



GLOBAL ISSUES NEWSLETTER

October 2012 Issue 29

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1. Letter from the Coordinator

Dear Members,

Our SIG can look back on an active year. Our past coordinator, Maureen Ellis, kept all of us on the committee busy with her commitment and enthusiasm for global issues. Thank you Maureen, once again, for all your hard work.

We were well represented at the Glasgow Conference. We had a very successful PCE: two main workshops given by Jamie Keddie and Alan Maley, in addition to several brief presentations and activities led by members of our committee. It was a good mix of food for thought, as well as some specific ideas, worksheets to take away and use in our classrooms. To get a taste of what the event was like, you can listen to the interviews of our main presenters:

Jamie Keddie: Videotelling – a marriage of traditional story-telling and video

<http://iatefl.britishcouncil.org/2012/sessions/2012-03-19/interview-jamie-keddie>

Alan Maley: Projects for young adults – drawing attention to the way people misuse language

<http://iatefl.britishcouncil.org/2012/sessions/2012-03-20/interview-alan-maley>

At the end of the day Kip Cates, the coordinator of the Global Issues SIG of JALT (Japanese Association of Language Teachers) shared with us what he has learnt about making global issues the content of English language education in a very inspiring interview. He also gave a copy of the most recent issue of their newsletter to each participant. What a treasure-trove of excellent articles, practical activities, and news about projects, publications, partnerships etc. Do check out their website at: www.gilesig.org

We also had some excellent workshops and presentations during the GISIG Day. To give you an overview, here is what was on offer:

- Sara Hannam (Greece): English Language teachers and their work: changing trends?
- Rachel Wicaksono (UK):Raising awareness of ELF in an internationalising university
- Kip Cates (Japan):Becoming a global teacher: ten steps to an international classroom
- Alan Mackenzie (India):Evaluating internationalism in the curriculum
- Rachel Bowden (Malaysia):ELTDP: Enquiry-based project design and teacher development
- Maureen Ellis (UK):Self-evaluation of critical global educators using CHAT

The Global Issues forum of IATEFL Glasgow online was alive and thriving before and after the Conference, thanks to Bill Templer, Paul Woods and all the other members who posted messages. Some of the threads discussed included *globalisation and linguistic imperialism, how kids learn about discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes, and women's issues*. Here is a list of questions that Paul Woods posted. They were raised and discussed at our PCE:

- *How can we engage learners with Global Issues?*
- *What GIs should we discuss and bring into the classroom?*
- *How can we link global with local?*
- *What ideas do people have for using clips which involve very little language (eg Mr Bean)?*
- *How can we make global issues relevant to young learners?*
- *How can we get shy, weaker students to speak out in class?*
- *Who makes policy and how does this affect the lives of teachers in the classroom? (the example was quoted of Iraq where there is a new curriculum in schools but teachers colleges are still teaching to the old curriculum)*
- *How do students' age and culture affect what GIs can be discussed in the classroom?*

Looking ahead, we are organising a very exciting Pre Conference Event in Liverpool. The theme is ‘unlearning learnt helplessness’ and the day will include workshops by Jim Scrivener and Adrian Underhill, a talk by Paul Shaw from Disabled Access Friendly, and a Question & Answer session with the patron of IATEFL, David Crystal.

We hope to see many of you there on 8 April!

Finally, thanks to Dana and Susan for putting this issue together. Enjoy reading it.

Margit

IATEFL GISIG Coordinator

Upcoming IATEFL SIG Events

16 – 18 November 2012	IATEFL BESIG	Stuttgart, Germany
23 – 24 November 2012	IATEFL LAMSIG & TDSIG joint event	Brighton, UK
24 – 25 November 2012	IATEFL LTSIG event	Dublin, Eire
15 December 2012	IATEFL PronSIG event	London, UK
6 – 8 September 2013	IATEFL GISIG event	Bielefeld, Germany
20 – 21 September 2013	IATEFL LASIG event	Hannover, Germany

IATEFL will also be at:

10 Nov 2012	EnglishUK event	London, UK
2 – 3 March 2013	EnglishUK event	Cambridge, UK

Book online for **all** IATEFL SIG events at www.iatefl.org

2. Update on Global Issues Special Interest Group Committee



Margit Szesztay (Hungary), Coordinator; has worked as a teacher trainer and has been involved in teacher training workshops and seminars both in Hungary and abroad. Her main areas of interest include community building, the teacher as educator, group dynamics, creativity in language teaching, and language development for non-native speaker teachers. She is ex president of IATEFL Hungary, and was IATEFL Associates Coordinator between 2003-2006.

Wolfgang Ridder (Germany), Finance & Events Manager. Wolfgang has been a member of IATEFL for over 28 years and served as SIG Coordinator of ESP and GISIGs; he is a trained comprehensive school teacher for Russian, Polish and English. Starting in March 2011, he became the 2nd Chairperson of the regional ELTA-OWL Association of English teachers in Germany (an associated member of IATEFL).



Iqbal Dhudhra (Pakistan), Discussion List Moderator. He teaches English in a vocational institute working for poverty alleviation and rehabilitation of the poor in Narowal, Pakistan; member of national and international associations and Discussion List Moderator for Global Issues SIG, IATEFL; founder of Rural English Learners and Teachers group in the Punjab, Pakistan.

Dennis Newson (Germany), Membership and Promotions Manager. Formerly teacher at University of Osnabrueck, GERMANY, member of Global Issues SIG and Discussion List Manager for IATEFL YLTSIG, creator of YLTSIG NING, winner of British Council ELT 05 Innovation Award and unrepentant grammarphobe.



Dana Radler (Romania), Newsletter is a freelance teacher and trainer with a BA in Foreign Languages and an MA in International Relations; published various articles and texts about creative writing and European writers, starting in 2000. Currently, an Associate Lecturer at University of Bucharest, Department of Applied Modern Languages.

Susan Finlay (UK): Newsletter Editor. Susan has been an EFL teacher since she did the CELTA in 1990 and has taught in various locations: Greece, Zimbabwe, Thailand, the UK, Bahrain and Oman. She has been at the University of Glasgow in Scotland teaching EAP since 2010. She has an MA in Applied Linguistics and the DELTA, and has also been recently trained up as a CELTA tutor.



Bill Templer (USA), Honorary Member and Discussion Group Contributor, is a Chicago-born educator with research interests in English as a lingua franca, literature, and critical applied linguistics. Bill is presently based in Shumen in North-Eastern Bulgaria, where he is active in BETA, an IATEFL affiliate.

3. Human rights education: driver for change and justice in a global context

Margot Brown, UK

- with thanks to Hilary Hunt for original material and additional support -

Introduction

Human Rights are frequently in the news – often because someone, somewhere is having their rights denied. Sometimes it is less depressing news – a human rights defender or activist has been released from prison or had their work recognised. Sometimes it is because the UN has agreed a new Convention or Declaration supporting the rights of a group who have hitherto been less well covered by existing law. Education and human rights are inextricably linked: the Right to Education and the learning about rights in education. As Katerina Tomasevski, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education has said (2003):

‘Education....is the key to unlocking other human rights’

Education itself is an internationally guaranteed human right agreed for the express purpose of creating a more just and sustainable world for everyone. Teachers of all subjects in the curriculum, including language, can contribute to young people’s understanding of rights and responsibilities.

Where do human rights come from?

The struggle for freedom, equality and justice – human rights values – has a long and honourable history, born of necessity. This struggle for human rights stretches across all regions of the world, all religions and peoples and teachers can use the recognized sources of the story of rights to develop research and presentation skills.

The ruler of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great, promulgated the ‘Charter of Cyrus’ over 2500 years ago. This gave

recognition to rights of liberty and security, freedom of movement and religious belief, and even certain economic and social rights.

Paul Gordon Lauren (1998) points out “Nearly twenty-four centuries ago in China, for example, the philosopher Mo Zi founded the Mohist school of moral philosophy. His writings emphasized the importance of duty, self-sacrifice, and an all-embracing respect toward all others, *‘universally throughout the world’*”. (p10).

One of the earliest written references to what are now defined as human rights values comes from Mesopotamia (present day Iraq) from the Laws of Hammurabi in the second century BC.

