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TEACHER TO TEACHER

The "Poor Quality" of U.S. Bilingual Education Research: *An Examination of the Logic and Metric of Judgment*

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Abstract

Political and academic critics of bilingual education in the United States have claimed that the research evidence supporting native language instruction is weak, a claim that has also been echoed by some prominent supporters of bilingual programs. This claim has had a damaging effect on the political fate of bilingual education in states such as California, Arizona, and Massachusetts. In this paper, I argue that (1) the primary metric used to support this critique--the percentage of research studies meta-analysts have found "methodologically acceptable"--is a vague and not widely accepted approach for weighing the quality of a research literature; (2) the percentage of studies found methodologically acceptable in bilingual education research is not very different from similar other, federally-funded research in education and the social sciences; (3) there is little basis for comparison for bilingual education research and other psychology- and education-related literatures since percentages of methodologically acceptable studies are rarely reported in research reviews; and (4) higher quality research is necessary, but should not be viewed in isolation to real-world constraints on such endeavors.

Background

A National Research Council report (August & Hakuta, 1997) has argued that using program evaluation to determine which type of program is "best" for language minority children has "little value" given the complexities of the components involved (p. 149). Nevertheless, the political debate surrounding bilingual education in the U.S. has focused heavily on the effectiveness issue. The results of program evaluation research have had a significant impact on the public rhetoric surrounding bilingual programs in states with large language minority populations such as California (McQuillan & Tse, 1996; Crawford, 1999; Tse, 2001). Commenting on the quality of that evaluation research, vocal opponents have stated that it is "worthless" (Rodriguez, 1997, cited in Crawford, 1999). Even supporters of bilingual education have commented that there is a "disappointing percentage of studies…[found] to be methodologically adequate," and have lamented the poor quality of the research in the field (August & Hakuta, 1997, p. 146). These pronouncements have had deleterious effects on the press coverage and editorial commentary on bilingual education (McQuillan & Tse, 1996), and very likely on the outcomes of recent anti-bilingual education initiatives (Crawford, 1999).

Program evaluators have extensively discussed the issues surrounding bilingual program evaluations in the past, noting that they are fraught with difficulties of research design and analysis (Willig & Ramirez, 1993). Lam (1992), for example, noted that there are several problems inherent in bilingual program evaluations, among them: high attrition rates, differing cultural backgrounds of English Language Learners, a limited number of psychometrically acceptable oral language proficiency instruments, and--most critically--difficulty in creating control groups that are truly comparable. These problems are compounded by conflicting federal and state policies, a historically inefficient means of disseminating appropriate evaluation assistance to program evaluators, and a lack of experience by many local evaluators in appropriate research design, the theory and practice of bilingual education, or both. In spite of--or perhaps because of--these difficulties, Lam and others have reported that bilingual education research is of low quality, a judgment based in part upon the percentage of studies found to be methodologically "acceptable"

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among evaluations examined by meta-analysts. Lam reports the mean number of acceptable studies found by various meta-analysts from the early 1970s up through the late 1980s was only around 10%. While later reviews (e.g. Rossell & Baker, 1996) found as many as 24% of the studies they reviewed to be acceptable, this is, for prominent opponents as well as some proponents, still considered to be an indicator of poor quality.

Lam (1992) pointed out that bilingual education is not alone in problems related to evaluation. Evaluation efforts in the 1970s and '80s were considered of generally low quality across many areas of education, including special education, migrant education, compensatory education, school desegregation, and others. While this does not, as Lam states, "excuse bilingual educators…from responsibilities for deficiencies in their program evaluations" (p. 183), it does give us a more appropriate context with which to make more balanced judgments about the quality of that research.

Research Issues

This paper critiques the claim that bilingual education evaluation research is of generally low quality based upon the "percentage acceptable" metric. That metric is determined by calculating the proportion of studies deemed methodologically acceptable according to the (varying) criteria of meta-analysts to the total number of studies located on a topic. This critique is carried out in two ways:

1. An examination of the logic of using the "percentage acceptable" metric for evaluating the quality of a research literature;
2. An examination of other areas of meta-analytical research in education and psychology in order to provide a context for the assessment of bilingual education research quality.

The data sources for this study are:

(a) several prominent research reviews in the field of education and the social sciences, including Head Start (GAO, 1997), other federally-funded social science research projects (Cook & Gruder, 1977), and early reading (Stahl & Miller, 1989); and

(b) a random sample of empirical literature reviews that appeared in two major journals of research reviews, the *Review of Educational Research* (N = 11) and *Psychological Bulletin* (N = 16) for the years 1995-1996. Only those reviews that included some statistical or vote-count method of comparing treatments or conditions were included.

These two sources will provide a context within which to examine the claim that, by some common standard of research practice, the quality of bilingual education research is "low."

Our analysis was based both on an examination of the logic of the measure in question--that is, is the "percentage acceptable" method a good way to judge research quality?--and a comparison to similar research reviews in other areas of education and psychology, based upon the data sources listed above. These reviews were read to determine the percentage of "acceptable studies" found, and those percentages (if reported) were compared to those found in a recent (critical) review of the bilingual education literature.

The Faulty Logic of the "Percentage Acceptable" Metric

There are several problems inherent in the "percentage acceptable" metric chosen to judge the quality of bilingual education research. First, the percentage of studies obtained will clearly depend on how many studies are gathered and inspected. This number has varied widely from review to review, from more than 1,400 to less than 20. Okada et al. (1982, cited in Lam, 1992), for example, found 168 studies that were methodologically acceptable, yet this represented
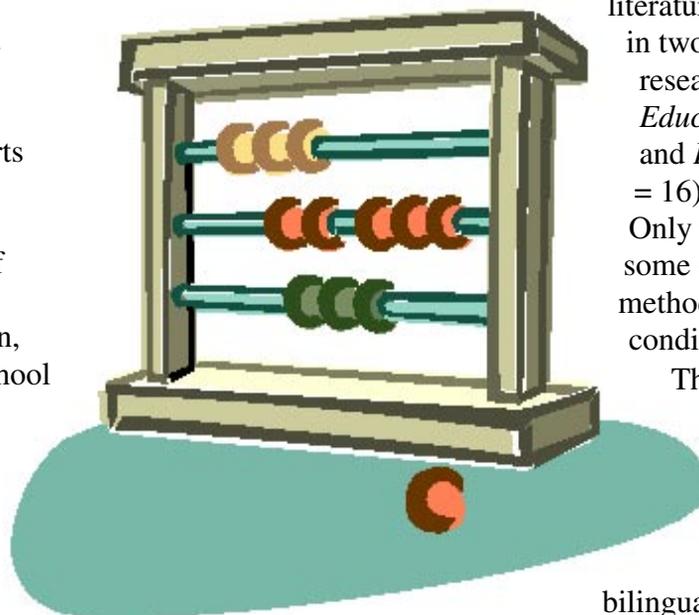
only 12% of the total population of studies examined (1,411). Put another way, a "low" percentage might be more than adequate for the purposes of providing an evidential basis for a given educational practice, if the absolute number of studies is high. Clearly it is better to have 10% acceptability of 1000 studies than 90% acceptability of 10 studies. The real question is: Are there a sufficient number of studies to support bilingual education, especially in comparison with the resources devoted to it? Even the most severe critics of bilingual education found 72 acceptable studies (Rossell & Baker, 1996), a number which is greater than the total number of studies considered in other research reviews for areas of education with far wider impact and expense (e.g. Stahl & Miller's (1989) review of early reading approaches, which examined 51 studies). Of course, much of the variation in absolute numbers will depend on the method of research review (vote-count vs. calculation of effect sizes), and on differing exclusion criteria. This is precisely the point: these determinations are rarely uniform across or even within fields of research.

Second, many of the "studies" that are included in the research reviews are mandated program evaluations, products of the U.S. Title VII regulations for federally-funded programs. As such, they are neither considered part of the published literature nor subject to even the most minimal review by other researchers. They would most likely never be part of a pool of reviewed research in most other areas of education or psychology. These evaluations are written by school district or outside evaluators, many of whom lack essential knowledge of either research design or bilingual education (Lam, 1992). As such, it is not surprising that the percentage will be low, given the pool of "research" that is examined. In Rossell and Baker's review of 300 studies, the vast majority (89%) of those found to be "methodologically unacceptable" consisted precisely of such unpublished studies.

Third, excluding studies based on *a priori* research design conditions itself violates an important recommendation made by prominent meta-analysts. They suggest including all studies with sufficient data in a research review in order to determine whether and which research flaws are related to outcomes (Glass,

McGaw, & Smith, 1981). Excluding studies *a priori* assumes that one can predict which qualities are important in a study's outcome. This is not only an unwarranted assumption in much of social science research, but one which may needlessly narrow the pool of available evidence to test a particular research hypothesis.

A Comparison to Other Meta-Analyses

Two types of comparisons were made with other areas of education and psychology to further assess the appropriateness of the "percentage acceptable" method. First, other reviews of federally-funded projects were examined to see how Title VII and other bilingual program evaluations compared in terms of their quality. Very little data on the "percentage acceptable" for other types of research were found, but those that were located were strikingly similar to bilingual program evaluations. The General Accounting Office's review of 200 Head Start evaluations determined that approximately 10% (22) met their methodological criteria, criteria that were much less stringent than those used by bilingual education reviewers such as Rossell and Baker (1996). Cook and Gruder (1978) found that the percentage of acceptable federal-funded program evaluations contemporaneous with the majority of bilingual evaluations (pre-1980) was in the 10-15% range, again, similar to the results reported by Lam. Other prominently cited meta-analyses in education either made no mention of the number of studies rejected for methodological reasons, or had percentages in a similar range. Stahl and Miller (1989), for example, determined that only nine of the 51 (17.6%) studies they reviewed on early reading methods met one of Rossell and Baker's key criteria for quality-- controlling for initial group differences.

Of the 26 randomly selected empirical reviews, only <u>one</u> reported the number of studies that appeared to be rejected explicitly for methodological quality..

A second comparison was made by systematically reviewing meta-analyses in education and psychology found in two major journals of research reviews, the *Review of Educational Research* and *Psychological Bulletin*. Of the 26 randomly selected empirical reviews, only <u>one</u> reported the number of studies that appeared to be rejected explicitly for methodological

quality (versus other possible exclusion criteria, such as not examining the constructs or population of interest). That study (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996, on school finance) found that 18% of the 175 articles and books initially reviewed met all of their criteria for inclusion, a figure not much different from the mean acceptable percentage from bilingual education reviews through 1996 (15%, range: 5-44%). The absolute number of studies used in the meta-analyses ranged widely (education: 26-133; psychology: 14-286), with a mean number of studies close to those used by more recent bilingual education reviews (education: 55.35 (SD: 30.1); psychology: 90.56 (SD: 73.67); bilingual education: 72 in Rossell & Baker (1996)). These comparisons are quite favorable to bilingual education, especially when one considers that research design difficulties such as the establishment of a comparable control group are much less severe in other areas of education and psychology than they are for bilingual program evaluation.

