" only on one small group at a time. But, when the board is used, the teacher can observe what is taking place at the board and circulate among students working at their desks, acting as a resource to both groups.

In addition, board work allows us to easily observe students in the act of writing and see how they think in their new language. We see their false starts, their hesitations, and the errors they make but discover for themselves. These observations often lead us to a better understanding of the types of errors they make repeatedly, and of whether or not they doubt the accuracy of their usage. Furthermore, it gives us the opportunity, if we choose, to address difficulties as they arise – to assist by suggesting the word of grammar structure the students seems to be searching for, or to make corrections as problems occur. This immediacy can be very exciting for teachers and rewarding for the students who are intensely aware of their needs at that moment and appreciate having their needs met.

Public writing allows us to emphasise the process rather than the product. By its very nature, board writing is ephemeral and errors are easily erased. Students seem not to become as possessive and sensitive to criticism of their board writing as they do of "finished" writing or of writing that is committed to paper that they can hold in their hands.

Furthermore, some students have more confidence in their written than in their oral discourse and find it easier to participate in written form. Some students dislike asking for help or lack the verbal competence to express their problems and welcome the fact that the teacher or other students can see their problems and offer help when they need it.

**Using the board in response to teacher prompts**

At the teacher's direction, students can use the board for numerous activities such as practising and testing their grasp of new forms; paraphrasing or summarising other writers; generating their own writing; editing their own and their peers' public writing; checking answers to quizzes and tests; playing games; sharing knowledge, personal experiences, and feelings; or sharing information about their countries and their cultures.

In addition, when possible, students can be encouraged to draw illustrations on the board to accompany their writing: research increasingly shows a strong link between drawing and language learning. Mona Brookes, author of *Drawing with Children: A Creative Method for Adult Beginners, Too* (1996), writes, "[Y]ou can learn information eight times faster and retain it eight times longer if you draw what you are learning about" (p225).

**Spontaneous student use, no teacher input**

Students who have been made aware that the board belongs to them as well as to the teacher sometimes write on it spontaneously. They may, unasked, join a group the teacher has appointed to write publicly. Or, they may, for example, decide to write the answers to a quiz on the board, even though the teacher has not announced that this is the method of checking answers that will be used. Still others may use the board to communicate with their classmates or teacher or to show off newly acquired language skills.

My initial enthusiasm for making sure that students view the board as part of their domain was kindled by one beginning learner, and adult who was illiterate in his own language because he had never had the opportunity to go to school and who became so pleased with his growing skills that he began to write "Good Morning!" and other greetings on the board each day as he arrive, making visible his pride and love of earning. This act convinced me of the power of public writing and led me to seek ways of sharing that power with other students as well as with my fellow teachers.

**A summary**

Writing on the board offers many benefits. When teachers are writing and not just talking, the visual element stimulates students' interest in what they hear. More important, visual materials help students understand and remember the new information teachers are presenting. When students write at the board, their learning experience becomes self-centred and active. And when groups of students write at the board simultaneously, the students feel both challenged by their peers and protective toward them – they share with them and learn from them.

---

## Questions for 'Using the Board in the Language Classroom'

1. How, when, where and why was the blackboard invented and by whom?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. What kinds of 'public writing space' are available nowadays?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What kinds of 'housekeeping' messages can be communicated on the board?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. How can the board be used for warm-up activities?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Give an example of a day or date that you could especially decorate the board for.

.....

6. Give an example of a stick-figure story you could draw on the board.

.....

7. How is presenting material "live" on the board better for learning?

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. Have you heard the expression "Talk and Chalk"? What does it mean? Is it generally seen as a good or a bad thing?

.....

.....

9. What does O'Hare say is the advantage of making a board record?

.....

.....

10. What do you think about rephrasing students' answers for them when they are incorrect?

.....

.....

.....

11. Would you have groups of students writing on the board? Why / why not?

.....

.....

.....

12. How does having students using the board allow you to see how a student is thinking?

.....

.....

.....

13. How does public writing emphasise the process rather than the product? Is this a good thing – why / why not?

.....

.....

.....

14. What do you think about children writing on the board spontaneously? Have you ever experienced this?

.....

.....

.....

15. Which is better: high-tech or low-tech? Why?

.....

.....

.....

Students could hold a **debate** to discuss the benefits of technology.

## Ways of Showing

(Harmer, 2007, pp. 183-7)

Over the years, technology has changed the way that teachers and students are able to show each other things (one of the most important functions of classroom equipment). We will look at four major presentation aids.

**The board**

The most versatile piece of classroom teaching equipment is the board - whether this is of the more traditional chalk-dust variety, a whiteboard written on with marker pens, or an IWB (see page 187). Boards provide a motivating focal point during whole-class grouping.

We can use boards for a variety of different purposes, including:

- **Note-pad**: teachers frequently write things up on the board as these come up during the lesson. They might be words that they want students to remember, phrases which students have not understood or seen before, or topics and phrases which they have elicited from students when trying to build up a composition plan, for example.

When we write up a word on a board, we can show how that word is stressed so that students can see and 'hear' the word at the same time (see Figure 5). We can sketch in intonation tunes or underline features of spelling, too. We can group words according to their meaning or grammatical function. Some teachers use different colours for different aspects of language.

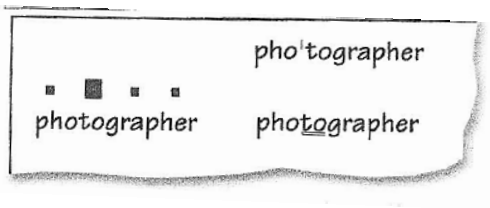



FIGURE 5: Different ways of recording word stress

- **Explanation aid**: boards can be used for explanation, too. For example, we can show the relationship between an affirmative sentence and a question by drawing connecting arrows (see Figure 6). We can show where words go in a sentence by indicating the best positions diagrammatically, or we can write up phonemic symbols (or draw diagrams of the mouth) to show how a word or sound is pronounced. The board is ideal for such uses.

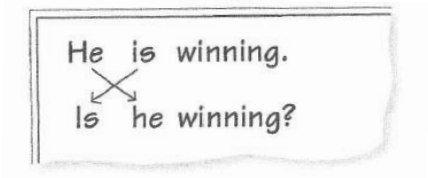



FIGURE 6: Using the board to show sentence/question relationships (elementary)

- **Picture frame**: boards can be used for drawing pictures, of course, the only limitation being our artistic ability. But even those who are not artistically gifted can usually draw a sad face and a happy face. They can produce stick men sitting down and running, or make an attempt at a bus or a car. What's more, this can be done whenever it is required because the board is always there, helping students to understand concepts and words.
- **Public workbook**: a typical procedure is to write up fill-in sentences or sentence transformation items, for example, and have individual students come up to the board and write a fill-in item, or a transformed sentence. That way the whole class becomes involved in seeing what the correct version is.