“Make justice reign in the Kingdom, to enlighten the country and promote the good of the people”

The English Magna Carta of 1215 explicitly protected certain rights of the monarch’s subjects, subjecting the monarch to the rule of law for the first time.

Rights are to be found in religious writings such as this Hadith (saying of the Prophet Mohammed, Al-Amily: 80):

“One hour in the execution of justice is worth seventy years of worship”.

Evidence of people’s vision of a just and sustainable world is to be found in many places and over many, many centuries. Of course not all is written. Some peoples passed down their views on justice and rights through oral traditions. For example, the Akan people of Ghana have the saying “One

should not oppress with one's size or one's might".

As time passed, the focus encompassed new and equally important rights. In Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries the desire to travel and exploit the land and resources in other parts of the world led to new struggles being identified.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, born in Spain in 1473, travelled to the Caribbean with Christopher Columbus, became a Dominican friar, and worked in Hispaniola, Cuba and Costa Rica. He was known as the 'Apostle of the Indians' and campaigned against colonialism and the exploitation and enslavement of indigenous peoples, at a time when indigenous peoples were seen as 'sub-human' and without rights or respect.

François Dominique Toussaint - "L'Ouverture" - was a freed black slave who led the successful struggle for national liberation in the colony of St Dominique from 1791, liberating the slaves and defeating both the Spanish and French. He became the first black ruler of an independent Haiti. The Anti-Slavery movement is often said to be an early example of an international human rights campaign.

In 1789, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* marked the aspirations of the French Revolution. Shortly after, Olympe de Gouges wrote the '*Declaration of the Rights of Women and of the Citizen*' saying:

"Oh women, oh women, when will you cease to be blind? What advantage have you received from the Revolution? A more pronounced scorn, a more marked disdain".

She was tried and executed on the guillotine as anti-revolutionary and for challenging the view that only men had rights.

This tenacity in seeking justice for groups who are oppressed – either through

being a minority or being conquered, or simply by being viewed as subordinate, is a characteristic of men and women over time and throughout the world.

Eglantyne Jebb, born in 1873 and British founded the 'International Save the Children Union' in 1919, which was set up to protect children and became 'Save the Children Fund' in later years. She drafted the first 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child' which was endorsed in 1924 by the League of Nations. This Declaration was a precursor of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by more countries in the world than any other international human rights treaty.

Dr Bhimrae Ramji Ambedkar became the first Indian Minister of Justice after Independence in 1947. He fought 'untouchability' and the caste system. He helped draft the Indian Constitution giving rights to adavasi and scheduled castes. Article 51 of the Constitution, entitled "Promotion of international peace and security" is notable in its commitment to "foster respect for international law and treaty obligations".

Rigoberta Menchu of Guatemala, Wangari Maathai of Kenya and Shirin Ebadi of Iran have all won the Nobel Peace Prize for their human rights work. Rigoberta Menchu for her work on the rights of indigenous peoples in Central America, Wangari Maathai for her work on the environment and Shirin Ebadi for her work on women's and children's rights. All these and many others are known nationally and internationally but we do not have to look much further than most local papers to find examples of rights being abused or denied, and also being defended by local, unsung heroes.

The last 60 years

The outrage at the atrocities of World War II and its aftermath created a strong desire for 'never again' and led to the establishment of the United Nations whose Charter is a profound statement on

the necessity of peace based on human rights:

“We the peoples of the United Nations, determined

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.”

One of the first pieces of work completed by the fledgling UN was the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The distillation of the global knowledge and experience which contributed to the UDHR in 1948 marks the beginning of the process to establish the universal values of human rights in universally agreed standards. The succession of Conventions and Declarations that have followed since 1948 shows clearly that the reality of human rights for all is still ‘work in progress’.

Each new attempt to bring equality and justice has its own problems. Yet, there is always cause for hope. “Although abuses have not ceased, there are now universally accepted norms, binding treaties of human rights with implementation mechanisms, access by individual victims to global and regional machinery and opportunities to voice concerns, and an international community much better informed through communication technology and less and less willing to accept traditional claims of national sovereignty”. (Lauren: 3)

Human rights will always be work in progress. The UDHR started that work in modern times. The foundation stone of the International Bill of Human Rights, it is the basis of all subsequent human rights instruments. The major treaties include the two International Covenants, on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and six Conventions: on the Status of Refugees (1951); on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); on the Rights of the Child (1989); on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families (1990). The Conventions for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006) and on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) and the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011). Others will follow as it becomes clear where there is still need.

Regional groupings of nations have developed the UDHR into regional human rights standards, all of which embody obligations to human rights education. For example, Europe has the Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950). All new accession countries to the EU must sign this. Africa has the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1981). The Americas have the American Convention on Human Rights (1969).

Neither the Middle East nor Asia has adopted similar regional human rights law.

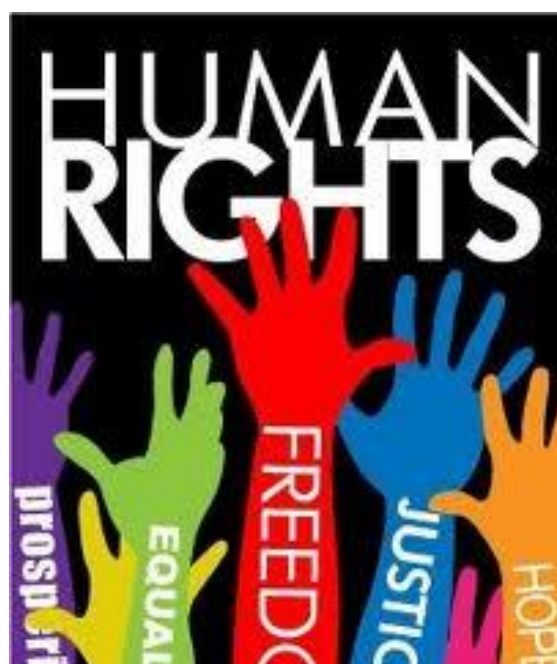
There are a whole host of other movers and shakers in the field of human rights and human rights education. UNESCO, UNICEF, Save the Children Fund (SCF), Amnesty International (AI), Anti Slavery International (ASI) and British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR) are among those who work for human rights on the ground but also produce excellent teaching and learning materials in English– both on-line and in hard copy. The profile of the work of these groups was highlighted during the International Decade for Human Rights Education from 1995 -2004 and the ongoing World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005>) among whose aims are ‘Strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms’ and ‘The promotion of people-centered sustainable development and social justice’.

Non-discrimination, equality and fairness – key components of justice – form the foundation of the UDHR. A year-long global campaign to mark its 60th anniversary culminated on Human Rights Day 2008. The theme, ‘*Dignity and justice for all of us*’ reinforced the vision of the UDHR as a commitment to universal dignity and justice, as a living document that matters in addressing social injustice and achieving human dignity in times of peace in established democracies, as well as in times of conflict and in societies suffering repression. (*UN documentation.*)

Our right to human rights education

In 1993, the World Conference in Vienna identified human rights education as a major plank in building the global reality of human rights. Knowing our rights, at home, at work, at school, is a prerequisite of understanding and valuing the rights of others and our shared responsibility to fulfill those rights for everyone. Schools, colleges, educational classes are places where human rights

knowledge, values and skills can be practised and integrated. Human rights can inform relationships between adults and pupils in the educational community; they can provide guidance for behaviour management in schools and inspiration for student voices to be heard and taken notice of.



