



Theses and Dissertations

2010-12-16

The Development of Two Units for *BTR TESOL*: "Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition" and "Communicative Language Teacher and Information Gap Exercises"

Paul A. Scholes
Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Linguistics Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Scholes, Paul A., "The Development of Two Units for *BTR TESOL*: "Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition" and "Communicative Language Teacher and Information Gap Exercises"" (2010). *Theses and Dissertations*. 2430.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/2430>

This Selected Project is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

The Development of Two Units for *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*: “Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition” and “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises”

Paul Scholes

A selected project submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Dr. Lynn E. Henrichsen
Dr. Dan P. Dewey
Dr. Mark W. Tanner

Department of Linguistics and English Language
Brigham Young University
April 2011

Copyright © 2011 Paul Scholes

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

The Development of Two Units for *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*: “Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition” and “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises”

Paul Scholes

Department of Linguistics and English Language

Master of Arts

A team of graduate students from Brigham Young University under the supervision of the main author Dr. Lynn Henrichsen collaborated on creating a book, as well as a website, *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (BTR TESOL)*. The entire project consists of 10 sections with nearly 50 units addressing topics that novice teachers should know before teaching English to non-native speakers. The *BTR TESOL* program provides basic material for untrained novice teachers that will help them to be better prepared to face the challenges and responsibilities of teaching English.

This write-up describes the creation of two units titled “Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition” and “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises.” The first unit, “Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition,” educates novice teachers about some of the basic theoretical concepts of second language acquisition that can be applied directly to teaching. It also includes a discussion of variables that can affect second language acquisition. The second unit, “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises,” introduces novice teachers to basic principles of the communicative approach and the steps involved in the creation and implementation of information gap exercises. Both units include an opening scenario and a list of the objectives of the unit. Following the main content, there is an audio or video segment related to the theme of each unit as well as reflection questions. The final section directs readers to resources where they can go to learn more about the subject.

Keywords: teacher training, novice teachers, *BTR TESOL*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1—Introduction	1
Overview	1
Rationale for Project Selection	3
The Constraints of the Project.....	4
Summary	7
Chapter 2—Literature Review.....	9
“Second Language Acquisition”	9
“Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises”	20
Summary	27
Chapter 3—The Process	28
Initial Stages.....	28
Fall 2009 and Winter 2010: Weekly Meetings, Prospectus Work, and Presentations.....	32
Spring 2010, Summer 2010, and Fall 2010: Final Revisions	35
Summary	36
Chapter 4—The Content.....	37
Text Content—Second Language Acquisition	37
Text Content—Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises.....	42
Recommended Resources	45
Summary	45
Chapter 5—The Finished Units	46
Unit 4A—Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition	47
Unit 4C—Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises.....	56
Chapter 6—Evaluation and Revision	65
Presentations and Feedback	66
Second Language Acquisition Topic Analysis Survey.....	71
Edits—Second Language Acquisition	76
Edits —Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises	80
Summary	82
Chapter 7—Lessons Learned and Recommendations	84
Lessons Learned.....	84
Recommendations for Future Team Members.....	90
Conclusion	94
References.....	96
Appendix A: <i>BTR TESOL</i> Program Prospectus.....	99
Appendix B: Original Drafts of Units	113
Understanding Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition.....	113
Using Communicative Language Teaching Principles and Information Gap Exercises .	120
Appendix C: Survey of Second Language Acquisition Terms.....	126

Appendix D: Results of Second Language Acquisition Terms Survey..... 129
Appendix E: Record of project hours for the TESOL MA project..... 131

List of Tables

Table 1	Comparison of Basic Principles of CLT.....	21
Table 2	Sample from Survey of Second Language Acquisition Terms.....	72

List of Figures

- Figure 1 Screen shot of Second Language Acquisition unit online.....55
- Figure 2 Screen shot of Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises unit online (main page).....64

Chapter 1—Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of this project, highlighting the need for the project, the rationale for choosing the project, and the special constraints of working on the project.

Overview

The ever-growing need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world, as millions of people today want to improve their command of English or ensure that their children achieve a good command of English (Richards, 2006). In the year 2000, Warschauer (2000) predicted that globalization would result in the further spread of English as an international language. Ten years later, it seems that this has occurred. The worldwide demand for English has created an enormous demand for quality language teaching and language teaching materials and resources (Richards, 2006).

In order to meet this demand, however, a great number of untrained people work as teachers and tutors of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). No one knows exactly how many novices or volunteers teach ESL/EFL around the world, but the number is undoubtedly large. In a study of adult literacy/ESL programs in the United States, the Center for Statistics in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, United States Department of Education (1986) found that about half of the 2,900 adult education programs surveyed and nearly all the 1,300 English language and literacy programs surveyed used volunteers. The 2005-2006 Statistical Report of ProLiteracy, a nonprofit adult literacy organization, states that 120,480 volunteers worked in its 1,200 affiliate programs, 88% of which provided ESL services. The number is undoubtedly greater today with the recent floods of refugees and immigrants to English-speaking countries and the growing demand for English around the world.

Internationally, tens of thousands of ESL/EFL teaching jobs are offered by many companies and organizations in many locations around the world. Some of these, of course, provide at least minimal in-house training for their volunteers. The number of untrained teachers who work independently or in other programs that provide no training, while difficult to calculate with accuracy, is still very large. These people constitute a huge but invisible/ignored group of teachers needing preparation. These people need at least basic training. Unfortunately, because of limits on their financial and time resources or their locations, many of these people cannot afford to enroll in a university degree program related to TESOL.

The purpose of the *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (BTR TESOL)* program is to create a book and a website to serve as a training resource for novice teachers. It is to provide basic information about a large variety of topics related to ESL teaching and also to provide lists of valuable and reliable resources where project users can go to learn more about any of these topics. These are with the purpose of providing training to novice teachers to help them in their teaching. The information presented in the units is intended to be highly-applicable to their teaching situations, whatever and wherever they may be. The *BTR TESOL* program employs a minimalist, connectivist, and problem-solving approach. As such, its goal is to provide minimal training on a variety of topics and to connect that training to resources where project users can go to learn more if they so desire. There is a focus on problem-based learning as each unit begins with an opening scenario with a problem related to the topic. The goal is for project users to be able to use the information presented to be able to find solutions to their own problems and difficulties in their respective teaching situations.

The entire program consists of 10 sections with nearly 50 units addressing topics that novice teachers should know about before teaching English to non-native speakers. The *BTR TESOL* program provides material for untrained novice teachers that will help them to be better prepared in a minimalist way to face the challenges and responsibilities of teaching English. This master's project describes the creation of two units in *BTR TESOL* section four, "Understanding Key Principles of Second Language Teaching," titled "Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition" and "Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises."

The first unit, "Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition," educates novice teachers about some of the basic concepts underlying second language acquisition that can be applied directly to teaching. It also includes a discussion of variables that can affect second language acquisition. The second unit, "Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises," introduces novice teachers to basic principles of the Communicative Approach and the steps involved in the creation and implementation of information gap exercises. Both units include an opening scenario and a list of the objectives of the unit. Following the main content, there is an audio and video segment related to the theme of each unit as well as reflection questions. The final section directs readers to print and online resources where they can go to learn more about the subject.

Rationale for Project Selection

I chose to work on this project for several reasons. First, I wanted to apply what I was learning in my graduate course work. Before the project was accepted, I had taken the linguistics course on second language acquisition (Linguistics 540). I had also taken *Teaching Methods and Materials* (Linguistics 577), in which I became more familiar with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and information gap exercises. I wanted to summarize

different aspects of what I had learned and be able to share this with other people. I also wanted to solidify that knowledge for myself and be able to explain it in such a way that novice teachers could understand and apply that knowledge to their teaching.

Another reason I chose to work on this project was its purpose to fill an important need for other people. There are many novice teachers around the world and there are likely to be many more in the future. This project can provide at least some of them with easy access to basic training in ESL teaching. The last of the four aims of a Brigham Young University education is lifelong learning and service. It is hoped that this project will help people fulfill this aim by providing quality basic teacher training resources for many people throughout the years and that it will meet their needs well. The last reason is related to my own personal experiences. When I started teaching, I didn't have any formal training or experience. I did receive some minimal training from my employer, but there were still many basic principles that I was not familiar with. I could have benefited greatly from having such a resource as the *BTR TESOL* program.

The Constraints of the Project

Two constraints made the project especially difficult. The first was choosing the content for the units. The question was not so much what content should be included in the units but what content could not be left out. There were also space constraints for the project that needed to be observed. These constraints arose out of the need for the project users to have a brief treatment of each topic and the purpose of each of the units is to only provide an introduction for each topic. Because of the time constraints of the project users and perhaps their limited level of interest in all the topics collectively, the units needed to be designed in such a way that project users could get a brief treatment of each topic and then seek out more in-depth treatments of the topics through other resources if they desired to learn more. Due to these space constraints, many

important areas of content in each of the units could not be covered. There was simply not enough room for most of the potential topics that could be covered in each subject area for the purposes of the units.

It is because the project employs a minimalist and connective approach to teacher preparation that it does not attempt to cover every teacher-preparation topic in great breadth and depth. Rather, in a large number of short chapters (5-10 pages each), it introduces teachers to key concepts and procedures that are related to a particular teaching topic and then directs them to other sources for additional, in-depth information (see Appendix A: Prospectus). Dr. Henrichsen has suggested that all the units be 5-10 pages in order provide only basic information about a variety of topics to novice teachers. The units are meant to serve as a starting point for project users. Their brevity reflects the reality that (in contrast to TESOL graduate students who are committed to a career in the field and are studying to earn university credit and course grades) many novices and volunteers do not have the time, interest, or dedication to study each topic in depth. Nevertheless, if the project users want to study a topic more in-depth, they can seek out the resources at the end of each unit.

Deciding on the best information to include in the units and even how much information to include on each of the topics was a great challenge. There were many valid topics that could have been covered. Many of the ideas for topics came from my coursework in second language acquisition and teaching methods and materials. In order to meet the requirements for the project, I had to narrow down the list of potential topics to just a few that could be included. Of these, I had to select four or five that actually would be covered at the exclusion of all others.

Fortunately, another purpose of this project is to connect users to resources to which they can go to learn more. These resources are mentioned on the last page of each unit. Also, there are

connections to other units in the program to which users can go to learn more about the topics introduced in the unit. This was important for the project because there was not space to elaborate on some of the topics presented but in some cases there was another unit devoted entirely to that topic. For example, the unit on Communicative Language Teaching and information gap exercises deals with speaking activities, yet there is not an in-depth treatment of teaching others how to speak. Rather, there is an entire unit devoted specifically to this topic. The decision-making process that I went through and the rationale for choosing that content are all included in Chapter 3—The Process.

Another difficulty encountered in the creation of this project was related to the target audience of novice teachers with minimal training. “Novice teachers” are those teachers that have little or no actual teaching experience in the field of TESOL. According to the *Free Dictionary* (2010), a “novice” is “a person new to a field or activity, a beginner.” “Minimal training” means that the teachers possess little or no training in this field. The term “training” is generally used to refer to those instructional experiences that are focused on individuals acquiring very specific skills that they will normally apply almost immediately (Smith & Ragan, 1999). Because of the nature of the target audience, it was very important that the content of the units be written in such a way that the project users could understand the content and apply it directly to their teaching in an immediate way.

The material had to be presented in a way that is very different from the way it is presented to TESOL graduate students. Rather than use abstract concepts and taxonomy that apply to a variety of settings over a professional career, the language needed to be more simplified and concise and the information presented needed to be very basic. The main result was great simplification of each of the topics and terminology covered in the units. In some cases, the most

common academic labels were not used for the topics but rather terms that would be easier to understand without having to be explained in great detail. Within the rest of the content, there was also a great simplification of terms. The most formal and academic words were taken out and replaced with simpler terms. Even the mechanics of writing were simplified, to result in shorter and easier to read sentences. It is hoped that this simplification will result in greater understanding for both native and non-native English teachers around the world.

The needs and interests of the project users are also very different than those of TESOL graduate students. The latter are more likely to embrace TESOL as a full-time career and seek professional opportunities that require advanced training. On the other hand, the project users are often volunteers who may at best receive very little compensation. They often seek out teaching experiences because they want to help people. Some also want to travel the world and have cultural experiences. But their motivation seldom runs deep enough to lead them to earn a two- or four-year university degree in TESOL

These differences were considered throughout the creation of the project. Throughout, opportunities were sought to connect with the target audience and receive their feedback. This feedback was then implemented into the development of the units.

Another limitation of this project is that it is only a two-credit project. Had it been a project that required even more time, there could have been more time to develop and refine the units even more.

Summary

This chapter discussed the need for the project and provided a brief overview of the content and organization. It also summarized the reasons that led me to choose to work on this project and the constraints under which the project was created. The content of the units is by no means

meant to be a thorough treatment of any topic included therein. It is even less meant to include all the relevant areas of a topic that a novice teacher could benefit from learning about.

To show the breadth and depth of material from which the selection was made, the next chapter will provide a basic review of literature on both of the units created “Second Language Acquisition” and “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises.”

Chapter 2—Literature Review

The main purpose of this chapter is to describe the research and theory that influenced the content of each unit. Another purpose is to provide a rationale for the choices made regarding which content would be included in each unit based on this research and theory.

Literature Review: “Second Language Acquisition”

The topic of second language acquisition includes a wide range of domains and theories. It is broadly defined as any phenomena involved in learning an L2 (Troike, 2006). Ellis (1997) defines it as “the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside a classroom” (p. 3). Although much research has been conducted on this topic over the last two decades, Kees de Bot & Verspoor (2005) believe that we are still far from understanding all the details of this process.

According to Brown (2006), second language acquisition [SLA] didn't emerged as its own discipline until the 1980s. Research in SLA draws on fields such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, education, and psychology and involves a diverse array of theoretical models (Harrington & McLaughlin, 1989). Therefore, “there are numerous models from which to examine second language data, each of which brings to the study of second language acquisition its own goals, its own data-collection methods, and its own analytic tools” (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 2). Second language acquisition is truly an inter-disciplinary field. Researchers in different fields also tend to emphasize different aspects of second language acquisition (Troike, 2006).

The study of second language acquisition, therefore, is vast. Perhaps one useful approach to describing it is in terms of some of its basic goals. Ellis (1997) suggests that two of the goals of SLA study are description and explanation. In order to describe the processes that take place in SLA, one could ask the learners themselves what they did or one could analyze samples of the

learners' language at different points in the learning process. This information could then be used for describing how a learner's language changes over time. "The goal of explanation involves identifying the external and internal factors that account for why learners acquire a new language in the way they do" (Ellis, 1997, p.4). Some external factors that could influence SLA are the social environment in which the language is learned and also the type and amount of target language input that learners receive (Ellis, 1997). Some internal factors include cognitive factors, such as what a learner knows about language and the world in general, and the type of strategies they employ in their language learning (Ellis, 1997). Both description and explanation are basic goals of SLA.

Three basic guiding questions. Troike (2006) suggests that in trying to understand second language acquisition, we are seeking to answer three basic questions: "What a learner comes to know, how they come to know it, and why some learners are more successful than others" (Troike, 2006, p. 2). The goals of explanation and description described by Ellis (1997) are not un-related to these three questions. The latter two questions are related to the goal of explanation; they seek to explain the processes involved in SLA and the factors that affect these processes. The first question, which deals with what is learned, could be included under description.

Troike (2006) concedes "there are no simple answers to these basic questions and perhaps no answers that all second language researchers would agree upon completely" (p. 2). However, in designing the unit on second language acquisition, I thought these questions could provide a framework for a basic discussion of SLA and what it entails. Recognizing these limitations, I sought to answer them and attempted to briefly address each in such a way that a novice to the field could understand and be able to benefit from it. For this purpose, I attempted to choose the most basic ways to address each question so that the information would not be overly

complicated, intimidating, or unusable for novice teachers. To this end, I sought to include topics that would be most relevant to novice teachers, ones that they could readily understand and apply in their teaching.