Conclusion

Educational practice is build upon an imperfect evidential base, as is the case for all social sciences. The field of bilingual education needs better-designed and implemented research studies, as August and Hakuta and others have concluded. But this is quite different from judging the quality of the extant group of studies to be somehow below a standard used for other educational research, however "awful" that may appear to some (e.g. Kaestle, 1993). There is no logical or empirical basis for the harsh assessments that have been made of bilingual education evaluations. The "percentage acceptable" method used by other reviewers has little acceptance in either education or psychology as a metric of quality, and is in any case an unstable product of shifting acceptability criteria, with little regard for the absolute number of studies available. It is, in other words, the sort of crude and context-free "single statistic" which research methodologists have warned as constituting the poorest way to make a reasoned argument (Abelson, 1996).

There have been even more fundamental critiques of the harsh judgment made of bilingual education.

It [the percentage acceptable method] is, in other words, the sort of crude and context-free "single statistic" which research methodologists have warned as constituting the poorest way to make a reasoned argument.

Cummins (1999, 2000) has argued that previous meta-analyses have applied what he terms a "Research-Policy" perspective. Such a perspective assumes that the results of research can be directly applied to a policy setting, without the application or the consideration of a theory of language acquisition and pedagogy. This approach, Cummins notes, has led to confusion concerning the meaning and relevance of previous research reviews, largely due to the problems of attempting to interpret results without an accompanying theoretical framework. Instead, Cummins advocates a "Research-Theory-Practice Paradigm," by which the results of studies are used to refine and reformulate hypothesis about relevant areas of theory and practice, which are in turn further tested in future studies. This iterative process not only puts research in its proper place vis-à-vis theory, Cummins argues, but also allows us to make sense of a wider variety of research findings which may have important information on how different program models work or don't work in various educational settings. In this perspective, much of what has previously been considered "unacceptable" evidence may be now used to guide policymakers and further refine theory. Krashen (1996) has similarly argued that studies that have been dismissed as methodologically wanting contain useful information and often provide confirmation of underlying theoretically sound models of bilingualism.

Future evaluations of bilingual education research and its quality need to take into account the broader context of educational evaluation, and the proper place bilingual evaluation holds in that context. I have attempted in this paper only to address the somewhat narrow issues of how certain metrics of quality fare with respect to bilingual education. Nevertheless, there are larger issues of how educational research is portrayed both in the scholarly community and in the popular media that demand further exploration by members of the bilingual education field. Understanding both the logic and the data behind those critiques is, I hope, a first step toward establishing a more solid foundation for future reviews and their use by policymakers.

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Art Class and Beginning English Language Learners: *Art Teachers' Views, Practices, and Educational Background in Language Acquisition*

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Abstract

Art class appears to be ideal for beginning second language acquirers, because it supplies extra linguistic context that makes input comprehensible. This promise, however, needs to be confirmed by research. A survey of art teachers who teach English Language Learners showed that at least some understand the potential of the art class, and some utilize strategies that make input more comprehensible. Art teachers, however, have little background in and access to knowledge about second language acquisition.

Introduction

Current language acquisition theory hypothesizes that we acquire language in only one way: When we receive comprehensible input, that is when we understand messages (Krashen, 2003). We are aided in comprehending messages by extra linguistic and linguistic context. Extra linguistic context can include physical objects and our knowledge of the world. Linguistic context refers to language that we have already acquired.

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We use both linguistic and extra linguistic context when we acquire language. If, for example, a beginning ESL student does not know the word "glasses" and hears a teacher ask "Who is wearing glasses?" while the teacher points to her glasses (extra linguistic context), and if the acquirer has already acquired "Who is wearing …"? (linguistic context) the acquirer will be able to understand the question, and will have made progress in acquiring the meaning of the new word.

Similarly, if an (advanced) ESL acquirer hears the sentence, "John is so obsequious; his flattery is completely insincere." If the hearer knows John (extra linguistic context) and knows the words "flattery" and "insincere," (linguistic context) much of the meaning of "obsequious" will be clear.

At beginning levels of second language acquisition, extra linguistic context is especially important. Beginning level foreign language teachers understand this and include pictures, realia (e.g. art exemplars) body parts and movement as means of making input comprehensible.

If this view is correct, it predicts that art class should be helpful for children who are beginning English language learners (ELLs), because it contains visuals and hands-on activities that serve to make input comprehensible.

Typically, elementary art classes demand little or less complicated reading involving a minimal amount of academic discourse. Art is thus considered to be a good way to provide early access to some of the mainstream, and allow ELLs to interact with other children. A common recommendation (see e.g. the variable threshold model, Krashen, 1996), is that beginning level ELLs be mainstreamed with native speakers of English for art, as well as for physical education and music.

Although mainstreaming art makes theoretical sense, there is no research supporting this practice. Do art teachers really make input comprehensible for ELLs? Do ELLs profit from early mainstreaming in art? This study is a step in determining how art can be a more useful experience for ELLs. It probes mainstream art teachers' background knowledge about second language acquisition, their awareness of the potential of art class, their preparation and background in second language acquisition, and, continues to examine art teachers' actual behavior in dealing with ELLs (see Eubanks 2002).

Method

Art teachers were asked to respond to a questionnaire on-line. A letter seeking participation was sent from two statewide art teacher organizations— The Kentucky Art Education Association (KAEA) and The Tennessee Art Education Association (TAEA). Members of the organization were asked to participate in the on-line survey. The invitation was sent via e-mail to members and stipulated that only public school art teachers respond. The participants were asked to respond within three weeks of receiving the letter, and responses were collected anonymously, with public school members completing the on-line survey by linking to a site.

> *"I think of my classroom as a place for the students to be on an "even playing field." … The ELLs can communicate through their art, just as all children can."*

Out of 450 members of the two organizations, 49 responded, a return rate of approximately 10%. Although this response rate is very modest, it falls within expected percentages for online survey studies (DSS Research). Of the 49 responses, 46 were usable for data analysis. Among the survey's 46 respondents, three answered only the open-ended questions. The survey included five major parts: (1) questions regarding professional/educational background, (2) information on numbers of ELLs currently taught, (3) classroom practice in terms of work assignments for ELLs, (4) Any additional comments. The actual questions are presented with responses in the results section below. Several questions asked for "yes/no" and "rating" responses. If respondents checked "yes," a question

requiring further explanation followed. Blank boxes under the questions needing more detail held 250 characters (approximately 40 words); longer response questions displayed two boxes (up to 80 words). The pilot test questions were developed via consultation with art experts and a statistician. Based on pilot testing, the survey questions were regrouped, rearranged and reworded for better flow.

The research questions were as follows:
1.   How do art educators see their role with respect to ELLs?
2.   In what ways is instruction modified for ELLs.
3.   How much knowledge do art educators have about second language acquisition?
4.   What level of pre- and in-service experience do art educators have related to ELLs?
5.   What are art educators' preferences in obtaining more background and knowledge about ELLs and second language acquisition?

Results

Number of ELLs in art classes
Only six of the 42 respondents to this question said they had no ELL students in their art classes. Twenty-four said they had between one and 20 ELL students, and a few had 41 or more (table 1).

Perceived Role as Art Educators

In an open-ended question, teachers were asked how they saw their roles as art teachers with respect to accommodating ESL students in their classes. Both elementary and secondary art teachers felt they could help ELL students adjust to a new country by facilitating success within the art classroom. Out of 42 responses, 21 teachers commented in the open response portion of the survey that part of their job is to help ELLs. The following quotes are typical:

"I feel like my role is much more involved than with other students. I must be an ambassador, a teacher and a tutor."
"I see myself as a means of easing ELLs' entry into our school."
Several teachers noted that the art class, as contrasted with "academic" classes, provides an especially comfortable and effective environment for ELLs:
  "I think of my classroom as a place for the students to be on an "even playing field." … The ELLs can com-

Table 1: Number of ELL students taught by art educators	
Number of ESL students taught each day	Number of teachers reporting
0	6
1-20	24
21-40	66
41-60	2
61-80	1
81-100	2
125	1

municate through their art, just as all children can."
"The art class is the great equalizer for all students. ELL, CEC (special education) and "regular" students can usually forget about their academic disabilities when they walk into the art room. If a love of art is instilled in them, they strive to achieve academically."

Three respondents said they did not make any special efforts with respect to accommodating ESL students in their classes, e.g. they treated ELLs "the same as any other student." The other 18 respondents did not answer the open response portion of the question.

Table Two: Strategies reported by teachers to help ELLs	
Strategy	Number Reporting
Demonstrate of the process, including drawing out the instruction (visual record)	21
Provide visuals including examples	22
Individual attention	7
Buddy system/peer-tutoring	7
Same language buddy system	6
Use limited Spanish or the language of the student	3

Common Instructional Practices

Respondents were asked about the kind of work they usually assigned to ESL students, and how it differed from the kind of work the rest of the class engaged in. Respondents were also asked if they used different instructional strategies for ESL students.

Most respondents, (39/46) reported that they assigned the same artwork to ESL students as they did to other students. Several teachers reported, however, that they used various means of making instruction more comprehensible. Table two presents six strategies mentioned by three or more teachers. The most frequently mentioned strategies were demonstration and providing visuals, teaching strategies that are intrinsic to art instruction.

These results are similar to those of Eubanks (2002). Ten of the eleven art teachers she interviewed in focus groups said they used visuals to make instruction more comprehensible ("body language, visual materials such as posters that show production procedures, and the teacher's own drawings," p. 42), and ten also said they used peer-tutoring, with translation allowed. Seven of the ten used the home language of the student, "even if it was just a few words" (p. 42). Also mentioned were the use of cooperative learning (four teachers) and "step-by-step instruction and simplification" (four teachers).

Although teachers claimed little knowledge of second language acquisition (see below), the strategies they reported using are quite consistent with what has been hypothesized about second language acquisition.

As noted earlier, there is overwhelming evidence that we acquire language when we understand what people tell us, or what we read (Krashen, 2003). The strategies teachers mentioned in Table Two were all aimed at making input more comprehensible. It needs to be pointed out, however, that only about half of the subjects responded to the question about the needs of ELLs, and of these, and a minority listed the strategies they used to make input more comprehensible.

Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition
Subjects were asked to indicate their level of knowledge of second language acquisition on a 1-5 scale, from 1 = extremely minimal to 5 = very extensive. Most of the teachers (31, or 67%) checked "1" or "2" indicating that their knowledge in second language acquisition was "extremely limited" or "somewhat limited." These results are consistent with subjects' responses to the next set of questions.

Pre-service ESL training of art educators

Subjects were asked if their colleges or universites offered any coursework related to teaching ESL students: Only six (15%) of the respondents checked, "yes." Subjects were also asked to describe the type of course they took. Of the six who took pre-service courses, five provided some description. From their statements, it was clear that material related to ESL was covered only superficially, and as a part of another class:

"Three courses covered ELLs in a very basic, non, in-depth way."
"One class about exceptional children in the classroom. I took it my 1st year so only remember that I really didn't get much from it all."

Table three: Respondents' preferences

	Extremely ineffective	Somewhat ineffective	medium	Somewhat effective	Highly effective	mean
In-service meetings	5	4	16	14	4	3.2
small group meetings	2	4	11	19	7	3.6
semester course	5	11	11	6	10	3.1
summer course	2	5	15	10	11	3.5
Consultations with ESL teachers	2	2	4	13	21	4.1

"One was an art education course, we worked on a project that would be appropriate for multi-cultural studies. "

"Elementary Education classes dealt with this issue."

"I have an endorsement to teach ELL. The MAT work I did in Art Education offered no instruction in teaching ELLs."

In-service ESL training of art educators
Subjects were asked whether their current schools offered any training related to ESL students and to evaluate the level of professional development provided by the school, on a 1-5 scale, from "extremely minimal" to "extensive." Thirteen (31%) said that their school offered at least some ESL training, but the majority, 36 (74 %) stated that the professional development training offered by their current school was "extremely minimal" or "somewhat minimal," six (13%) considered it to be of "medium" quality and only one teacher stated that the level of professional development was "extensive."

> *Subjects were most enthusiastic about consultation with ESL teachers. Thirty-four of the 43 who responded (76%) ranked this option as either "somewhat effective" or "effective."*

Professional Development Preferences

Respondents were asked to rank on a 1-5 scale (where 1 = extremely inefficient, 5 = highly efficient) the kind of professional development they thought would help them deal more effectively with ESL students, choosing from:
1. In-service meetings once a semester
2. Regular & periodical small group meetings
3. A semester-long course at the county or higher educational institution after work
4. Attending a course in the summer
5. Periodic consultations with ESL teachers.

Table three presents the rankings given to each option. Subjects were most enthusiastic about consultation with ESL teachers. Thirty-four of the 43 who responded (76%) ranked this option as either "somewhat effective" or "effective." The least preferred was doing a full semester course. Neither did they consider a once a semester meeting to be the best option. Their responses suggested that they did, in fact, understand the need for more information and help.

The results also suggest, however, that the art teachers would like expert support rather than becoming experts themselves. Their lack of enthusiasm about a full course could be due, at least in part, to time commitments and expanding responsibilities.

Summary

1.   Respondents reported having little knowledge of second language acquisition, little pre-service training, and had limited access to in-service training at their school on the topic of ELLs.

2. Of those teachers responding to the open-ended portion of the question, strategies they used were consistent with those that second language acquistion theory predicts to be useful for language acquisition.

3.   Respondents recognized the need for more information on teaching ELLs, and indicated that they preferred to increase their knowledge of ESL by consulting with ESL teachers.

Discussion

The finding that half the respondents were concerned about ELL students, and used appropriate strategies is encouraging. The modest response rate to the survey, however, prevents us from generalizing to the entire population of art teachers.

The results also indicate that art teachers have not had a great deal of education about accommodating ELLs, and that information related to second language acquirers is not readily available.

This study is only a preliminary step in determining the potential effectiveness of art classes for ELLs for second language acquisition. There is more to do.

First, we suggest determining the reliability of teachers' responses by actual observation of art classes in order to determine how much of the input directed at ELLs is comprehensible to them. Although Eubanks (2002) reported that the art teachers she interviewed utilized strategies similar to those our subjects did, a much larger percentage of her subjects reported use of these strategies, a result that could be due to her use of a focus group rather than a survey question that required additional open-ended responses. The difference could also be due to the presence of more ELLs in their classes. The optimal procedure is, of course, to document the strategies art teachers actually use to make input comprehensible; it is quite possible that teachers do much more, or less, than they say they do.

The crucial question, of course, is whether the strategies used indeed promote second language acquisition. Do ELLs in classes in which more and better strategies are used make better progress in English?

If art education does indeed result in improvement in English, what aspects of English are improved? Does art contribute to the development of academic vocabulary and syntax? Informal observation suggests that art does have the potential to improve academic language, as instruction typically requires the comprehension of terms such as "straight line," "perpendicular," "parallel," and eventually "proportion" and "ratio." More advanced art classes can also include discussion of historical context and biographical details of artists.

Second, we need to determine the effect of informing art teachers about second language acquisition. How much and what information is optimal? Our suggestion is that we take the teachers' word, and first provide basic information about second language acquisition as well as on-the-job consultation from ESL-trained colleagues.

Finally, the same type of investigations can be done with other subjects assumed to be helpful for beginning ELLs: music and physical education, subjects in which context is rich, less print is involved, and, especially when done with young children, the challenges presented by academic language are reduced.

Art class is a potential safe harbor or "comfort zone" (Eubanks, 2002, p. 44) for beginning ELL students. As noted at the beginning of this paper, the communicative and experiential nature of art classrooms provide multiple extralinguistic and linguistic learning opportunities for ELLs. Success in art class can provide an important beginning for ELLs and build their confidence in participating in the mainstream. As plausible as this sounds, however, it must be confirmed by empirical studies, and efforts need to be made to optimize the potential of the art class.

> *Art class is a potential safe harbor or "comfort zone" for beginning ELL students... the communicative and experiential nature of art classrooms provide multiple extralinguistic and linguistic learning opportunities for ELLs.*

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Second Language "Standards For Success": Out Of Touch With Language Acquisition Research

by Stephen Krashen, PhD

A list of Standards for Foreign Language Learning has been issued by the University of Oregon Center for Education Policy Research.[1] According to the Standards for Success website,[2] these standards are part of a larger project covering many different subjects and have been sent to every high school in the United States. It is likely that the standards will be interpreted as guidelines for curriculum.

There is a problem: Most of the standards in the document lead to pedagogy that conflicts with research and theory published in professional journals over the last thirty years. The document, in fact, promotes pedagogy that is the mirror- image of what research says should be going on in foreign language classes. Contrary to the impression created, Standard for Success is not based on research: It is based on a series of discussions with faculty at several universities. In my view, they were faculty who were clearly out of touch with the field of foreign language pedagogy and second language acquisition research. My guess is that few of those consulted were actively involved in language teaching: Most university foreign language faculty members are specialists in literature and linguistics.

I discuss here a few of the Standards in light of what current second language acquisition (which is based on research) now hypothesizes. I include some citations, but they are only a small sample of the research supporting the points made below.

> *The document, in fact, promotes pedagogy that is the mirror- image of what research says should be going on in foreign language classes.*

The role of comprehension

There is an overwhelming amount of research supporting the "Comprehension Hypothesis": We acquire language when we understand what people tell us and what we read. There is no need for deliberate memorization; rather, firm knowledge of grammatical rules (a feel for correctness) and a large vocabulary gradually emerge as language acquirers get more "comprehensible input," aural or written language that is understood.

In support of the Comprehension Hypothesis are many studies showing that foreign language classes that contain more "comprehensible input" produce superior results when compared to traditional classes: Comprehensible input students do far better on tests of communication and at least as well on grammar tests.[3] Also in support are studies showing that more reading in the second language, specifically more voluntary reading, results in improvement in reading, grammar and vocabulary.[4]

Standards for Success does not mention this central idea. The only Standard that mentions comprehension is IC: "Successful students construct meaning from authentic spoken and written sources ....".[5] Of the five sub-standards under IC, four deal with literary analysis (identify genre, distinguish main ideas from supporting details, identify literacy devices, analyze literacy devices). In addition, Standard A.8 explicitly insists that students use "mnemonic and memorization strategies to enhance the learning of the target language."[6]

Grammar

Research consistently shows that conscious grammatical knowledge has a limited function, acting only as an editor of what is already produced.

In support of this position are studies showing that even advanced students with a great deal of interest and experience with grammar are able to access only a small amount of their grammatical knowledge when actually using language. Even when students are deliberately focused on form and taught rules carefully, the impact of grammar study is weak.

Current theory recognizes the value of some grammar study, but also recognizes its limitations. For second language users to use grammatical rules, several very stringent conditions must be met:

First, grammar users must know the rule. This is a profound constraint. Professional grammarians have not described all the rules of any language, textbook

writers do not include all the rules they know in texts, teachers do not teach all the rules in the text, students do not learn all the rules presented, students do not remember all the rules they learn, and they cannot use all the rules they remember (some are very complex). Second, grammar users must have time to apply the rule. This is extremely difficult to do in real conversation.

Third, grammar users need to be thinking about correctness, or focused on form. This is hard to do in while communicating a message of interest.

The only time all three conditions are met for most people is when they take a grammar test, and this is where we see the strongest influence of grammar study. But even then, the impact of grammar study is very modest, and studies show it typically fades after a few months; in other words, teaching a rule, even for many hours over several weeks, results in only modestly improved performance primarily on grammar tests, and is rapidly forgotten.[7]

In addition, case studies show that adept second language performers can apply consciously learned grammar rules to make limited improvements in their writing. These rules, however, are generally not available during real conversation.[8]

Standards for Success devotes a complete standard to grammar, insisting that foreign language students recognize parts of speech, understand and compare how simple clauses, tense and aspect are used in English and the second language, and requires that students "apply written conventions accurately in English and the target language."[9]

Theory and research support some study of grammar, but it has consistently shown that the effects of grammar study are very limited. Nowhere is this stated in Standards for Success. Rather, "Structure" is granted an entire category, covering 25% of the total set of Standards.