Despite the lack of consistent human rights teaching and learning in many schools and in many countries, there are oases of good practice, hope and inspiration. Global Education has had human rights as a central pillar for over twenty years and the key concepts of the Global Dimension include human rights. But when will all teachers learn about human rights and feel confident enough to teach them?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a powerful tool for global education, because it provides a common language shared by almost all countries of the world for the benefit of their children. Article 29, on the aims of education, has 5 component parts which will be very familiar to global educators as they cover much of the work these educators have as important strands of their work. The CRC is for all young people under the age of 18,

but the values inherent in its education articles have resonance to all learners whatever their age.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

Education Response

- Responding to learner needs
- Developing ability to communicate, negotiate, build consensus
- Critical thinking
- Cooperation
- Fully rounded person, physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and creatively

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

Education Response

- Respect for human dignity
- Solidarity
- Understanding of cultural difference and life style;
- Concepts such as democracy, justice;
- Causes of poverty and possible solutions
- Links between local and global
- Importance of freedoms to quality of life, particularly freedom from fear
- Exploration of the tensions between different rights and the rights of different people

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he

or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

Education Response

- Values and perspectives
- Identity and diversity
- Understanding difference
- Environmental influence on lifestyle
- Understanding of history from different points of view

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

Education Response

- Developing life skills as a citizen of their own country and of the world
- Social responsibility

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

Education Response

- Sustainability
- Sustainable development
- Climate change

A crucial element of human rights education is that of action and advocacy. The Chinese saying, 'To know and not to act, is not to know' reminds us that real learning leads to change - sometimes small change but more often substantial. This is the added value which transformative educations can bring to the education process, the change which will lead to a more just and sustainable future. Using human rights values and knowledge are important for a rounded education for all young people.

Tips for human education activities in your classroom

- 1) *“Human rights education in my country”*: ask your students to research on and discuss for a couple of minutes the current situation in their country; encourage them to give a couple of positive examples (e.g. international treaties or agreements signed by their country) and possible suggestions for the coming years (in what area does my country need to further work on – for instance, the rights of disabled persons, minorities etc.) Map the most common findings on a chart. Duration: research: 20 min; discussion: 14 min; mapping common findings: 6 min.
- 2) *“Show, don’t say!”* Ask one student to think of a key word related to human rights education (e.g. peace, tolerance, justice etc.) – he/she has to illustrate visually this concept, without naming it; the rest of the class should guess the concept. Students can do this in turns. Duration: 15-20 min.
- 3) *“Human Rights Poster”*. Ask your students to work in small teams (3-5 each) and design an A3 poster to illustrate one human right; one rapporteur will present the poster of his/her team. Students need A3 paper, coloured pencils or markers. Duration: team preparation: 10 min; poster design: 20 min; team presentations: 10 min.
- 4) *“Discrimination debate”*. Ask your students to read the following short story: “Once upon a time, in a small village near a river, a snake heard from a fox that her cubs will attend a new school starting in September; many other animals have already registered their cubs there because the school has excellent teachers and modern technology. The snake runs to register his own babies, but the owl who is the headmaster claims that the school regulations do not allow him to do that, because they include a line about certain reptiles growing too fast and threatening the safety of other students. The lion asks everybody to come and state their opinions, and rules that the owl needs to pay a 20 dollars fine in 60 days if the snake babies are not accepted in the school. Why do you think the lion took this decision?” What could the owl do to avoid such a fine?” Reading and discussion: 25 min; case wrap up: 5 min. This can be worked out by students individually or in small teams.

Conclusion

Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the UN committee which developed the UDHR, said, on its 10th anniversary: “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he (sic) lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have

meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we

shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

(Eleanor Roosevelt, ‘In our hands’ - speech delivered on 10th anniversary of the UDHR, 1958)

Now, is a particularly good time, after the introduction of the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, for global education practitioners to include a more explicit human rights dimension to their work, reminding learners of the rights they enjoy, those they may infringe and

those they can defend in solidarity with others. Human rights can be the driver of change. As Mahatma Ghandi has said,

“You must be the change to see in the world.”

References

Al-Amily, H.(2003), *The Book of Arabic Wisdom*, Oxford, New Internationalist
Lauren, PG (1998), *The Evolution of International Human Rights ; visions seen*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press
Tomasevski, K. (2003), *Education Denied: Costs and Remedies*, London Zed Books.

Information about Human Rights treaties <http://www.ohchr.org/> (accessed 20/02/2012)

Teaching resources:

Amnesty International: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/>

UNICEF/UK: <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Resources>

SCF: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/>

Global Dimension- the World in your classroom: <http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/>

Margot Brown was until recently the National Coordinator of the Centre for Global Education, based at York St John University, York, UK. She has developed training and development programmes on global issues, including human rights, citizenship, diversity and sustainability in the UK and in many other countries. She has published practical handbooks for teachers and written on issues of citizenship for teachers of languages and others.





IATEFL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

The IATEFL SIGs are run by IATEFL members, for IATEFL members.

What are the IATEFL SIGs?

- IATEFL Special Interest Groups extend the work of IATEFL into several specialist areas
- They enable professionals with special interests in ELT to benefit from information, news, developments and events in their special interest areas.

Why should I join an IATEFL SIG?

- Each SIG aims to provide its members with three mailings (newsletters, updates, e-mailings) per year. The SIG newsletters often include cutting edge articles in the field, while informing the membership about the content of conferences and day events which members may not have been able to attend.
- Each Special Interest Group aims to organise up to three events in the UK or outside the UK per year. These events frequently include the most informed and stimulating speakers in the field.
- In addition there are other benefits which vary from SIG to SIG: websites, internet discussion lists, internet chat forums, scholarships, webinars etc.
- Full individual members of IATEFL are entitled to join one Special Interest Group included in their membership fee.

Who are the SIGs?

Business English ES(O)L English for Specific Purposes
Global Issues Learner Autonomy Leadership And Management
Learning Technologies Literature, Media & Cultural Studies Pronunciation
Research Teacher Development Teacher Training & Education
Testing, Evaluation & Assessment Young Learners & Teenagers

You can be ACTIVE in IATEFL: Be ACTIVE - Join an IATEFL SIG!

For more detailed information about the SIGs, contact IATEFL at generalenquiries@iatefl.org or visit www.iatefl.org

For more detailed information about the SIGs, come to the IATEFL stand at any IATEFL event or contact IATEFL Head Office – Darwin College, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NY, UK; email us at generalenquiries@iatefl.org or telephone us on 00 44 1227 824430.

4. Protecting the Environment: The Moroccan Way

Abderrahman Azennoud
Al Akhawayn University Ifrane, Morocco

We invite the cupid people, who seek energy at any cost, to imagine that we may wake up one day and find that our planet Earth is all flooded with water or that it is all dry because there is no rain. Isn't this the fate we –human beings- are heading for? Aren't all people –wherever they are – observing our planet being affected catastrophically with many species of birds, fish, and plants are disappearing? In addition to this, many countries are flooded, and the largest parts of them are covered with snow, whereas others are almost dry. This is not to mention the destruction of the ozone layer which results in global warming and pollution, issues that affect all of us. Actually, many organizations are trying their best to protect the environment and Moroccan ones are no exception. In Morocco, one of these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has fashioned its own way to cope with this issue.

Deep in the south of Morocco, in one of those poorest areas, an NGO whose members are primary school teachers supported by “Ash Kayn?” Band - literally translated as “What's Up?”- have been training young pupils, aged between 6 and 12, to protect their own environment, a method to be over-generalized. Here are the components of that training:

First, the teachers organize trips for their pupils to areas that are much affected and show them first hand those piles of trash from cans, plastic bags and containers, tire, glass, especially medical

trash. Not only this, but pupils can observe animals being fed from this trash and whose meat is consumed by human beings. Besides, they are shown dying trees and plants with inedible fruits. In a way, in this step, called as the *Observation Stage*, these pupils are sensitized to the ills affecting their own environment.

Second, and in class, movies – mainly documentaries- about the affected areas from different countries are shown to these pupils. They are also taught what the international community has done to solve the issue. It is really amazing to hear these pupils talking to you and thoroughly about the Climate Change Conferences referred to as COP. Some of them mention that of Copenhagen, held in

Denmark in 2009, or Cancun which was held in Mexico in 2010, or Durban in South Africa in 2010, among others. Better than this, some will criticize the US for not accepting the Kyoto Protocol of 2004 that was enforced by the UN. What is outstanding about these pupils is that those aged 10, 11, and 12 keep notebooks where they report about all the international conferences and meetings held to protect



the Environment, and they are proud that one of these was held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2001. In a nutshell, this step is referred to as the *Awareness Stage*.