As resources, I used some of the most current books and articles on the subject. These include *Second Language Acquisition* by Rod Ellis (1997), *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* by Muriel Saville-Troike (2006), *Second Language Acquisition* by Susan M. Gass and Larry Selinker (2008), and *Second Language Acquisition* by Kees de Bot, Wander Lowie, & Marjolijn Verspoor (2005). Some other sources used were *Learner English* edited by Michael Swan and Bernard Smith (2001) and *Moving Beyond the Plateau* by Jack C. Richards (2008).

To get a sense of what topics would be the most relevant to include I also conducted a survey of second language acquisition topics. A complete explanation of this process is found in Chapter 6—Evaluation and Revision.

What a learner comes to know. To answer the question of what a learner comes to know about the language they are learning, different aspects can be focused on. As a starting point, I chose to focus on the basic linguistic aspects of language. This is to give project users an idea of the linguistic knowledge that learners can gain. If project users want to read further in psycho- or socio-linguistics they can; however, there was not room to cover these topics in this unit. Also, the linguistic aspects are not presented as a list elsewhere in the *BTR TESOL* program (although parts of the list such as grammar and phonology are addressed in other units) but do appear in second language acquisition textbooks (Gass & Selinker, 2008; O’Grady & Archibald, 2005; Troike, 2006). The list presented in my unit is based on a list provided by Gass & Selinker (2008, p. 8-13), which describes some of the basic aspects of language that can be described systematically. This list is similar to a list provided by O’Grady & Archibald (2005). This list in

the unit includes the following: sound systems, morphology and lexicon, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Only a basic list is presented in the unit rather than an in-depth discussion of these topics, because that would be beyond the purposes of the unit as well as the designated space. Furthermore, as far as what a learner comes to know, the concepts of receptive and productive knowledge were originally included in the unit but were left out due to space constraints.

How learners come to know. The second question, how a learner comes to gain knowledge, deals with the processes that take place in learning. To answer this question, different theories have been developed. For the purposes of this unit, a few selected concepts—interlanguage and first language interference as well as scaffolding, chunking, and the concept of comprehensible input (*i+1*)—are briefly described in a simple way. These are all prominent topics in the second language acquisition textbooks I reviewed. The selection of these concepts was influenced in part by the results from the aforementioned study of second language acquisition topics and the resultant survey participant's responses. The aim of the topic selection process was to choose concepts that could be introduced briefly without involving complicated theoretical explanations, concepts that could be readily understood by the project users, and concepts that could have direct applications to teaching at a basic level.

The results from the survey helped me to ensure that the topics selected were not overly complicated and could likely be understood by project users. Correspondingly, some of the terms that were selected for the unit were simplified and other important terms were mentioned briefly or not at all because of their complexity and also due to a lack of space. These terms are mentioned below. Also, the terms that were included in the unit were terms that were generally rated by the survey participants to be relatively easy to understand and apply in teaching situations.

Why some learners are more successful than others. The last part of the SLA unit sought to present the answer to the third question presented by Troike (2006): “Why are some learners more successful than others?” (p. 2). This is a question that can be immediately applied to teaching situations because all learners have individual characteristics that affect their learning. Also, according to Ellis (1997), one of the goals of SLA is to explain the factors that affect the learning process, including why some learners are more successful at it than others. The last part of my *BTR TESOL* unit addresses this question.

The first main focus of this part of the unit is on the differences between older and younger learners. This was included because project users may not be sure what range of learner characteristics they may encounter in their teaching. Many times, the project users will not have had experience teaching either younger or older learners. Sometimes, they won't even know what age group they will be teaching until after they arrive at their teaching assignments. It is therefore important for them to get a sense of the strengths and weaknesses of learners of different ages. In this section, the concepts of the critical period and fossilization are briefly introduced in a simplified form. Once again, these terms met the aforementioned criteria. After these topics, differences in learner characteristics other than age are briefly discussed. The differences discussed in the unit are aptitude, motivation, personality, and learning styles. Many of these terms were rated as being easy to understand and slightly more difficult to apply by the survey participants. There was not room for an in-depth discussion of these terms, so a simple listing of these terms with brief explanations was included.

Some important concepts from the aforementioned table in Appendix C that were not included in my *BTR TESOL* unit include the following: universal grammar, connectionism, interaction, attention, automaticity, acculturation, the competition model, the affective filter,

learning styles, the monitor model, and error analysis. Once again, these concepts were deemed to not be the most important things to include in the unit because of their complexity, the limited space available, and the survey results. Also, many of them would be difficult to explain in a simplified form. Originally, a more in depth study of personality and learning style was included but will now be addressed in another unit.

Rationale for included content. The concept of interlanguage was chosen to serve as an introduction to the theories regarding what occurs in a language learner's mind during second language acquisition. According to Ellis (1997), "the concept of interlanguage offers a general account of how L2 acquisition takes place" (p. 34). Because of its general nature, this concept is desirable to include in the unit. It can be introduced briefly without going into a lot of detail and it can also be introduced in simple terms. Such a "general account" also serves as a precursor for the subsequent SLA topics introduced. Ellis (1997) states that the concept of interlanguage "is perhaps more useful for the questions it raises than for the answers it provides" (p. 34). In the unit, there is not room to provide these answers. Rather, this concept is introduced to get the project users thinking about the SLA process itself as an introduction.

Another major issue of L2 acquisition is L1 transfer (Ellis, 1997). Negative transfer is one of the sources of learner's errors and positive transfer aids second language acquisition. The original heading of the second section was "contrastive analysis," but it was replaced with the term "first language influence." Obviously, these two terms are not equal. A brief explanation of "contrastive analysis" would have been too complicated for the purposes of the unit. Furthermore, novice teachers will not likely be engaged in the explicit process of contrastive analysis, but rather recognizing the relationship between the learners' L1 and L2. It is this idea that is better represented by the term "first language influence." This term is used to introduce the concepts of

positive and negative transfer, which are explained in more detail. These concepts were chosen to show teachers that the influence of their students' L1 can have a positive or negative affect (or both) on their language learning. They are introduced to help novice teachers recognize the importance of L1 transfer on second language acquisition. These concepts can have applications for teaching at even the basic level. Teachers can recognize these influences and be more aware of their effects. They can then focus on these aspects in their teaching.

Another way in which teachers can help learners in their language development is through the process of scaffolding (Troike, 2006). Scaffolding is an important concept to include because it deals with how interpersonal interaction and the building of discourse can have a positive effect on language development (Ellis, 1997). It is one way in which interaction and modified interaction can help L2 learners grow in fluency and improve their L2 skills in general. This process involves building on a framework to help learners perform at a level that is slightly above their current level and often involves providing teacher and peer support (Troike, 2006). It is also something that novice teachers can provide and promote in their classes in order to have success.

Another useful concept is the concept of $i + 1$ described by Stephen Krashen as part of his Input Hypothesis (Shutz, 2007). According to this hypothesis, the learners improve and progress along a natural order when they receive second language input that is one step beyond their current stage of linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage i , then acquisition takes place when they are exposed to comprehensible input that belongs to level $i + 1$ (Ellis, 1997). It is useful for teachers to know that language acquisition may be aided by learners receiving comprehensible input that is slightly above their current level. This is something that even novice teachers can be aware of as they control and modify the input their students receive.

Chunking is the process of learning groups of words as they appear together rather than as separate, individual words. This is a useful topic for novice teachers because it is another tool they can use to help their students acquire language. One way in which this happens is in the modified interaction between native and non-native speakers, “in which the experts commonly provide learners with chunks of talk that the learners can then use to express concepts that are beyond their independent means” (Troike, 2006, p.112). Similarly, teachers can introduce complete phrases for students to use as well. These phrases will not need to be broken down in order for the students to use and understand them. For these reasons, it is important for novice teachers to be aware of this concept and know that they can use with their students.

According to Ellis (1997), two of the major variables that affect second language acquisition are learners’ aptitude and motivation. Both of these concepts are strongly related to success in L2 learning (Ellis, 1997). Motivational factors can explain the reasons why people learn another language and these reasons can affect the way they go about doing it. For example, some people learn a language to be able to integrate better with the individuals or society that speak that language. This is known as integrative motivation. On the other hand, some people learn a language for practical reasons, such as to be able to get a better job or to function better in the community in which they reside. There doesn’t seem to be an advantage for either kind of motivation for L2 achievement, but there is a strong correlation between strength of motivation and L2 achievement (Troike, 2006). Other important variables that affect learning include age and instruction (Troike, 2006). The list included in the unit is derived from Troike (2006), which includes age, aptitude, motivation, and instruction. Variables not included in this section are social context, and social experience. These were not included due to the space constraints mentioned in Chapter 1—Introduction.

With the discussion of age, the critical period hypothesis is a topic that is often discussed. This hypothesis states that there is a period in which language acquisition is easy and complete. There is considerable evidence to support this claim although there is also evidence that some learners may not be subject to critical periods (Ellis, 1997). When learners stop developing short of target language competence, fossilization occurs. It is important for novice teachers to know that some learners may have persistent problems due to the effects of fossilization, especially if they are past the critical period (Ellis, 1997). Related to these concepts, it is also important for them to understand the general characteristics that learners of different ages possess.

Rationale for content not included. Many important concepts of second language acquisition were not selected for the unit due to the constraints previously mentioned. Some of these are error analysis, universal grammar, connectionism, markedness, the monitor model, information processing, the affective filter, interaction, output, acculturation, and zone of proximal development. Some of these are discussed below.

The treatment of errors is an important topic, but one that is not discussed in the unit. Whereas contrastive analysis is based on “idealized linguistic structures attributed to native speakers of the L1 and L2,” error analysis “is based on the description and analysis of learner’s actual errors” (Troike, 2006, p. 37). The concept of error analysis was rated by survey participants to be easy to understand but more difficult to apply. Although this concept could have direct applications to teaching, it was not selected in part due to the survey results, but also due to space constraints. Also, I considered it to be beyond the scope of novice teachers as is explained below.

According to Ellis (1997), there are at least three good reasons for focusing on errors. First, they are a noticeable feature of learner language. Second, they provide useful information for

teachers. Third, “it is possible that making errors helps learners to learn when they self-correct” (Ellis, 1997, p. 15). There are also many steps involved. According to Ellis (1994), the steps of error analysis are as follows: 1) collect samples of learner language, 2) identify the errors, 3) describe the errors, 4) explain the errors, and 5) evaluate the errors. For a brief explanation of these steps, see Troike (2006, pp. 39-40). Due to the complexity of these tasks, it seems unlikely that novice teachers would be engaged in all of these steps. However, it is important for them to realize the role that errors can play in SLA. For this reason, it is recommended that they seek out the recommended resources at the end of the unit.

Input is mentioned in the unit, but only briefly. It is important because it is something that “is absolutely necessary for L1 or L2 learning to take place” (Troike, 2006, p. 105). Ellis (1997) agrees that “language learning cannot take place without some form of input” (p. 5). However, “the nature of its role is in dispute” (Troike, 2006, p. 105). Rather than take up the subject of the different roles it can assume, I simply mentioned it to allow project users to know that it is important. The unit specifically states that learners need to have contact with the language in order for learning to occur. Another topic of considerable interest for SLA is the type of input that best facilitates learning (Ellis, 1997), however, such a discussion would be beyond the purposes of the unit. Input is mentioned in the unit in regards to Stephen Krashen’s input hypothesis and the concept of $i + 1$.

The topic of interaction is mentioned briefly in the unit. According to Troike (2006), social interaction is essential for L1 acquisition, but many L2 learners are able to reach at least some level of competence without it (Troike, 2006). It is also a topic that can involve a degree of complexity. Ellis (1997) states that “the relationship between modified interaction and L2 acquisition is clearly a complex one” (p. 48). Interactionist theorists posit that “language learning

takes place as a result of a complex interaction between the linguistic environment and the learner's internal mechanisms" (Ellis, 1997, p. 44). Despite this complexity, it seemed to be a topic that should be mentioned at least briefly because of its applications to language teaching.

The principle of output is also mentioned briefly. Krashen argues that "speaking is the result of acquisition and not its cause" (Ellis, 1997, 49). However, Merrill Swain has argued that output "can serve a conscious-raising function by helping learners notice gaps in their interlanguages" (Ellis, 1997, 49). This principle was mentioned only briefly in the context of interaction due to limited space. It was thought that the concepts of input, interaction, and output are related parts of a broader process. I thought dealing with the complexities of any of these concepts was beyond the purposes of the unit.

An important topic that was not included is stages of L2 acquisition. According to Ellis (1997), "the discovery of common patterns in the way in which learner language changes over time is one of the most important findings of SLA" (p. 24). It is also a discovery that has implications for the field of language teaching (Ellis, 1997). However, it was not included due to space constraints and I didn't think it had enough immediate relevance to the purposes of the *BTR TESOL* program. It was not included in the survey on second language acquisition topics but perhaps could have been.

The terms mentioned above could have been selected or explained in more detail for my *BTR TESOL* unit, but were not. Many of these were not chosen over other topics because they were rated to be more difficult to understand and apply. Several of these concepts were rated as being relatively easy to understand but more difficult to apply in teaching situations. These include error analysis, markedness, learning styles, the affective filter, connectionism, and

universal grammar. On the other hand, a much smaller number were thought to be more difficult to understand yet easier to apply.

Literature Review: “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises”

“Since the introduction of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the late 1970s, there have been different definitions and interpretations of the communicative approach to second language (L2) instruction” (Spada, 2007, p. 271). Extensive research has been done on communicative language teaching and there are many different ways in which it is described. According to Brown (2006), “it is a unified but broadly based, theoretically well informed set of tenets about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching” (p. 43). Based on this definition, it would be difficult to come up with a relatively short list that contains all of its basic agreed-upon components.

Savignon (2001) explains CLT in this way:

CLT can be seen to derive from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at a minimum, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research. Its focus has been the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events (p. 16).

According to Richards (2006), “CLT can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom” (p. 2). The following list of the over-arching principles of CLT methodology is derived from Richards (2006, p. 13). It appears side by side in Table 1 with those offered by Brown (2006, p. 43).

Table 1
Comparison of Basic Principles of CLT

Richards (2006)	Brown (2006)
Make real communication the focus of language learning.	Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes.
Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know.	Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom.
Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or communicative competence.	At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
Provide opportunities for learners to develop both fluency and accuracy.	Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques.
Link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they occur so in the real world.	Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence.
Let students induce or discover grammar rules	Students are encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others.

While the ideas represented on each side of the table are not entirely the same, in many instances they represent similar fundamental components of CLT and do indeed, mirror each other. These two lists were the major sources used in creating a basic list of components for this *BTR TESOL* unit for novice teachers. For the purposes of this unit, the most basic, important, and easy-to-understand principles had to be selected. The resulting list of principles I decided upon for the unit is by no means intended to be comprehensive. The intent is to give the project users a basic idea of what communicative language teaching entails and should be considered as only an introduction:

1. People learn a language through using it to communicate.
2. Meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.
3. Learning to communicate is a process that involves trial and error.
4. Learner errors are often not corrected immediately but can be corrected later.

I chose to focus on these four principles because they seem to have the strongest parallels with each other in Table 2. I didn't want to include more information about different language skills or the goals of communicative competence because I wanted to keep the list as simple as possible. There is not mention of the four language modalities in the unit or inducing grammar rules. The first two principles are related to the components listed in the first two lines of the table above. The next two principles are related to the components listed in the third and fourth lines from the table above. These are the four principles that are discussed in the unit. They were chosen for their simplicity. Because it is important to show how these principles can be applied, the next section talks about the roles of teachers and learners in CLT. These are also greatly simplified and are meant for users to be able to understand quite readily so they can consider and apply them in their current or near-future teaching situations.

Communicative competence. An important concept mentioned in this part of the unit is communicative competence. According to Richards (2006, p. 2), it is the goal of CLT and includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

1. Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions.
2. Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication).
3. Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations).
4. Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies).

Grammatical competence is part of communicative competence (Savignon, 2001). “While grammatical competence is needed to produce grammatically correct sentences, attention has shifted to the knowledge and skills needed to use grammar and other aspects of language appropriately for different communicative purposes such as making requests, giving advice, making suggestions, describing wishes and needs, and so on” (Richards, 2006, p. 9). Savignon (2001) suggests that the communicative competence needed for communicative participation includes both grammatical and pragmatic competence.