Teachers sometimes write mistakes they have observed in a creative language activity on the board. They can ask class members who think they know how to correct them to come up and have a go.

Such activities are very usefu1 because they focus everyone's attention in one place'

- **Game board:** there are a number of games that can be played using the board. With noughts and crosses (also called Tic-tac-toe), for example, teachers can draw nine box frames and write different words or categories in each box (see Figure 7). Teams have to make sentences or questions with the words and if they get them right, they can put their symbol (O or X) on the square to draw their winning straight line. A popular spelling game involves two teams who start off with the same word. Each team has half the board. They have to fill up their side with as many words as possible but each new word has to start with the last letter of the word before. At the end of a given period of time, the team with the largest number of correct words is the winner.

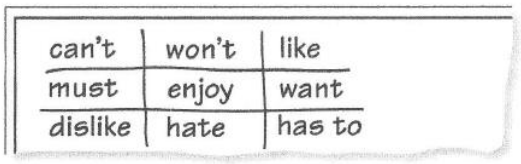



FIGURE 7: Noughts and Crosses (tic-tac-toe)

- **Noticeboard:** teachers and students can display things on boards - pictures, posters, announcements, charts, etc. It is especially useful if the boards are metallic so that magnets can be used.

Handwriting on the board should be clear and easy to decipher; we should organise our material in some way, too, so that the board does not just get covered in scrawls in a random and distracting fashion. We could, for example, draw a column on one side of the board and reserve that for new words. We could then put the day's or the lesson's programme in a left hand column and use the middle of the board for grammar explanations or games.

It is probably not a good idea to turn our back to the class while we write on the board, especially if this goes on for some time. This tends to be demotivating and may cause the class to become restless. Indeed, it is better to involve the students with boardwork as much as possible, either getting them to tell us what to write, or asking them to do the writing themselves.

**Questions for 'Ways of Showing':**

1. What is 'one of the most important functions of classroom equipment'? .....

.....

2. What is the most versatile piece of classroom equipment? .....

3. What do boards provide? .....

.....

4. Give an example of using a board as each of these:

Notepad: .....

.....

Explanation Aid: .....

.....

Picture Frame: .....

.....

Public Workbook: .....

.....

Game board: .....

.....

Noticeboard: .....

.....

5. What should the handwriting on the board be like? .....

6. Give an example of board organisation.

.....

.....

.....

7. Why is it not a good idea to turn your back to the class while writing on the board?

.....

.....

## Flip Chart and Computer

(Harmer, 2007, pp. 186-7)

### The Flip Chart

Flip charts are very useful for making notes, recording the main points in a group discussion, amending and changing points, and for the fact that individual sheets of paper can be torn off and kept for future reference. Many of these qualities (and more) are, of course, shared by computer-based technology, but flip charts are portable, relatively cheap and demand no technical expertise.

Flip charts work best in two particular situations. In the first, a teacher, group leader or group scribe stands at the flip chart and records the points that are being made. The participants - because they can see what is being written up - can then ask for changes to be made.

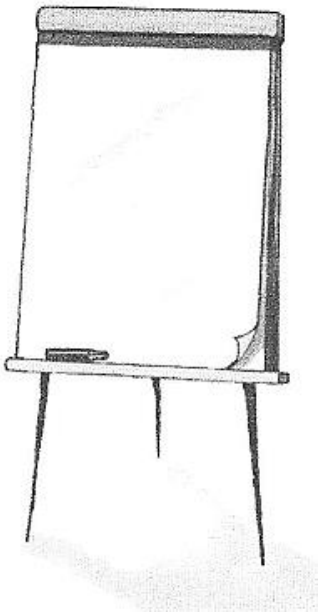


FIGURE 9: FIip chart

When possible, it is ideal if groups can each have flip charts of their own. When an activity is finished, students can walk round the room seeing what the different groups have written (or what points they have noted down). Flip charts can also be posted at different points in the room, each flip chart standing for a topic or a point of view. Students can walk around, adding to what is on each of the flip charts, writing up their opinions, disagreeing or merely getting an idea of what the other students are thinking, based on what is already written there.

### Computer-based presentation technology

Computers have changed the world of classroom presentation forever - that is for those fortunate enough to have the money and resources for both hardware and software.

The two crucial pieces of hardware are a computer and a data projector. Anything that is on our computer screen can be shown to the whole class using a data projector to put up an enlarged

version of it on a screen or a white wall. This means that all the class can see a word processed task at the same time, or we can project a picture, diagram or map, for example.

Presentation software, such as PowerPoint, increases our capacity to present visual material (words, graphics and pictures) in a dynamic and interesting way. However, the most commonly used PowerPoint template (a heading with bullet points) has suffered from overuse and may not be the most effective use of the medium. In fact, the software offers a more interesting option where we can mix text and visuals with audio/video tracks so that pictures can dissolve or fly onto and off the screen, and music, speech and film can be integrated into the presentation. Some people, of course, may find this kind of animated presentation irksome in its own way, but there is no doubt that it allows teachers to mix different kinds of display much more effectively than before such software came along.

One of the major technological developments in the last few years has been the interactive whiteboard, the IWB. This has the same properties as a computer hooked up to a data projector (i.e. you can present visual material, Internet pages, etc. in a magnified way for everyone to see), but it has three major extra advantages, too. In the first place, teachers and students can write on the board which the images are being projected onto, and they can manipulate images on the board with the use of special pelts or even with nothing but their fingers. The pen or finger thus acts as a kind of computer mouse. Secondly, what appears on the board (just like the screen of a computer) can be saved or printed so that anything written up or being shown there can be looked at again.

Enthusiasts for IWBs point to this extraordinary versatility and to other tricks (such as the ability to mask parts of the board and gradually reveal information). They say that the ability to move text and graphics around the board with pen or finger is extremely attractive, especially for younger learners. They emphasise the fact that text, graphics, Internet capability, video and audio material can all be controlled from the board.

Critics of IWBs worry about the amount of money they cost. There is some concern, too, about the fact that currently most IWBs are at the front of the classroom and thus tend to promote teacher (and learner)-fronted behaviours, and are less favourable for groupwork.

There are also worries about projector beams (especially in ceiling-mounted projectors) affecting the eyes of teachers who frequently find themselves looking directly at them.

**Questions for 'Flip Chart and Computer':**

1. What are flip charts useful for? .....

.....

2. What advantage does a flip chart have over computer-based technology? .....

.....

3. What has suffered from over-use? .....

.....

.....

4. What are the (3) extra advantages of an Interactive White Board (IWB)?

- .....
  .....
- .....
  .....
- .....
  .....

5. What are the disadvantages of the IWB?

- .....
- .....
  .....

# 10 Things I hate about PowerPoint

by Jeremy Harmer

Jeremy Harmer writes books (*The Practice of English Language Teaching, How to Teach English, How to Teach Writing* - for Pearson Education - and *Just Right* and the *Just* series for Marshall Cavendish). He is the editor of the Longman methodology series. He uses PowerPoint in presentations around the world.