The third step, which is called, the *Moroccan Way to Protect the Environment* consists in encouraging the pupils, with the help of their teachers and that of the band who created a song for this purpose, to find Moroccan-made measures to contribute to the protection of the environment. The pupils were able to create a justice court and a chart of regulations that everyone, including teachers, has to abide by: everyone has to sign a form in which they pledge to pay fines if they violate these regulations. For example, if someone walks on the school yard grass or cuts a flower or doesn't throw cigarette tips in bins or keeps water taps on, the person will be sued at the school court and penalized. A part of the money collected from fines is devoted to refurbishing and landscaping the school. The other part of the money is to prize those pupils who could transfer the regulations to their families and to the neighbouring schools. The band also prized these pupils through gifts such as laptops, cameras, CDs, clothes, chocolate, and other items.

The fourth component of this training is known as the *Evaluation Stage* for it evaluates the results achieved: on a monthly basis, the teachers and the band meet with the students and assess the effectiveness of the measures tried, the outcomes, and future amendments. Actually, the measures, though at the very beginning were hard to implement for the community around the school did not trust

those young pupils to be able to bring change, were surprising. Now all the inhabitants in the area are proud to see that their children have succeeded in voicing out their ideas and carrying out their project. The outcomes for the school proved to be rewarding as with the school becoming cleaner and cleaner and consequently a more attractive place. The landscape in both the school and the neighbouring areas became greener. Now water is used wisely especially that the region is known for the shortage of rain. With regard to future plans, the actors involved—the teachers, the students, and the band—decided to generalize their experience among other schools. Luckily, the Delegation of the Ministry of Education sent a committee to encourage and reward those teachers and students. The committee provided them with transportation to expand such an experience. Not only this, but it has decided to organize a competition among the schools involved in the project and has allotted prizes for this purpose. The prizes are laptops and TV sets.

To conclude, with the help of these teachers, the band, and the delegation, these pupils were educated, and they themselves educated other people to care about our planet Earth. It is true that it is a small scale decision; however, its gist is to draw the attention of the Earth thinking beings, i.e. human beings, to the fact that, like many other issues – be they economic or political, the solutions for protecting the environment lie in education.

Abderrahman Azennoud is Professor of English at Al Akhawayn University Ifrane in Morocco. His interests cover applied linguistics, communication, cultural studies, and knowledge management; author of articles published in Canada and the UK.



5. Teaching the Arab Spring

Kathleen DeLacy, USA

We have all been inundated with news about developments in the Middle East recently. I have both personal and professional interests in the region, making unfolding events even more gripping. Understanding events is complicated, which is why I started thinking about teaching the Arab Spring. In this short article I will use only the two countries that I know personally, Syria and Egypt, in my examples.

As with any complex, current event, there are dangers involved in teaching the Arab Spring. It is tempting to be impulsively enthusiastic, or reactively cautious. As circumstances on the ground change, one is repeatedly reminded that “teaching” such topics is extremely challenging. However, these are also events that provide us with myriad opportunities to explore both language and culture.

So how does an English teacher approach the Arab Spring? I think that this is, more than anything, an opportunity to practice the Socratic method, taking advantage of a classroom full of international points of view, each bringing personal experience to the issue. I will outline one suggestion for a Six Lesson treatment of the topics and then explain each point below.

One possible way to structure these lessons:

- Lesson 1: History and geography lesson, assign points of view
- Lesson 2: Students present “their” points of view pre-research, from what they already know of the situation (using first person, simple present)
- Lesson 3: Students present research conducted (reported speech); second point of view assigned
- Lesson 4: Students present from their second point of view, with sources

- Lesson 5: Teacher driven lesson on negotiation techniques and the necessary language structures
- Lesson 6: Students conduct a negotiation, each presenting the second point of view that they researched (subjunctive, hypothetical).

Lesson 1: It would be helpful to start with a general lesson on the geography and political make-up of the region. Europeans will be more aware of the colonial history than North Americans, but a review is never a bad idea. Students will immediately find facile parallels – the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of Yugoslavia. However, I would wait to discuss these comparisons until the end of the lesson when some of the complexities are better understood.

Lesson 2: After the basic history lesson, perhaps it would be interesting to ask your students to choose one point of view, and write a short essay on the events unfolding from that one point of view. Not only does this bring the conflict into the classroom – a controlled learning environment where students can begin to understand the challenges faced by practicing peacemakers – but it forces them to research the situation enough to defend a point of view. It could be necessary to assign points of view, if students are unsure or unable to choose their own.

Lesson 3: In the next session a teacher could tell students to bring five sources in to support their perspective. Those sources would have to be credible, but can be biased (what source isn’t?). One of the greatest challenges facing teachers today is to help students navigate the cacophony of “news” that greets them every time they turn on their computers. It is vital that they see how developing a discerning, sophisticated point of view, can

only be accomplished by choosing one's sources wisely. It is a skill, and as any skill, it requires practice. Teaching the Arab Spring can be one method for navigating your students through this process. There is both euphoria and hysteria in the news today, on these issues. However, there are also exhaustive historical accounts of the cultural, religious and philosophical issues facing the region. Students must be able to weed through the wackiness, using research as the buffer against rash assumption.

Lesson 4: In order to broaden the learning experience, as well as the language use, I would tell my students to adopt a second viewpoint from which to examine current events. Ideally this would be a counterpoint to their first choice. They would have to use at least two of the five same sources, in order to support this second point of view. They may have to make mental leaps, or use their imaginations, but at least they should, in most cases, be able to make the second case as well. This lesson requires comparison and reporting together.

Lesson 5: Here the teacher may want to take more control of the class in order to discuss the tactics and techniques involved in negotiations, as well as the more subtle and sophisticated language. Now that the students have a more in-depth appreciation of the issues, they can practice using their language skills to persuade others to their point of view.

Lesson 6: In this final lesson the students interact mostly with each other and the teacher simply guides the discussion. As a result of researching at least two points of view, the students will not have hardened into any one position. This lesson can teach students about

tipping points, establishing boundaries, give and take and many other negotiation tools which are also useful in our daily lives and relationships. These are lessons that are commonly taught at the university level, but I am increasingly convinced that not only can much younger minds absorb these lessons, but they must. Here students will be using subjunctive tenses, hypothetical structures and other sophisticated and subtle language skills.

In the end many of the questions that will determine the path of political change in the Middle East are timeless issues that we can all relate to: fear of sudden change, desire for opportunity, resentment of unearned privilege, loyalty to family, adherence to dogma... Our students will have many questions based on these highly emotional topics. Our goal should be to help them to understand the issues facing the people in Egypt, or Syria; to internalize them such that they feel a link. It is only these links that can create global citizens, and counteract some of the "us vs. them" mentality active all over the world.

Although the issues can be complex, students (and teachers) should be reminded that very often those providing information – indeed those taking action – are teenagers themselves. Our students must learn to read for context, especially in ongoing situations of conflict, with limited credible information. When we teach our children to understand conflict and revolution, as manifestations of human desire, whether for change, or for stability, then we give them the tools to understand their fellow man. The Arab spring can indeed help us to teach, and to learn, these vital lessons.

Kathleen DeLacy is a communications and media consultant who has worked in over 30 countries. She is a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and Tuft's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.



6. Reading for Personal Growth and Enjoyment

Elite Olshtain

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

In the process of trying to understand a written text the reader has to perform a number of simultaneous tasks: decode the message by recognizing the written signs and the ways in which these signs are connected, interpret the message by assigning meaning to the strings of words and finally understand the author's intention. In this process there are at least three participants: *the writer, the text and the reader* (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). In the EFL classroom there is usually a fourth participant or a mediator: the teacher. The learners are given support and guidelines to read the text and often the text is analyzed and reworked in great detail, in the hope that these sequences of activities will help the reader become more effective when reading on his/her own. In the present article our main focus is the transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the students and that is done by reading books beyond the classroom.

This type of reading is often referred to as *extensive reading* and perhaps today, more than ever before, it is important to encourage students to read books. We all realize that book-reading has become more limited since digital reading has managed to monopolize most of our time, but during book-reading there is quality time for personal growth and enjoyment of reading. It is quite likely that some of our students will end up reading digital books and that is just as useful and perhaps even more enticing for young people in the twenty-first century.