Savignon (2001) has proposed a model of communicative competence that consists of grammatical, discourse, socio-cultural, and strategic competence. Discourse competence refers to connecting words and phrases to form a meaningful whole. Socio-cultural competence refers to understanding the social contexts of language use and knowing how to communicate appropriately in these contexts. Strategic competence refers to the use of strategies to overcome limited communication abilities (Savignon, 2001). According to this model, all of these components are essential and interrelated. As such, “an increase in one component interacts with other components to produce a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence” (Savignon, 2001, p. 17). In this model, “learners gradually expand their communicative competence through practice and experience in an increasingly wide range of communicative contexts and events” (Savignon, 2001, p. 17).

While communicative competence is an underlying principle of CLT, there is not room for a detailed explanation of it in the unit. The purpose is to introduce users to the term and show that it is indeed an important principle that project users can learn more about from other sources. The term is introduced along with a brief definition and examples. I considered it a concept that would have to be explained much more thoroughly for novice teachers to apply it well and I

didn't think that a detailed explanation of it would be appropriate in the unit. Project users are encouraged to seek out the resources at the end of the unit to learn more about this topic.

Roles of teachers and learners. Another important characteristic of CLT is the roles that teachers and learners use in the classroom. "The type of classroom activities proposed in CLT implied new roles in the classroom than previous methods" (Richards, 2006, p.5). For example, CLT encourages a shift from individualistic to cooperative learning. To this end, students have to become comfortable listening to each other rather than relying on the teacher for a model. Students also need to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning as teachers assume the role of facilitator and monitor. Furthermore, teachers need to be tolerant of learner's errors as the learners develop their communicative competence (Richards, 2006). Brown (2006) describes the role of the student as being that of interactor and negotiator. Similarly, the two main student roles chosen for the unit are active participant and cooperative learner. When students are active participants, they will interact with one another and cooperate to negotiate meaning and complete their task.

Brown (2006) suggests that the roles of teachers are facilitator, needs analyst, counselor, and process manager. In like manner, Breen and Candlin (1980) propose that the teacher has two main roles:

The first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. The latter role is closely related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it. Other roles assumed for teachers are needs analyst, counselor, and group process manager (p. 99).

Some important roles of teachers in CLT are, therefore, to facilitate the communication among students and to also be active participants within each learning group. “These roles imply a set of secondary roles for the teacher; first, as an organizer of resources and as a resource himself, second as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities” (Breen and Candlin, 1980, p. 99). “A third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities” (Breen & Candlin, 1980, p. 99).

So there are many roles that CLT teachers can serve. From the above information, the following roles were derived for the unit: organizer and facilitator, participant and guide, and resource and needs analyst. A brief description of each of these roles is provided in the unit.

Information gap activities. The second part of the unit introduces the information gap activity. This is an important aspect of communication in CLT (Richards, 2006). It is also a popular communicative activity that exemplifies well many of the principles of the communicative approach previously discussed. In an information gap activity, one person has certain information that must be shared with others in order to solve a problem, gather information or make decisions (Neu & Reeser, 1997). This is important and relevant to CLT because in real communication, people normally communicate to get information they do not have (Richards, 2006).

Richards (2006) describes the value of information gap exercises as follows:

More authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom if students go beyond practice of language forms for their own sake and use their linguistic and communicative resources in order to obtain information. In so doing, they will draw

available vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies to complete the task (p. 19).

These activities also “give every student the opportunity to speak in the target language for an extended period of time and [in these activities] students naturally produce more speech than they would otherwise” (Raptou, 2001, p. 1). Another advantage of information gap activities is that students are forced to negotiate meaning because they must make what they are saying comprehensible to others in order to accomplish the task (Neu & Reeser, 1997).

The evidence from a study by Doughty and Pica (1986) suggests that tasks “with a requirement for information exchange [are] crucial to the generation of conversational modification of classroom interaction. This is significant in light of current theory, which argues that conversational modification occurring during interaction is instrumental in second language acquisition” (Doughty & Pica, 1986, p. 305).

In my *BTR TESOL* unit, information gap is briefly described. This part of the unit also includes two sample activities that project users can implement into their classes. To conclude the unit, there is a brief discussion of the steps involved in carrying out information gap activities and how they can be used in different ways and with different proficiency levels. There is also more information about why they can be so effective.

The sequence of this unit, therefore, is to first describe some basic principles of communicative language teaching and then to introduce the principle of information gap exercises and second, to outline the steps in preparing an information gap activity, provide examples of such, and to provide some general information about how they can be used with students of different ages and proficiency levels.

To aid me in the development of this unit, I drew on knowledge I received in the Linguistics 577 class, *Teaching Methods & Materials*. The textbook used for the class was *Teaching by Principles* by H. Douglas Brown (2007). In this class I was introduced to the principles behind communicative language teaching and information gap exercises. Other major sources used were *Communicative Language Teaching Today* by Jack C. Richards (2006), “Communicative Language Teaching for the Twenty-First Century” by Sandra J. Savignon (2001) and “Information gap tasks: Do they facilitate second language acquisition?” by Catherine Doughty and Teresa Pica (1986).

Summary

This chapter has been a literature review that includes information on the topics discussed in my two *BTR TESOL* units and what resources were consulted before selecting the content of the units. It explains the rationale for why this content was selected. The next chapter will describe the process I underwent in all the development stages of the creation of the units.

Chapter 3—The Process

This chapter provides a summary of the different developmental stages I went through in producing my two *BTR TESOL* units from the initial stages to the final version. The original drafts of the units are provided in Appendix B.

Initial Stages

The idea for the project was first presented to me in November 2008 when a TESOL student meeting was held in which the TESOL professors shared with us potential projects that we could work on with them. Soon after, I requested to work with Dr. Lynn Henrichsen on what was then called "Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language: The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More." Almost a year later, as a result of discussion among the development team members, the official name of the project became "*BTR TESOL*," with BTR signifying "Basic Training & Resources" but pronounced "better." The purpose of the overall project is to create a book and a website that can be used as effective resources for novice teachers to help them in their teaching. The *BTR TESOL* program is divided into over 40 units. For my MA project, I chose to create two units, one regarding second language acquisition and one regarding communicative language teaching and information gap activities. Dr. Henrichsen had already produced an outline for a table of contents for the *BTR TESOL* program and I was allowed to select both of these units from his outline.

I chose these units because they were topics I was interested in and they coincided with my graduate studies up to that point. I had already taken a class on second language acquisition and also a class on teaching methods and materials, of which communicative language teaching and information gap exercises was a part.

I submitted my master's project proposal in January 2009 and was accepted to begin work on it in March 2009. During that time, I met with Dr. Henrichsen a couple of times individually and also as a group with the other students who were going to work on the project as well. At the time there were five of us. Later on, a few more students, who were doing other MA projects or theses, joined the team out of personal interest.

The initial draft work for my project began in the summer of 2009. I searched out the best resources I could find to help me create the two units I had selected. I compared the information in them and used that information as the basis for the original drafts of the units. These original drafts are found in Appendix B.

The total time required to create the initial drafts of both units was 31.5 hours. Dr. Henrichsen provided a template for the units to help with the organization and structure and also to produce consistency in the look and style of the various *BTR TESOL* units that were to be created. I completed most of the initial work on my drafts in the summer of 2009.

Sources. Some of the resources I used were textbooks that I had used in previous classes and some were additional resources recommended by Dr. Henrichsen and other professors. Still others I found while searching for more information and resources on each topic. For the unit on second language acquisition, I used some current books and articles on the subject. These include *Second Language Acquisition* by Rod Ellis (1997), *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* by Muriel Saville-Troike (2006), *Second Language Acquisition* by Susan M. Gass and Larry Selinker (2008), and *Second Language Acquisition* by Kees de Bot, Wander Lowie, & Marjolijn Verspoor (2005). Some other sources used were *Learner English* (for L1 Interference) edited by Michael Swan and Bernard Smith (2001) and *Moving Beyond the Plateau* (for fossilization) by Jack C. Richards (2008).

The first of these sources (by Rod Ellis) is a book that was cited in some of my online searches and was later recommended to me by Dr. Tanner as a valuable resource. In some ways, it was a natural choice. This book is part of the Oxford Introductions to Language Study series. As such, and as series editor Widdowson states in the preface, its purpose is to provide an introduction to linguistics that is less daunting to novice teachers than more academically oriented introductions to linguistics (Ellis, 1997). Its purpose “is not to supplant but to support such texts, to prepare the conceptual ground” (Ellis, 1997, p. vii).

The purpose of the Ellis book is closely related to the purpose of the *BTR TESOL* program. The *BTR TESOL* program seeks to introduce novice teachers to different topics related to language teaching in order to provide them with basic training. This introduction can also serve as a starting point from which novice teachers can build their knowledge as they seek out other resources. Whereas, the Ellis book contains much more information than the *BTR TESOL* unit, it could also be a recommended resource for novice teachers to learn more from.

The second resource mentioned (by Muriel Saville-Troike) was the introductory text used in the graduate level second language acquisition class I took in the fall of 2008, *Introduction to Second Language Acquisition*. I found this text to be a valuable resource. The third and fourth resources are also introductory texts that were recommended to me by Dr. Dewey. *Learner English* (2001), was recommended by Dr. Henrichsen and is a book that I used in the pronunciation teaching class that I took in the winter semester of 2009. This book introduced me to the effects that different L1s have on the acquisition of English as the L2.

The Jack Richards booklet, *Moving Beyond the Plateau* (2008) was also recommended by Dr. Henrichsen and further provided me with ideas for appropriate content on fossilization to include in the units. Another book used was *Teaching by Principles* by H. Douglas Brown

(2006). This was the textbook used for the class on teaching methods and materials that I took in the fall of 2008.

For the unit on communicative language teaching and information gap exercises, some major sources used were *Communicative Language Teaching Today* by Jack C. Richards (2006), “*Communicative Language Teaching for the Twenty-First Century*” by Sandra J. Savignon (2001) and “*Information gap tasks: Do they facilitate second language acquisition?*” by Catherine Doughty and Teresa Pica (1986). I also used *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* by H. Douglas Brown (2006) and *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (2nd ed.)* by Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rogers (2001). Several other sources were Internet sites I found, including

<http://www.cambridge.org/elt/resources/teachersupportplus/> and

<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/index.htm>.

The first of these online resources is provided by Cambridge University Press. It contains free resources including pedagogical booklets and academic presentations designed for ELT professionals who wish to explore key aspects of language instruction. In just 27 pages, the Richards’ booklet deals with various topics related to CLT such as its definition, background, and classroom activities and current trends associated with it. Although designed for ELT professionals, it can be used as an additional source for novice teachers because of its focus on the key aspects of each topic.

The second resource is from the website of the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC). The webpage is titled “Essentials of Language Teaching” and is designed to be a resource for college and university language instructors.

The second and third sources mentioned above are articles that were also recommended by Dr. Tanner. The Savignon (2001) article outlines the history of CLT, its components, and how it is interpreted. She also provides a model of communicative competence and outlines five components of a communicative curriculum. The Doughty & Pica article (1986) is the report of a study on the effectiveness of information gap activities. The findings of the article are that information gap activities require conversational modification, which is instrumental in second language acquisition.

The fourth and fifth sources mentioned above are textbooks that were recommended to me by Dr. Henrichsen and are also listed as recommended resources for novice teachers in the “Where to go to learn more” section at the end of the *BTR TESOL* unit.

Fall 2009 and Winter 2010: Weekly Meetings, Prospectus Work, and Presentations

When university studies resumed in the fall of 2009, our *BTR TESOL* group began holding weekly meetings to guide the creation of the project. At first we needed to finalize who would be doing which units and what the content to be included in each of the units should be. After that, one of the main focuses was to make improvements to the prospectus for the project presented to us by Dr. Henrichsen. These meetings and prospectus work were in conjunction with the Ling 678 class, *Advanced Materials Development*, which most of our team took in the fall of 2009.

There were a couple of things we wanted to do to improve the prospectus. One of the main things was to do research on potential competitors of the project. Each of us in the group reviewed at least one potential competitor and presented the findings in a shared document on Google docs. I researched the TESOL Core Curriculum program that had just been conceptualized in November 2009. I found that this program took a lot of time and was costly (130 hours of training for over \$1000) compared to the *BTR TESOL* program. There was also the

inconvenience of having to enroll several months in advance of the actual training time. Also, most of the training was to be done online.

In contrast, the *BTR TESOL* program is cheap and accessible without any need for a waiting period to access it. The website can be accessed at any time and the book version can be accessed even more easily without the need of having an Internet connection. The book version will include a DVD of the additional media content such as the video and audio clips. These will also be available on the website.

In October of 2009, our group presented our project at the Intermountain TESOL conference in Provo, Utah. Each of us had the opportunity to discuss the content of our units and to solicit feedback from the audience. This was our first public presentation of the project and of our individual units and we did receive feedback. However, the feedback we received at this time was minimal because there weren't many people in the audience and there wasn't a lot of time for them to give comments about our units.

In the winter of 2010, the weekly research group meetings continued. The focus of the first few meetings was getting our projects ready for review and the steps involved in the process of preparing for the project defense. We also discussed our upcoming presentations at the 2010 TESOL Conference and the steps involved in completing the write-up portion of our project. Each member of the *BTR TESOL* team also presented our units to real novice teachers in the Ling 377 class taught by Dr. Henrichsen. The title of the class is "Basic Training in TESOL."

I presented my units twice on two separate occasions to the Ling 377 class and a group of volunteers from HELP International in March of 2010. I also presented both units to more HELP International volunteers in May of 2010. HELP International is a Utah-based non-profit organization that trains college-age volunteers to design and implement development projects

with the purpose of helping people in various poor countries around the world to become more self-reliant. Teaching English as a second language is one of the activities that these volunteers may be involved in during their time in these countries. As such, many of these volunteers would be embarking on the first English teaching experiences of their lives and wanted to receive some basic training before they left the country.

These were good experiences for me to connect with a segment of the target population for my project units and get a better sense of learners' needs. I also received feedback from these students about what information presented was helpful to them and what information wasn't. In general, these particular students were less interested in theoretical terms and concepts as they were in practical applications and skills that they could apply directly to their future teaching experiences abroad. They were particularly interested in the information gap activities that were presented and how they can be adapted to various teaching situations. Overall the feedback was positive. A more detailed explanation of the feedback received and its effect on the units is found in Chapter 6, Evaluation and Revision. Overall, these experiences helped me to get a better sense of the need for clear, concise, and practical information for the users of this project.

Near the end of March 2010, we presented our units at the TESOL Graduate Student Forum and the TESOL Developer's Showcase, which were part of the 2010 International TESOL Convention in Boston, Massachusetts. Both of these experiences gave us a chance to show what we were creating to a professional TESOL audience and to receive feedback from them. A more detailed explanation of the feedback received and its effect on the units is found in Chapter 6, Evaluation and Revision.

Spring 2010, Summer 2010, and Fall 2010: Final Revisions

This was a time for completing the final revisions on the project. Based on the feedback I received from the pilot users as well as Dr. Henrichsen, some changes were made to the content of the units as the drafts underwent more revision stages. These stages are described in more detail in Chapter 6, Evaluation and Revision. The final product will be published on the *BTR TESOL* website and is awaiting publication in book form.

The spring, summer, and fall of 2010 was also a time for completing the final write-up for the project. The final write-up was completed for the first time in June of 2010 and was submitted to the entire committee for approval. At that time the committee determined that the draft needed to undergo further revisions. The committee recommendations called for a stronger literature review section and a stronger connection between the literature review, the content of the units, and the rationale for the content of the units. These changes were made and the draft was re-submitted for approval.

In order to create a stronger literature review, more experts on each of the topics were cited. Also, it was at this time that I created the survey of SLA topics mentioned in Chapter 2—Review of Literature. This survey gathered information about what potential novice teachers thought about 30 important SLA topics that were being considered for the unit. This information was used to provide rationale for the topics selected and also to make changes in the selection of topics.

After the draft was resubmitted for approval, it was determined that further revisions needed to be made after which the draft was submitted once again for committee approval.

Summary

This chapter described the main developmental stages I underwent in creating the two *BTR TESOL* units. The next chapter will discuss the content of these two units: “Second Language Acquisition” and “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Activities.”