**Introduction**

Ok, this is how it goes. I was at an international conference recently (I go to a lot of conferences) and I found myself in conversation with a colleague at the end of a long conference day. And we started rolling our eyes and groaning and generally being a bit melodramatic about the presentations we'd been to. Which is not very kind. But we weren't complaining about the content of the talks and we certainly weren't having a go at the presenters (people in glass houses....). No, what we were moaning about was death-by-PowerPoint, the sheer ubiquity of that Microsoft platform that can induce catatonia in the liveliest mind - quite apart from the damage it can do to the sleepy middle-aged one that I am forced to carry around.

And the more I experience PowerPoint, and the more I think about it, the more overheated I become. Why, I can feel myself getting all steamed up even as I type. And the reason I'm getting worked up is because there are ten things about PowerPoint that I absolutely hate. I mean hate, OK?

**1: PowerPoint as lecture notes**

Sitting in the front row at a big conference recently I remember feeling trapped and tortured with that desperate urge for escape which you know is impossible. And then you feel like screaming or carving up textbooks or even teachers. What brought about this madness? The little figure on the PowerPoint screen which said 4/52. That meant there were another 48 slides to go (think about it! *Forty-eight!*). And the sad thing is that the fabulous educator was using the slides as her lecture notes. But I don't want to see a presenter's notes. I want to see how they come out the other end as discourse when the presenter is in full flow.

And the other terrible thing is that if a presenter chucks up what they are going to say on a slide, before they say it (and they often do) you can read it in 45 seconds - and then what's the point of listening at all?

PowerPoint offers so much more than this: a chance to show pictures, play music clips, show video clips of teaching. But it's a lousy reading machine unless the words are used as signs or staging posts to structure a talk.

**2: Visual assault**

Pictures, flashes, whizzy entrances, funny faces. It can all get far, far too much. Sometimes you want to hear what's in the presenter's brain, not be dazzled by a kind of pyrotechnic ejaculation. Ooops! Myself I use pictures and animation a lot. That's what PowerPoint is so good for - a whole visual vocabulary that overhead transparencies could and can never match. The images from a data

projector can be so much clearer, so much sharper and cleaner. If you've ever seen a presentation given first with OHTs and then again with the pictures on a PowerPoint slide you'll know what I mean.

But I'll need to re-evaluate what I do with pictures and animation. Someone told me I was overdoing it the other day so I'll have to get feedback to see if other people think I'm also guilty of visual overload. Hmmm

**3: Aural assault**

Thwack! Zing! Bzzzz! Kerpow! Wow. There's one presenter I know who is totally brilliant and loved almost everywhere he goes. His PowerPoint presentations literally erupt into the room and if there's a new gizmo to be had, he'll have it. And then he'll chuck in all the latest VERY LOUD sound effects. I can only take about 30 minutes of this before my head starts exploding. But you can't walk out. It's rude! It's just that aural overload is horrible.

Ooops! Myself I use music clips in almost every presentation I do (if I can find some daft excuse to include them). It's not just for the 'Auditory' people in the audience, it's for my own enjoyment too - a total self-indulgence. But maybe it's too much for everyone else. I'll have to get some feedback. But one of the great things about PowerPoint is that you can bring in little audio and video clips at the click of a mouse. All you need is to download some audio editing freeware, the simplest kind, and you can cut little excerpts from audio tracks and give them fade-ins and fade-outs so that they sound good. Even I can do that so it can't be very technically challenging.

**4: Bullet points**

If I never see another bullet point again I will be

- Happy
- Relieved
- Surprised

They're everywhere in Microsoft's PowerPoint template and they screw up the hierarchy of information. And they're boring. And there are other means of showing the much more subtle ways that different bits of information relate to each other. PowerPoint - with its animation and varied letter shapes - gives the users a myriad of means in which to show main and subsidiary points. I mean one of its greatest tricks is to allow material to arrive and fade away and then reappear. That's using the medium properly. Bullet points aren't. They're for paper, not for an animate screen.

**5: PowerPoint backgrounds**

Oh please spare me from another wishy-washy Microsoft background with a translucent globe or the intimations of water or any of the other lacklustre visual 'washes' that the designers have chucked in there. The moment you see one of those your heart sinks and you know the user has just taken something off the shelf, and lecture notes (see above) are probably on the way. I'd much rather see a blank or monochrome background. There's a reason why the walls in many art gallery

are plain white. You can do some much more with visual presentation if you don't have to worry about clashing with some Gatesian* view of subtle harmony.

**6: Early closing**

This really gets me mad. I mean mad. Oh dear I'm overheating again. But I get all steamed up when a presenter finishes their talk and the moment - I mean the second - any applause stops they start clicking away and closing up their PowerPoint so we can all see the programme and their desktop. I reckon that's just plain rude - especially if the presenter has put their email or website address up there and some poor teachers are scrabbling away to try and write them down. You wouldn't expect an orchestra to start folding up their music stands before the audience had even got out of their seats at the end of a concert. They wait till the hall is pretty much empty. So why do presenters look like they care so little? Leave the last screen up there until people have left the room. It's good manners.

**7: Lecturers who stand in front of the projector**

I reckon it should be easy to spot the difference between a human-being and a machine. One walks and breathes and talks, the other just beams. They don't mix. They are different media. But presenters often stand right in that beam so we can all see the coursebook excerpt being projected slithering all over their tie or their dress or whatever. And it's kind of irritating. And we all (I mean us presenters) do it.

**8: Lecturers who are stuck to the computer**

Look what PowerPoint can do to a person! When you speak to them in the breaks, or they are talking about their presentation they are all animated, they move around, they seem to function perfectly well as breathing humans. And then they give their sessions and they turn into statues with only one moving part, an index finger which goes click, click, jabbing downwards - the only sign of life in the paralysed creature in front of us.

But it doesn't have to be like this. Cordless clickers and controllers are easily available. They can have a range of thirty metres, big enough for a presenter to stride around in just about any room or hall. The moment you get one you morph from paralysis back into teacherdom. It's a great feeling. Ooops! Except a colleague said to me the other day - when I had presented in a room which was very cramped (and thus didn't allow for any wandering about) - well it was nice to see you stay in one place just for once instead of galloping around. I don't like statues, but maybe striding the aisles can be just as irritating. I'll have to get some feedback on that.

**9: Technology experts**

I've been to a couple of sessions recently where people got really, really excited (almost indecently) about all the wonderful new chunks of hardware and software that are on offer. Interactive Whiteboards - swoon - Google maps - ooooh - computer-mediated communication - aaaaah! And what did we see on the screen? Lecture notes. Bullet points. Ugly little pictures coming up - *splat* - on a vacuous background. Why do technology fetishists make such a mess of it I wonder? Perhaps it's because when they talk about the technology they sometimes forget to remember that it's

teaching they should be talking about - fitting the technology to the child, not the child to the technology as the British academic Susan Greenfield said in the House of Lords (Britain's second legislative chamber) the other day.

