### HOW CAN TEACHERS HELP LEARNERS TO LEARN?

Language teachers do not teach languages. Language teachers teach learners and, in doing so, teachers try to help learners to learn to use the target language effectively. This teaching is done in many ways, depending on teachers’ beliefs about language learning, on the context of the teaching, and on the needs and wants of the learners. Table 1 outlines some of the ways in which teachers can help learners improve their ability to communicate in the target language.

Table 1. How Teachers Can Help Learners Communicate in the Target Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Learning Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Providing learners with a rich and varied exposure to the language in use</td>
<td>1. To provide input to the learner for potential processing 2. To provide learners with experience of how the language is actually used</td>
<td>1. Learners can acquire language subconsciously from comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985). 2. Holistic, experiential learning, in which learners achieve apprehension before comprehension, is more effective than discrete, academic learning in which learners focus conscious attention on bits of the whole (Kolb, 1984).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Providing learners with tasks that facilitate:  • effective and cognitive engagement with samples of the language in use  • multidimensional representation of the samples of language in use  • positive and confident interaction with the samples of language in use</td>
<td>1. To facilitate intake of implicit language data 2. To facilitate deep processing of salient features of learner’s intake 3. To promote positive affect</td>
<td>1. Learners can be helped to optimise their intake (Dulay, Burt, &amp; Krashen, 1982; Krashen, 1985). 2. Deep processing promotes long-term learning (Craik &amp; Lockhart, 1972). 3. Positive affect is vital for durable and effective learning (Arnold, 1999; Tomlinson, 1998a, 1998c).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. Providing opportunities to the learner for meaningful use of language in order to achieve intended outcomes | 1. To provide opportunities for hypothesis testing  
2. To develop monitoring and repair skills  
3. To promote positive affect | 1. The brain acquires language by generalising on the evidence of like instances of language use. Its hypotheses are then reinforced or revised as a result of further evidence from language use (Ellis, 1994; Krashen, 1985; Tomlinson, 1998c).  
3. Positive affect is vital for durable and effective learning (Arnold, 1999; Tomlinson, 1998a).  
4. Learners gain language from negotiating meaning in language use (Swain, 1985). |
|---|---|---|
| 4. Helping learners to pay attention to salient features of their input and output | 1. To develop readiness to learn as a result of noticing both the immediate and subsequent input  
2. To help learners notice the gap between their own use of the language and that of typical proficient users of the language | 1. Learners only learn what and when they are ready to learn (Pienemann, 1985).  
2. Noticing the gap facilitates further acquisition and development (Schmidt, 1990; Schmidt & Frota, 1986).  
3. Making discoveries about how the language is used eventually facilitates language acquisition (Bolitho, Carter, Hughes, Ivanic, Masuhara, & Tomlinson, 2003; Tomlinson, 1994b). |
| 5. Being available for responsive ‘teaching’ | 1. To be ready to teach what learners need when they need to use it | 1. The best time to teach something is when learners need it to understand or articulate something important for them (Tomlinson, 1998c). |
6. Setting achievable challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Resourceful Language Teacher - 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>SK</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is enthusiastic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is flexible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-versed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates well</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks well</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands learners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspires</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The characteristics that received more than one mention in respondents’ sentences are tallied in Table 2.
Note. M is Malaysia (47 respondents), G is Germany (24 respondents), SK is South Korea (32 respondents), CR is Czech Republic (11 respondents), UK is United Kingdom (18 respondents). Total number of respondents is 132.
There were 65 other characteristics, each only receiving one mention. All but 2 of these 65 characteristics related to personal qualities (e.g., patience) as opposed to language ability. None referred to methodological expertise and only one to organisational skills.

On side 2 of the questionnaire the respondents were asked,

Which of the following do you think are important characteristics of the Good Language Teacher? For each one give a grade from 1-5 where 1 means you don’t agree that this is an important characteristic and 5 means that you completely agree that this is a very important characteristic.