Chapter 4—The Content

This chapter presents a description of the content of the units. This includes descriptions of both the text content as well as the additional audio recordings for “Second Language Acquisition” and the additional video clips for “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Activities.”

Text Content—Second Language Acquisition

The purpose of the *BTR TESOL* program is to provide basic information and training on a variety of TESOL-related topics to novice teachers in order to help them be successful in these topics. An additional purpose of the project is to provide information about additional resources where novice teachers can go to learn more about the topics.

Each unit begins with a scenario or problem, real or imagined, to introduce the topic. All of the *BTR TESOL* units are based on a problem-based learning approach. The purpose is to get people thinking about the topics and how knowledge of the topics can be applied in a real-world setting to solve problems or fill needs. It is also intended to activate their background knowledge of the topic, as well as critical thinking skills. In the unit on second language acquisition, the story of Mike is presented, who in his teaching experiences has taught people from different ages and language backgrounds. He thinks about how these differences affect learners’ language acquisition and how the process of language acquisition takes place. This and the subsequent reflection questions provide an introduction for the unit.

I wrote this scenario to serve as an introduction for the basic principles of second language acquisition. One of the underlying principles of the unit is how learners’ different personal and linguistic backgrounds have an influence on their learning. No theoretical concepts are

introduced in the scenario. Rather, I wanted project users to think about how differences among learners in their own teaching situations can affect the learning process.

These are followed by the objectives of the unit. These objectives are for the users of the unit to be able to apply knowledge of the following concepts to their teaching:

1. Some linguistic components of language to be learned.
2. Some processes that occur when people learn a new language.
3. The effects of age, language background, and other factors (such as personality) on second language acquisition.

The subheading for the rest of the unit is “The Least You Should Know.” The first section under this heading presents some basic linguistic aspects that need to be learned in order to become fluent in a language. The purpose of this list of linguistic aspects is to show users that there are many different aspects of language to be learned and that can be focused on.

The rest of the unit is organized into two parts. The first part deals with several topics related to second language acquisition theory, and the second part deals with how learner characteristics affect second language acquisition. The first topic I chose for the unit is the concept of interlanguage. This is a model of how an L2 is processed in the mind and results in a new language that has characteristics of both the L1 and the L2. I chose this topic to introduce a model of second language acquisition that has practical applications. The applications mentioned in the unit are for teachers to anticipate what kind of language the learners will produce and understand why the language they produce has the characteristics it does. Also, there is a reminder to teachers to be patient with learners as their language develops and to not expect them to produce perfect language immediately.

The second topic I chose is the influence of the L1 in language learning. One of the concepts mentioned briefly in this section is contrastive analysis. This is the study of the similarities and differences between the L1 and L2 and uses this information to predict the errors that may occur in a learner's language. Also introduced are the concepts of both positive and negative transfer, and then examples are given of each. The importance of this topic is for teachers to get a sense of the direct influence of a learner's L1 on the L2 production. Teachers can understand that learners will have specific problems based on their L1 and that it is beneficial to know what these problems are. Novices can become aware that with knowledge of the learner's L1, they can better predict some of the errors the learners will make, notice them better, and understand how to help learners correct these errors.

The next topics are scaffolding and the concept of $i + 1$. As these are directly related to theories of learning, they also have practical applications for teachers. It's important for teachers to know that learners can benefit from building upon the framework of knowledge they already have. To this end, teachers should provide the appropriate social support to help the learners succeed and know what level of language input to provide to the learners as well. One of the implications is that when teachers present new concepts and ideas, the learners should already have an understanding of the more basic concepts that these new concepts are built upon. This is represented by the idea of $i + 1$. Also, learners should not be presented with material that is at their level of expertise but should be presented with material that is just a bit above their level, or at the level $i + 1$. They will therefore be challenged to reach towards a higher level and therefore advance their learning.

Scaffolding refers to the social support that learners receive from others that helps them to achieve more than they would be able to alone. As learners are presented with higher levels of

input, peers can work together to help each other reach a higher level of learning. Teachers can also provide the verbal guidance and support necessary for the learners to succeed and reach a higher level of language ability. Also mentioned briefly in this section of the unit are the concepts of input, interaction, and output.

The last part of the unit is about how individual learner characteristics can affect second language acquisition. This section begins with a brief explanation of the principles of fossilization and the critical period hypothesis. The next topics highlighted are the different manners in which students from different age backgrounds learn and what instructional methods can be most effective for them. The last part of the unit describes some other learner characteristics that can affect second language acquisition. These are aptitude, motivation, instruction, personality, and learning style. These topics are discussed only briefly in this unit due to space constraints. The section on personality and learning style highlights the fact that introverted and extroverted personality types can be equally good learners, with each having different strengths and weaknesses. This topic is discussed in more detail in *BTR TESOL* Unit 5C: Understanding your students' language learning styles and teaching them accordingly. This unit can be found at

http://hummac.byu.edu/btrtesol/units/05knowing_your_students/5c_learning_styles.php

One of the foci for this part is differences in age between learners. This was selected because teachers could be teaching students of various ages. Even the same teacher could be teaching students of different ages at the same time as in the example case of Mike. This topic was also chosen because the age of learners has a large effect on their language development and their language needs. In this unit it was important to outline the strengths and weaknesses of both older and younger learners, although not in great detail. There are additional units on this topic in

the *BTR TESOL* program that cover it more fully such as Unit 5A: Understanding, respecting, and appreciating adult ESL learners and Unit 5B: Working with young English language learners. However, since these are separate units that deal with each group individually, I thought it would be useful to have a small summary of some of the strengths and weaknesses of both groups in this unit, especially after the discussion of the critical period hypothesis.

After each topic presented in the unit, there is a short paragraph describing how the information presented can be applied to real teaching experiences. This is to help the readers make immediate connections with the material presented and its real-world applications. The purpose of this project is to provide teachers with ideas that they can use in their teaching in addition to becoming familiar with the topics presented.

Audio content–second language acquisition. Two video clips were originally selected for this unit. These videos were filmed by my committee chair, Dr. Henrichsen. One was filmed at an elementary school in Thailand and the other was filmed at a university in China. I chose these videos to illustrate the difference between two different settings, one in which younger learners are taught and one in which older learners are taught. However, my committee chair and I decided that these videos did not demonstrate well the principles of second language acquisition and could possibly better suit the purposes of other units. Therefore, audio files were selected to illustrate the basic principles of interlanguage and negative transfer discussed in the unit. These examples were specifically chosen to show the influence of the L1 on L2 speech production. They show differences in L1 interference that occur in people from different language backgrounds. The files were selected from diagnostic samples of Dr. Henrichsen's Linguistics 302 students from Winter 2009. There are two sets of recordings of three speakers responding to the same speaking prompt in each set. The language backgrounds of the speakers in the first set

are Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese, respectively. The language backgrounds of the speakers in the second set are Korean (male), Korean (female), and Chinese, respectively. After listening to these audio clips, novice teachers respond to follow-up questions that require them to think about how the English language production of each of the speakers they heard differs from the English the project users are familiar with. The project users are encouraged to also identify the features of language (such as grammar and pronunciation) that the different speakers in the audio clips have difficulty with.

Text Content–Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises

The opening scenario for this unit is one in which a woman named Jan finds herself contrasting her former ESL teaching experiences in the United States with her current EFL teaching experiences in Korea. She is finding that in Korea she is having more trouble getting the students to talk and communicate with her and with each other. Her goal is to get her students to talk more using the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and information gap activities. I wrote this scenario to get project users to imagine a situation where there was a need for the principles of CLT in the classroom. In the situation presented, there is a need for students to improve their communication skills through the use of peer interaction under a CLT framework. After the scenario, there are some reflection questions about the scenario and then the objectives of the unit are introduced. These objectives are for the users to be able to apply knowledge of the following concepts to their teaching:

1. The basic principles of communicative language teaching.
2. What information gap activities consist of and...
3. How they can be applied in a classroom setting.

The unit is divided into two major parts. The first part is an overview of what communicative language teaching is, including basic principles and the roles of the learner and teacher. The basic principles were chosen to give the users an idea of what some of the characteristics of communicative language teaching are. The roles of the learner and teacher were chosen to illustrate what is expected of the teacher and the learner when applying these principles. There is also a paragraph that explains that these principles may not be what learners are used to. The topic of this part of the unit is very broad, so only the most basic important information is included in this section.

The second part of the unit begins with an introduction to information gap activities. Also included in this section are the four steps of an information gap activity, which are followed by two simple examples of information gap activities that use the four steps mentioned previously. Then there is a note about how information gap activities can be used and then some follow-up reflection questions. These are as follows:

1. What is the defining characteristic of an information gap activity?
2. What are the four steps in designing an information gap activity?
3. What kinds of information gap activities are appropriate for beginning levels?
4. What kinds of information gap activities are appropriate for advanced levels?

Video content–communicative language teaching and information gap exercises.

There is a link to a video clip at the end of *BTR TESOL* Unit 4C. The purpose of including a video clip is so the users can see an example of the principles of CLT in action. There are also reflection questions accompanying each video to help users reflect on what they have learned. The purpose of the video associated with this unit is to show an example of the type of

communicative language activity known as the information gap. The video illustrates all the major points of such an activity discussed in the unit:

1. First the teacher explains the task and reviews any necessary vocabulary.
2. The teacher then models the activity by simply answering the questions of the information gap.
3. Students are then assigned into pairs and then ask each other the questions.
4. The teacher walks around the room and provides help where needed.

This video was selected from the files of Dr. Henrichsen, my committee chair. He was also the one who filmed the video. The activity in the video was done with a class of freshman at a university in China. The teacher is a middle-aged volunteer from the United States and all the students are Mandarin-speaking freshman from the same university in China.

In the video, the teacher first assigns people into pairs by passing out cards. She explains the activity and then models it with a couple students. Then the students find their partners and begin performing the activity. The teacher then walks around the room and monitors the activity. One pair of students is focused on in particular in the video. The reflection questions for this unit are as follows:

1. How did the teacher divide the students into pairs?
2. What was the purpose of the activity?
3. Compare the activity to what you read in the “The Least You Should Know” section above, including the four steps of an information gap activity. Did the activity include all these steps?
4. Think about how the principles illustrated in this video can be applied to your teaching situation.

The answers:

1. The teacher divided the students into pairs with cards.
2. The purpose of the activity was to discover the likes and dislikes of a classmate.
3. This question requires the user to look back in the unit and determine if the activity met all of the criteria in the two lists mentioned.
4. This question requires the users to think about how the principles illustrated in this video can be applied to their own teaching situations.

Recommended Resources

At the end of each unit are recommended resources to which *BTR TESOL* project users can go to learn more about the topics presented in the units. There are both online and print-based resources. Information about each resource is provided in the actual units that tells what each resource is and gives a brief summary of what they contain.

The online resources are stable Internet sites where novice teachers can learn more about each given topic. Some of the print-based resources mentioned are also major sources of information for this project. My committee chair recommended other print-based resources to be included in the list of recommended resources.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview and description of the content of each of my *BTR TESOL* units. The organization of each of the units was described in detail. The audio and video content for each of the units was also described in detail, including why they were selected and how they can be applied by project users to enhance their learning. The following chapter will present the actual text content of the units in their final form.

Chapter 5—The Finished Units

This chapter presents the final text of the two units I created, “Second Language Acquisition” and “Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Activities.” Screen shots of the website pages are included at the end of each unit. Initial, earlier versions of these units are included in the appendices. The audio and video content of the units will be accessible from the *BTR TESOL* website in the near future.

Second Language Acquisition:

(http://hummac.byu.edu/btrtesol/units/04understanding_key_principles/4a_second_language_acquisition.php)

Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Activities:

http://hummac.byu.edu/btrtesol/units/04understanding_key_principles/4c_communicative_language_tchg.php

Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition

Scenario: The puzzle of Second Language Acquisition

Mike is currently enjoying his first English teaching experiences in China. At the moment, he is teaching two English classes—one to Chinese school children during the day and another to Chinese adults in the evening. After the first week, he noticed that there are some differences in the way the students in these two classes are learning and that these differences greatly affect the way he is planning his lessons. He had always heard that children learn quicker than adults but he doesn't understand if that's true or why that would be the case. He's beginning to think deeply about the subject of second language acquisition. That's something he hadn't thought about much before, but he now realizes it's important to understand the differences in the ways his students learn.

As he continues to think, his mind goes back to the previous year, when he had taught English classes to adults in Korea. He can think of many differences in the language difficulties of the Chinese and Korean adults. He also notices differences in learning styles but he is not sure how to describe them or what they mean. All of these things make him think about how second language acquisition takes place and what the key issues that guide its development are.



- What are some aspects of a second language that are learned?**
- What are some important factors that can influence this learning?**
- How can knowledge of these factors be beneficial to you as a teacher?**

Objectives of this unit

After you work through this unit you will be able to apply knowledge of the following topics to teaching experiences.

1. The aspects of language to be learned.
 2. Some processes that occur when people learn a new language.
 3. The effects of...
 - A. Age
 - B. Language background
 - C. Other factors (such as personality) on second language acquisition
-

The Least You Should Know

The study of second language acquisition has resulted in many ideas and theories. The focus of this unit will be on some of these basic ideas and theories:

1. What is learned—Language aspects.
2. What happens in the learning process—Interlanguage.
3. One way in which the learner's first language can affect their learning of another language—First language interference.
4. What learner characteristics affect their learning and how—Learner variables.

1. Language aspects

When someone learns a second language, what exactly is learned?

There are several main categories that can be used to describe a language: sound system, word structure, vocabulary, grammar, and knowledge of practical use, among others. These are briefly described below.

Sound system—Sounds that make a difference in meaning.

Word structure—Parts of words that have meaning, additions to a word that affect grammar (e.g. plural s), and prefixes and suffixes that may be added to change the meaning of words (pre-, post-, etc.).

Vocabulary—Words, their meaning, and possible occurrences in combination with other words.

Grammar—Word order and agreement between parts of sentences (e.g. agreement between subject and verb).

Meaning—The meaning of words, phrases, and longer forms of discourse.

Sentence organization—Ways to connect and organize sentences in paragraphs or longer passages.

Practical use—Using language appropriately to interact with others in different situations.

As you can see, there are many important aspects to be learned. Language learning is very complicated.

Comprehension and Reflection Questions

1. Which of these eight aspects of language were you already familiar with?
2. What did you know about them and how much did you know about them?
3. Were you surprised by how many aspects work together in language?
4. If you have ever studied a foreign language, which aspects were most difficult for you to learn? Why?

2. States of learning: Interlanguage

A principle that reinforces the fact that learning a language is a gradual process is the principle of interlanguage. This principle attempts to describe what happens while someone is



attempting to move from limited knowledge of a second language (L2) to fluency. It refers to the **intermediate states** that one encounters in this process, each of which represents a different level of the L2.

Some advertisements claim that their product will help people to speak a language instantly, but there is little that is instant about real long-term language acquisition. It is a gradual process and learners will experience intermediate (or middle) states of language along the way as they move from their L1 to their L2. According to many researchers, this process is the **interaction** of a person's thinking processes with the type and amount of contact they have with the language, or **input**. This contact could occur any time they are exposed to the language, whether inside or outside a classroom, whether written or spoken. The interlanguage is influenced by the learner's knowledge of their first language (L1) as well as by the contact with the language to be learned (L2). To be practical, the interlanguage can be considered a third language, sharing characteristics with both the L1 and L2.

How can this be applied?

In teaching, one can be aware that the language a learner produces will have characteristics of both the L1 and the L2. It's important to help learners recognize the differences between the two languages so that their language can continue to become closer to the L2. It's also important to be patient with the learners and guide them along as this process takes place. Do not expect learners to be perfect at first. Their language will develop gradually as they go through these intermediate states and it is the teacher's responsibility and opportunity to guide them.

3. The influence of the first language: positive and negative transfer

Another important factor in second language acquisition is the influence that the first, or native, language of the learners (L1) has on the language to be learned (L2). Because of its importance, there is a field of study known as **contrastive analysis** that involves predicting learner errors based on similarities and differences between the L1 and the L2. Usually the easiest language aspects to learn in the L2 are the ones that are most similar to the L1, although this is not always the case. This phenomenon is known as **positive transfer**. For example, if the L1 has sounds similar to those in the L2, the learner could be able to make these sounds correctly. The same is true with other language aspects such as word order. For example, "My father" (English) has the same word order as "mi padre" (Spanish). So, based on first language influence, the word order should not be hard for a Spanish-speaking English learner to acquire.