In order to become an effective reader one has to develop useful reading strategies. Much of the work done in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

classroom helps students develop their individual strategies. They encounter texts from a variety of genres: stories,

descriptions, essays, guidelines, instructions and many more. They try to make sense of what they read by recruiting all their knowledge: knowledge of the world helps them understand the content of the passage they are reading and knowledge of the language (English in our case) helps them decode and interpret the written text.

Reading in the Classroom

In this article we will focus on intermediate and advanced EFL learners, who have mastered the mechanics of reading in English prior to the present stage and who have gained some basic experience in reading for comprehension. These learners have probably also developed some personal reading strategies and are ready to embark on a deeper interaction with written texts.

Moving from guided and mediated reading in the EFL classroom to a more independent, extensive reading activity outside the classroom is a growing and gradually empowering process. The EFL reading lesson for intermediate and advanced learners is the context within which students have the opportunity to encounter a variety of text types, read for a variety of purposes, expand and enrich their own vocabulary knowledge and develop individual preferences. Meta-cognitive understanding of the process can equip them with ways to cope with future reading experiences, way beyond the classroom. In order to take full advantage of the classroom reading lessons, teachers need to plan these lessons carefully and select appropriate reading texts. We shall discuss some of the factors involved in this selection and planning process.

Selecting reading texts that suit the interest and knowledge of our students is often a crucial step. Assuming that we want to prepare the students for their future

needs, it is important that we expose them to a variety of reading texts and reading purposes. We need some informational texts which we read for factual knowledge, we need some narrative texts which we often read for pleasure and literary appreciation and we need some procedural texts which tell us how to perform certain procedures or activities. The purpose for reading will often be compatible with the text type and thus the approach to how to teach an informational text, for instance, will relate to the fact that our purpose for reading such a text is gaining new knowledge and factual information. The preparation for reading an informational text will focus on its structure, the particular vocabulary and the grammatical features that help us understand the text. When reading a narrative the emphasis will be on the plot of the story, the protagonists, the chronological perspective and the literary features.

The reading lesson aims to guide students in reading different text types while enriching both their vocabulary and strategic competence. Most reading experts emphasize three stages: the pre-reading preparation, the during-reading explanation and the post-reading activities which require students to reflect and relate to the text they have read from a more personal and experiential perspective (Grabe and Stoller, 2001). The pre-reading part of the lesson has a number of major objectives, a) to recruit the students' background knowledge that is relevant to the content of the text, b) to prepare the relevant vocabulary, in particular the key words in the text, c) to motivate the students and arouse their interest in the text and d) to encourage the students to preview the text looking for external features and sometimes even scan the text by answering some pre-reading questions.

A very significant process of mediation between text and reader takes place during the reading of the text in class. The reading teacher has the opportunity to point out ways of understanding the written

page while focusing on an appropriate interpretation. During this process students develop their individual coping strategies. A text may present students with a variety of difficulties such as grammatical complexities, processing difficulties due to the structure of the text and difficulty in lexical accessibility due to lack of contextual support. During the reading of the text the teacher can point out these difficulties and guide students in ways to overcome them.

Post-reading activities usually extend the ideas and information presented in the text but most importantly these activities should encourage students to become aware of strategies that helped them improve their reading abilities. These interpretation skills will help students eventually become strategic readers who can be effective and independent readers outside the classroom. This is the main focus of this article.

Extensive Reading

The real test for a strategic reader is the ability to read on his/her own. The methodological approach to "extensive reading" is gradually moving from the teacher's mediation of the interaction with a text to fully independent reading. In this article I would like to emphasize the fact that individual reading of a book outside the classroom can be greatly supported by some mediation provided by the teacher. As a demonstration of this approach I would like to show how one might use my own biography "Terracotta Ovens of My Childhood" with a group of advanced students of 15 years old and above. The book is a memoir which tells the story of a little Jewish girl born in the spring of 1938, just before the Second World War. The family lived in a small town which had been part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, became a district of Romania after the First World War, became part of the Soviet Union for one year during 1940-1941 and is now in the Ukraine. While the father of the little girl served in the Red Army and the

mother was deported to a concentration camp, the girl stayed with her grandmother. A very special relationship develops between the grandmother and the girl. When the Second World War ends, the family is miraculously reunited in Bucharest.

One way of having a whole class read the book is to devote several classroom sessions to the book in the following manner (the book is 136 pages long):

Lesson One – all students bring the book to class. The teacher guides them to look at the book, at the picture on the cover and at the writing on the back cover. The students read the preface (one and a half pages) and discuss it. They can relate to any other biographies they have read and they can talk about how they themselves might write a brief story of their life. For homework the students will be asked to search for information on the Second World War and they can be asked to read the first two chapters of the book.

Lesson Two – about two weeks later, the teacher leads a discussion with historical emphasis while students present their findings. They also talk about the two chapters they read. The teacher may devote some time to vocabulary that appeared in the two chapters. The students are assigned to read three more chapters.

Lesson Three – three or four weeks later the class discusses the chapters they have read so far. Some students may have read more than the assignment. The focus in this lesson can be on some of the characters. The students are assigned to read five more chapters (chapters 6 to 10).

Lesson Four – about four weeks later. At this stage there are many events and characters that can be discussed in class. Different students might be asked to summarize different sections of the book. By now the students will have read half of the book. They can now be assigned the rest of the book during a period of six weeks.

Lesson Five – would be the last lesson on this book and the teacher may choose to have each student write his/her own reaction to the book, and/or have the class work in groups with each group focusing on one main issue such as: the character of the grandmother, the character of the little girl, the historical events affecting individual lives, and other such topics. One of the most important meta-cognitive features that should be brought up at the end of reading a whole book is the ways in which each student copes with the difficulties mentioned earlier: vocabulary, complex structures, or any other features.

A different way to treat the reading of a book outside the classroom, and yet providing support, is to divide the classroom into groups – each group reads a different book and then reports to the whole class. Here too, it will be useful to devote four-five sessions in order to discuss part of the book as we go along. The main focus of such activities is to help students become independent readers who enjoy and develop personal attitudes and preferences. It is only after a number of books that "we read together" that we can encourage students to choose books on their own.

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Elite Olshtain (PhD, University of California, 1979) is Professor Emerita of language education from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her most recent publications include a book co-authored with Celce-Murcia, *Discourse, Context and Language Teaching* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), a book co-edited with Horenczyk *Language, Identity and Immigration* (Magnes Press, 2000), *Discourse in Education* (Mofet, 2005 in Hebrew) co-edited with Irit Kupferberg, and *The Hebrew Language in the Era of Globalization* (Magnes Press, 2007 in Hebrew and English), co-edited with Nava Nevo.

Elite Olshtain was Head of the School of Education at Tel Aviv University during 1990-1992 and Director of the NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University during 1992-1997. She was also the Wollens Chair for Research in Education.



7. Checking Maps

John Warner, Bielefeld, Germany

Returning to class after the summer break here in Germany I found material from three different book publishers in my in-tray. Each one had sent a different map of the United Kingdom. I looked at these and wondered if I wanted to put up these maps in my classroom and to advertise one particular publisher over another.

Then I had an idea – this was a way of enabling critical thinking in my classroom so I took all three into the classroom and got small groups of B2 level students to look at each of the maps in turn, making notes on what they noticed in each map.

Back in the whole class group we got feedback from each of the groups on what they thought of each of the maps. Noting especially things that were missing and things that were common to the maps. There was some discussion of places that the students (in an adult evening class) had visited or wished to visit and whether they should be included on the map.

We then compared the maps and discussed which they felt was the best one and which should be awarded the honour of being hung in the classroom. The decision was that all three should be hung in the classroom and the students comments should be added as thought bubbles next to the maps to point out the benefits and disadvantages of the maps.

John Warner is a freelance teacher of English in Bielefeld and Ostwestfalen-Lippe (OWL), interested in maps and how we map the world around us both physically and in our heads.

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8. Tradition And Change: Can Mainstream Academic Discourse Ever Change?