The respondents answers are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents’ Ranking of the Characteristics of a Good Language Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>SK</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>4.8  (1)</td>
<td>4.6  (1)</td>
<td>4.4  (4)</td>
<td>4.1  (9)</td>
<td>4.5  (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>4.6  (2)</td>
<td>4.6  (1)</td>
<td>4.4  (4)</td>
<td>4.4  (3)</td>
<td>4.5  (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive self-esteem</td>
<td>4.1  (6)</td>
<td>4.4  (5)</td>
<td>4.6  (1)</td>
<td>4.3  (5)</td>
<td>4.4  (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to needs and wants</td>
<td>4.2  (5)</td>
<td>4.5  (3)</td>
<td>4.6  (1)</td>
<td>4.5  (1)</td>
<td>4.4  (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>4.4  (3)</td>
<td>4.1  (6)</td>
<td>4.4  (4)</td>
<td>4.5  (1)</td>
<td>4.4  (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good sense of humour</td>
<td>4.4  (3)</td>
<td>4.1  (6)</td>
<td>4.2  (7)</td>
<td>4.1  (9)</td>
<td>4.2  (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches according to own beliefs, etc.</td>
<td>4.0  (8)</td>
<td>4.0  (8)</td>
<td>3.6  (10)</td>
<td>4.3  (5)</td>
<td>4.2  (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes initiative</td>
<td>3.8  (10)</td>
<td>3.5  (11)</td>
<td>4.6  (1)</td>
<td>4.4  (3)</td>
<td>4.2  (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large and varied repertoire</td>
<td>4.1  (6)</td>
<td>3.9  (9)</td>
<td>4.0  (9)</td>
<td>4.2  (7)</td>
<td>4.1  (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert on target language</td>
<td>4.0  (8)</td>
<td>4.5  (3)</td>
<td>4.2  (7)</td>
<td>3.9  (11)</td>
<td>4.1  (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times lessons well</td>
<td>3.3  (12)</td>
<td>3.8  (10)</td>
<td>3.5  (11)</td>
<td>4.2  (7)</td>
<td>3.7  (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has authority</td>
<td>3.4  (11)</td>
<td>3.2  (12)</td>
<td>3.4  (13)</td>
<td>3.9  (11)</td>
<td>3.5  (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorough preparation for examinations</td>
<td>3.1  (13)</td>
<td>3.2  (12)</td>
<td>3.5  (11)</td>
<td>3.7  (13)</td>
<td>3.4  (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covers the coursebook in the allocated time</td>
<td>2.0  (14)</td>
<td>3.2  (12)</td>
<td>2.6  (14)</td>
<td>2.7  (14)</td>
<td>2.9  (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notable from the responses are that

- the characteristics rated as most important in all the countries were personal qualities rather than expert skills.
- the ratings were very similar regardless of the culture of the teachers (with the exception of “takes initiative” and “expert on target language”).
the qualities often rated as very important by head teachers and inspectors were rated of low importance in all countries (i.e., “Covers the coursebook in the allocated time”; “Thorough preparation for examinations”; “Has authority”; “Times lessons well”).

Dat (2002), writing about teachers in Vietnam, says

It is uncommon to see a class getting bored and uncooperative when working with a cheerful, approachable and dedicated teacher. . . . Conversely a teacher who cares about maintaining hierarchy tends to prevent language tasks from developing into dynamic interaction (269).

This humanistic view of the good language teacher was reinforced recently by Rick Reis (see Madagan, 2005) using views extracted from Beidler’s (1997) chapter, “What Makes a Good Teacher?”.

1. Good teachers really want to be good teachers.
2. Good teachers take risks.
3. Good teachers have a positive attitude.
4. Good teachers think of teaching as a form of parenting.
5. Good teachers try to give students confidence.
6. Good teachers try to motivate students.
7. Good teachers listen to their students.

Good teachers

• are available to assist students with questions on the subject, and they show concern.
• do not have a lofty, standoffish attitude.
• interact with a student on an individual basis.
• give time, effort, and attention to their students.
• are first friends, then educators—the friend encourages, supports, and understands; the educator teaches, challenges, and spurs the student on.
• have such an obvious enthusiasm for what they do that it is contagious and their students pick up on it.

My ongoing research into what makes a good language teacher suggests that teachers of languages in well-resourced classrooms are not necessarily at an advantage over those in under-resourced classrooms and that, in fact, the latter might even be at an advantage in that they are better able to exploit their personal qualities in direct interaction with the learners rather than in association with impersonal machines. Being enthusiastic, committed, concerned, and creative can help teachers to become resourceful even when not well resourced.
WHAT RESOURCES CAN HELP THE GOOD LANGUAGE TEACHER?