The role of speaking

Theory and research confirm that our ability to speak is a result of language acquisition, not a cause: We acquire language from input, not from output. The evidence for this view comes from several sources:

People simply do not speak or write enough for output to make any significant contribution.[10]

It is possible to improve and attain very high levels of competence without output.[11]

More output does not result in more language acquisition. For example, students in classes that demand more writing do not acquire more of the language, [12] and students of English as a foreign language who report more speaking outside of class do not do better on the TOEFL examination; those who read more outside of class, however, do better.[13]

> *When asked what aspects of class cause the most anxiety, students consistently put "speaking" on the top of the list.*

There is, in addition, evidence that forcing students to speak before they feel ready to is extremely anxiety provoking. When asked what aspects of class cause the most anxiety, students consistently put "speaking" on the top of the list.[14]

Nevertheless, Standards for Success assigns a major role to language production. Standard IV A3 insists that students be "willing to speak in the target language in front of teachers, peers and those who are fluent in the target language," a standard that will encourage pedagogy that puts students in a position of maximum anxiety while doing nothing to improve their language abilities.

The role of the first language

According to current theory, we "fall back" on the first language when we need to produce in the second language but lack competence. The influence of the first language is due, thus, to ignorance, not to interference.[15] Consistent with this view are studies showing that the influence of the first language diminishes as students acquire more.[16]

Standards for Success actually encourages the use of the first language. Standard A9 says that students should "employ knowledge of their first language to help form and test hypotheses regarding the target language" and Standard III, the set of grammar standards, also insists that students engage in a "conscious comparison" of the grammatical systems of the first and second language.[17] Conscious comparisons may be interesting for grammarians, but they have nothing to do with language acquisition.

Writing

Theory and research maintains that writing has two separate aspects. Writing "competence," that is, the possession of good writing style, comes from reading, while writing "performance," the ability to use writing to solve problems and come up with new ideas, comes from actual writing itself and the use of certain strategies that can be taught.

Many studies confirm that those who read more write better.[18] Studies also fail to show a relationship between writing quantity and writing style[19]: it is reading, not instruction, that helps us develop a good writing style. This is a reasonable finding: The system of "planned discourse," or the structure of academic writing, is extremely complex, and only the most obvious aspects can be taught directly. The most plausible hypothesis is that most aspects of writing are absorbed gradually from extensive reading.

The ability to use writing to solve problems comes from mastery of the "composing process." Good writers, research tells us, utilize certain strategies that help them do this: They plan, but their plans are flexible,[20] they are willing to revise,[21] they reread what they have written,[22] and they delay editing until all their ideas are on the page.[23] Peter Elbow suggests, in addition, that good writers delay considerations of audience until the paper has gone through several drafts.[24]

Communication Skills Standard IB covers both writing competence (writing style) and performance (the use of writing to solve problems), but does not distinguish the two. B1 lists some strategies that are part of the "writing" (composing) process, but does not tell us why they are desirable for students to master. B2 asks students to be able to "use some basic cohesive devices" in writing, an aspect of form that may emerge as a result of reading. B3 asks writers to develop awareness of audience, context and genre "throughout a prepared composition or speech," suggesting that second language users consider subtle aspects of form while composing, violating the com-

posing process.[25]

Completely absent from the discussion is whether aspects of the composing process transfer from the first language. Research now suggests that those who plan, revise and delay editing in their first language also do this in their second language.[26] It may be that Standard B1 belongs elsewhere, as a language arts standard.

Conclusion

Standards, unfortunately, are often used not simply as goals but as guides to pedagogy. The standards set by the Oregon Center will result in a pedagogical approach that emphasizes grammar, output, and an explicit reliance on the first language. Current theory comes to conclusions that are completely opposite: language acquisition is a result of input, grammar plays a peripheral role in second language performance, and first language influence is simply the result of a lack of acquisition of the second language. The Standards also are uninformed about basic writing theory and research.

It should be pointed out that this criticism is not based on the fact that the Standards are focused on literature as the goal of foreign language study. The study of literature is without question a primary goal of foreign language study. But the Standards encourage a curriculum and methodology that is inappropriate for any use of the foreign language, for literature, science, business, or simply getting to know people from other countries and of other cultures.

I do not propose that theory and research should fully determine teaching methodology: The ideas and intuitions of expert teachers should be given at least as much weight. In addition, the creators of the Standards are certainly free to disagree with my version of theory. But they are not free to completely ignore all research on second language acquisition and teaching.

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Notes

1.   I thank Karen Rowan for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

2.   Standards for Success, http://www.s4s.org.

3.   For studies at the beginning level, see James Asher, "Children's First Language as a Model for Second Language Learning," Modern Language Journal, vol. 56, 1972, pp. 133-139; James Asher, "Children Learning Another Language: A Developmental Hypothesis," Child Development, vol. 58, no. 1-2, 1977, pp. 24-32; Ali Isik, "The Role of Input in Second Language Acquisition: More Comprehensible Input Supported by Grammar Instruction or More Grammar Instruction?" ITL: Review of Applied Linguistics, vol. 129-130, 2000, pp. 225-274; Michel Nicola, "Experimenting with the New Methods," Dialog on Language Instruction, vol. 6, 1989, pp. 61-71; Harris Winitz, "Grammaticality Judgments as a Function of Explicit and Implicit Instruction in Spanish," Modern Language Journal, vol. 80, no. 1, 1996, pp. 32-46. For intermediate level, i.e. teaching language through content or "sheltered subject matter teaching," see e.g. Harry Edwards, Mari Wesche, Stephen Krashen, Richard Clement, and Bastian Kruidenier, "Second- Language Acquisition throught Subject-Matter Learning: A Study of Sheltered Subject-Matter Classes at the University of Ottawa," The Canadian Modern Language Review, vol. 41, 1985, pp. 268-282; Philip Hauptman, Mari Wesche, and Doreen Ready, "Second-Language Acquisition Through Subject Matter Learning: A Follow-Up Study at the University of Ottawa," Language Learning, vol. 38, 1988, pp. 433-471; Robert Lafayette and Michael Buscaglia, "Students Learn Language via a Civilization Course - A Comparison of Second Language Acquisition Environments. Studies in Second Language Acquisition, vol. 7, 1985, pp. 323-342.

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5.   Standards for Success, op. cit.

6.   Standards for Success, op. cit.

7.   John Truscott, "Noticing in Second Language Acquisition: A Critical Review," Second Language Research, vol. 14, no. 2, 1998, pp. 103-135; Stephen Krashen, "Seeking a Role for Grammar: A Review of Some Recent Studies," Foreign Language Annals, vol. 32, no. 2, 1999, pp. 245-257.

8.   Stephen Krashen, Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1981). Available for free downloading at http://www.sdkrashen.com.

9.   Standards for Success, op. cit.

10.   Stephen Krashen, "The Input Hypothesis and its Rivals." In Nick Ellis, ed., Implicit and Explicit Learning of Languages (London: Academic press, 1994). pp. 45-77. Stephen Krashen, Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use: The Taipei Lectures. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003).

11.   Krashen, 1994, op. cit.

12.   Sandra Burger, "Content-Based ESL in a Sheltered Psychology Course: Input, Output, and Outcomes," TESL Canada, vol. 6 (1989), pp. 45-59.

13.   Harry Gradman and Edith Hanania, "Language Learning Background Factors and ESL Proficiency," Modern Language Journal, vol. 75 (1991), pp. 39-51.

14.   Dolly Jesusita Young, "An Invesigation of Students' Perspectives on Anxiety and Speaking," Foreign Language Annals, vol. 23 (1990), pp. 539-553; Steven Loughrin-Sacco, "More than Meets the Eye: An Ethnology of an Elementary French Class," Canadian Modern Language Review, vol. 49 (1992), pp. 80-101.

15.   Leonard Newmark, "How Not to Interfere with Language Learning." International Journal of American Linguistics, vol. 40 (1966), 77-83.

16.   Stephen Krashen, "Newmark's 'Ignorance Hypothesis' and Current Seconde Language Acquisition Theory," In Susan Gass and Larry Selinker, eds., Language Transfer in Language Learning (New York: Newbury House, 1983). pp. 135-153.

17.   Standards for Success, op. cit.

18.   Elley and Mangubhai, op. cit, Sy-Ying Lee, What Makes It Difficult to Write: Theory, Research, and Implications (Taipei, Crane Publishing Company 2001). For an interesting second language study, see Michael Janopoulos, "The Relationship of Pleasure Reading and Second Language Writing Proficiency," TESOL Quarterly vol. 20, no. 4 (1986). pp. 763-768.

19.   Krashen, 1994, op. cit.; Lee, 2001, op. cit.

20.   e.g. Janet Emig, The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders. (Urbana, National Council of Teachers of English, 1971).

21.   e.g. Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," College Composition and Communication," vol. 31 (1980), pp. 378- 88.

22.   e.g. Sharon Pianko, "A Description of the Composing Processes of College Freshman Writers," Research in the Teaching of English vol. 13 (1979) pp; 5-22

23.   e.g. Lester Faigley and Stephen Witte, "Analyzing Revision," College Composition and Communication vol. 32 (1981) pp. 400-414.

24.   Peter Elbow, Writing With Power (New York, Oxford University Press, 1981).

25.   Standards for Success, op. cit.

26.   Chris Hall, "Managing the Complexity of Revising across Languages," TESOL Quarterly vol. 24, no. 1 (1990), pp. 43-60; Miyuki Sasaki and Keiko Hirose, Explanatory Variables for EFL Students' Expository Writing," Language Learning vol. 46, no. 1 (1996) pp: 175-182; Sy-Ying Lee and Stephen Krashen, "Writer's Block: Is it Universal? Does it Transfer across Languages?" In Selected papers from the Eleventh International Symposium on English Teaching/Fourth Pan-Asian Conference. (English Teachers Association/ROC, 2002) pp. 432-439.

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The Continuing Problems of Oral Grammar Correcting

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For some time, discussion of second language instruction has been under the influence of a well-established and rarely challenged assumption, that teachers should—even must—correct their students' grammar errors. The result has been an artificially limited discussion and, more importantly, artificial limits on teachers' options. The goal of my writing on the subject (e.g. Truscott, 1996, 1999a, 1999c) is to challenge the assumption. I wish to show that there is an option to be considered and to present the case in favor of the alternative approach.

Not surprisingly, this effort has drawn its share of critical responses. In this paper I wish to consider one such response, namely Lyster, Lightbown, and Spada's (1999) critique of my paper on oral grammar correction (Truscott, 1999c). My conclusion here will be that their comments do not offer any serious challenge to my original conclusion, that oral grammar correction is a bad idea. After briefly summarizing my position in the original paper, I will discuss the three main issues on which we differ: the feasibility of correction, empirical evidence, and the more general issue of whether focus on form is necessary/helpful.

The Topic of the Debate

The issue I raised is this: Given what is now known about oral grammar correction, what is the most reasonable approach for teachers to take? My answer is that the best approach is not to correct oral grammar errors at all. Lyster, Lightbown, and Spada (1999, henceforth LLS) took the position that teachers should correct but did not offer any explicit view on how it should be done.