Of course not all IT experts are like this. Far from it. We all know people who are brilliant at using the resources they have to hand. They know what I also believe which is that if technology is your thing then you are sort of obliged to show it in its best pedagogic light. The medium, in this case, really is the message.

**10: Technology failure**

It happens. It's always happened. The tape recorder doesn't work. The OHP goes *phutt!* as the bulb explodes. The video/DVD player has a monster sulk.

Computer's do it too. They freeze when you try and engage Media Player or they go all funny when you bring in a music clip. And if - as happened to me in Abbottabad last Autumn - the electricity goes, you're back where you started: just a presenter and two hundred teachers, and the fans have stopped working in the fetid heat and there's still sixty-three minutes to go and they're looking at you expectantly....

And then, once the panic disappears, you suddenly remember what it is to be a teacher.

**Conclusion?**

Phew. I've got all that off my chest then. I feel much better now, thank you for asking. As you've probably guessed, I'm actually a huge fan of PowerPoint. I use it all the time. It allows me to add extra dimensions to teaching and presenting that were never previously available. But I'm still a novice, really, and probably irritate people with the way I used the medium just as much as people (as you have seen) irritate me. So I need your feedback (see above). Which is why, if you see me presenting at a conference and I make a mess of it, do come and tell me. I'm sure I'll be pleased to hear from you.

Won't I?

(Harmer, 10 things I hate about PowerPoint, 2006)

[* Gatesian – Gates + ian, referring to Bill Gates, Microsoft]

---

## Questions for '10 Things I hate about PowerPoint':

1. Who is Jeremy Harmer? .....

2. What is it that people complain about? .....

3. Have you ever seen a PowerPoint presentation where the slides are the lecture notes? .....

4. Have you ever given a PowerPoint presentation where the slides are the notes for your talk?

.....

5. Is this bad/wrong? ..... Why? .....

.....

.....

6. What is involved in a 'visual assault'? .....

.....

.....

7. What is the problem here? .....

.....

8. What kind of 'aural assault' do we get with PowerPoint? .....

.....

9. Does this mean that it's bad to use sound effects? .....

10. Do you use bullet points? .....

11. What does Jeremy Harmer NOT like about bullet points in PowerPoint? .....

.....

12. Do you like and/or use Microsoft backgrounds? ..... Why / why not? .....

.....

13. What is the problem with 'early closing', or turning the presentation off quickly at the end of the talk? .....

.....

14. Where should the lecturer / presenter stand? .....

15. How can the presenter move away from the computer? .....

.....

16. What should you do when your technology fails? .....

17. What is Jeremy Harmer really saying about people using PowerPoint? .....

.....

## Works Cited in this topic

Dobbs, J. (2001). Introduction. In *Using the Board in the Language Classroom* (pp. 1-11). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Harmer, J. (2006, May). *10 things I hate about PowerPoint.* Retrieved May 13, 2013, from Humanising Language Teaching Magazine: http://www.hltmag.co.uk/may06/mart04.htm

Harmer, J. (2007). The Practice of English Language Teaching. Pearson Longman.

# Topic 6b: Developing Resources for Teaching

In this topic we are looking at each of the skills to be taught in KSSR.

## Listening and Speaking Skills

The first 'module' in the KSSR syllabus is 'Listening and Speaking'. Although it is quite acceptable to present skills in an 'integrated' way, teachers tend to push aside the listening and speaking activities in favour of the quieter and more controllable reading and writing activities.

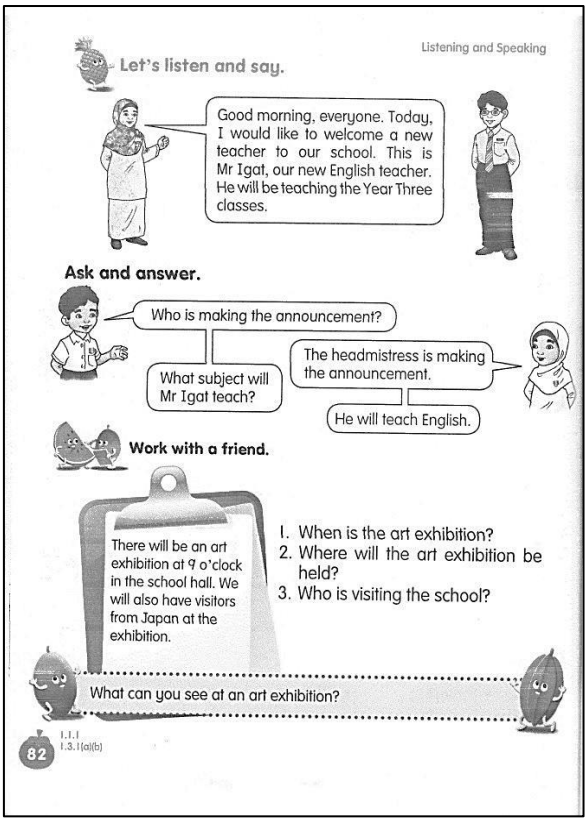
Even when teachers are brave enough to present children with listening materials, very often the speaking side of this joined 'skill' gets ignored even more.

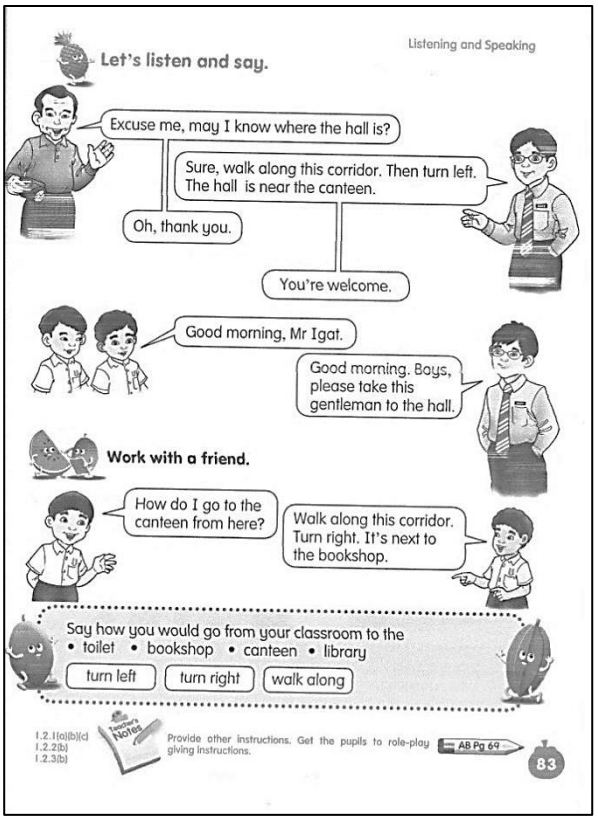
Besides having patience and good classroom control, there are a number of materials that teachers can make use of.