Many of the ways outlined above for helping learners to learn are independent of external resources and can be effectively exploited by the teacher’s making full use of herself and her learners. Even the best language teacher, though, could be helped to achieve even more for her learners if some resources were available to support the following ways of facilitating learning.

Exposing Learners to Language in Use

By far the best way of helping learners to gain from motivated and meaningful exposure to language in use is to provide them with a school or, better still, class library of potentially engaging, extensive readers and then to find the time for them to read what they want, how they want, and when they want. The benefits of such free, voluntary, taskless reading include the development of positive affect and a dramatic improvement in the ability to read, write, listen, and speak. These benefits have been attested by my own experience in Indonesia, Vanuatu, and Zambia and by such researchers as Day and Bamford (1998), Davis (1995), Elley (1991), and Krashen (1993). The benefits of experiential reading of shorter texts have also been outlined by Masuhara (2003) and Tomlinson (1998b).

Other resources that help expose learners to language in use are newspapers, magazines, comics, extensive listening cassettes or CD ROMs, videos, DVDs, films, television and radio programmes, and the Internet (Derewianka, 2003; Tomlinson, 2003a; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004)

Providing Useful Tasks

The ideal resource for providing tasks that engage and challenge learners is a teachers’ resource book with a wide and varied repertoire of tasks for the teacher and the learners to select from (e.g., Watcyn-Jones, 2001). However, a good coursebook could be a useful source of activities, too. See Tomlinson, Dat, Masuhara, and Rubdy (2001) for relevant criteria for selecting such a coursebook, Tomlinson (1995) for examples of teacher-produced coursebooks, and Tomlinson (in press) for a discussion of how teachers can make locally suitable adaptations of coursebooks.

Providing Opportunities for Language Use

Learners can use language without any external resources, but the provision of e-mail access, video conferencing facilities, and video-making and word-processing facilities can stimulate and facilitate communication. Being able to record the learners using language with cassette players or videos can also be extremely useful in providing data for both the teacher and the learners to analyze and provide feedback.
Helping Learners to Pay Attention to Language in Use

A book of language awareness activities (e.g., Bolitho & Tomlinson, 1995) can help learners develop their ability to make discoveries about the language for themselves, as can means of recording the learners’ output during activities with intended communicative outcomes.

WHAT CAN THE UNDER-RESOURCED TEACHER DO TO EXPLOIT AVAILABLE RESOURCES?

Exposing Learners to Language in Use

If the teacher does not have books, print materials, cassette players, computers, video players, or televisions available, she can still find ways of exposing her learners to language in use. In Vanuatu, for example, one resourceful teacher I observed provided her learners the experience of extensive reading through a homemade television. She wrote out in large print on a scroll of cardboard the English version of a local folktale. She then inserted a rolling pin into the scroll and then placed it into a cardboard box that she had made to look like a television by cutting out a screen and painting knobs below the screen. One day she announced to the excited class of primary school pupils standing in line outside the classroom that they were going to watch television (at that time, Vanuatu did not even have a television service). She sat them in front of her cardboard television and slowly unwound the scroll so that the story appeared on the screen. She then gradually revealed the whole story to the mesmerised class by turning the rolling pin slowly. After that initial experience, the class enjoyed regular extensive reading sessions via their television, and their reading speed increased in response to the teacher gradually speeding up her turning of the rolling pin. Such a resource can be developed by teachers anywhere, and if teachers get together to pool and create stories and share the work of transcribing them, the school can quickly build up a library of potentially engaging, locally relevant readers.