It is important to note that, contrary to LLS's initial statement of my thesis (p. 457), the issue is grammar correction, not 'error correction'. I have consistently avoided the latter term. As I noted previously, the line between correcting grammar errors and doing more useful classroom activities is not always clear-cut, so

occasional incidental correction of grammar errors may be inevitable. I see no reason to believe, as LLS apparently do, that anything of consequence rides on this point.

I also want to emphasize that my thesis is by no means a rejection of continuing research on correction. One cannot rule out the possibility that correction could be appropriate for certain combinations of correction type, error type, learner characteristics, and context. The point, again, is that everything now known about oral grammar correction indicates that it is a bad idea. No exceptions to this conclusion have yet been discovered, indicating again that the best option for teachers at this point is simply not to correct oral grammar errors.

The Feasibility of Oral Grammar Correction

In regard to the feasibility of correction, I argued that a great many things can go wrong, any one of which could well render a given correction ineffective; dealing with all the potential pitfalls is extremely difficult, so the chances of correction being successful in any given instance are negligible. At the same time, a number of undesirable side effects can result from the correction process; even if they can be adequately managed, the distraction produced by attempts to deal with them creates additional difficulties for the process as a whole.

Crucially, I never presented any single problem as fatal to the correction process, despite LLS's claims that I did. The feasibility of correction must be judged by how well teachers and students can deal with the set of problems as a whole. Seen in this context, LLS's comments provide little or no challenge to my argument. At times they look more like an indirect endorsement of that argument.

In discussing the problem of teachers noticing and understanding their students' errors, LLS said that experienced teachers are sometimes successful. The implication, of course, is that failures are common—precisely my point. Similarly, their comments on the problem of students failing to notice corrections implicitly acknowledged that a high percentage of corrections go unnoticed, which again was my original point. They also acknowledged that significant problems are created by the ambiguity of recasts, by the

difficulty of dealing with individual differences among students, and by students' lack of seriousness in dealing with the corrections they receive.

They seemed to acknowledge that inconsistency is common in grammar correction and did not seem to deny that it constitutes a problem. Nor did they challenge the points that students are sometimes unwilling to accept a correction or that they may not understand it well enough to generalize beyond the immediate context of the correction. They did not seem to deny that problems are created by the existence of developmental sequences.

They also declined to challenge my position that incorporation is a major problem, that even if teachers and students successfully deal with all the other problems, correction is feasible only if one adds the dubious theoretical assumption that corrections can be routinely incorporated in the learner's interlanguage. In other words, even in the unlikely event that a learner acquires from a correction a clear understanding of the error and the correct form, it does not follow that this knowledge will make a difference in the person's speech in the future. Control of grammar in normal, fluent speech is almost entirely automatic and unconscious. If the knowledge that has been acquired from the correction does not come under such control its future value will be very limited. And it would be conservative to say that a successful outcome in this regard cannot be taken for granted.

For the problem of undesirable side effects, LLS did not deny that a teacher's expression of approval can be misinterpreted by students as a message that an ungrammatical utterance was grammatical, or that teachers' repetitions could lead students to believe they erred when they did not, or that teachers who correct grammar errors sometimes mistakenly correct non-errors. They did seem to deny my points that correction is by nature an interruption in communicative activities and that for some students public correction can produce significant negative reactions. But I do not understand how these denials are possible. I see these points (in the form in which I actually presented them) as statements of the obvious.

In any case, each of the actual side effects also has a direct influence on the feasibility issue, because efforts to avoid them can create additional difficulties for teachers attempting to provide effective correction.

To avoid misleading students about the correctness of their speech, teachers must avoid expressing approval of a student's statement if it is grammatically flawed. They must refrain from repeating utterances that are not grammatically flawed. They must make extra efforts to avoid mistaken corrections. To minimize the disruption of communicative activities, they must try to make the correction as brief and unintrusive as possible while at the same time making it salient and clearly understood. To avoid harmful affective reactions, they must consider the likely reaction of each individual student in each individual case. It is not reasonable to expect already overburdened teachers to be able to deal effectively with these additional burdens. To summarize, for most of the points I raised, LLS either acknowledged or did not deny that serious problems exist. Their response was that many of the individual problems taken in isolation are more or less manageable. But the feasibility issue is not about individual problems taken in isolation. It is about whether teachers and students can be expected to deal effectively with a large set of difficult interconnected problems, any one of which could render a correction ineffective. LLS did not even attempt to show that they can. Thus, the conclusion remains: Effective oral grammar correction is not feasible.

The Evidence

LLS and I disagree in regard to the proper interpretation of several studies on the effectiveness of correction. In discussing this research, LLS first rejected evidence that came from non-communicative classes. The distinction between teaching methods is worth noting, but their position depends on the very questionable idea that correction in non-communicative classes is fundamentally different from correction in communicative classes. Interesting differences exist, but they do not alter the fundamental nature of the practice. In both approaches it represents an attempt to reduce grammatical errors by making learners notice their mistakes and realize what they should have said. In both approaches it rests on the assumption that negative information is readily incorporated in the interlanguage. Indeed, most of the feasibility problems apply equally to either approach.

In regard to Van den Branden's (1997) study, LLS rejected my statement that learners who underwent negotiation of form (grammar correction) declined in accuracy, saying instead that 'only the low proficiency

learners' suffered declines (p. 461). Van den Branden's own summary was the following: 'On the Error Index a clear pattern emerged: The NSs remained at a status quo, but the NNSs, especially those in the researcher-pupil condition [where negotiation of form occurred], produced a greater proportion of morpho-grammatical errors in the posttest than in the pretest' (p. 626). The 'low proficiency learners' that LLS referred to were precisely the NNSs—those students who were trying to learn the language. The fact that negotiation of form only harmed learners, not native speakers, is not an impressive defense of the practice. Again, these results do not fit well with claims that negotiation of form (grammar correction) contributes to accuracy.

Van den Branden's (1997) study is one of several that examined the effects of grammar correction under nearly ideal conditions—too ideal to be duplicated in the typical classroom—and still obtained results that ranged from unimpressive to unambiguously negative. Each involved extended one-to-one interaction between students and native speakers of the target language, the main goal of the interaction being to provide optimal feedback on selected error types. In other words, the situation was in effect designed to minimize feasibility problems, to an extent that few teachers could hope to achieve in their classrooms. Long, Inagaki, and Ortega (1998), one example compared a feedback group with a model group and a control group on five aspects of Japanese and Spanish grammar, looking only at effects immediately after the treatment. They found feedback superior to the other two conditions on one of the five, better than the controls but not the model group on another, and indistinguishable from either of the other groups on the remaining three. Understandably (given the relatively ideal conditions), the authors characterized their results as "rather disappointing" (p. 367), though they chose to emphasize hints of positive effects seen in some of the results.

A second study of this type, Mackey and Philp (1998), tested the effects of recasts on the development of English question forms, looking at the way learners advanced or failed to advance through the six stages of development previously identified for these forms. One of the two measures they used for this purpose was the number of Stage 4 or Stage 5 forms (depending on the initial level of the learners) used on a series of three posttests. On this measure they found that one of the two groups that underwent interaction without

feedback made significant improvements from pre-test levels. But their recast groups did not show any such improvement. (They also used a control group, receiving no treatment, but did not report the results.) This negative finding was reinforced by the observed lack of any relation between learners' responses to the recasts and their progress. In other words, it made no difference whether they repeated the utterance in its correct form or simply continued the interaction without showing any sign of having noticed the recast.

Mackey and Philp (1998) concluded, however, that recasts were helpful in the experiment, based on their other measure, according to which most of the learners in one of their recast groups advanced a stage while in the other groups most did not. The authors favored this measure over the count of Stage 4/5 forms on the grounds that it better reflected "sustained change" (p. 351) because advancement was defined as the use of at least two higher level forms on at least two of the three posttests. But of the seven learners in the recast group who met this requirement, at least two and possibly three or four (the information was not explicitly provided; see p. 347) apparently did so by producing higher level forms one day after the treatment ended and again one week later, but not on the final posttest four weeks later. These cases, treated as evidence of sustained development, are in fact evidence of short-term learning that could not be maintained. If durability of learning is the issue, they suggest that recasts are not helpful.

Even if these cases are treated as successes (as they are by Mackey & Philp, 1998); the results obtained from this measure are unimpressive. The difference between the relatively successful recast group and the comparable interaction group just reached statistical significance. The authors did not report significance tests involving the control group, which was somewhat more successful than the interaction groups on this measure. According to Krashen's (2002) calculation, differences between the controls and the recast group that showed the relatively impressive gains did not reach significance, challenging the claim that this measure provided support for the effectiveness of the recasts.

Further questions about the strength of the results are raised by an apparent contradiction in the way they were reported. According to the main report, on which the analysis was based, seven of the nine learners in

the relevant recast group advanced one or more stages. But the authors later described three members of this group who "did not change in developmental level" (p. 352). And of course one can ask how meaningful it is to divide learners into discrete categories of success and failure based on whether or not they produced at least two high level forms on any two of the three posttests.

In short, results obtained from the advancement measure were quite weak. As this measure was the basis for claims of beneficial effects for recasts, the other results pointing to ineffectiveness, it would be conservative to conclude that this study does not provide impressive evidence for grammar correction, even if one sets aside the fact that it was carried out under idealized conditions.

The results of two closely related studies (Mackey, 1999; Mackey & Oliver, 2002) have sometimes been presented as evidence on the value of feedback, but in fact are not. The authors found that interaction which included form-based feedback was helpful, but the design of these studies does not permit any conclusions about the effect of the feedback, only about the effect of the overall interaction. This is an important point for the interpretation of research in this area. It is almost universally agreed that interaction is beneficial, though explanations for these benefits vary dramatically, emphasizing alternatively feedback, improved input, or output practice, as well as the act of interacting in itself. Thus, studies that do not separate the various aspects of interaction do not provide evidence favoring any one explanation of observed benefits. In particular, they do not speak to the question of whether deliberate efforts by teachers to improve their students' accuracy through feedback are helpful. For pedagogical concerns this is of course the issue.