Clarissa Menezes Jordão,
Federal University of Parana, Brazil

The following letter was an unpublished response to a famous European journal in the field of English Language Teaching, after they recently refused a paper I had submitted to them. This text is therefore deeply indebted to an open-minded Editor and some narrow-minded reviewers who functioned as my imaginary interlocutors. I hope it can inspire more academics to struggle against the dictatorship of traditional journals and dictatorial ways to control language. From my experience growing up in the 60's and 70's in Brazil, I learned to feel strongly about freedom of expression: enough of totalitarian regimes.

* * *

All is well when one writes from within a legitimated tradition of thought and discourse. All is not well when one writes from the margins – despite all the trouble post-colonialists, feminists and post-feminists, post-structuralists and other *posts* have been going through in order to show how oppressive symbolic violence can be, especially in terms of representation and subject formation. I am to be doubted, for I'm writing from the margins – from a margin called Brazil, to be more specific. My margin, however, can be the centre when one looks at it from a Brazilian perspective: I come from the south of Brazil, where most of the Brazilian academy is settled, where most of the population of the country works and studies, where most Brazilians seem to believe are the best cultural centres and thus where lies the more developed region of Brazil.

When writing for the international academy, I need to submit my texts mostly to European-centred journals, all engaged in a so-called “model for academic discourse” following “English norms”. I don't have much choice if I want to reach more readers: most journals follow the dominant “English norm”, created by more traditional journals published when other poorer nations (and therefore other “models” and other “norms”) could not support academic journals to be published world-wide. This norm has since been used as an excuse to rule out other writing styles and consequently to deprive

European (and North-American) academics from other academic discourses than the ones “authorized” by mainstream journal editors.

I face the lion-editors and reviewers, sending my articles, written in what the Brazilian academy would consider adequate style. More often than not, I am refused under one main repetitive allegation, that is, that my writing style is too emotional, too personal for academic texts.

One of my problems as an academic, according to many of my reviewers from the Global North, is that I overuse “emotive language”¹, what “reveals prejudices rather than allows the argument itself to convince the reader”. This argument always makes me wonder what “emotional language” is, and therefore what could constitute its *opposite*, “unemotional language”... And it also puts me into thinking about what “the argument itself” would be... What is the absolute truth beyond interpretation? Does this allegation come from an assumption that language can be transparent if not used emotively? Is it possible not to be emotive and use language? How does language relate to emotions and how neutral and cold one can be when using language?

Thoughts and emotions collide (and I cannot tell them apart anyway, apparently for a cultural flaw that makes me “too emotional” for the academia) when I read this kind of criticism. Believe it or not, one Latin-American reviewer once wrote to me: “Unfortunately, the academic discourse is

also something that the English language requires in a certain way, making this a totally colonized field: Anglophone academia. Either we write as the culturally academic discourse imposes or we don't publish. Therefore, the article, although showing some glimpses of brilliant ideas, fails to follow the coherent academic discourse required for a publication in the English language." And so the "glimpses of brilliant ideas" were reserved exclusively to Brazilian readers, for the text was published in its Portuguese translation in Brazil. I must confess it's difficult for me to understand this requirement as intrinsic to the English language, what makes it perceived as inevitable, imponderable, as if it were a sort of Big Brother we cannot get rid of – even when we are in the position of power and able to decide what is and what is not acceptable, we "unfortunately" conform to the establishment, such as Editors tend to do. This reminds me of the Brazilian Paulo Freire and his idea that the oppressed, when in the position of the oppressor, oppress even more than the oppressors, for this is the only experience they have and they want to show themselves worthy of being in such position – and for this, they need to excel their masters.

As a rule, reviewers seem to assume a supposed "neutrality" of language when they say, for example, that the argument could be more convincing, that the text is confusing or that its arguments should be ordered in a different way. What if this is a problem with the reader, not necessarily with the text? In most of our reading practices, we usually blame the reader, not the text, for reading difficulties. Let's take the literature classroom as an example: when the readers are confronted with a different writing style from the ones they are accustomed to, it is not the literary writer who is to blame, but the

readers that cannot adapt their reading strategies and styles to the text they are presented with.

But this is a different context and reviewers are supposed to know when a text IS well-written or not, regardless of the context in which it will be read. Reviewers are supposed to know what their journal's readers expect to find in the texts they read, what they like or dislike in texts, and therefore what they can or cannot understand. A journal whose audience is mostly formed by EFL teachers, for example, needs to publish "practical ideas for the classroom", for teachers are "less theoretically inclined" than academics. My experience with teachers all over the world has been that the theory *as presented* by many scholars does not appeal to teachers exactly because it is disembodied and thus does not seem relevant to our routine social practices.

My view on language makes me think and act otherwise. When I write, to teachers and/or non-teachers, I hope to be consistent with my view of language as a contextualized social practice of meaning-making, and therefore a practice that is directly related to who I am, what I do and how I see myself and others being and doing things in the world, a practice constantly criss-crossed by ideologies of different orders, never neutral, never transparent. Thus, my "emotive" language and "prejudices", which I'd prefer to call "views", are better openly stated rather than disguised in an illusionary objectivity. I'm glad some reviewers realize this and do recommend my texts for publication in the Anglo-Saxon world.

ⁱ All words, expressions and sentences between inverted commas here have been actually written down anonymously by different reviewers and sent to me by journal editors from 2008 to 2009. The source is not mentioned in order to respect the privacy of the authors.

Clarissa Menezes Jordão is an Assistant Professor in the Departamento de Letras Estrangeiras Modernas at the Federal University of Paraná. She holds a PhD in Literary Education by the State University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and a Masters in English and American Literatures by the Federal University of Paraná, Brazil. She has been working with EFL student teachers and with experienced EFL teachers in continuous education.

9. Book Reviews

Teaching the Pronunciation of English as a Lingua Franca

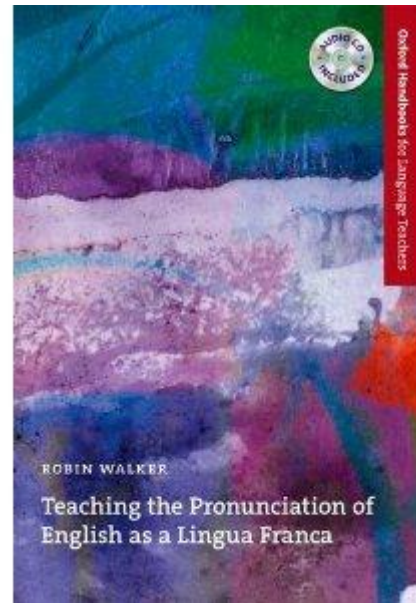
Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers Series

Paperback, 223 pp.

ISBN-10: 0194422003

ISBN-13: 978-0194422000

Author: Robin Walker



Reviewed by Chia Suan Chong, UK

In a world where English is cementing its position as the lingua franca used for international communication, it is issues with pronunciation, and not grammar, that seemingly is to be blamed for the breakdowns in communication. Suggesting that less proficient English users often rely on bottom-up processing when listening, Robin Walker writes with the authority of a practitioner-turned-academic as he convincingly persuades the teacher of English to help their learners to maintain mutual intelligibility by working on phonological features in the Lingua Franca Core (LFC), whilst recommending that we do not waste classroom time on supra-segmental features like the ‘schwa’ and elision or catenation, which native speakers may use to pave the way for rapid speech, but can be detrimental to ELF intelligibility.

From the first chapter till the end of the book, Robin peppers the discussion with challenges regarding our assumptions towards the adopting of a native-speaker (NS) target in English language learning. By addressing language variation even within the UK and the US, and the role of accents in expressing one’s identity, he reminds the reader that there is no such thing as ‘good English’, and that the presumption that a standard variety (often seen as prestigious) is suitable for all contexts indicates a failure to

comprehend the sociolinguistic reality. Walker illustrates using research findings that our view of what a standard variety is could influence what is socially acceptable to us. A result of socio-cultural conditioning, one’s attitudes towards a particular accent can hugely affect one’s judgments of intelligibility. It is thus not simply the responsibility of the speaker to ensure intelligibility in a conversation, but part of the onus should also be on the listener to employ appropriate strategies to understand or clarify understanding. Walker clearly adopts such a post-structuralist standpoint, where interactions are seen as dynamic and fluid processes, where the role of the listener and speaker constantly switches, where all interlocutors have the duty of facilitating the success of the communication, where teacher should focus on receptive skills, and not just on productive ones.