Another teacher in Vanuatu created big books by writing stories in large print on large sheets of cardboard. The teacher then seated her pupils in a semicircle around the book and waited until they were ready before revealing the next page. Readiness could be signalled by a silent looking away or by a silence following a learner-initiated discussion of the page revealed. In Ethiopia I visited a primary school in which the teachers wrote and illustrated stories, which were then displayed on the classroom walls for pupils to read at their leisure. In a primary school in China, I saw stories written and illustrated by pupils and displayed on walls for pupils to read. In a school where I worked, I had each class write stories for the class below them. I monitored the stories and suggested improvements, and then they were written out attractively before delivery to the other class. In Indonesia I saw a secondary school teacher stagger into her classroom with a large and apparently heavy cardboard box. She put it down with relief on her table and announced to the curious class that it was their new class library. She invited the students to come to her table to look at the library, and they were annoyed to find that the box was empty. The teacher told the students that the box was a positive start and what each
student should do for homework that week was to find something interesting in English and put it in the box. Some students looked for English names in the telephone directory and then visited their addresses to ask the residents if they had anything interesting in English they could donate to their class library. Others went to embassies, travel agents, newspaper shops, and international companies, and by the end of the week there were 40 potentially interesting texts in the box (ranging from novels to comics, to magazines, to cereal boxes). From then on, each week the students took a text from the box home to read and added a new text that they had found. By the end of the semester there were 400 texts in the box, and the headmaster was so impressed by the initiative of the teacher and the resourcefulness of the students that he found a bit of money to buy a few books for the box. Other ways of providing access to reading materials in under-resourced schools have included

- the teachers writing stories in chalk around the walls of the school.
- getting learners to create oral stories in groups with a view to the selected group dictating its story so that the teacher can write an improved version of it on the board for everyone to read.
- helping learners to produce daily newspapers and weekly magazines for other learners to read.
- setting up pen pal schemes in which the learners correspond with native speakers.

I told a teacher in Japan the story about the class library in Indonesia, and she initiated a similar project in which her students developed a class listening library of more than 1,000 tapes onto which they had recorded songs, announcements, instructions, talks, interviews, and stories in English. In Vanuatu I visited a primary school classroom in which the teacher had her pupils make hand puppets from her spoken instructions. The pupils then used the puppets to help first the teacher and then themselves to tell multivoice stories in a puppet theatre the teacher had constructed from a box and some bits of curtain.

I have encouraged under-resourced teachers to try other ways of providing experiences in spoken English, including

- the teacher telling a joke, reading a poem, singing a song, dictating a riddle, telling a story, or giving instructions for a game at the beginning of a lesson.
- the teacher talking about herself at the beginning of the lesson: The teacher talking about herself was found to be the most popular activity in two completely independent research projects (Davies, 2002; McDonough, 2002).
- teachers of different classes bringing their students to the hall and then engaging in discussion or debate, conducting interviews, or performing extracts from plays with each other.
- teachers and students finding interesting English-speaking local residents and then inviting them to come to class to talk about their jobs or hobbies.
- getting teachers of other subjects to sometimes give their classes in English.
- using TPR Plus activities (Tomlinson, 1990, 1994a) in which the teacher encourages physical responses to her spoken input (e.g., miming a story while it is being told,
painting a mural on the classroom wall, playing a complicated game, cooking a meal, building body sculptures).

- taking classes (or at least encouraging learners to go) to any local event in which English is likely to be used (e.g., an English film at the cinema; a concert by an English singing pop group; a public talk by a visiting politician or celebrity).

**Providing Useful Tasks**

Teachers can provide useful tasks without needing access to expensive resources. They can do so by using their imagination, the local environment, the learners’ interests, and other subjects on the curriculum. For example, they could help learners to design a cross-cultural project that involves interviewing local English speakers about the differences between life in their own country and life in the country where they live (or are visiting) now. Learners could use any available English source to research an aspect of one of their interests in order to gain information for a presentation on the topic (e.g., World Cup, Olympics, tourism). Or they could teach each other, in English, topics from the curriculum of other subjects that they are interested in.

One way I have helped under-resourced teachers in Botswana, China, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Mauritius, the Seychelles, South Africa, Turkey, and Vietnam is to encourage them to design their own text-driven materials based on the following flexible framework adapted from Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004, pp. 21–25).

**A FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIALS**

**Preparing for Materials Development**

**Text Collection**

Collect and create texts (written or spoken) with the potential for affective and cognitive engagement from as many different sources as you can.

**Text Selection**

When developing a unit of materials for a particular target group, use the following criteria to select a text from your library of potentially engaging texts:

- Does the text still engage you cognitively and affectively?
- Is the text likely to engage most of the target learners cognitively and affectively?
- Are the target learners likely to be able to connect the text to their lives?