Often the opposite is also true—the things that are the most different in the two languages will be the hardest to learn. This phenomenon is known as **negative transfer**. For example, if the L1 and L2 have very different grammar, such as word order or verb tenses, these could be hard to learn and could cause mistakes. Take for example "the blue flowers" and "las flores azules." The meaning of the two phrases is the same, but in Spanish, the adjective often follows the noun rather than precedes it. Because of this difference, a native Spanish-speaker may have the tendency to say "the flowers blue" or even "the flowers blues," because in Spanish, plural nouns also have plural adjectives. The learner has probably not **noticed** this difference exists, and it should be brought to their attention.

Other problems can arise with apparent similarities between the two languages. Sometimes people confuse the Spanish verb "asistir" (to attend) and the English verb "to assist." Instances like these are known as "false cognates" or "false friends" and can result in miscommunication.

A native Spanish speaker may be heard to say, “I am going to assist class today” meaning “I am going to attend class today.” This difficulty, like many which students will have, is tied directly to the influence of the student’s native language.

Another example is that many languages do not use words such as “the” and “a” the way they are used in English. Some languages don’t use similar words at all. Because of the influence from their native languages, speakers from these different language backgrounds often leave out or use these words incorrectly when they speak English.

How can this be applied?

Perhaps the most important thing one can learn from first language influence is that there are reasons why learners have specific language problems and that these problems can be influenced by their L1 as well as other things. With knowledge of the learners’ L1, you can often predict the errors they will make and, at the very least, better understand why they make them. So it’s important to gain as much knowledge of the learners’ L1 as possible. With this knowledge, you will be better able to help them understand the differences between their L1 and L2, so they won’t repeat the same mistakes.

4. Building on what learners know: Scaffolding and $i + 1$

In addition to the influence of the first language, second language acquisition is influenced by the level of tasks learners have to do and the amount of language knowledge they already have. One way in which learners can be helped is through the process of **scaffolding**. Just as the scaffolding of a building is a temporary framework that is put up to support its construction, a scaffolding in language learning is a framework that is put in place to support learning and allow the learner to reach a higher level than they would be able to without that support. This support can be provided by teachers as well as by fellow learners. Teachers can provide verbal guidance to help learners perform a task. Peers can also work together to help each other complete a task. Through the process of working together, they can provide support for each other’s needs and help each other reach a higher level than they could individually.

There is a concept of language learning developed by Stephen Krashen known as $i + 1$. According to his hypothesis, learners improve and progress when they receive second language **input** that is one step beyond their current stage of language ability. For example, if a learner is at stage ‘i’, then acquisition takes place when they receive input that is at the level $i + 1$, or input that is one stage beyond their current level. This type of input challenges learners to move to a higher level rather than stay where they are. They already have a framework upon which to build but they need this higher level of input in order to advance.

It is also important that learner’s **interact** with others in the language they are learning. This can provide them with opportunities to “test out” what they are learning and make improvements in their language. They can become more aware of their own limitations, learn new words and phrases from those with whom they interact, and improve their overall language comprehension. They can also receive feedback from others and make improvements in the **output** they produce that they can apply to their future interactions.

How can this be applied?

First, figure out your students’ current level of ability in English, then provide tasks for them that are at a slightly higher level. This will allow them to be challenged by the tasks. Do not

perform the activity for them, but provide support along the way. Also, have students work on group projects and other collaborative projects that will allow them to work together and help each other achieve a higher level than they would be able to otherwise. Encourage interaction among your students and encourage them to interact with others outside of class. Finally, teachers should adjust their language to be at a level that is slightly above that of their students (see Unit 3B: Adjusting your spoken English).

Tip: Another useful concept for teachers and learners is the concept of **chunking**. Especially at the beginning levels of language learning, it is useful for learners to memorize groups of words such as common phrases that they can immediately use rather than focus on the meanings of the individual words. They also don't need to be familiar with all the grammar rules used before they can use the chunk. As long as they understand the meaning of the entire phrase, they can recognize and use it.

5. Factors that affect second language acquisition

Age and time of acquisition: Many people believe that the best time for people to acquire a second language is when they are children, although this is not necessarily the case. Support for this idea comes from the concepts of the critical period and fossilization. The **critical period** refers to the idea that children have only a limited number of years (or critical period) during which they can achieve native or near-native ability in an L2. After that, a process known as fossilization is more likely to occur. **Fossilization** refers to a state in which L2 learners stop moving toward native performance before they reach complete ability with the L2. Essentially, this means they are no longer advancing in their L2 learning, despite continued study and practice in the L2. These two concepts explain why many people think that it is harder for adults to learn a language than it is for younger learners. Additional evidence, however, shows there are advantages for both older and younger learners:

Advantages of Younger Learners

The following are qualities that younger learners generally have:

Less analytical--Because children are generally seen as being less analytical, it seems they learn more naturally and with less effort. Instead of thinking about and analyzing what they are learning, they simply absorb it in situations.

Fewer inhibitions—Younger learners are often seen as having fewer inhibitions, although this is not always the case. Generally, the more willing learners are to take risks and avoid self-conscious behavior, the more quickly their learning can occur.

More years to learn the language before ultimate ability is judged—People marvel at children's ability to learn language seemingly without effort. Children's learning ability, however, often takes place over the course of several years before it is judged. Adult learner's ability is often judged more quickly. Also, young learners are not expected to speak at a mature, adult level as are adults.

Advantages of Older Learners

Learning capacity—Because many older learners have more practice and experience learning, they may have more capacity for learning than younger learners do, through direct instruction.

Analytic ability—This is a big advantage of older learners. Unlike younger learners, adults can be more directly taught about the way a language works, including the rules of a language and why, when, and how to learn certain language components.

Practical skills and real-world knowledge—Simply put, older learners have more life experience to tie their learning to, so they should more readily understand why something is being taught and how they can use it in their lives.

Greater knowledge of their L1—Older learners can have a greater knowledge of their L1, which can aid in the acquisition of the L2. This can be the result of having studied their native language formally in school.

Why is this important?

This knowledge is important for two main reasons. First, it is important to realize the strengths of older and younger learners. Children are often seen as model language learners, but older learners actually have advantages in some areas. Second, lessons should be designed for the strengths of the age group being taught. For example, children can benefit from simple games, role-plays, and hands-on activities (see Unit 5B: Working with young English language learners). Adult lessons can include more direct instruction and explicit rule teaching (as well as games) and should include practical situations and topics that occur in adult life as well (see Unit 5A: Understanding, respecting, and appreciating adult ESL learners).

Other important variables that affect second language acquisition among learners

Regardless of age, other learner differences can affect the way learners learn and how successful they are.

Natural ability: Learners differ in their ability to process language, identify patterns, and store information about a language in memory. Simply put, some learners may be better at doing the things that are required to learn a language.

Motivation: Motivation largely determines the level of effort which learners put forth at different stages in their L2 development and is often a key to the ultimate ability level they achieve.

Instruction: Quality of instruction is important in all settings, although there doesn't seem to be a proven instructional method that works better than all the others. Type of instruction should be designed for the students' individual needs and learning styles. Keep in mind that how well a teacher prepares and presents the lessons does affect how well and how quickly the learners learn.

Personality and learning style: There is no clear advantage for any particular personality or learning style, including whether a learner is shy or outgoing. Positive characteristics associated with outgoing people are being self-confident, adventurous, and risk-taking. Positive characteristics of shy people are being imaginative, empathetic, and tolerant of ambiguity.

Sound clips

Here are several sound clips to demonstrate the effects of the first language on second language pronunciation—<http://hummac.byu.edu/btrtesol/index.php>. There are two sets of recordings of speakers from different language backgrounds. As you listen, pay attention to the differences between the pronunciation patterns of the speakers. Then answer the questions below. Many of the differences between the speakers are a direct result of their L1.



Reflection and Responses

1. Did you notice specific differences in the pronunciation of the speakers?
 2. If so, what specific differences did you notice? For example, were there particular sounds or words that the speakers had trouble pronouncing?
 3. Did you notice any two speakers having similar problems?
 4. Based on what you heard, can you guess which language backgrounds they are from?
- Hint: The languages represented are Spanish, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese.

Where to go to learn more

Connections to other units in this program

Here are some other units in this program that relate to topics we have addressed in this unit.

- Unit 3D: Correcting language learners' errors productively, and developing their self-monitoring skills.
- Unit 5A: Understanding, respecting, and appreciating adult ESL learners.
- Unit 5B: Working with young English language learners.
- Unit 5C: Understanding your students' language learning styles—including cross-cultural differences in learning styles, strategies, and expectations—and then teaching them accordingly.

Online and other electronic resources

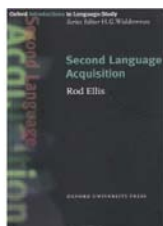
www.cal.org/resources/digest/0005contextual.html--This is part of the online resources provided by the Center for Applied Linguistics. It is an article that discusses the individual, social, and societal factors that affect students' learning of a second language.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_language_acquisition--This is from the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia. It discusses many of the variables related to second language discussed in the unit as well as many others.

<http://www.cambridge.org/elt/resources/teachersupportplus/>--These are online booklets provided by Cambridge online. The one related to second language acquisition is entitled "Moving Beyond the Plateau" by Jack C. Richards. It deals with the problems that second language learners encounter in moving from the intermediate to advanced levels of language ability.

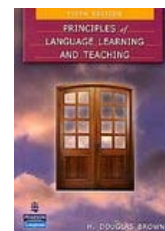
Print and paper-based resources

Here are some published books that have proven to be helpful resources for learning about second language acquisition. (All reviews and quotes are from Amazon.com)



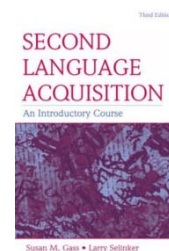
Ellis, R. *Second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. This book outlines the study of how people learn a language other than their mother tongue. It is designed to make the essentials of this rapidly expanding field as accessible as possible. "...a powerful tool in opening the door, even to the novice, into this field." "This book will be useful for anyone curious to learn about the issues of this rapidly expanding area." ISBN 019437212X.

H. Douglas Brown. *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New York: Pearson ESL, 2006. "...the classic second language acquisition text used by teacher education programs worldwide. It introduces key concepts through definitions of terms, thought-provoking questions, and charts. The "Classroom Connections" section encourages students to consider the implications of research for classroom teaching." ISBN 0131991280.





Muriel Saville-Troike. *Introducing second language acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. "Written for students encountering the topic for the first time, this introduction explains in non-technical language how a second language is acquired; what the second language learner needs to know; and why some learners are more successful than others. The textbook logically introduces a range of fundamental concepts." ISBN 0521794072.

Susan M. Gass & Larry Selinker. *Second language acquisition: An introductory course*. Routledge, 2008. "A comprehensive overview of the field of second language acquisition in an easy-to-read, accessible style. It introduces students to current issues in the field, as well as providing an historical overview." ISBN 0805854983.



BTR-TESOL

Introduction


As a teacher of language learners, you need to understand what is going on inside your students' heads when they try to learn a new language. That is a complicated psycholinguistic and cognitive process. This unit will introduce you to some of the basics.

BACK TO TOP

Scenario: Thinking about the puzzle of second language acquisition

Mike is currently enjoying his first English teaching experiences in China. At the moment, he is teaching two English classes--one to Chinese school children during the day and another to Chinese adults in the evening. After the first week, he has noticed that there are some differences in the way the students in these two classes are learning and that these differences greatly affect the way he is planning his lessons. He had always heard that children learn quicker than adults but he doesn't understand if that's true or why that would be the case. He begins to think deeply about the subject of second language acquisition, something he hadn't thought about much before, but he feels it's important to understand the differences in the ways his students learn.

As he ponders further, his mind goes back to when he had previously taught English classes to adults in Korea, and he can think of differences in the language difficulties of the Chinese and Korean adults. For example, the Chinese adults seem to have less of a problem with word order but they have different pronunciation problems than the Koreans did. He also notices differences in learning styles but he is not sure how to describe them or what they mean. All of these things make him ponder how second language acquisition takes place and what the key issues that guide its development are.



How do you think a second language is learned?

What are the key principles that guide the development of second language acquisition?

How can knowledge of such principles be beneficial to you as a teacher?

BACK TO TOP

Objectives of this unit

Figure 1. Screen shot of Second Language Acquisition unit online

Unit 4C

Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises

Scenario: The Story of Jan

Two years ago, Jan taught community ESL classes in the western United States. The make-up of her classes was mostly people of Hispanic origin and her classes tended to be lively and amusing. There was a good level of participation and the students enjoyed working in groups. The main problem was that sometimes the students' pronunciation wasn't very good.

This year Jan got a job teaching English at a Korean high school. It is her first teaching job overseas and her first class of all Asian students. When Jan entered on the first day of class, the students were silent and attentive, waiting to see what she would do next. Based on the interested look on their faces, Jan wondered if they had ever seen an American before. She also noticed that they did not speak out unless called upon and the conversation among themselves was minimal. As she was teaching, she noticed that the students seemed to have a good understanding of grammar. Their speaking ability, however, was minimal. She wanted to use an approach to teaching that would require them to speak more and hopefully improve their speaking ability but she didn't know what that could be and how to implement it in her classes.



What would you do in this situation?

How would you help students improve their speaking ability?

What could you do to make speaking activities both effective and enjoyable?

Objectives of this unit

After you work through this unit you will be able to describe apply the following concepts to your teaching situations:

1. The basic principles of communicative language teaching.
2. The steps in designing different types of information gap activities and...
3. The effective implementation of information gap activities in classroom settings.

If you have learned well, you will be able to implement the principles of communicative language teaching and information gap in your classes through the use of activities that will help your students improve their speaking.

The Least You Should Know

Communicative Language Teaching

The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach is currently one of the most popular in the field. It is an approach in which the focus is on communication and developing students' ability to communicate. In order to achieve this goal, CLT places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts and situations. Its primary focus is on helping learners create meaningful communication rather than helping them develop perfect grammatical abilities or achieve native-like pronunciation. Successfully learning a foreign language is determined by how well learners have developed **communicative competence**. This term refers to a learners' ability to apply their knowledge of the language to communicate effectively. One example of communicative competence is to know how to use language for different purposes, such as apologizing or asking for permission. Another is to know how to use appropriate language in different settings, such as using formal or informal language. Another is to know how to continue communication despite limited communication ability. This can be achieved through the use of communication strategies such as asking for someone to repeat and/or explain what they said and also, as the speaker, learning how to make better explanations. (For more information on communicative competence, see the resources at the end of this unit).

1. Basic principles of CLT

1. **People learn a language through using it to communicate.** It was once widely thought that learners must first have a strong knowledge of grammar before they were ready to communicate. In CLT, learners are encouraged to practice communicating during all stages of the learning process, including the beginning stages, regardless of their grammar ability (see unit 4B: Types of Practice).

2. **Meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.** Communicative activities that involve spontaneous speech in scenarios and situations that the learners are likely to find themselves in are frequently used to encourage authentic (or realistic) communication. Dialogues, if used, are not usually memorized but are allowed to occur more naturally and spontaneously.

3. **Learning to communicate is a process that involves trial and error.** As learners create language through communicative practice, it is accepted that errors may occur frequently as they try to discover what works and what doesn't. This is a natural part of the learning process and one that helps communicative competence. Learners are not expected to be perfect in their communication but they are expected to try to communicate the best they can.

4. **Learner errors are often not corrected immediately but can be corrected later.** It is considered that the fluency of a learner's speech is more important than its accuracy. This means that correcting learner errors immediately would interrupt the communication process and the flow of the learner's speech. Errors are noted by the teacher but they are often not brought up until a later time if necessary (See Unit 3D: Correcting Errors).