A final example of a one-to-one interaction study is Iwashita's (2003) experiment. She compared a group carrying out a prepared interaction activity, including recasts, to a group that engaged in free conversation, finding that the treatment group outperformed the control on two of the three target forms. But such a finding, again, does not indicate that the form-based feedback was helpful, as the free conversation could well have produced interaction that was qualitatively different from the prepared interaction activity with respect to any or all of the possible explanations for the value of interaction. The more interesting finding, therefore,

was that recasts had a significant positive relation with performance on one of the three target forms and a mildly negative relation for the others—again, not an impressive showing in view of the idealized conditions. It is not clear how seriously these results should be taken in any case, as the author noted, because the independent variables accounted for only 38% of the variance for one of the target forms and even less for the others, indicating that other, uncontrolled factors exerted a very large influence on the results, possibly interacting with the treatment in unknown ways. In short, none of these one-to-one interaction studies provide any meaningful support for oral grammar correction. What they suggest is that even under ideal conditions correction has little value and may even have harmful effects, as suggested by Van den Branden's (1997) experiment.

LLS also rejected my conclusion that DeKeyser (1993) found no benefits from correction. But they did not address the arguments I gave for my interpretation, so there is nothing to be added here.

The study on which we disagree most strongly is that of Doughty and Varela (1998). LLS presented it as support for correction. But they did not provide an adequate response to my criticisms. First, the fact remains that the role of errors of overuse—the type of error to which corrected students are most prone—was minimized and that such errors were not scored as errors, creating an exaggerated account of the success of these students. Second, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the testing conditions in which they were obtained, because these extremely narrow conditions matched those in which the corrections occurred. LLS did not address the issue of close matching between teaching and testing contexts. Nor did they challenge my statement that during the testing students were probably focusing on the targeted forms, making the testing unlike normal language use. Even without acknowledging these points, they were cautious in their speculations about the possibility of generalizing to other contexts, concluding that this is an empirical question requiring further research. This conclusion is another unintended endorsement of my position, which was that no such generalization can be made on the basis of this study.

The severe limits on the generalizability of Doughty and Varela's (1998) findings are made still clearer by a point that I overlooked in the original paper. The oral testing in this study is best seen as a test not of spontaneous production but rather of prepared speech, prepared by learners who should have been fully

aware that their use of the target forms was part of the test. The students gave short answers to six questions, for five of which they had already prepared written answers. (The remaining question simply changed the preceding question "What did you think would happen?" to "What did I (the teacher) think would happen before we did the experiment?") They were not allowed to simply read the answers during the oral testing, but it is difficult to believe that this preparation had no effect on their oral performance, particularly when the teacher had clearly shown throughout the course that she was continuously monitoring their use of this one particular aspect of grammar. For this reason alone, the results cannot be validly generalized to spontaneous speech.

Finally, LLS declined to challenge much of the cited evidence against correction. They did not mention Plann (1977) or the studies by Dvorak. Nor did they challenge my claim that research on written correction bolsters the conclusion that oral correction is ineffective.

Focus on Form

The point on which I most strongly disagree with LLS is their dismissal of correction-free instruction as "anachronistic" (p. 464). It was rendered obsolete, they argued, by the observation that students who do not receive form-focused instruction/feedback have grammatical problems. This would be a compelling point if students who do receive such instruction were free of grammar problems. But of course no one makes any such claim. The point would also have some force if research found students in grammar-free programs grammatically inferior to those in programs using form-focused instruction. But the two studies I am aware of that tested this possibility (Clyne, 1985; Nikolov & Krashen, 1997) did not find even a hint of superiority for the form-focus groups. Students who do not receive grammar instruction and correction do indeed have grammatical problems; but so do students who have received it, and there is no reason to believe that the problems of the latter are any less severe than those of uncorrected students.

LLS also defended their dismissal of correction-free instruction by mentioning theoretical arguments favoring correction. But one can also cite theoretical arguments that it is irrelevant or harmful (e.g., Paradis, 1994; Schwartz, 1993; Truscott, 1996). Following

LLS's lead, I will not discuss these complex issues here.

A crucial part of our disagreement is over the interpretation of research on the effects of form-focused instruction. I have reviewed this research in detail elsewhere (Truscott, 1998, 1999b), concluding that such instruction can give learners an intellectual grasp of grammar but does not help them use the language accurately.

A good example is the study by Williams and Evans (1998), which LLS cited as evidence favoring the combination of grammar instruction and correction. The researchers measured students' learning, in part, with judgment and fill-in-the-blank tests involving choices among a few alternative verb forms. These measures, far removed from natural use of language, yielded very impressive results for both of their target forms, English passives and participial adjectives. A somewhat less constrained task, used only with passives, produced rather weak results. They also included a qualitative analysis of a freer measure (dictogloss), on which the instructed learners showed essentially no ability to use the passive, despite their strong performance on the most artificial tests. The straightforward explanation for all these results is that form focus produced only metalinguistic knowledge, useful for grammar tests but having little or no value for actual language use.

Conclusion

LLS's response offers no meaningful challenge to my critique of the feasibility of grammar correction or to the argument that empirical evidence points to its ineffectiveness. Nor does it make any case for their claim that form-focused instruction/correction is a necessary part of second language instruction. Thus, my original conclusion stands: Oral grammar correction is a bad idea. But the limits on this conclusion also remain. Future research could conceivably find that correction is appropriate in some as yet unknown circumstances. The possibility of identifying such cases is thus a worthwhile topic for further discussion and research.

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TEACHER TO TEACHER

How to Promote Your Language Program in a Tough Market

by Sarah Elaine Eaton, M.A.

In 1998, "Asian flu" hit the markets, causing thousands of Korean, Japanese and other Asian students to stay home. In 2001, the World Trade Center in New York was destroyed and for a time, North America was no longer considered a "safe" destination for international students; enrollments in overseas programs dropped again. In 2003, the war in Iraq had a similar effect on educational programs relying on foreign student registration.

The situation worsened in Canada when Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) caused the World Health Organization to recommend that anyone with travel plans to Toronto "consider postponing all but essential travel". Language programs in and around Toronto were hit hard. In fact, registration in language programs across the country dropped significantly at that time. Let's face it, international students and their parents may not know that Calgary or Vancouver are thousands of kilometers away from Toronto and hardly affected by SARS. The reality is that for a few months Canada was branded, however informally, as an "unsafe" country for foreigners.

As an educational consultant who specializes in helping language programs market their courses better, this year I heard more managers than ever concerned about plummeting enrollments. Program managers
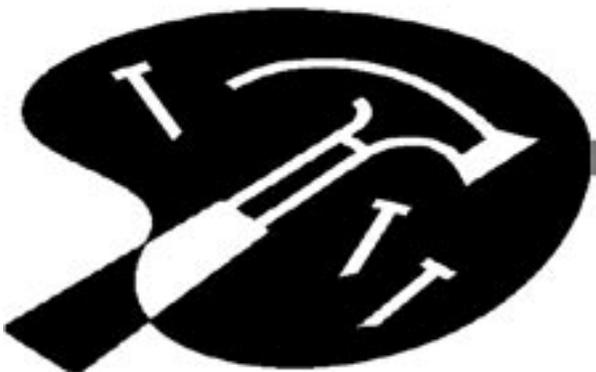
from across North America have asked me, "What do we do now?" The answer is not a "quick fix", but one focused on long-term vision and strategy.

Understand the effect of global events on your business

Firstly, recognize that what has been happening recently is by no means isolated. If we take a look at history, we can see that every few years, some event occurs in the world that has a direct impact on our enrollment. What happens on the international economic front and in the markets will affect us. One mistake language program managers make is to think that education is not business. But when enrollments drop and you have to answer to senior administrators who want answers and more important- ly, want a healthy bottom line, we recognize that we are indeed in the "business" of educating students.

We need to learn to think like busi- ness people. Our programs are the services that we offer to clients. Our market is international. There- fore, what affects the global market for all goods, services, stocks and commodities affects us.

We need to learn to think like business people. Our programs are the services that we offer to clients. Our market is international. Therefore, what affects the global market for all goods, services, stocks and commodities affects us.

If you have historical program statistics, review them. More than likely, all other factors being equal, you will be able to correlate significant drops in student en- rollment with economic disruptions or political events across the globe. We must look at the "big picture" and recognize that whatever it may be this time, it will be temporary.

Say to yourself, "This too, will pass." Developing a long-term perspective will help you and your staff avoid the panic that so many program managers have felt this year. It will also help you answer to superi- ors who may be quick to blame lower enrollments on managers or coordinators (namely, you.) If you have a

clear idea of the big picture, you will be calmer, more confident and you will think more clearly about the decisions you have to make and why you have to make them. Your staff and superiors may not like the fact that enrollments have dropped, but they will respect you more if you show strength, vision and a conserva- tively positive attitude in tough times.

Apart from keeping things in perspective and develop- ing a long-term vision, there are things you can do to continue promoting your program in tough markets:

Take the time to strategize. Instead of flailing around to develop new courses that you hope may bring a few more students through the door, I recommend recognizing the situation for what it is: a slow market. This is the time to be pro-active, not reactive. If you complained before that you never had time to figure out a marketing strategy for your program, now you have that time. Use it wisely. Figure out where you want your pro- gram to go over the next 5 years. Realistically, you may want to factor in at least one more global event that will affect your enrollment during that time. Assess your current marketing strategy and determine what, if anything, needs to change. Instead of letting panic rule how you run things in tough times, stay calm and develop a vision that will carry you through the difficulties and into the market recovery.

Keep your prices stable. Now is not the time to in- crease your prices because you are feeling a financial pinch. Instead, maintain current price structure and keep your long-term vision. Conversely, now is also not the time to lower prices or offer "special discounts due to SARS". Even if you don't say it directly, pro- spective students and their parents will recognize a certain level of financial concern on your part. They may be intuitively turned off your program if it looks like it's in financial trouble.

Focus on the students you do have. If you have fewer

students, you can focus on giving them top-notch service. Remember that word of mouth is still the best promotion. Make sure that the students currently enrolled get the best quality program you can deliver.

Each and every student is a prospective referral for you. No-cost or low-cost ways to focus on students include things like having every person who works in the program learn the names of each and every student. This includes correct pronunciation of their names, too! Personalized letters of congratulation to each student from the director at the end of the program is another idea.

> *Each and every student is a prospective referral for you. No-cost or low-cost ways to focus on students include things like having every person who works in the program learn the names of each and every student.*

Remind your staff that they each play a part in the success of your school, so remind them to stay positive. This may not be easy, especially if there have been layoffs due to lack of work. That's all the more reason for those who still have work to stay focused on the students and show a positive attitude around them. This will serve a double purpose. Not only will your students feel important and special, but by focusing on the students as much as possible, staff are less likely to dwell solely on the safety of their jobs or the dismal state of enrollment.