**Developing the Materials**

**Experiencing the Text Again**

Experience the selected text again (i.e., read or listen to it again experientially in order to re-engage with the text). This re-engagement is essential so that you can design activities that help the target learners to achieve similar engagement. Without this stage there is a danger that you study the text as a sample of language and end up designing activities that focus the learners exclusively on linguistic features of the text.
Devising Readiness Activities
Devise activities that could get learners ready to experience the text in multidimensional ways. You are aiming at helping the learners to achieve the mental readiness that we take to first language (L1) texts and to inhibit the word fixation and apprehension that second language (L2) learners typically take to texts. The activities could ask the learners to visualise, to draw, to think of connections, to mime, to articulate their views, to recount episodes from their lives, to share their knowledge, to make predictions: anything that helps them to activate connections in their minds that will help them when they start to experience the text. For example, if the text is about a child’s first day at school, they can be asked to think about and then share with a partner their first day at school experience. Because the activities aim at mental readiness rather than language practice, any activity involving talking to others can be done in the L1 in monolingual lower level groups.

The important point is that the lesson starts in the learners’ minds and not in the text and that the activities eventually help the learners gain a personal experience of the text by connecting it to their lives.

Devising Experiential Activities
Experiential activities are activities designed to help the learners to represent the text in their minds as they read it or listen to it and to do so in multidimensional ways that facilitate personal engagement. Experiential activities are activities they are encouraged to do while reading or listening and should therefore be mental activities that contribute to the representation of the text and that do not interrupt the processing of it or make it more complex. They could include, for example, trying to visualise a politician as they read about him, using inner speech to give their responses to provocative points in a text, or thinking of examples from their own lives to illustrate or contradict points made in a text.

These activities need to be given to the learners just before they start to read or listen to the text and should be given through concise and simple instructions that are easy to remember and apply. For example,

You’re going to listen to a poem about a child’s first day at school. Imagine that you are that child and that you are standing alone in the playground during your first day at school. As you listen to the poem, try to see in your mind what the child could see in the playground.

Experiential activities can be either related to a given text, as in the preceding example, or part of a process approach that involves the learners in participating in the creation of the text, as in the following examples:
- Read aloud a text and pause at salient points while learners shout out predictions of the next word or phrase.
- Dictate a text and then pause at salient points while learners compare what they have written with their partners and then write the next line.
- Read aloud a text while all the learners act it out.
Devising Intake Response Activities

**Intake response activities** are activities that help learners to develop and articulate what they have personally taken in from the text. They focus on the mental representation that the learners have achieved from their initial reading of the text, and they invite the learners to reflect on this representation rather than return to the text. Unlike conventional comprehension questions, these activities do not test learners on their comprehension of the text. Instead, they give the learners a positive start to their postreading or listening responses by inviting them to share with others what the text means to them. They cannot be wrong because they are not being asked about the text but about their personal representation of it. However, it is possible that their representation is only partial (or even superficial) and the process of sharing of it with others can help to extend and deepen it.

Intake response activities could ask the learners to think about and then articulate their feelings and opinions about what was said or done in the text. The activity could require them to visualise, draw, or mime what they can remember from the text, to say if they like a particular character, to say if they agree with what the text says, or to summarise their representation of the text to someone who has not read it.

Devising Input Response Activities

**Input response activities** are activities that take the learners back to the text and that involve them in studial reading or listening tasks aimed at helping them make discoveries about the purposes and language of the text.

**Interpretation Tasks**

**Interpretation tasks** are tasks in which learners think more deeply about the text in order to make discoveries about the author’s intentions in creating it (e.g., what points about society do you think the writer is making in his modern version of *Little Red Riding Hood*?)

**Awareness Tasks**

**Awareness tasks** are input response activities that provide opportunities for learners to gain awareness from a focused study of the text (by awareness, I mean a gradually developing apprehension, which is different from knowledge, in that it is internal, personal, dynamic, and variable). The awareness could be of how language items are used, communication strategies, genre characteristics, or text type features. The awareness tasks usually involve investigation of a particular feature of a text plus research to check the typicality of the investigated feature by analysing the same feature in use in other texts. So, for example, you could ask the learners to work out generalisations about the form and function of *in case of* from the poem “In Case of Fire” by Roger McGough and then get the learners to find and compare examples of *in case of* in notices and instruction manuals. The important point is that evidence is provided in a text that the learners first experience holistically and then make focused discoveries from. For further discussion of the value of awareness activities, see Bolitho et al. (2003) and Tomlinson (1994b).
Devising Development Activities