Comprehension and Reflection Questions



1. Without looking, what are the four basic principles of communicative language teaching?
 2. What are the goals of communicative language teaching?
 3. How can the principles of communicative language teaching be used to improve learner's speaking ability?
-

2. Teacher and Learner Roles in CLT

Teacher roles

1. **Organizer and facilitator**—The primary role of the teacher is to keep the communication going between all members of the class as they perform various activities. The teacher first prepares the activities and then explains how they will be carried out. It may be necessary for the teacher to provide examples of how each activity will be performed. Once the activity is underway, the teacher checks on individual groups to see if they are communicating effectively and gives help where needed.

2. **Participant and guide**—Instead of just explaining the activity, the teacher can also take the role of an active participant within each learning group. In this role, the teacher will become part of the groups and participate fully with the other group members. As the teachers do so, they can continue to guide the process.

3. **Resource and needs analyst**—In this role, the teacher determines and responds to learners' language needs. This involves making students aware of what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong. Although the teachers often do not address errors immediately, they can listen for and note learner errors and then plans future instruction to address these needs.

Learner roles

1. **Participant**—The primary role of learners is to be active participants within groups as they seek to achieve effective communication. Learners are often not independent learners but rely on others in the class to learn as much as they can. As they participate, they should try to contribute as much as they gain from the other learners.

2. **Cooperative learner**—In order to work together, students have to become comfortable listening to each other rather than relying on the teacher for a model. Students also need to take responsibility for their own learning.

Possible differences from students' expectations

The roles of learners in CLT may be different from their ideas of what learning should be like, so learners may have to adjust. For example, in CLT, students are expected to interact primarily with each other and not the teacher. This may be different from what they are used to. Also, error correction in CLT is often infrequent or absent, whereas learners may be accustomed to frequent error correction. It is also important for learners to understand that successful communication is the responsibility of both the speaker and the listener. If failed communication occurs, it is not always the fault of either party individually. Learners are expected to work together and to not blame each other.

Comprehension and Reflection Questions



1. In what ways might communicative language teaching be different from what your students are used to?
 2. Without referring to the list above, name and describe as many of the roles of both teachers and students in communicative language teaching as you can.
 3. Which teacher roles might you be the most or least comfortable with?
-

3. Information Gap Activities

Information gap activities are one of the most important kinds of communicative activities. A great variety of information gap activities exist, but they all have the goal of requesting and giving information. The defining characteristic of these activities is that it is necessary for participants to communicate with each other in order to reach the goals of the task. In an information gap activity, one learner has certain information that must be shared with other learners in order to solve a problem, gather information, or make decisions (Neu & Reeser, 1997). Information gap activities can be extremely effective in the L2 classroom. They give every student the opportunity to speak in the target language for an extended period of time, which results in students naturally producing more speech than they would otherwise. In addition, speaking with peers is usually less intimidating for the learners than giving a presentation in front of the entire class and being evaluated. Another advantage of information gap activities is that students are forced to communicate effectively because they must make what they are saying comprehensible to others in order to accomplish the task.

4. Steps in Designing a Successful Information Gap Activity

These are the four steps in the process of designing a successful information gap activity:

1. **Task Explanation and Review.** The teacher first explains the activity and reviews any vocabulary potentially needed for the activity.
2. **Modeling.** Next, the teacher focuses learners' attention on the information gap itself so they understand what is expected of them. This is often accomplished by the teacher's modeling the activity in front of the class.
3. **Performing the Task.** Students are divided into pairs or groups and then left to complete the task. The task is designed so that each participant plays an important role and the task cannot be accomplished without everyone's participation.
4. **Teacher monitoring.** During this time it is the teacher's responsibility to monitor student practice and to provide feedback.

Example Activities

Here is an example of an information gap activity that follows the steps above. The purpose of this activity is for students to find out from each other what they did the previous weekend.

1. First the teacher explains the task and reviews any necessary vocabulary. For this activity the teacher may want to emphasize the use of the simple past tense and give examples of its use. If desired, the teacher can present the students with a list of questions they can ask and use as a guide in performing the activity. For example:

- What was the favorite thing you did last weekend?
- What was the least favorite thing you did last weekend?
- What was the most memorable thing you did last weekend?

2. The teacher can model the activity by simply answering the questions above in the appropriate form.

3. Students should then be assigned into pairs and ask the questions of each other. As an additional step, the students can report back on what they learned from each other.

4. The teacher will walk around the room and provide help where needed.

In another type of information gap activity, the students will be asked to come up with their own questions in order to obtain the desired information. For example, they can be given a table that requires them to ask get-to-know-you questions of their classmates in order to complete it:

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Name			
Address			
Phone Number			
Favorite Food			
Favorite Color			

This kind of task will require the students to form questions on their own such as

1. What is your name?
2. What is your address?
3. What is your phone number?
4. What is your favorite food?
5. What is your favorite color?

They have to ask these questions to three different people and record the responses in writing.

A more advanced information gap task could involve students having a discussion to solve a problem. For example, students could decide together what items would be most important for their survival if they were stranded together on a desert island.

5. Use of Information Gap Activities

Information gap activities are appropriate at all learner proficiency levels, from beginning through advanced. This is because the difficulty of the task can be adjusted based on the student's level. Typically, in tasks for beginning-level students, the gap should be small and may require questions and answers of only a word or two (e.g. the cost of an item, an address, a

birthday, or a telephone number). The activity can be used to reinforce previously practiced material and is often done in pairs. In tasks for higher level students, the gap should be larger and therefore more demanding in terms of language required (e.g. following directions to a place). The activity may be structured for students to work in groups of three or four rather than in pairs.

Many information gap activities are highly motivational because of the nature of the different tasks. Activities that require the solving of a problem or a mystery can create a high level of interest. Teachers should first try to determine whether an activity is of an acceptable level of difficulty for their students. If the students are sufficiently prepared for the activity, the level of language accuracy will be acceptable.

Comprehension and Reflection Questions



1. What is the defining characteristic of an information gap activity?
 2. What are the four steps in designing an information gap activity?
 3. What kinds of information gap activities are appropriate for your students?
 4. Describe an information gap activity you might use with your students in the future.
-

Video example

This video shows an information gap exercise that was done with a class of freshman at a university in China-<http://hummac.byu.edu/btrtesol/index.php>. The students are asked to share their likes and dislikes in English with a partner.

Reflection and Responses

Think about each of the following questions related to the video you just watched. Write a sentence or two in response to each one.

1. How did the teacher divide the students into pairs?
2. What was the purpose of the activity?
3. Compare the activity to what you read in the “The Least You Should Know” section above, including the steps of an information gap activity and the characteristics of a successful speaking activity. Were the steps followed? Was the activity successful?

Where to go to learn more:

Connections to other units in this program

Here are some other units in this program that relate to topics we have addressed in this unit.

- Unit 3D, “Correcting language learners’ errors productively, and developing their self-monitoring skills.”

- Unit 4B, “Creating and using exercises for mechanical, meaningful, and communicative practice.”
- Unit 4D, “Encouraging cooperative and collaborative learning to increase student interaction.”
- Unit 6B, “Developing English language learners' speaking skills.”

Online and other electronic resources

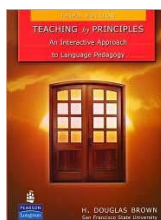
<http://www.cambridge.org/elt/resources/teachersupportplus/>--This website features a number of online booklets including one related to CLT titled “Communicative Language Teaching Today” by Jack C. Richards. It discusses the historical background of CLT as well as current approaches to how it is used.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communicative_language_teaching--This Wikipedia article provides more information about what defines CLT and how it differs from other approaches.

http://bogglesworldesl.com/information_gap.htm--This page introduces several information gap activities and contains printable teaching resources for each activity.

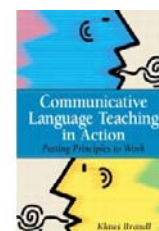
Print and paper-based resources

Here are some published books that have proven to be helpful for learning about communicative language teaching. (All reviews and quotes are from Amazon.com)



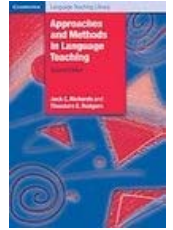
H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (3rd ed.) Pearson ESL, 2007. “A widely acclaimed methodology text used in teacher education programs around the world. This user-friendly textbook offers a comprehensive survey of practical language teaching options, all firmly anchored in accepted principles of language learning and teaching. End-of-chapter exercises give readers opportunities to process material interactively.” ISBN 0136127118.

Klaus Brandl. *Communicative Language Teaching in Action: Putting Principles to Work*. Prentice Hall, 2006. “A basic text that demonstrates principles and practices of communicative language teaching and task-based instruction. Its primary purpose is to serve as a guide for second and foreign language teachers in training or for those who have embarked on a new career as language teachers.” ISBN 0131579061.



Friederike Klippel. *Keep Talking: Communicative fluency activities for language teaching*. Cambridge University Press, 1985. “This is a practical guide to communication activities in the language classroom, suitable for use with students from elementary to advanced level.” ISBN 0521278716.

Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rogers. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. (2nd ed.) Cambridge University Press, 2001. "...surveys the major approaches and methods in language teaching, such as communicative language teaching and the natural approach. The text examines each approach and method in terms of its theory of language and language learning, goals, syllabus, teaching activities, teacher and learner roles, materials, and classroom techniques." ISBN 0521008433.





Basic Training and Resources

for Teaching English to
Speakers of Other Languages

and where to go to
LEARN MORE

by Lynn Henrichsen






Menu:

- [HOME](#)
- [1- BASIC CONCEPTS](#)
- [2- DESIGNING PROGRAMS AND LESSONS](#)
- [3- FUNDAMENTAL TEACHING SKILLS](#)
- [4- KEY PRINCIPLES](#)
- [5- KNOWING YOUR STUDENTS](#)
- [6- DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS](#)
- [7- TEACHING LANGUAGE COMPONENTS](#)
- [8- MEMORABLE, ENJOYABLE LEARNING](#)

TLYSK Unit 15 - Communicative Principles

 **outline** *Scroll down or click on the links below to jump to sections in this unit*

- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [SCENARIO](#)
- [OBJECTIVE OF THIS UNIT](#)
- [THE LEAST YOU SHOULD KNOW](#)
- [COMPREHENSIVE QUESTIONS](#)
- [VIDEO EXAMPLES](#)
- [REFLECTION AND RESPONSES](#)
- [WHERE TO GO TO LEARN MORE](#)
- [CONNECTIONS TO OTHER UNITS IN THIS PROGRAM](#)
- [ONLINE AND OTHER ELECTRONIC RESOURCES](#)
- [PRINT AND PAPER BASED RESOURCES](#)
- [ADDITIONAL REFERENCES](#)

Figure 2. Screen shot of Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises unit online (main page)

Chapter 6—Evaluation and Revision

After my original units were designed, many changes needed to be made. One of the first things to change was the formatting. First, there was a new template for the units, which was applied to the original drafts to improve their appearance. This template was created by a team of two ENGL 418 Visual Rhetoric and Document Design students at BYU (Jake Vane and Lance Dobson) under the direction of my committee chair, Dr. Henrichsen, and their instructor, Dr. Danette Paul of BYU's English Department. It was created in the spring of 2009 and implemented in the fall of 2009, when our original drafts were being created in Ling 678.

There were also issues regarding content. In general, the material was not suitable for the target audience of novice teachers with minimal training. The wording was too complex with too much academic language and too many references to theories. In general, the language needed to be simplified and more concise. Also, there were some issues regarding the amount of content. The units needed to be no more than five pages in length so several pages of the material had to be cut. This was the page limit given by Dr. Henrichsen to keep the units to a length that would be digestible by novices. The material was then screened and only the most important parts were allowed to remain.

A good portion of the editing changes resulted from criticism provided by Dr. Henrichsen, the other members of my committee, and fellow *BTR TESOL* team members. Criticism was also gathered from presentations at I-TESOL 2009, presentations in the Linguistics 377 class, and the 2010 TESOL Convention in Boston. Criticism from each of these events was taken into consideration; however, the vast majority of the comments received came from the novice, volunteer teachers of the Linguistics 377 class. This feedback is described below.

Presentations and Feedback

The most direct feedback specific to the units came from the Ling 377 students. Each of the units was presented three times. The title of the Ling 377 class is *Basic Training in TESOL* and many of the participants were young college students who were about to embark on their first teaching experiences in another country. Included in this group were also volunteers from HELP International, a local non-profit program that sends people abroad to teach English in less-developed countries. For many of these students, this experience would be the first English-teaching experience of their lives. Therefore, the students were a good representation of a portion of the target audience—they were novice teachers with minimal training and experience who were soon going to be teaching English in a foreign country.

Each of the units was presented three times to different groups of these students, and each group filled out a response form that was collected at the end of the presentation. There were three basic questions on the response form: 1) What information was useful to you? 2) Was there information that was not useful to you? If so, what? 3) Do you have questions about the topic that were not answered in the presentation? If so, what?

Although the people in this class represent a portion of the target audience, it was important to analyze and assess their feedback before incorporating it into the units. Before changes were made, their feedback was discussed with Dr. Henrichsen and other student members of the *BTR TESOL* team.

Feedback from the Ling 377 presentations. Some of the most common feedback received about the unit on second language acquisition was regarding the technical terms and theoretical concepts described. Some students in particular did not like the terms *contrastive analysis* and *interlanguage* --they did not find them useful. There were actually very few responses to question 2 (regarding information that was not useful) but one person said, “I probably won’t use

technical terms like contrastive analysis but the basic idea was still helpful.” Another student said he/she could see “less immediate use with the theories presented” but they “thought [the information] was interesting.”

The students quoted above did not like the technical terms used and saw less practical application with the theoretical concepts mentioned. Indeed, the training materials are supposed to provide practical applications for novice teachers and that is what they wanted. The term training refers to those instructional experiences that are focused upon individuals acquiring very specific skills that they will normally apply almost immediately (Smith & Ragan, 1999). Clearly, some of these students did not feel that they would be able to apply some of this information almost immediately, so such information would not be consistent with the purposes of the *BTR TESOL* program. However, I didn't feel that important theoretical concepts related to second language acquisition could be taken out entirely. I also performed a survey (mentioned below) in which contrastive analysis was not rated to be a difficult concept to understand and apply by potential project users but interlanguage was. This provided further justification for including the concept of contrastive analysis but not interlanguage. I did not want to take out the concept of interlanguage because I wanted it to serve as an introduction for the entire unit, because, as Ellis (1997) stated, “the concept of interlanguage offers a general account of how L2 acquisition takes place” (p. 34).

Rather than take the terms of contrastive analysis and interlanguage out of the units, I supplemented them in the section headings. For example, I supplemented the title of the section “Interlanguage” to be “States of learning: Interlanguage.” I did this in a similar way with other section headings. In this way, I provided more information in the headings for the users. This would allow them to not focus on the technical terms and still get an idea of what that section

was about. I also added a paragraph at the end of each section that describes how the concepts can be applied in teaching situations.

Despite the difficulty with the terms, many students did find the content of these sections useful, particularly the ones on interlanguage and contrastive analysis. For example, in response to what information they thought was useful, one student said, “The first part about interlanguage and contrasting languages was interesting. These subjects are good for us to know.” Another student said, “Explaining that the first language is the primary language and that there must be a “jumbled point” in the learning process was important.” Another student mentioned interest in “the parts about interlanguage and that learning a language is a gradual process.” The part of the unit about learner age differences was even more popular and was mentioned by more than half the students as being useful information. One student mentioned as being useful, “learning about the skills that older and younger people have in learning a language and the differences to consider when teaching older and younger people.” Another student said, “it helped me understand the differences between older and younger learners.” Another student said, “it gave me a better idea of how to treat older and younger learners.”

As far as the variables that affect second language acquisition mentioned at the end of the unit, one student said, “I appreciated learning how to deal with the different variables that affect language acquisition”. Another student mentioned as useful, “learning more about how languages are acquired in theory and the qualities of the student.”