> *We need to combat fear by maintaining a long term vision and most importantly, by staying productive in the meantime.*

Take time to regroup, re-organize and even have some fun! Remind everyone that while these may not be the best of times, things will get better. There is nothing more detrimental to staff morale or to a program in general, than to allow panic or a sense of hopelessness infect the school like a virus. We need to combat fear by maintaining a long term vision and most importantly, by staying productive in the meantime. This means hands-on work for teachers and staff to keep everyone busy while preparing for better times ahead. Now is the time to clean out your teachers' of-

fices, resource rooms, filing cabinets, cupboards and bookshelves. Organize a second-hand book sale of any old textbooks or resources you really don't need. Use the money to take the students on a field trip or buy pizza for the staff on a Friday afternoon. There is still room for fun and in fact, small ways of boosting staff morale that don't cost your program significant dollars can be a huge emotional investment in the mental health of your staff.

I tell language program managers to listen to their financial planners when it comes to having their language programs make it through tough times. Sound strange? Not really… Investment planners tell us not to make rash decisions when markets fluctuate unexpectedly. We need to think long term, plan for the future and stay calm. Your program is similar to your personal investments. Stay steady in your belief that all your hard work and investment in your program will not be lost and that the market will recover. The next time a market fluctuation causes a drop in enrollment, you will be all the wiser.

Sarah Elaine Eaton is a writer, language teacher and educational consultant. Her book, 101 Ways to Market Your Language Program, sells in Canada, the U.S. and New Zealand. Contact the author at saraheaton@eatonintl.com or www.eatonintl.com. Copyright © 2003 by Sarah Elaine Eaton
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"Nationwide, this has become a repeated refrain: Don't trust teacher judgment. Mandate a test that more than half the kids fail, and that proves that you need more tests. And, of course, more test preparation."

from: K. Emergy and S. Ohnanian, Why is Corporate America Bashing Our Public Schools? Heinemann, 2004. (pp. 119-120.)

By Susan Gross

Students enroll in foreign language classes and stay in foreign language classes because they aspire to fluency. They drop foreign language classes when their aspiration appears to be thwarted. Enrollment in upper-level classes is dismal. Approximately 50% of first-year high school students drop foreign language by Level III. Only about 5% of students continue studying their language through the highest-level course. Enrollment is even worse at universities. Very few students make it to third-year level university classes through study at the university alone. A recent survey found that almost every student in a university's 300-level classes either had previously studied language in high school or else had independent contact with the target culture. Every student who entered Language 101 as a neophyte had abandoned all hope of fluency. Virtually every person, according to the Colorado Model Content Standards for Foreign Languages, is capable of achieving fluency in the four essential skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, we deliver this ability to only 5% of our students.

> *Students enroll in foreign language classes and stay in foreign language classes because they aspire to fluency. They drop foreign language classes when their aspiration appears to be thwarted.*

Schools that teach for fluency have consistently higher levels of enrollment. In these schools, as many as 25% of first-year language students ultimately complete the highest-level class.

What is fluency?

Fluency means using the language smoothly, with ease. Hesitation is the opposite of fluency. Standard One of the Colorado Model Content Standards for Foreign Languages addresses "all four essential skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing." Each of these essential language skills has a fluency component.

A fluent listener comprehends the language without repetition, reduced speed, or re-wording. A fluent speaker expresses him or herself spontaneously, in an unrehearsed situation. A fluent reader comprehends text in the language smoothly and without assistance. A fluent writer expresses him or herself at a rate of about 100 words per 5 minutes without resorting to a dictionary.
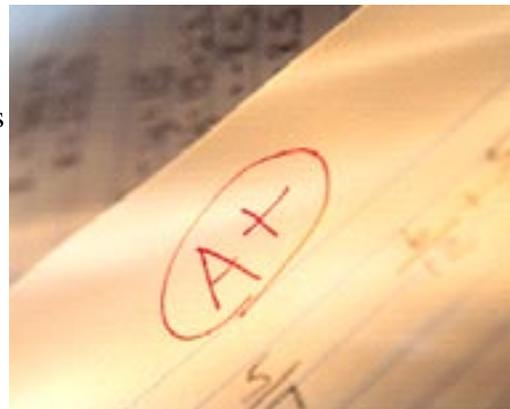
Teaching for fluency is brain-friendly

Teaching for fluency not only increases enrollment and meets the Colorad Standards, it is brain-friendly. In a fluency-oriented class, the teacher is concerned with what the students are able to do. Student performance is used to determine the rate at which new information is introduced. While accuracy is a goal in all language classes, the teacher does not squelch student enthusiasm with interruptions or with a sea of red marks on compositions. Classroom activities provide abundant comprehensible input, from the first day of class throughout all levels. Assessment is continual, so there is no need for students to review or cram in preparation for tests.

> *While accuracy is a goal in all language classes, the teacher does not squelch student enthusiasm with interruptions or with a sea of red marks on compositions.*

In a non-fluency-oriented class, the teacher is concerned with how many chapters have been "covered" in a textbook. New information is introduced because the last chapter is "done" and it is "time" for the next chapter. Students become hesitant due to frequent error cor-

rection and many are reluctant to speak or write any more than the minimum required to get by. Classroom activities focus on learning and applying language rules. Students practice these rules in numerous output activities. Assessment is formal and announced; students are expected to study in preparation for these examinations.

Krashen's "order of acquisition hypothesis" posits that the human brain will naturally acquire the various features of a language in a predictable order. This order cannot be altered by instruction. Since present and past tenses tend to be acquired early, along with certain object pronouns, the students in a fluency class will begin using these language features with some accuracy, even in the first year of language. In contrast, students in a non-fluency first-year class will be expected to practice the entire conjugation

> *Most foreign language classes (and all major textbooks) ignore and indeed contradict the natural "order of acquisition." As a result, many students find that learning a language is difficult and unpleasant.*

> *Despite a plethora of games and projects and activities, we find ourselves surrounded by students who speak the language hesitantly, who rely on memorized phrases, and who are virtually unable to speak without planning their output the night before.*

paradigm of one present tense verb after another, together with the genders of nouns. Given that a conjugation paradigm is not an element of acquisition, and that accuracy in noun genders is acquired fairly late, the students find themselves battling with their own brains.

Most foreign language classes (and all major textbooks) ignore and indeed contradict the natural "order of acquisition." As a result, many students find that learning a language is difficult and unpleasant. Attempts to camouflage the unpleasant aspect of working against one's own brain have sprouted innumerable games and gimmicks.

Despite a plethora of games and projects and activities, we find ourselves surrounded by students who speak the language hesitantly, who rely on memorized phrases, and who are virtually unable to speak without planning their output the night before. Small wonder, then, that enrollment declines dramatically in most foreign language programs.

Assessing for fluency

How can we assess for fluency? The tests that accompany textbooks are not fluency tests. The National French, Spanish, and German Tests are not fluency-centered.

Fortunately, there is a good fluency assessment tool. The State of New York requires that all students pass the New York State Proficiency exam in order to enter Level II of their language as ninth-graders. Furthermore, the New York State Regents Exam assesses students at the end of Level III. Both the Proficiency Exam and the Regents Exam are designed to assess fluency in all four essential skills. The rubrics, grading criteria, sample questions, and procedures for administering have been developed and improved every year. By giving students a fluency assessment, we can determine what our students can do with the language rather than what they know about the language. It takes energy to conduct classes that are dominated by comprehensible input. It takes courage to abandon the familiar textbook-driven grammar syllabus. But such courage is necessary if we are going to produce a generation of people who do not say, "I took two years of French and I can't even order a cup of coffee."

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The Circus is in "Tense"
Using past, present and future tenses in early TPR instruction

by Michael Miller

Bertie Segal Cook developed the idea of the three-ring circus as a way to extend understanding of vocabulary and structure for early language learners using TPR methodology. TPR, or Total Physical Response, was developed by James Asher decades ago. This method is brilliant in that students can absorb huge amounts of language and become actively involved in a class with a low affective filter. TPR essentially takes action verbs and concrete objects and teaches this vocabulary to students via command forms:

Stand up! Sit down! Touch the table! Touch the floor!

The teacher models the action as he gives the command. Soon the teacher stops modeling and the students are left to respond physically to the commands on their own. As student comprehension grows, the teacher arranges the familiar commands into new combinations:

Stand up on the table! Sit down on the floor!

Classtime may seem like game time, but subconsciously students are acquiring the language in a natural way, similar to how a baby acquires his first language. Students are not forced to speak until they are ready. The technique is powerful. I teach 200 words and expressions in only 5 weeks using TPR. Long-term recall of these vocabulary words by the students is very high.

There is, however, a limitation of TPR. The vocabulary has to be concrete and observable. It is difficult to use TPR to get across words such as "feel" or "friendly" or "greedy". That's where TPR Storytelling and other Natural Approach methodologies come in. Another limitation of TPR is the exclusive use of command forms. Students often remember words in the command forms, which can be problematic when

students need to switch to indicative forms.

There is also a question about the Natural Approach itself. This methodology is based on how children learn their first languages. It is true that many parents use command forms with their children:

Put your shoes on!
Now make a fist and stick your arms in the sleeves!
Don't pick your nose!

But parents also use a variety of sentences using various tenses as well as indicative and subjunctive forms:

Did you eat that cookie?
Are you going to be a good boy today?
Would you be a good boy if I gave you a cookie?

Parents use these forms without thinking about the supposed difficulty of verb tenses. It is natural to use these tenses. The only thing that is sheltered is the vocabulary. A parent probably wouldn't say: Do you have gastrointestinal inflammation?

Instead the parent would say: Do you have a tummy ache?

The tense is exactly the same. It is simply the choice of vocabulary that is simplified.

What are the implications for the classroom? How do we teach the tenses to beginners in a natural way? Is there a way to accomplish this goal with TPR?

Thankfully, yes! Bertie Segal Cook developed the "Three-ring Circus" years ago. This technique provides comprehensible input using a variety of tenses, and yet still falls under the umbrella of TPR.

Before class the teacher chooses three phrases that the class is working on with TPR. Let's say, for example:

Throw the paper in the trash can!
Fall on the floor!
Write on the chalkboard!

The first time, three students come up and do the commands as the teacher says them. This uses the imperative forms. While the three students are performing their "acts", the teacher can ask the rest of

the class questions in the present indicative (usually 3rd person) about what is going on. The TPR Storytelling technique called "circle of questions" provides a formula for asking questions. (Ray, Fluency Through TPR Storytelling, 4th edition, 2004.)

If Joe were throwing the paper in the trash can, Sally were falling on the floor, and Jim were writing on the chalkboard, the teacher would ask questions such as:

Is Joe throwing the paper in the trash can?
Is Joe throwing the paper in the trash can or on the floor?
Is Joe throwing the paper on the floor?
Is Joe throwing the paper in the trash can?
Yes, Joe is throwing the paper in the trash can.