Unlike many books on pronunciation that tend to focus on helping students of English emulate what is seen as the ‘correct’ native speaker target (usually RP or GA) phonological features, Walker’s book acknowledges the importance of being able to understand both non-native speaker and native speaker accents, providing learners (and teachers alike) with useful listening practice through exposure to the different

accents and the good examples of expert ELF usage on the accompanying CD.

Walker is probably the first to take on the most common myths and misconceptions about ELF, as he addresses ten of the most common concerns that many might have when confronted with a discussion regarding ELF pronunciation: e.g. that ELF is an impoverished version of native speaker English which condescends the learner by assuming they would never be able to speak 'proper English'; that without native speaker accents, learners will not have a model; that the expression of one's identity through variation in one's accent cannot take place synchronously with the maintenance of mutual intelligibility; that we cannot teach ELF because nobody speaks it; that the majority of students and teachers would rather have an NS accent.

As if to also debunk the myth that ELF has no practical and pedagogical implications, Walker engages the practical teacher by suggesting ideas for raising our students' awareness of ELF and the sociolinguistic facts relevant to the discussion, before providing a list of useful pronunciation activities, some of which we have encountered without an ELF emphasis, such as minimal pairs and drilling, to help learners with features of the Lingua Franca Core like consonant sounds and vowel length. Other familiar task types like the information gap, dictations, and problem-solving tasks are suggested as ways of focusing on training the learners' accommodation skills and abilities to negotiate meaning. As a practitioner, I found

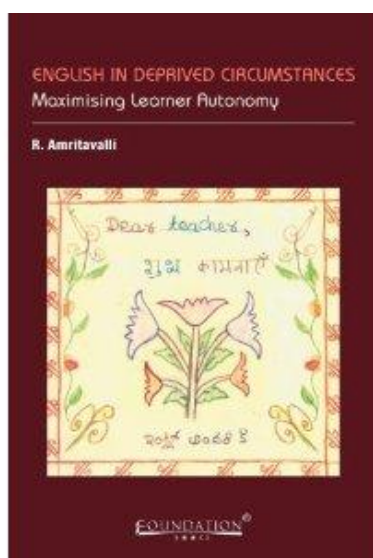
the chapter 'Techniques and Materials for teaching ELF pronunciation' to be a good reminder of useful pronunciation activities that can help students with the areas that do hinder them from being understood. Walker does a good job of demonstrating that teaching the pronunciation of English as a lingua franca need not be about re-inventing the wheel, but could merely start with a shift in our attitudes and what we prioritise in the classroom.

One example of such a shift is a chapter reminiscent of Michael Swan's 'Learner English', where Walker and his credible co-authors list the pronunciation difficulties of the Lingua Franca Core features based on ten different L1s. This book, however, differs from Swan's in that it makes use of the learners' L1s as a departure point rather than a source of L1 interference, clearly demonstrating how we can use the L1 'as friend' that can help learners with difficult LFC features, and not 'as foe'.

Taking the reader through a detailed exemplification of how an ELF pronunciation programme can be worked into the syllabus, and how it can be assessed, Walker triumphs in writing a book that is also useful for educational managers and education planners. However, most importantly, this is a book that takes ELF discussions away from the academic circles of Sociolinguists, and puts the discussion in the hands of the practitioners, challenging us to rethink our presumptions about how we approach pronunciation issues with our learners in our classrooms.

Chia Suan Chong has an MA in Applied Linguistics and runs General English and Business English classes, in addition to teacher training courses, and has been active at conferences speaking about ELF, Dogmas, Systemic Functional Grammar, and Pragmatics. Active on Twitter, Chia loves a good debate and blogs regularly at chiasuanchong.com.





English in deprived circumstances Maximising learner autonomy

Bangalore: Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd./Foundation Books, 2007.

Paperback 85 pp.

ISBN-13: 978-81-759-6435-8

Author: R. Amritavalli

Reviewed by Bill Temple, USA

In combating the learned helplessness of our English language learners (ELLs), galvanizing learner autonomy is one prime avenue for sustained change. Can ELLs choose their own materials to learn from? Should they do so? This fascinating empirical study from Andhra Pradesh state in southern India suggests that student-selected texts at their own level for Free Voluntary Reading as ‘classroom material’ constitute a highly effective method. In this case, the study experimented with learners in more disadvantaged circumstances, and teenage children who themselves are already working many hours a day outside school, and a group of adult ELLs. It is a narrative that explores how ordinary learners learn when they themselves take charge of what they read, listen to or write. Importantly for our perspective, it reflects realities and research in a working-class context of learning in the Global South.

A leading scholar in EFL/ESL pedagogy in India, based at the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad, Prof. Amritavalli makes a strong case for learner autonomy for reading and listening in selecting texts in a learner-centred constructivist framework: “This study arose from the belief that successful second language learning can result when the power to choose learning materials is vested in the learners themselves [...] Each learner undertakes an exploration of the language in accordance with her current ability” (pp. ix, 17). She laments that:

“in no time in the learner’s experience of a language curriculum is the learner expected to take charge of her language input; e.g. to find anything for herself to read and understand, to write, or to listen to. Language learning at school is restricted to reacting to prescribed material rather than being proactive in finding potential language resources” (ibid.).

That is especially true for reading within the classroom, over and beyond Extensive Reading/Listening for pleasure (Templer, 2012). She seeks to challenge this lack of learner autonomy constructively, within a mode of empirical action research.

Prof. Amritavalli builds on a notion of ‘authenticity’ of language texts geared to what is ‘real and appropriate’ for learners, chosen by them as they perceive their needs, as based on Widdowson (1979). The study reports on longitudinal data gathered among 15 working-class ELLs, and cross-sectional data working with a group on non-Indian adult ELLs from 10 countries. Prof. Amritavalli’s methodology centred on the use of her own class diary/ journal, highly detailed, where she recorded daily impressions, and focused case study of several young learners. The book is replete with reproduced examples of texts chosen by her students. She builds in particular on ideas of Krashen, Vygotsky, N.S. Prabhu (1987), and some of the notions of learner-centred ‘deschooling’ developed by Ivan Illich. Illich’s (1971) work on disestablishing traditional forms of schooling is worth serious discussion in the ELT profession in general, and within GISIG perhaps in particular. It is centred on promoting learner autonomy. The powerfully de-institutionalized autodidacticism advocated by philosopher Jacques Rancière (1991), as a counteractant to the rigid ‘explicative order’ of teaching in most classrooms and curricula, is also worth looking at in this

connection. Rancière's very iconoclastic approach suggests intriguing antidotes to learned helplessness, the way it straitjackets and silences the learner.

The special value of the present study, still little known outside India, is that it is based on fine-textured empirical research on ELL autonomy within a social constructivist framework, especially with less privileged learners. Emphasizing concerns of GISIG, I would argue that (a) the entire question of 'learners in deprived circumstances' (however 'deprived' is defined, socio-economically, culturally or otherwise) needs to be focused on far more in EFL, wherever taught; (b) the field of EFL pedagogy in much of Europe and the Global South is probably too BANA-centric, dominated by pedagogy stemming from Britain, Australasia and North America, and needs in that sense to be decolonized and 'indigenized,' localized (McLaren, 2011; Jamarillo, 2012); and (c) social-constructivist approaches need to be experimented with far more in our classrooms, especially with average learners from lower-income and ethnic minority family backgrounds.