For the unit on communicative language teaching and information gap activities, the students were particularly excited about the examples of information gap activities that were presented. They were very interested in example activities that they could apply directly to their teaching. This is consistent with the purpose of the *BTR TESOL* program to provide training for

novice teachers. As such, these experiences should usually be able to be applied almost immediately (Smith & Ragan, 1999). For example, one student said the most important information presented was the “examples of information gap activities and how to design one.” Another student said, “recognizing that communication happens with errors and that repeated errors can be corrected in group settings.” Another student mentioned, “realizing that communication is given more importance than perfect grammar.” Finally, a couple of students were impressed with the idea of “making meaningful communication the goal of classroom activities.” In summary, many students were interested in the idea of not focusing on error correction during communicative tasks and they were very interested in information gap activities. Five students mentioned that they were interested in the concept of communicative language teaching in general and the basic principles of CLT.

Results of feedback from the Ling 377 presentations. Most of the feedback received was positive. Perhaps this is because the listeners were sympathetic to the presenter and didn't want to leave a lot of negative comments. Regardless, the feedback received did reinforce the usefulness of each of the concepts selected for the target audience for both of the units. There didn't seem to be any concepts selected that were not useful to the students. Their desire for immediate, practical application was reflected in their comments (see above), but many were interested in the more theoretical concepts as well.

The results from these presentations were discussed with Dr. Henrichsen and the *BTR TESOL* team. It was brought to my attention that the term “second language transfer” should be used instead of “contrastive analysis” to introduce the examples presented in that section. Contrastive analysis is a set of procedures for comparing and contrasting the linguistic systems of two languages in order to identify their structural similarities and differences (Ellis, 1997).

These are procedures that are used to predict the effects of second language interference. It is not these procedures that are discussed in the unit, but simply the concept of second language interference in the forms of positive and negative transfer. The term “interference” was later replaced with “influence” in an attempt to sound less technical for the novice teachers.

During this meeting, it was suggested by Dr. Henrichsen that the section on the similarities and differences between older learners might have been too long. This is especially due to the fact that there are two separate *BTR TESOL* units that deal with each of these subjects. So it was determined to shorten this section and make room for other material that was closely tied to second language acquisition theory. However, this change was not actually made until after I had met with the other committee members and received feedback.

Regarding the feedback received, it is important to consider that the students in Ling 377 represented only a portion of the target audience. They were of a similar age, enrolled in university programs, and all involved in the same teaching programs. They were also all native speakers of English. It is important to realize that other pilot users who are older or come from different backgrounds may have different reactions to the content. Because of this, there is a place on the *BTR TESOL* website (<http://hummac.byu.edu/btrtesol/index.php>) for future pilot users to leave their comments and suggestions for the improvement of the units.

Additional editing as a result of committee feedback. The above-mentioned changes were made between April and June 2010. The revised version was submitted to the committee members on June 8, 2010 for approval. However, there were some important changes that they recommended for the units before the defense could be scheduled. First, they wanted to see more justification for the selection of the topics for each unit. They specifically wanted to see a stronger literature review with more justification from different experts in the field. They also

wanted to see a clear rationale for why some topics were selected and others weren't. They also recommended that I perform a survey of second language acquisition topics. This survey is described in the following section. In addition, they made suggestions about other topics that could be included in the unit on second language acquisition.

As a result, I performed the second language acquisition topic analysis survey to get a sense of what potential project users thought about the usefulness and relevance of many second language acquisition topics. The committee also wanted to see a stronger connection between the literature review and the content of the units and a clearer explanation of the rationale I used for topic selection. As a result, I included more information and references in the literature review to justify and explain my choices. I explained more fully my selections and provided reasons for not including important topics that could have been included. I also changed the content of the units and introduced several new topics. These are described more fully in the section entitled "Major Edits" below.

Second Language Acquisition Topic Analysis Survey

To get a sense of what topics would be the most relevant to include I conducted a survey. To create the survey instrument itself, I examined the tables of contents, glossaries, and indices of several leading textbooks on the subject. I noticed which terms commonly appeared in each text and also the manner and order in which they were treated. One of my committee members, Dr. Dewey, helped me in this process. He also made some suggestions about what he thought I should include, based on his review of leading textbooks. Using this information, I created a table that was limited to 30 of the most prominent terms from the texts, such as interlanguage or scaffolding. These terms were ones that appeared prominently in all of the textbooks we surveyed. It was not a perfect system, but the idea was to get a general idea of what potential

project users thought about some prominent second language acquisition terms that could be included in the unit. I thought that 30 would be a practical number of terms to include as I was only going to be able to include up to 20 terms in the unit itself due to space constraints. I also thought that 30 terms would be a practical number for the survey. The list created included a few more terms than 30 but was reduced to 30 by Dr. Dewey based on his judgment of which would be the most relevant terms to include. The table I created was submitted to Dr. Dewey and was approved by him to be used as the basis for my survey after he made a few revisions. In the table, I included the term itself, a simple definition of the term, and also three response items that I asked others to rate using a 5-point Likert scale. The participants rated each of the response items on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing “very easy to understand” and 5 representing “very difficult to understand.” These responses were recorded in a spreadsheet and the simple averages for each term as rated by all the participants were calculated.

In Table 2 a few of the sample items appear. (For the complete table, see Appendix C).

Table 2
Sample from Survey of Second Language Acquisition Terms

Term	Definition	How easy is this term to understand? 1=very easy 5=very hard	How easy would it be for you to come up with teaching applications with this term? 1=very easy 5=very hard	How well do you think you could apply such applications in your teaching? 1=very easy 5=very hard
Universal grammar	The concept that there is a set of innate grammar principles common to all languages	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Feedback	Information provided to the learner about their performance	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Chunking	Presenting and learning groups of words together	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

The survey participants were a convenience sample of 10 undergraduate students at Brigham Young University, none of whom were majoring in teaching. They were stopped on campus and asked to participate in the survey. I chose to stop students on campus because students from various backgrounds participate in ESL teaching experiences despite having never taught before. I found students such as these in the Ling 377 class as well as among the HELP International volunteers. I specifically didn't choose students who were majoring in teaching or linguistics because they may have already been familiar with at least some of the terms in the table. I wanted to select students who most likely had never seen any of these terms before. The *BTR TESOL* units are written for whom at least most of the information may be completely new. I wanted this convenience sample to be a group of people who similarly had not seen these terms before.

They rated how easy they thought each term and definition were to understand, how easy they thought it would be to come up with teaching applications related to each term, and how effective they thought these applications would be in teaching. The ensuing results provided information about what some potential project users thought about the terms that were considered to be included in the units in order to answer Troike's three basic questions "What a learner comes to know, how they come to know it, and why some learners are more successful than others" (Troike, 2006, p. 2) (see Literature Review—Second Language Acquisition). The average rating for the first response question "How easy is it for you to understand this term" was 2.09. The average rating for items 2 "How easy is it for you to come up with applications for this term" and 3 "How effective do you think these applications would be" was 2.43 and 2.55, respectively. These averages show that the participants thought it was easier to understand the definitions of each term than to create applications for them and apply them in teaching

situations. All of the terms selected for the unit were rated to be both easier to understand and apply relative to the other terms in the survey, with the exception of positive and negative transfer.

In general, the results confirmed that the survey participants thought the topics I had selected were understandable and easy to apply. The notable exceptions of positive and negative transfer were rated as being relatively difficult in all three categories. These terms were used to introduce and reinforce the broader concept of first language influence, which was not rated as being as difficult to apply. In order to support the users' learning and understanding of these terms, examples of positive and negative transfer are presented in the unit.

Limitations to the survey. There at least several key limitations to the survey of second language acquisition topics. First, the students were not randomly selected. This could have increased the generalizability of the results. Also, the number of survey participants was quite small. A sample of 10 provided some useful information but a sample of 20 or 30 would have been much better.

In addition to the limitations regarding the size of the sample, the students selected only represent a small percentage of the potential project users for the *BTR TESOL* project. Many future project users may actually be native speakers of languages other than English. Potential project users also may have more or less education than the students selected for the survey and may also be of different ages. It would have been beneficial to gather a larger and more representative sample of the target audience, thus increasing generalizability. This was not done because it was not sufficiently considered at the time the survey was performed.

Another limitation of the survey is that the directions for the survey may have not been clear or at least they may have been inconsistent. The rating scales for each of the survey items should

have been clearly labeled for all three items rather than just the first one. I explained the directions to the different groups of students orally and sometimes provided clarification to them while they were taking the survey. To have had more consistency with the instruction provided to them, I could have written the directions clearly at the top of the survey rather than having to explain the directions to them orally.

Another limitation to the survey, and perhaps one of the greatest limitations to the efficacy of its implementation is that the survey was performed after the topics had been selected and the units had been written. It would have been more valuable to perform the survey before the writing process began. It would have been easier, therefore, to incorporate the results into the content of the units.

Another limitation is the process I underwent to arrive at the 30 terms that were used for the survey. The method I used involved a lot of subjective decisions on my part. As a result, there could be some important terms that I failed to recognize that could have been beneficial to us for the purposes of my project.

Results of the survey. For the most part, the survey results confirmed that the topics selected would be appropriate to include in the units. I had to provide further justification for including the terms *interlanguage*, *i + 1*, and *fossilization* in the units as these were rated to be more difficult to understand and apply by the survey participants. The survey also indicated that perhaps there were some additional terms being considered for inclusion in the unit would be appropriate as well. These terms are *scaffolding and chunking*. Ultimately, the survey results did not change which items were selected for inclusion. But it did provide information about what potential project users might think about each of the topics presented. For the topics that were rated as being more difficult, I needed to provide further justification for their inclusion in the

unit and ensure they were explained in a simple manner. For the complete results of the survey, see Appendix D: Results of Second Language Acquisition Terms Survey.

Reading level difficulty. One of the main editing tasks was to simplify the wording of the units. I checked the difficulty of the original drafts using a composite of the Flesch-Kincaid, Gunning-Fog, Coleman-Liau, SMOG and Automated Readability scoring systems. This was achieved using a website program found at <http://www.addedbytes.com/code/readability-score/>. The resulting overall composite scores represent the average grade level for each of the original drafts of the units. The results of the analysis were 11.70 and 10.70 for the SLA and CLT units respectively. After all the revisions, the average grade levels of the current drafts of the SLA and CLT units are 10.14 and 10.28, respectively. This means that both of the units were simplified as a result of editing changes with the greatest simplification occurring in the SLA unit. The numbers 10.14 and 10.28 signify that both of the units are currently written at approximately a 10th grade reading level.

Edits—Second Language Acquisition

There were many changes that were made to each of the *BTR TESOL* Units throughout the editing process. The following changes are examples of some of the changes that were made.

Some of the major edits involved simplifying the language and vocabulary to be appropriate for project users. On the first page I changed the word “ponder” to “think” as the latter is in more common use. Reflection questions were also added to the end of the story for users to think more about the situation presented. After that, I changed the format for the “Objectives of the Unit” section to be more understandable. Instead of repeating the word “understand” and thus being redundant, this part was formatted to be more clear and direct. I eventually changed the objectives in both units from “being able to understand” to “being able to *apply* the following

information.” This is consistent with the problem-solving approach of the *BTR TESOL* program. The goal is for learners to be able to use the knowledge they learn to solve real problems in their teaching situations. In “The Least You Should Know” section I added a short summary of the different sections of the unit giving the users an idea of the entire scope of what would be covered in the unit.

In the “Components of Language” section, I simplified the vocabulary. I changed the title to “Aspects of Language” and reduced the size of this section by half. I moved the academic titles of the components into parenthesis and added simplified titles that novice teachers are more likely to understand. Later, this section was simplified even more to include only the specific language aspects I had chosen accompanied by brief explanations. I eliminated the technical terms in parenthesis and the bullet points in the formatting. For example, in the original draft, *vocabulary* is introduced as follows:

Vocabulary (Lexicon)

- Word meaning
- Pronunciation and spelling
- Part of speech (grammatical category)
- Possible occurrence in combination with other words and in idioms

In the current draft of the unit it is introduced as

Vocabulary—Words, their meaning, and possible occurrences in combination with other words.

I simplified all of the “Aspects of Language” in a similar manner, resulting in a great simplification of the information presented in the unit. These changes resulted in space that made it easier to include more information about other topics in the unit as well. Comprehension and reflection questions were also added at the end of this section.

The language of the “Interlanguage” and “Contrastive Analysis” sections also had to be modified. I simplified the vocabulary in each, trying to avoid the theoretical jargon typically used to describe them. I eventually replaced the term contrastive analysis entirely with the term second language interference. The term *interference* was later changed to *influence* in an attempt to sound less technical. I also deleted a somewhat complicated example of contrastive analysis that was not necessary for the unit and for which there wasn’t room. Along with this example, references to form, meaning, and distribution were taken out. These were taken out mainly due to the complexity of the explanations that would have to be provided to explain them.

The ensuing section, “Productive vs. Receptive Knowledge,” was deleted because it was not deemed essential for the unit and because of the limited space available. It was also not deemed essential because my committee chair and I did not consider it an important concept to include for providing training for novice teachers. It also was not related as much with the other sections and as such may have seemed out of place in the unit.

The section on “The Advantages of Older and Younger Learners” was shortened to be more concise. The word count in this section went from 550 words to 300. The “Variables that Affect Second Language Acquisition” section was also simplified. Overall, the language was edited to be more concise and easy to understand. Some of the theoretical terms were taken out as well. For example, significant changes were made to the explanations of introverted and extroverted personality styles. I took a lot of the redundant information out resulting in a word reduction of about 100 words in that section alone.

These changes were the result of feedback from committee members and also from the Ling 377 presentations mentioned above. Originally, there was more information in this section (see Appendix B: Original Drafts of Units).

A video section with reflection questions was added but was later replaced by sound files. The original video clips were examples of the different instructional formats that can be used with younger and older learners. I decided these clips were more useful for Unit 4F: Teaching Styles. The sound files were chosen to show the direct influence that L1 can have on L2 speech production. Also added in the editing was a longer list of suggested resources along with current pictures of each book cover. The books chosen were books that I had used as sources in the creation of the units. Many of these were also recommended by my professors. I also included several online resources. These were chosen because they seem to be stable websites and provide good information for novice teachers. In later drafts, I included more information about each website so project users would have a better idea of what they contained.

In the latest draft of the unit, I greatly shortened the list of language components and changed the title to “Language Aspects.” This was because all the components previously mentioned could be simplified and summarized so as to not take up so much room in the unit. This simplification and summarization created more space which made it possible to include other concepts in the unit. I also shortened the sections on first language influence and the section that discusses age differences among learners. These sections were deemed to be too long by committee members for the purposes of the unit. They were shortened to be more concise and include the most important and relevant information.

I then added a section entitled “Scaffolding and the concept of $i + 1$ ”. This section also makes mention of input, interaction, and output and has a small paragraph about how these concepts can be applied. I further included a small paragraph on chunking. This was included to introduce project users to the importance of language chunks and make them aware that they can

use them in their teaching. These additions were made at the recommendation of project users to include more important second language acquisition terms in the unit.

Edits—Communicative Language Teaching and Information Gap Exercises

Similar corrections were made to the language of this unit, although there was less theoretical language to take out than in the previous unit. I did this to make the language of the units to be at an appropriate level for project users. Once again, reflection questions were added after the opening scenario and the “Objectives of the Unit” section was modified to be more clear and concise. Rather than only suggest that the objective for project users was to understand the material, the verb “understand” was changed to “apply”. This emphasized the fact that the goal for project users is to apply the information that they learn from the units. The title of the “Basic Premises of CLT” was edited to be the “Basic Principles of CLT.” This was done to make the title more readable and understandable. The content of this section was changed to be more readably and understandable as well. For example, the first principle of CLT in the original draft reads as follows:

1. **Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.** This contrasts with earlier ideas that learners must first acquire formal knowledge of the language (structures, grammatical systems, etc.) before they are ready to communicate. In CLT, learners are encouraged to practice communicating during all stages of learning including the beginning stages.

It now reads as follows:

1. **People learn a language through using it to communicate.** It was once widely thought that learners must first have a strong knowledge of grammar before they were ready to communicate. In CLT, learners are encouraged to practice communicating during all stages of

the learning process, including the beginning stages, regardless of their grammar ability (see unit 4B: Types of Practice).

Although the information contained in both of these examples is essentially the same, the second one is easier to read. Similar changes to the kind and style of language used in the units was made throughout both of my *BTR TESOL* units.