**Listening and Speaking Resources:**

The teacher's first resource is the text book. Here is a scan of the 'Listening and Speaking' pages for Unit 11 in the Year 3 *Sekolah Kebangsaan* text book.

The topic for this Unit is "In School ...", and the teachers' notes at the bottom of the page say: *"Provide other instructions. Get the pupils to role-play giving instructions."*



**Learning Standards:**

Able to speak with correct word stress

1.3.1(a)(b) Able to answer and demonstrate understanding of oral texts asking and answering simple wh- questions

1.2.1(a)(b)(c) Able to participate in daily conversations (a) express good wishes, (b) ask for help, (c) respond to someone asking for help.

1.2.2(b) Able to listen to and follow (b) simple directions.

1.2.3(b) Able to give (b) simple directions to places in school.

## Questions for Unit 11 Year 3 text book 'Listening and Speaking' pages:

1. In this lesson using the text book, what voices will the students listen to? .....

.....

2. How will the students 'learn to speak with correct word stress' (LS 1.1.1)? .....

.....

3. What is each of the four example conversations designed to teach?

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

4. Is the language used 'authentic'? .....

5. What activity is suggested to learn the target language? .....

6. In the 'Work with a friend' section on page 82 what activity are the students expected to be involved in? .....

.....

7. Is there sufficient material on these two pages for a full 'Listening and Speaking' lesson?

.....

8. How could you add listening materials? .....

.....

9. The teacher's notes say: 'Provide other instructions'. Suggest some. (Discuss)

.....

.....

10. Discuss: In looking for additional learning materials for this, or any, lesson – what principles will guide your choice? .....

.....

**Places to find authentic listening resources:**

Many multimedia resources are available for listening, and children benefit greatly from hearing English spoken (or sung) by many different voices other than their teacher. Digital sound and video files, or parts of them, can be played repeatedly to the children, and activities designed for before, during and after listening will help them to concentrate and learn something new each time they listen.

Podcasts and videos can be used, as long as they are watched carefully first by the teacher. Some topics will be easier to find materials than others.

**Speaking resources:**

As long as the children have been led through the vocabulary that they need, then the resources needed for speaking are simply stimuli to get them motivated.

Here are some examples of possibilities:

- Find a way to get children speaking (and singing) on a microphone. It changes their outlook.
- Ask children to retell a story that has been told/shown (video) n an engaging way
- Let children get puppets to 'speak' for them
- Film children speaking – encourage them to 'act' a character
- Show an animation or video clip without sound and ask children to be the sound
- Learn dialogues, language arts, jazz chants etc.
- materials for motivation – games, charts, rewards
- Children look at photos/pictures and talk about them
- ask children to speak about a PowerPoint teacher has prepared
- Play games – circle games, board games, card games, Game show games (see devising language games, topic 5)

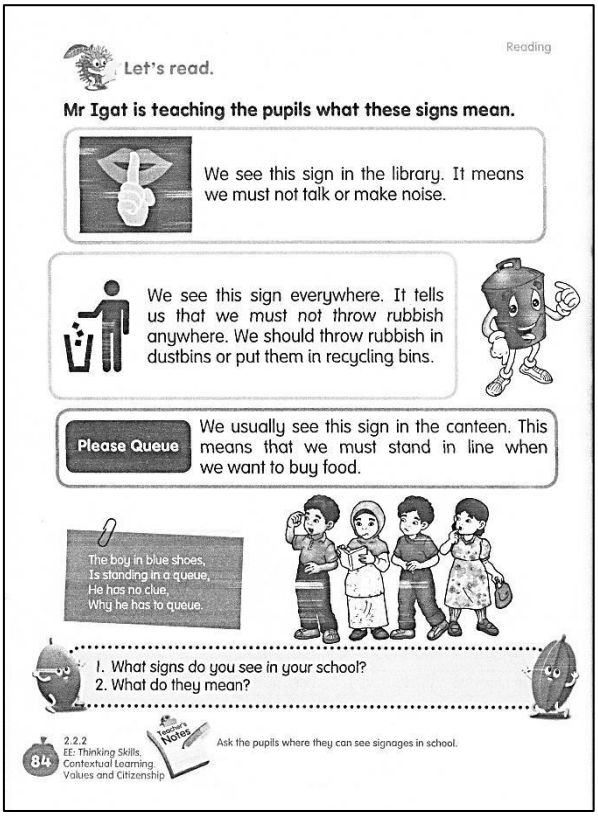
**Practical Exercise**

Plan a Listening and Speaking lesson (related to this topic) that does not involve any Reading or Writing. You could use movies, stories, songs, games, or just the teacher talking, and the children listening and speaking confidently. As the teacher you need to set up a structure for speaking so that they know what they are going to say without feeling shy.

## Reading Skills

In order to learn to read, children need to practise reading. In order to practise reading, children need to have materials available to read. Of course, if the reading material is not appealing, they will not read it.

Here is a scan of the 'Reading' pages for Unit 11 in the Year 3 *Sekolah Kebangsaan* text book. The topic for the unit is "In school ...".



Reading

Let's read.

**Mr Igat is teaching the pupils what these signs mean.**

We see this sign in the library. It means we must not talk or make noise.

We see this sign everywhere. It tells us that we must not throw rubbish anywhere. We should throw rubbish in dustbins or put them in recycling bins.

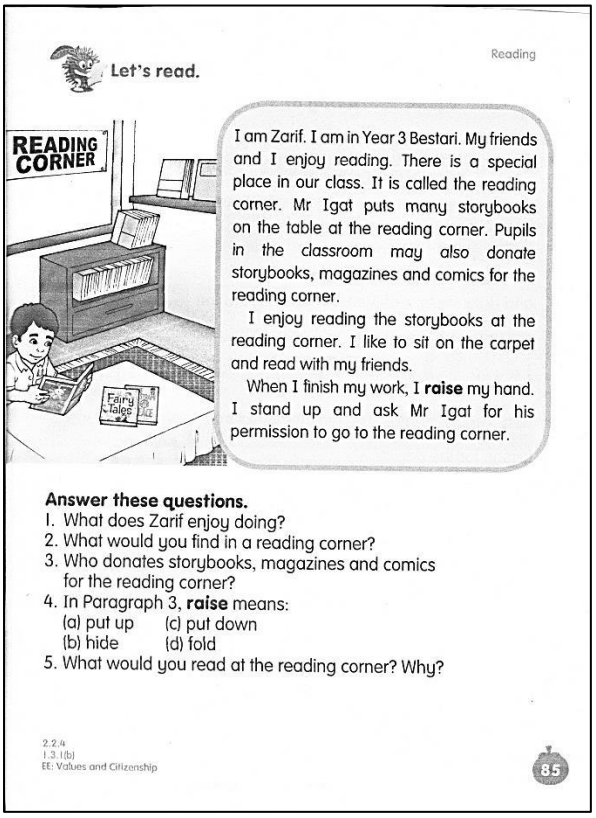
Please Queue — We usually see this sign in the canteen. This means that we must stand in line when we want to buy food.