Typically the class only needs to respond with one-word answers: Yes, no, a name, or an object. Teachers can also ask "who", "what" or "where" questions with this technique. The translations for "who", "what" and "where" should be posted on the wall in the target language and English somewhere for students to see. Questions can also be mixed up so that students don't end up following a predictable pattern.

Who is throwing the paper in the trash can?
Is Sally throwing the paper in the trash can?
Is Joe throwing the paper in the trash can?
Is Joe throwing Sally in the trash can?
Is Joe throwing Jim in the trash can?
What is Joe throwing in the trash can?
Where is Joe throwing the paper?
Is Sally falling on the trash can?
Is Sally falling on the floor?
Where is Sally falling? On the trash can or the floor?
Is Sally falling on Joe?
Is Sally falling on Jim?
Who is writing on the chalkboard?
Is Jim writing on the chalkboard?
Where is Jim writing?
Is Jim writing on Sally?
Is Jim writing on Joe?
Is Joe writing on the chalkboard?
Is Sally writing on the chalkboard?
Is the trash can on the floor?
Is the chalkboard on the floor?
Is Sally on the floor?
Where is the trash can?
What is in the trash can?
On what is Jim writing?

Asking students questions such as these keeps students engaged in the lesson, and gives the teacher a continual way to assess whether students understand the vocabulary. The sentences practice regular question formation in the 3rd person indicative. The questions also give students the necessary repetitions of the vocabulary without being dull. The class becomes engaged in the vocabulary, and there is a fair dose of humor to make the lesson fun. The actors are often fun, but some of the questions are funny as well.

Once students get used to answering these questions, the teacher can introduce other tenses. I usually introduce the future tense after a week and then the past tense a week after that. This means that my beginners are hearing and responding to three indicative tenses and the imperative tense after only three weeks.

When I introduce the future form, I tell the students that we are going to do the Three-Ring Circus, but I'm going to tell students in advance what three activities are going to be performed. We choose three volunteers to perform the actions, but they don't come up right away. In German, I prepare the students by saying: "I have seen the future, and the future is wird" (weird).

For those who aren't familiar with German, "wird" is the helping verb used with the future tense, similar to the English word "will." With that said, I now ask for volunteers:

Who will sing to the flag?
Who will slap his cheek?
Who will crawl on the table?

Let's say that Susie will sing to the flag, Bob will slap his cheek, and Jane will crawl on the table. These actors still haven't come up yet. But the class knows who they are and I can ask questions in the future tense:

Is Susie going to sing to the flag?
Is Susie going to sing to the flag or to Bob?
Is Susie going to sing to Bob?
No, Susie is not going to sing to Bob; Susie is going to sing to the flag.
Is Bob going to slap his cheek?
Is Bob going to slap Susie?
Is Susie going to slap Bob?

Who is going to slap his cheek?
What is Bob going to slap?
Is Jane going to crawl on the table?
Is Jane going to crawl on Bob?
Is Jane going to crawl on the flag?
Is the flag going to crawl on Jane?
Where is Jane going to crawl?
To what is Susie going to sing?

Again, the possibilities are endless. Then I have our actors come up. I use the command forms (imperative) to have my students perform the actions, and then I ask a circle of questions using present tense:

Who is singing to the flag?
Who is slapping his cheek?
Who is crawling on the table?
Is Bob crawling on the table?
Is Bob slapping his cheek?
Is Susie slapping Bob?
Is Susie slapping Bob with the flag?
Is Jane slapping Bob with the table?
Where is Jane crawling?
What is Bob slapping?

There are, of course, more questions to ask. Finally I have the actors sit down and I ask the class about the actions in the past tense. The first time I do this, I prepare the class by saying:

"The past uses the "ge-verb" at the end because the verb passes to the end of the sentence."

The past tense in German is formed with a helping verb (hat or ist) and a participle that is usually formed with a ge- at the beginning. The participle "passes" to the end of the sentence. Of course, German teachers know that I am talking about the conversational past here. Then I go through more questions in the past tense:

Who crawled on the table?
Who slapped his cheek?
Who sang to the flag?
Did Sally sing to the flag?
Did Sally sing to Bob?
Did Sally sing to Jane?
Where did Jane crawl?
Did Jane crawl on Susie?
Did Jane crawl on the flag?
Did Jane crawl on the table or on Bob?

What did Bob slap?
Did Bob slap the table?
Did Bob slap the flag?
Did Bob slap his cheek?
Did Bob slap Susie?
Did Bob slap Jane?

I used this technique for the first time at the beginning of the 2004-5 school year and saw very positive results. At the end of our TPR phase, which lasts about 5-6 weeks, I gave the students a short quiz to see if they could pick out tenses and translate sentences using correct tenses in English. First I said six sentences to the students in German. Students simply had to identify whether the sentences were in the present, past or future. Here are the sentences:

1) Sarah schaut die Tafel an (Sarah looks at the board)
2) Franz wird das Buch aufmachen (Franz will open the book)
3) Der Affe klopft an die Tür (the monkey knocks on the door)
4) Das Mädchen hat gelacht (the girl laughed)
5) Der Junge hat Cola getrunken (the boy drank cola)
6) Der Professor wird langsam gehen (the professor will walk slowly)

The average score on the first section was nearly 100%. Then I repeated sentences #1, #2 and #4 and asked students to translate those three sentences into English, using the appropriate tense. I told the students that the results would not affect their grades; they were just for me to see. The students averaged 85%. Most of the mistakes were in translation. The second sentence can be somewhat difficult for beginning students to translate. The assessment did not include any kind of production--just recognition and translation of the tenses. I plan to use a variety of tenses throughout the year as we tell stories with TPRS and will report again at the end of the year.

Michael Miller is a long-time TPRS German teacher and the author of German TPRS materials. He teaches at Cheyenne Mountain Junior High in Colorado Springs, CO.

http://www.sabineundmichael.com

Why the English Language is So Hard to Learn

1) The bandage was wound around the wound.

2) The farm was used to produce produce.

3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.

4) We must polish the Polish furniture.

5) He could lead if he would get the lead out.

6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.

7) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.

8) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum

9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.

10) I did not object to the object.

11) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.

12) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.

13) They were too close to the door to close it.

14) The buck does funny things when the does are present.

15) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.

16) To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.

17) The wind was too strong to wind the sail

18) After a number of injections my jaw got number.

19) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.

20) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.

21) How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

Quicksand works slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig. And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham?

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it? Is it an odd, or an end?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a

> *If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?*

vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

Why can your house burn up as it burns down?

Why do you fill in a form by filling it out? Why does an alarm go off by going on?

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

And why doesn't "Buick" rhyme with "quick"?

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The Teddy Story

As she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the children an untruth. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same. However, that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.

Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he did not play with the other children, that his clothes were messy and that he constantly needed a bath. In addition, Teddy could be unpleasant.

It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then putting a big "F" at the top of his papers.

At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each child's records and she put Teddy's off until last. However, when she reviewed his file, she was in for a surprise.
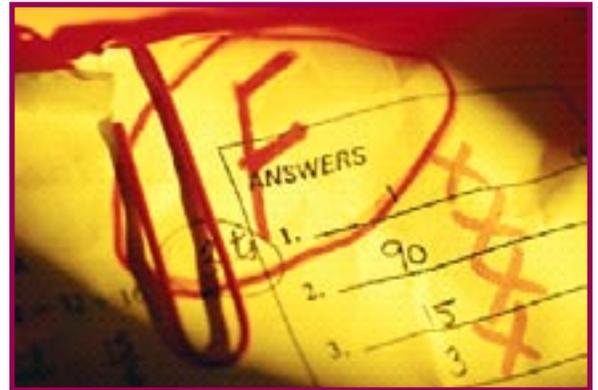
Teddy's first grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners….he is a joy to be around."

His second grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is an excellent student, well-liked be his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle.

His third grade teacher wrote, "His mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best, but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if steps aren't taken."

Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and he sometimes sleeps in class."

By now, Mrs. Thompson realized the problem and she was ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents, wrapped in beautiful ribbons and bright paper, except for Teddy's. His present was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper that he got from a grocery bag.

Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a bottle that was one quarter full of perfume.

But she stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist.

Teddy Stoddard stayed after school that day just long enough to say, "Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my Mom used to." After the children left, she cried for at least an hour.

On that very day, she quit teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach children. Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, he seemed to come alive.

The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie that she would love all the children the same, Teddy became one of her "teacher's pets."

A year later, she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He then wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school, had stuck with it, and would soon graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and favorite teacher he had ever had in his whole life.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer…

The letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, MD.

The story does not end there. You see, there was yet another letter that Spring. Teddy said he had met this girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit at the wedding in the place that was usually reserved for the mother of the groom.

Of course, Mrs. Thompson did. And guess what? She wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. Moreover, she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembered his mother wearing on their last Christmas together.

They hugged each other, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson's ear, "Thank you, Mrs. Thompson, for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference."

Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back. She said, "Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn't know how to teach until I met you."

(Teddy Stoddard is the doctor at Iowa Methodist in Des Moines that has the Stoddard Cancer Wing.)

MIS PUNTOS

I understand that I am responsible for keeping "puntos" that are given to me for various things. Failure to be honest in the keeping of "puntos" will cause me to lose all of them.   In order to receive participation points for the quarter, I will turn in my card at the end of the quarter.

Name _____ Signature _____

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Links and Resources

Upcoming Conferences

2005 SCOLT-FFLA conference
April 7 - 9, 2005
Irving, Texas
www.swcolt.org

National TPRS Conference
Kansas City, MO
July 16-22, 2005
http://www.tprstories.com/ntprs

Fall 2005 Conference
El Paso, Texas
October 20 - 23
http://www.tfla.info

November 18-20, 2005
Baltimore, MD
http://actfl.org

2006 SCOLT-FFLA conference
February 16-18
Orlando, FL
http://www.valdosta.edu/scolt

March 9-11, 2006
Chicago, IL
http://www.centralstates.cc/

OFLA Annual Conference
March 30 - April 1, 2006
Toledo, OH
http://www.ofla-online.com

The 2006 Northeast Conference
March 30 - April 2, 2006
New York, NY
http://www.dickinson.edu/nectfl/

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CORRECTION

How I Differentiated with TPRS, by Catherine Leon, printed in the Winter edition of IJFLT inadvertantly omitted co-author Cheryl Wojitas. We apologize for the omission.

Found a helpful link or interesting web site that should be shared with other teachers? Have an idea for an article or something that works in your classroom? Want to let teachers know about upcoming state language conferences, workshops or trainings? Send us an email, IJFLT@TPRStories.com.

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