Working with learners coming from 'deprived circumstances' is a focus that tends to be marginalized in the profession, despite the fact that many of our ELLs -- here in Bulgaria where I am based, and elsewhere -- are from families with a modest income, and in quite a few schools, urban and rural, stem from minority ethnic social strata where the national language is not the home language. In Bulgaria, a recent report by the NGO *Zaedno v Chas* (Together in Class) revealed that some 40% of Bulgarian 16-year-olds can be classified as functionally illiterate, and the data suggest "that Bulgarian schools cannot compensate for the negative effects of family environment, of poverty and of low social status, thus ranking Bulgaria at the level of countries such as Peru and Uruguay, not as a European one." *Zaedno v Chas* also noted that "in the last 10 years, the difference between the best-prepared students from the largest cities and/or from families with good income and the worst-prepared disadvantaged students and those from the villages is growing" (Novinite, 2012). This is 'social class in the classroom' (Finn, 2009, pp. 53-94; Marsh, 2011), and Amritavalli addresses that dimension directly, especially in chap. 3, "What is authentic for deprived learners?" (pp. 28-48).

For example, she describes how a group of disadvantaged learners (whose English was a lot below the standard expected of them) were instructed to simply find something that they could read from a textbook. "Every student managed to find something, even if it was only a couple of sentences. Most astonishingly, what we were left with at the end of such sessions of finding readable texts, was a 'book within the textbook' that the children could read on their own" (Amritavalli, 2012, p. 3). That 'book within the textbook' or 'hidden textbook' was made up of short texts of all kinds picked out by learners from their textbook, often with pictures. All were short texts that could be read in 10-15 minutes, ranging between 50-150 words, and short sentences. Many contained illustrations, conversations, passages from newspapers, poems. She notes: "In short, every piece of text that looked short enough to be read by a learner, had short paragraphs, involved turn-taking and dialogue, short lines (as in poems), and most importantly, was a short text, was chosen" (ibid.). Brevity was a central criterion for the learners. A detailed description of this work with self-selected texts is given by the author in the section "The discovery of a hidden textbook" (pp. 35-48).

Intriguing is the section "The teacher learns: A new approach to the choice of materials" (pp. 62-67), where Prof. Amritavalli describes how she learned through experimentation to better distinguish between 'genuine' texts and pedagogically 'authentic' texts actually geared to student ability level and "likely to engage the learner cognitively" (p. 63), a distinction that echoes Widdowson (1979, p. 165). Many texts her students chose in addition to excerpts from their textbook came from the Indian daily newspaper *The Hindu*. In this study, the underpinning with materials was relatively simple, low-cost and lo-tech, which also is in keeping with GISIG's aims. But wherever you teach, online newspapers are readily accessible, as is the huge archive of VOA Special English (<learningenglish.voanews.com>) and engaging texts from BBC Learning English (<goo.gl/07OR>), and other sources.

I would argue, although Prof. Amritavalli does not stress this, that in virtually all countries at this point, utilizing the huge repository of potential texts and images in cyberspace is essential in seeking to engage students as autonomous readers. Teachers today are dealing almost everywhere -- including a multitude of urban youngsters and youth from lower-income circumstances in the Global South -- with a

‘Generation Y’ or NetGen of ‘screenagers’ who are ‘digital natives’ and may often “feel disengaged in the classroom,” distrustful of “traditional often boring lockstep learning” (Templer, 2012: 1; Reilly, 2012). NetGen kids & teens from a range of social strata have their quite vital

- ‘e-life’ /browsing on Internet, using online social media/
- ‘g-life’ /computer games/
- ‘m-life’ /music, pop + chalsa/
- ‘p-life’ /cell phones + SMS/
- ‘c-life’ /comics/
- ‘f-life’ /films/

But for most of our younger ELLs, their ‘b-life’ /self-selected reading of books/ is quite limited in any language. So free voluntary reading online is one avenue to pursue inventively (Krashen, 2007). My own experience in working-class Thailand, and in provincial Bulgaria, the lowest-income economy in Europe, confirms this.

Dr. Amritavalli’s fifth chapter (pp. 68-75) describes intensive work with a group of adult professionals, ELLs from a range of countries, including Cuba, Laos, Syria and Vietnam. At one point, staying simple and low-cost with resourcing, she offered them a pile of old issues of *Reader’s Digest*, and told them to select what they wanted to read. She notes that “there was a quantum leap in the amount of material processed by the learner when the choice of reading material was vested in them.” There was also a change in class atmosphere, and by week 6, “an almost carnival spirit characterized the group’s reading” (p. 69). Here again, she provides detailed case studies of several students in the class, with examples of what they chose to read and why, and the range of abilities they revealed. *Reader’s Digest* is indeed an excellent low-cost, simpler-language resource, though perhaps its engaging texts should be read critically against their often bourgeois American Pollyanna grain.

Prof. Amritavalli builds centrally on social constructivism in her pedagogy of ELL autonomy. Social constructivism (Reyes & Vallone, 2008, pp. 31-38, 167-172; Crawford & Reyes, 2011; Reich, 1998) in the ESL classroom at all levels is a good armature for including and energizing student-centred text selection and much independent reading for pleasure.

“Constructivists view learning not as a process of filling passive minds with information, but as a process of cognitive change — a literal rewiring of the brain — as children engage the world, building and rebuilding their understanding of it. Early childhood educator Beverly Falk said it best: ‘Learning is something that a learner does, not something that is done to the learner.’ Thus constructivism values questioning, reasoning, analysis, reflection, problem-solving, cooperation, and creativity among the intellectual assets that children will need in school and in life beyond school” (Crawford & Reyes, 2012, p. 32).

Interactive constructivist learning is also ‘situated learning’ in social and collaborative contexts of interaction, communities of practice among learners (Reich, 2007, esp. pp. 78-81.). Social constructivism encourages students to construct meanings for themselves, to ‘learn by doing,’ through working together, and also much individualized work, since every student has a different ‘zone of proximal development’ in Vygotsky’s conception. Constructivist educators try to create an open and stimulating environment that is conducive to learning, with a lot of simpler ‘sheltered reading,’ and careful scaffolding for individual comprehension -- in this case centred on reading. in EFL grounded on readily ‘comprehensible input’ in Krashen’s classic ‘*i + 1*’ sense, as Amritavalli (p. 6) stresses (see also Krashen, 2004; 2011; 2012).

Based on her research, Dr. Amritavalli stresses the need for more investigation of ‘reading cultures’ among pupils in India, imperatives also probably applicable where you work:

“As this small pool of learner-chosen materials began to accumulate, there emerged also the need for a full-fledged, systematic investigation into ‘children’s reading choices’ in our country. [...] We need to know what, if anything, our children are reading out of school, and in which language. We need to know if the school systems are producing independent readers and whether any non-prescribed reading material is available for

them in schools. We need to know whether social stratifications are reflected in reading abilities and availability of reading choices, so that we can find ways of improving our delivery of reading instruction” (p. 9).

In regard to whether learner autonomy in reading choices is workable with younger ELLs, she emphasizes: “our experience has been that any learner at any level can take charge of finding what she wants to read, listen to, or even write” (ibid.). One of her final recommendations is for a “systematic survey of children’s reading for pleasure [...] if possible in a multilingual framework” (p. 80). A survey questionnaire ‘Exploring your own reading history’ that you might want to use with your own students can be found in Templer (2012, p. 11).

The book can be readily ordered from Cambridge UP India <goo.gl/hPXJI> and elsewhere in India and the UK (<goo.gl/o1Uqy>) at a quite reasonable purchase price. Its Table of Contents is here <goo.gl/C8A06>. It was put online open-access last year (<goo.gl/hPXJI>), but has since been locked up by Cambridge UP and is accessible online only through them. Fortunately, the author’s most recent article (2012) on ‘helping children become readers’ is open-access for all in a new journal from India, *Language and Language Teaching*.

We can all learn from practical grassroots research coming out of India. The second issue of *LLT* <goo.gl/INwOY> has useful articles on using Boal’s ‘Theatre of the oppressed’ as a pedagogical tool, critical approaches to assessment, using cartoons in the classroom, bias in ELT textbooks, a fascinating interview with Kerala-based linguist K.N. Anandan and his work on Discourse Oriented Pedagogy, and Stephen Krashen’s latest brief piece: “A Short Paper Proposing that We Need to Write Short Papers.”

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Bill Templer (USA), *Honorary Member and Discussion Group Contributor, GISIG*, is a Chicago-born educator with research interests in English as a lingua franca, literature, and critical applied linguistics.

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