The boy in blue shoes,
Is standing in a queue,
He has no clue,
Why he has to queue.

1. What signs do you see in your school?
2. What do they mean?

84 2.2.2 EE: Thinking Skills, Contextual Learning, Values and Citizenship

Teacher's Notes: Ask the pupils where they can see signages in school.



Reading

Let's read.

READING CORNER

I am Zarif. I am in Year 3 Bestari. My friends and I enjoy reading. There is a special place in our class. It is called the reading corner. Mr Igat puts many storybooks on the table at the reading corner. Pupils in the classroom may also donate storybooks, magazines and comics for the reading corner.

I enjoy reading the storybooks at the reading corner. I like to sit on the carpet and read with my friends.

When I finish my work, I **raise** my hand. I stand up and ask Mr Igat for his permission to go to the reading corner.

Fairy Tales

**Answer these questions.**

1. What does Zarif enjoy doing?
2. What would you find in a reading corner?
3. Who donates storybooks, magazines and comics for the reading corner?
4. In Paragraph 3, **raise** means:
   (a) put up (c) put down
   (b) hide (d) fold
5. What would you read at the reading corner? Why?

2.2.4
1.3.1(b)
EE: Values and Citizenship

85

**p84: Learning Standards:**

2.2.2: Able to read and understand phrases and sentences in linear and non-linear texts.
*Educational Emphases*: Thinking skills, Contextual Learning, Values and Citizenship

*Ask pupils where they can see signages in school*.

**p85: Learning Standards:**

2.2.4: Able to read and understand a paragraph with simple and compound sentences.
1.3.1(b): Able to listen to and demonstrate understanding of oral texts by (b) answering simple Wh-questions

*Educational Emphases*: Values and Citizenship

NOTE: "signages" is not commonly used in English. Just ask pupils where they can see signs.

**Questions for Unit 11 Year 3 Text Book Reading pages:**

1. What are the children going to read? .....

.....

2. What is a 'Reading Corner'? Have you ever seen one? .....

.....

3. How will the children know the meaning of the word 'raise'? .....

.....

4. What signs are the children likely to find if they go for a walk around the school? .....

.....

5. How can children record the signs they see? .....

6. What is the poem about 'The boy in the blue shoes ...' for? .....

.....

7. What are the Learning Standards for this lesson?

.....

.....

.....

8. Will you set up a Reading Corner in your classroom? (What problems could there be? How could you do it?)

.....

.....

9. What materials and activities could you use to reinforce the teaching from this lesson?

.....

.....

10. What are some signs you think should be put around the school?

.....

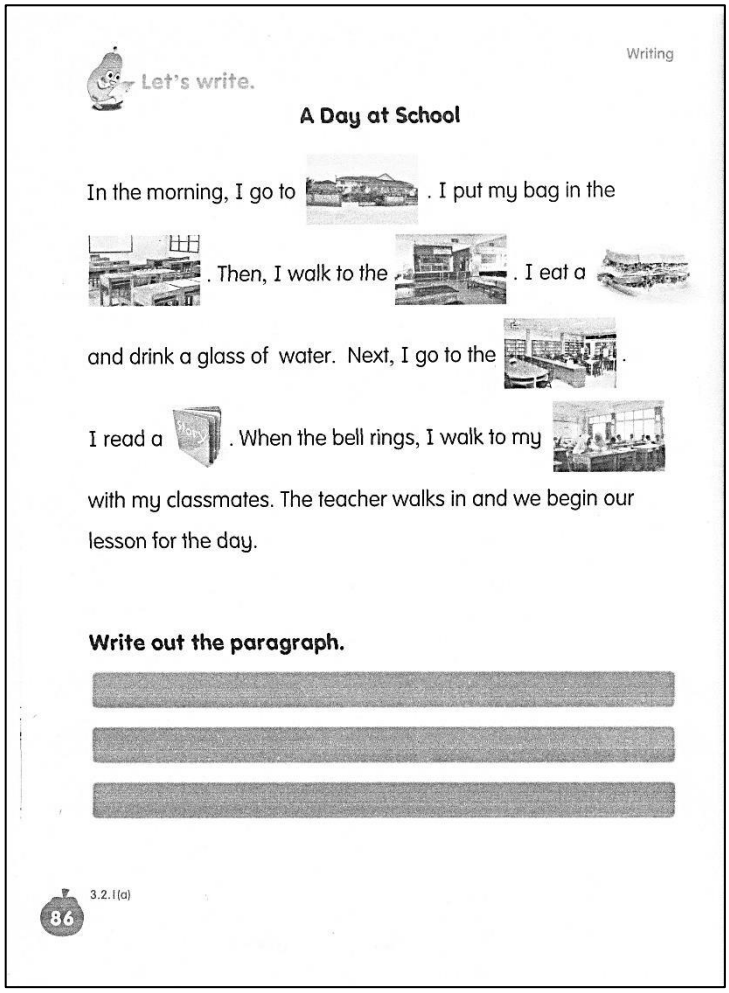
11. What is a "print rich environment" and why is it important for a school to have it?

.....

.....

## Writing Skills

Here is a scan of the 'Writing' page for Unit 11 in the Year 3 *Sekolah Kebangsaan* text book. The topic for the unit is "In school ...".



Writing

Let's write.

**A Day at School**

In the morning, I go to . I put my bag in the . Then, I walk to the . I eat a and drink a glass of water. Next, I go to the . I read a . When the bell rings, I walk to my with my classmates. The teacher walks in and we begin our lesson for the day.

**Write out the paragraph.**

3.2.1(a)

86

Learning Standard:

3.2.1(a): Able to complete (a) linear texts.

### Questions for Unit 11 Year 3 Text Book Writing page:

***Work with a group or partner on the following questions:***

1. What skill are the children learning when they complete this page?

.....

2. Where will the children write their paragraph?

.....

3. Can you think of a creative way (in light of previous reading in this subject) for the children to complete this activity?

.....

4. What would be a good extension activity that utilises the skills they are practising here – and what resources would you need to complete it?

.....

.....