Development activities are activities that provide opportunities for meaningful language production based on learners’ representations of the text. Development activities involve the learners (usually in pairs or small groups) going back to the text before going forward to produce something new. So, for example, after experiencing a comic story called “Sentence of Death” about a man in Liverpool being told that he has 4 hours to live, the learners in groups rewrite the story so that it is based in their own town. Or, after experiencing a story called “They Came from the Sea: Part 1,” learners sit in a circle and take turns suggesting the next sentence of “They Came from the Sea: Part 2” (Tomlinson, 2001). Or, after working out from an advertisement the good and bad points of a vehicle called the C5, they design an improved C6 and then design an advertisement for it. The point is that they can base their language production both on what they have already understood from the text and on connections with their own lives. While talking or writing, they will gain opportunities to learn new language and develop new skills, and if they are affectively engaged in an achievable challenge, they will learn much from each other and from the teacher (if she moves around the room helping learners when they ask for assistance).

For a more detailed presentation of this framework and an example of it in use, see Tomlinson (2003b).

Providing Opportunities for Language Use

One way of providing opportunities for meaningful language use is to make use of the development activities outlined in the flexible framework just presented. Other ways include

- asking learners to give mini-presentations on their favourite hobby.
- asking learners to teach each other games.
- asking learners to teach each other to develop a skill (e.g., a form of dancing, wire sculpture, cooking, singing).
- encouraging learners to form social groups who agree to use English as the language of interaction in their social and leisure activities (a student I recommended this to in Ethiopia has now influenced a very large group of students to use English in social conversations on his university campus).
- helping learners to produce a weekly newspaper in which groups of learners take responsibility for the section that interests them most (the fashion group could summarise and localise fashion-related articles from available English language newspapers or produce abbreviated versions of L1 newspaper articles).
- helping learners to perform improvised or learner-scripted versions of plays or films.
- helping individuals to write a book about their hobbies (one of my student teachers did this with beginning-level adult learners and helped them to produce illustrated books on such topics as gardening and furniture restoring).
- asking a class to produce a radio soap opera over the period of a semester (I once did this with a group of Argentinians by getting the class to vote on group suggestions for locations, characters, and title and then getting a different group to script and perform an episode from the soap opera each week).
• helping individuals to write a novel each (I did this with an underachieving group in Vanuatu by getting each learner to think about an interesting person in their village, then to start writing a story about this person and continuing to do so in class for 3 hours a week with language help from their peers and from me).
• getting teachers from different schools together to produce communication activities for cheap publication and dissemination to schools (e.g., Tomlinson, 1981).

Helping Learners to Pay Attention to Language in Use
One way of helping learners to pay attention to language in use is to use the language awareness activities outlined in the flexible framework. Other ways include
• asking learners to construct a mini-corpus from whatever sources they have available (Willis, 1998, gives examples; I once divided a class into a some group and an any group and then asked them to find 50 examples of their word from a pile of newspapers and magazines and to develop generalisations about the use of some and any).
• giving each learner a language item to focus on for a 2-week period (e.g., question tags, reported speech, the imperative) and then have them get into groups to inform each other what they have noticed about their item in use.
• assigning your learners and a group of proficient users of English a task involving language use (e.g., writing the instructions for a game they have just played) and then helping the learners note the differences between their use of language and that of the proficient users.
• asking learners to write The Use of English by X (i.e., their name) on a loose leaf file or exercise book and then to note in it any conclusions and examples from language awareness activities in class and any of their own observations on their own personal encounters with English.

CONCLUSION

If a teacher is aware of the ways in which she can help her learners to learn, if she is encouraged to be positively resourceful, and if she thinks of achievable ways of exploiting whatever resources are available to her locally, then her learners can actually be motivated to learn more affectively than those in resource-rich classrooms replete with multimedia aids.

What I have tried to demonstrate in this paper is that the richest resources in any classroom are the teacher and the learners themselves. It is these resources we should be focusing on in any teacher development course.
REFERENCES


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Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
700 South Washington Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314 USA
Tel: 703-836-0774
Fax: 703-836-7864
E-mail: tesol@tesol.org
http://www.tesol.org/

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