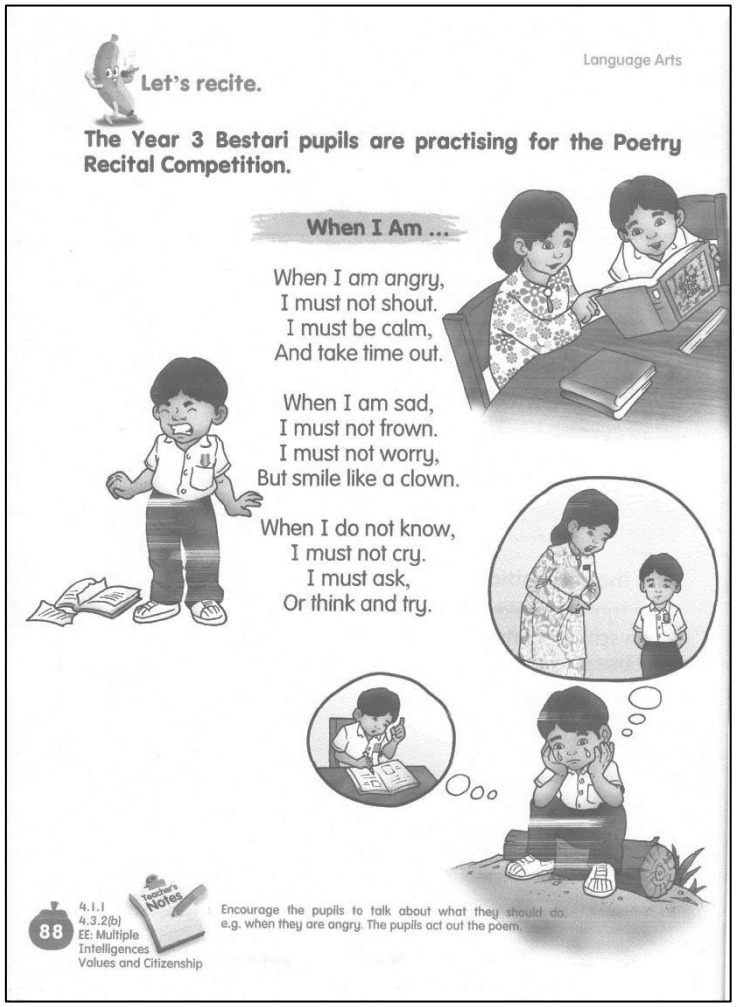
5. How could you relate this activity to the grammar activity that follows?

.....

**Discuss your ideas with other groups and pairs.**

## Language Arts

Here is a scan of the 'Language Arts' page for Unit 11 in the Year 3 *Sekolah Kebangsaan* text book. The topic for the unit is "In school ...".



Language Arts

Let's recite.

The Year 3 Bestari pupils are practising for the Poetry Recital Competition.

When I Am ...

When I am angry,
I must not shout.
I must be calm,
And take time out.

When I am sad,
I must not frown.
I must not worry,
But smile like a clown.

When I do not know,
I must not cry.
I must ask,
Or think and try.

88

4.1.1
4.3.2(b)
EE: Multiple Intelligences
Values and Citizenship

Teacher's Notes

Encourage the pupils to talk about what they should do. e.g. when they are angry. The pupils act out the poem.

*Teacher's Notes:* Encourage the pupils to talk about what they should do. e.g. when they are angry. The pupils act out the poem.

Learning Standards:

4.1.1: Able to enjoy action songs, jazz chants and poems through non-verbal response.

4.3.2(b): Able to perform with guidance based on (a) Jazz chants

Educational Emphases:

Multiple Intelligences, Values, Citizenship

### Questions for Unit 11 Year 3 Text Book Language Arts page:

***Work with a group or partner on these questions:***

1. What do you feel about the chant? (Is it good? Would you teach it?) .....

.....

2. What could you add to the chant (actions, props ... ) so that the children can perform it as it suggests in the learning Standard?

.....

.....

3. Can you think of a song that might be good to teach this subject? Or maybe a song you could modify the words of?

.....

.....

.....

4. Find / make up a story that could teach the lesson from this topic. What would the plot be?

.....

.....

.....

5. How could you use art and craft to reinforce this lesson?

.....

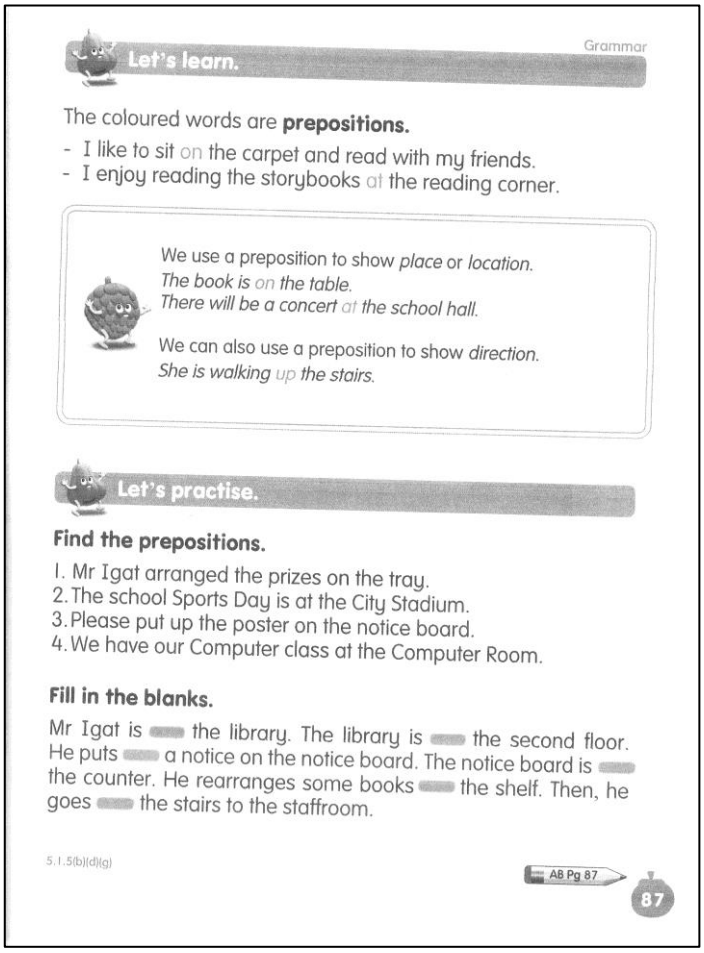
.....

.....

***Share your ideas with other groups or pairs.***

## Grammar

Here is a scan of the 'Grammar' page for Unit 11 in the Year 3 *Sekolah Kebangsaan* text book. (The topic for the unit is "In school ...".)



Grammar

**Let's learn.**

The coloured words are **prepositions.**

- I like to sit on the carpet and read with my friends.
- I enjoy reading the storybooks at the reading corner.

We use a preposition to show *place* or *location*.
*The book is on the table.*
*There will be a concert at the school hall.*

We can also use a preposition to show *direction*.
*She is walking up the stairs.*

**Let's practise.**

**Find the prepositions.**

1. Mr Igat arranged the prizes on the tray.
2. The school Sports Day is at the City Stadium.
3. Please put up the poster on the notice board.
4. We have our Computer class at the Computer Room.

**Fill in the blanks.**

Mr Igat is ____ the library. The library is ____ the second floor. He puts ____ a notice on the notice board. The notice board is ____ the counter. He rearranges some books ____ the shelf. Then, he goes ____ the stairs to the staffroom.

5.1.5(b)(d)(g)

AB Pg 87

87

Learning Standard:

5.1.5(b)(d)(g): Able to use prepositions correctly and appropriately

(b) on, (d) up, (g) at.

**SPECIAL NOTE**: As this page suggests, 'at' is generally used for places such as 'school'.

However for enclosed areas and rooms such as 'school hall', 'library', and 'reading corner', it is more common to use 'in'.

i.e. 'in the library', 'in the school hall', 'in the reading corner', 'in the computer room',
**BUT** 'at the City Stadium' **OR** 'in the City Stadium'.

Of course, in this case, 'in' is not one of the prepositions being taught.

If you are not sure, take a look at the notes below from English Club. (English Club, 2013).

If you are using this page to teach this topic, never undermine the children's confidence in the

## Prepositions of Place: at, in, on

In general, we use:
**at** for a POINT
**in** for an ENCLOSED SPACE
**on** for a SURFACE (English Club, 2013)

| at | in | on |
|---|---|---|
| **POINT** | **ENCLOSED SPACE** | **SURFACE** |
| at the corner | in the garden | on the wall |
| at the bus stop | in London | on the ceiling |
| at the door | in France | on the door |
| at the top of the page | in a box | on the cover |
| at the end of the road | in my pocket | on the floor |
| at the entrance | in my wallet | on the carpet |
| at the crossroads | in a building | on the menu |
| at the front desk | in a car | on a page |

Look at these examples:

- Jane is waiting for you **at** the bus stop.
- The shop is **at** the end of the street.
- My plane stopped **at** Dubai and Hanoi and arrived **in** Bangkok two hours late.
- When will you arrive **at** the office?
- Do you work **in** an office?
- I have a meeting **in** New York.
- Do you live **in** Japan?
- Jupiter is **in** the Solar System.
- The author's name is **on** the cover of the book.
- There are no prices **on** this menu.
- You are standing **on** my foot.
- There was a "no smoking" sign **on** the wall.
- I live **on** the 7th floor **at** 21 Oxford Street **in** London.

Notice the use of the prepositions of place **at**, **in** and **on** in these standard expressions:

| at | in | on |
|---|---|---|
| at home | in a car | on a bus |
| at work | in a taxi | on a train |
| at school | in a helicopter | on a plane |
| at university | in a boat | on a ship |
| at college | in a lift (elevator) | on a bicycle, on a motorbike |
| at the top | in the newspaper | on a horse, on an elephant |
| at the bottom | in the sky | on the radio, on television |
| at the side | in a row | on the left, on the right |
| at reception | in Oxford Street | on the way |

**Questions for Unit 11 Year 3 Text Book Grammar page:**

Work with a partner or group.

1. Is this page useful? .....

2. How would you use this page? .....

3. Would you use additional materials to teach these prepositions? .....

4. Describe how you could use a story (children reading / you reading / you telling) to teach this same material?

.....

.....

.....

5. Describe how you could use a chant or rhyme to teach this material.

.....

.....

.....

6. Describe how you could use art or craft to teach this material.

.....

.....

.....

7. Describe a game you could play to teach this material.

.....

.....

.....

8. Can you think of any other materials you could use to teach this material?

.....

.....

.....

***Share ideas with other groups / pairs.***

## Vocabulary

There is no special page in the text book for vocabulary, and teaching 'Vocabulary' is not a specific lesson. However, it is obviously very important. Lack of sufficient vocabulary knowledge can really slow students down in all areas – they can't read or listen to a story if there are too many words they don't know, they can't talk or write about something if they don't know the necessary words.

Work with your group / partner to answer this:

In the pages you have just been looking at, on the Topic of School, what related words are in the text book that the students need to know?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What other words might be useful for this particular topic?

.....

.....

.....

.....

What are some (creative!) ways you can help you students to <u>remember</u> all of these words?

.....

.....

.....

What art or craft activity could you use to help practice this vocabulary?

.....

.....

.....

What story could you use to reinforce school vocabulary?

.....

.....

.....

What song, rhyme or chant could you use to practice this vocabulary?

.....

.....

.....

Which words in the Word List (in KSSR curriculum) are also used in these pages?

.....

.....

.....

***Share ideas with other groups / pairs.***

## Works cited in this Topic

Kementarian Pelajaran Malaysia. (2010). Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Sekolah Rendah . *Modul Teras Asas - Bahasa Inggeris SJK, Tahun Satu, Dua & Tiga*. Malaysia: Kementarian Pelajaran Malaysia.

Seong, L. E., Kaur, M., & Awang, Z. (2012). *English Year 3 Sekolah Kebangsaan Textbook.* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

# Bibliography

Dobbs, J. (2001). Introduction. In *Using the Board in the Language Classroom* (pp. 1-11). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Elissavet, G., & Economides, A. A. (2003). An evaluation Instrument for Hypermedia Courseware. *Educational Technology & Society, 6*(2), 31-44.

English Club. (2013). *Prepositions of Place.* Retrieved June 16, 2013, from English Club: http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/prepositions-at-in-on-place.htm

Harmer, J. (2006, May). *10 things I hate about PowerPoint.* Retrieved May 13, 2013, from Humanising Language Teaching Magazine: http://www.hltmag.co.uk/may06/mart04.htm

Harmer, J. (2007). The Practice of English Language Teaching. Pearson Longman.

Johnson, L., & Lamb, A. (2013). *Evauating Internet Resources.* Retrieved April 21, 2013, from Teacher Tap: http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic32.htm

Kementarian Pelajaran Malaysia. (2010). Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Sekolah Rendah . *Modul Teras Asas - Bahasa Inggeris SJK, Tahun Satu, Dua & Tiga*. Malaysia: Kementarian Pelajaran Malaysia.

Mat, T. (n.d.). *Chapter 3: Teaching Speaking.* Retrieved April 21, 2013, from Todd Mat 34: http://www.toddmat34.com/uploads/1/9/1/7/1917706/teaching_speaking.pdf

McDonough, J., Shaw, C., & Masuhara, H. (2013). *Materials and Methods in ELT (3rd Ed).* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Puchta, H. (2007). *Developing Young Leraners' Speaking Skills.* Retrieved April 21, 2013, from Herbert Puchta Resources: http://www.herbertpuchta.com/wp-content/files_mf/1337800529YL_Speaking.pdf

Redston, C., & Cunningham, G. (2006). Superheroes: The Real Spiderman. In *Face to Face: Intermediate Student's Book* (p. 97). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seong, L. E., Kaur, M., & Awang, Z. (2012). *English Year 3 Sekolah Kebangsaan Textbook.* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.