The fifth basic principle of CLT was deleted entirely because I deemed it unessential for the unit and overcomplicated for novice teachers. It was deleted because it involves an explanation of the relationship among the four modalities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also suggested that these four modalities *are* the basic components of communicative competence which idea is inconsistent with other literature on the topic (Savignon, 2001).

The “Teacher and Learner Roles in CLT” section was modified, mainly to be more complete. In the original draft of this unit, only three roles were mentioned for teachers and learners. In the current version of the unit, eight different roles are mentioned. These changes were made at the suggestion of committee members and were guided by further literature review of this topic. The subheadings were changed and the writing was made more concise with more simple and clear explanations for each. A short section was added titled, “Possible differences from students’ expectations.” This concept was alluded to at the beginning of the section. It was included because it is important for the users to know that learners in different settings may not be accustomed to CLT methods and may not adapt to them very readily.

The “Information Gap Activities” section was shortened and simplified. For example, a reference to “negotiating meaning” was deleted. The remainder of the section already had fairly simple language so it was not modified as much as the other sections. The example information gap activities were kept since they were deemed to be useful by the trial users. However, the

entire section titled, “Characteristics of a successful speaking activity” was deleted at the recommendation of committee members. The committee and I decided that the information included in this section would be more appropriate in *BTR TESOL* Unit 6B: Developing English Language Learners' Speaking Skills. A video clip was added with corresponding comprehension and reflection questions, and a more complete list of recommended resources was compiled with accompanying pictures of the current book covers. Additionally, more information was added to the suggested online resources presented at the end of the unit. I added this information at the recommendation of committee members to provide more useful information about the resources for project users.

Summary

I made several key changes to the units as a result of feedback from others. These were the result of pilot testing and committee feedback. Major changes were made to the content of the units and the language used to present them. The overall language of the units was simplified to be easier to read and apply by the project users. Additional information was also added to the units to make them more complete. I also made significant changes to the project write-up. The literature was doubled in size and I made a stronger connection between the literature review and the content of the units. To this end, I also conducted a second language acquisition topic analysis survey to get a better sense of what topics would be most useful to project users to include in the units.

This chapter has described the major evaluation that the units underwent in their development and the implementation and consideration of feedback received. It has also described some of the major editing changes that were made to the units in their development.

The final chapter will discuss the lessons I learned from working on this project and some recommendations I have for future *BTR TESOL* team members.

Chapter 7—Lessons Learned and Recommendations

This chapter discusses the main lessons I learned from working on the project and also contains recommendations for future *BTR TESOL* team members who will complete the program and revise it in the future.

Lessons Learned

I learned many things throughout the course of this project. However, a few things were the most important. These are outlined below.

Reviewing the literature. In order to design the units, I had to research the topics that were going to be covered. I had already taken graduate level courses on second language acquisition and teaching methods, which provided me with a background of knowledge from which to work. However, in order to get a better sense of what topics to include in the units, and increase my knowledge of the subject matter in general, I needed to study the potential topics in more detail. After the units were created, I needed to go back and do further study to make sure the topics I had selected were the most appropriate for the purposes of the project. I also piloted the topics in a survey completed by undergraduate university students. As a result, numerous changes were made to the content of the units. These are mentioned in Chapter 6—Evaluation and Revision.

Through studying the resources I had selected for the project, I was able to gain a better understanding of the respective fields of second language acquisition and communicative language teaching in general. I was able to study some articles and books by prominent names in the fields I was researching, such as Jack Richards, Rod Ellis, and Stephen Krashen. Through this study, I gained a better and more complete understanding of their work and viewpoints on both the subject of second language acquisition and communicative language teaching.

Of course, there is still much more that I could learn about each of these subjects. However, my committee members told me that I needed to become an expert in these two fields beyond what other graduate students, who were not creating such a project, would be. I feel that I have done that.

The distillation process: comparing information about the topics. I also gained from the experience of comparing the information from different resources and discovering similarities and differences among the information I found. For example, there are numerous possible ways of defining communicative language teaching and a plethora of interpretations and classroom applications (Richards, 2006). Part of my job for this project was to identify some key points about CLT on which professionals in the field agree and then summarize and distill that information and make it accessible for the target audience of novice teachers. For the field of CLT, I actually used resources that already were attempting to summarize CLT's defining characteristics and then compared the information from those resources together and then summarized the main points they had in common.

For the unit on second language acquisition, I also benefitted from the distillation process. When I surveyed the potential topics for the second time, I found that there were many different topics that could have been included in the unit. The study of second language acquisition is a very broad field. I did notice that there were some topics that seemed to be more prominent than others in the field. I was especially aided by Rod Ellis' (1997) book, *Second Language Acquisition*, which is part of the *Oxford Introductions to Language Study* series. Not only did this resource introduce many of the important topics related to second language acquisition, but it did so in such a way that it was clear to see the importance of each one and how knowledge of these topics could be applied to teaching situations.

Simplifying and summarizing information. One of the main challenges of this project involved condensing a large amount of potential information into a small space. First, only a narrow range of topics could be selected for the units. Of the topics that were selected, these too had to be greatly condensed and simplified. Previously, I had been so used to writing in an academic style throughout the course of my education that it was quite a challenge to simplify the language for the content of the units. I had actually never participated in such an activity before. Perhaps as a result, the original drafts of the units were off target in terms of the nature of the language used. They were too complicated and academic. Each subsequent draft became slightly more simple until arriving at the final product. In the course of the writing, I learned how to simplify concepts and even how to simplify academic terms and labels that may be confusing for others who are not familiar with them or who are not familiar with academic language in general. I learned that it is acceptable and sometimes even preferable to use less than technical language in order to help others understand better. During the course of this process I also learned how to tailor my work for a target audience.

Tailoring your work for a target audience. In order to create a product that could be used by novice teachers, I first had to get to know the target audience. I was able to do this on several occasions. The main experience I had with this was when I presented both units on three separate occasions for a group of volunteers who were going to be teaching English abroad for the first time. Before the presentation, I already had a clear idea of what content I wanted to present. However, I had not yet piloted the units in a formal presentation in front of part of the target audience. It was a learning experience and gave me insights about the purpose of my project and the nature of the target audience. Previously, I had been familiar with who the target audience was in terms of a verbal description, but I had never interacted with them firsthand before. As

soon as I walked in the room, I got a sense that I should become more familiar with the target audience. I also felt that what I was about to present might not be focused enough towards their particular needs. I realized that I probably had not done a good enough job up to that point of condensing the academic topics I had been studying into something that could be used readily by novice teachers. I guessed that I would have to modify my presentation somewhat from what I thought I would present and I think my assumptions proved to be correct. In fact, based on the feedback from some of the audience, I don't think I modified it enough to meet their needs. In general, they wanted it to be less theoretical and more applicable to their immediate teaching needs. I needed to present the parts of the unit that would be the easiest to understand and apply by all the members of the audience.

What I discovered from this experience is that the audience had a need for something that was indeed basic, digestible, and something that they could take home with them and apply to their teaching situations. They particularly wanted things that were highly applicable and could be put into practice almost immediately. This is consistent with the purpose of the *BTR TESOL* program to provide training for novice teachers. The training provided should be able to be applied almost immediately (Smith & Ragan, 1999). The content of the units should also be based on problem-based learning. The units should help project users solve problems they have or may encounter in their teaching related to the topics presented in the units. Because of these needs, in the presentation of the unit on second language acquisition, I tried to go quickly through the brief explanations of theoretical concepts I had previously planned to present and get to the second part of the unit, which had to do with learner variables. In their comments on the feedback forms they submitted at the end, I found that the audience was not very interested in the

theoretical names and concepts as much as they were in the description of learner variables. I think they felt this would be more applicable to their teaching.

A similar thing occurred when I presented the unit on communicative language teaching and information gap activities. Students were less interested in the description of communicative language teaching and the explanations of possible activities as they were in the performance of the activities themselves. In fact, the most popular part of both presentations was when I had them participate in an information gap activity in a foreign language with the person sitting next to them. They really enjoyed this experience and felt like it put them in their future students' shoes. Also, because they actually performed the activity themselves, they will probably be more likely to remember this experience how to perform it with other people.

When I went back to the units for editing, I already knew some of the key changes I needed to make. I also felt like I was creating this project for real people and for a definite purpose—something tangible and for practical use. I also had a better idea of how to modify my future presentations.

Working in a group and the importance of group work. In the spring of 2009, those of us who were going to begin working on the *BTR TESOL* project decided that we would hold meetings to help each other and discuss issues related to the project. Although we did meet a couple of times as a team in the spring of 2009, before we began drafting the units, the initial drafting of the units was something that was done individually. It wasn't until the fall of 2009 that our *BTR TESOL* team began holding regular meetings and working together in earnest.

Before we started meeting together regularly, I had never thought about the power of working together with others on this project. In fact, I was surprised when Dr. Henrichsen decided to have us hold weekly team meetings. Some of the main things these meetings provided

were energy, excitement, and motivation. There is a sharing of energy that occurs as members of a group come together for a common purpose. The main purpose of the meetings was to give us guidance and direction and to help us collaborate on the project together. Dr. Henrichsen guided the meetings at first, but eventually left us to direct the meetings on our own.

Almost every week for a period of several months we had our meetings. During the course of this time, I learned how much work goes into the creation of such a project. There were many aspects that I hadn't thought of before, such as the need for a prospectus, competitor evaluations, and pilot testing. Each of these were outlined in the meetings and often different assignments were delegated to different individuals to complete before we met together again. One of the main things we accomplished as a group was a number of additions to the project prospectus. Also, we shared our initial presentations of our units with each other before they were completed. This helped give us experience presenting and opened the way for suggestions from other group members. During these experiences, we were able to help and support one another in our individual projects.

These group experiences also helped me to realize that group work is the preferred framework for working on a project. Having completed most of the initial work on my own, I thought that there was not going to be a lot of involvement with other people. However, I realized that there are many positive benefits from working in groups. Some of these are mentioned above. I have also learned that working in groups collectively enables you to do better work and helps to make your experiences more meaningful as you help each other to succeed.

I also realized that group work has its limitations. That is, there is a point to which group work can be effective. As we neared completion of our units, I felt that the rest of the finalizing

work was going to be done among our respective committees and ourselves. We had been able to help each other to a point, but the weekly meetings were no longer as effective.

Applications for teaching and teacher training. One of my purposes in choosing this project was to help me be a better teacher. I wanted to solidify the information for myself and learn how to present it to others. I wanted to make it accessible to the target audience in a way that an effective teacher trainer would do. In so doing, I hope that my experiences will be beneficial for teaching training opportunities in the future. I hope that I will be able present information in such a way that others can understand. Although I only did two units for the *BTR TESOL* project, I look forward to the completion of the entire project as I believe it will be a good tool to use in the future. And I hope that I can apply the collective work of our team to future teaching training situations, particularly the condensed and simplified information they have provided. I think that in the future the *BTR TESOL* project will be used as a reference guide for novice teachers as well as teacher trainers.

Recommendations for Future Team Members

The creation phase of the *BTR TESOL* project will continue for at least another year. After that, there will need to be more revisions based on need and feedback received from pilot users. As of now, this is an ongoing project. In that light, I have several suggestions for future team members. It is not coincidental that these are similar to the items mentioned above. I think the most important things they should learn and do are the following:

1. Consult the best resources and select the most appropriate content. Before you begin the creation of your units, identify which resources will be the best to use. Receive the recommendations of your committee members to help you in this process. Once these resources are identified, try to identify those principles that will be the most useful for your target audience

to learn about and apply. Make sure you choose ones that are prominent in research literature and ones that you can easily justify including in your units. Make sure that you can provide a clear rationale for why you chose to include or not include the topics you did or didn't include. Make sure that what you select is not already included in other units of the *BTR TESOL* program. If there are other units that have content that is related to the content of your units, make sure you list these in your units as places that project users can go to learn more.

2. Suggestions for writing the content of the unit. Choose opening scenarios that are appropriate for your units and ones that introduce the basic principles that you are going to introduce in your units. You can write a scenario from your own experience or the experience of someone else. You can also invent a scenario that fits the purposes of your units. The scenario does not have to be real but it does need to be strongly related to the content of your units.

Write objectives for the project users that are clear and require them to apply the information presented in the units. When writing about the basic principles in your units, try to avoid theoretical jargon and concepts that may be confusing for the target audience. Work with your committee chair to select media clips that are the most appropriate for your units and provide sufficient explanations of them in your units so that project users can make connections with them and the content and objectives of the units. Make sure that the media clips have a strong connection with the units and a very clear purpose for being used. The media clips I used were from the files of my committee chair and were recommended by him. However, you can choose and even create your own media clips if you so desire.

Finally, when selecting the resources for project users to go to learn more, use your best judgment based on what you know about the target audience, what you know about the content of the resources, and the recommendations from your committee.

3. Know your target audience. The more pilot testing done and presenting of your work you carry out, the more closely you will come to know your target audience. By knowing whom you are creating for, you will have a better sense of what to create. This will allow you to make a product that will end up being what it should be in the final result. Share as much information with the intended audience as possible and receive and implement their feedback as much as you can. There are several ways in which this can be achieved. First, take advantage of opportunities to share your work at conferences such as TESOL and I-TESOL. Also, take advantages of opportunities to share your work with the Ling 377 class (if possible) or a similar group of students or volunteers who are going to teach abroad. Look for other ways to connect with the target audience, including those who live overseas. Tell people about the *BTR TESOL* website and ask the to tell other people about it. One way in which feedback can be collected is directly through the website.

4. Keep the audience in mind. As you work on the project, remember whom you are creating the project for and what their needs are. Keep in mind that the target audience is novice teachers with little or no training in the field. In each step of the creation process, check to make sure that what you are creating is consistent with what you know about the target audience and their needs. Consider the target audience in your selection of every aspect of your unit, for example, opening scenarios, objective, reflection questions, unit content, and audio or video clips. Make sure the language of your units is simple enough that someone who has not finished high school could be able to read it. Use readability measures such as the one found at <http://www.addedbytes.com/code/readability-score/> to ensure that the readability is at about a 9th grade level. Do not write the content of your units as you would a graduate paper or at a level

that is appropriate for TESOL professors or graduate students. If you do, you will have to extensive revisions to your work later on.

5. Learn to work with and get help from your group members. If you need any help or suggestions about your project, you can get help from your *BTR TESOL* group members who are working on this project with you. Through the process of presenting our units to each other, we were able to get experience that helped us become more aware of areas in which we could improve our presentations. We also collaborated on completing the prospectus for the project. Furthermore, we have occasionally coordinated what information should be included in each of the units with each other. This involved sharing and transferring information from one unit to another. The *BTR TESOL* group members are a team and the final product should be a unified and cohesive whole.

6. Learn to work with your committee. Something I should have done from the beginning is to have more contact with all the members of the committee. I worked mostly with my committee chair throughout the duration of the project. When I submitted the write-up to the other two members for approval, they had serious concerns about the project that could have been addressed earlier on. Some of the main concerns were that I didn't know enough about the topics in the units and there were concerns about the process I underwent in the topic selection process. There were concerns that the review of literature was not complete and that in it, I did not provide sufficient justification for my decisions regarding the topics that were and were not included. Additionally, there were concerns that the connection between the process I underwent in the topic selection process, the literature review, and the actual content of the units needed to be stronger. As a result of these concerns, I performed major revisions to the project write-up and put in many more hours and worked for several more months on the project. If I had contacted

the other members of my committee earlier, I may not have had to do so much backtracking and revising of the units. So, it's important to have frequent contact with all the members of the committee to ensure that everyone feels satisfied with the direction the project is moving in. This can help to avoid any delays or setbacks along the way.

Conclusion

The *BTR TESOL* program seeks to fill an important need in the lives of novice teachers and their students. The need is great. Currently, many untrained or minimally trained people teach ESL/EFL in community programs, commercial schools, public libraries, churches, homes, language schools abroad, etc. The *BTR TESOL* program is designed for the thousands of untrained or minimally trained teachers of ESL (in the United States and other English-language environments) and EFL (in other settings around the world). It will also be useful for untrained people who on the verge of teaching ESL/EFL. For various reasons (finances, timing, location), most of these teachers are unable to enroll in full-scale TESOL teacher-preparation programs, but they still need and want basic training in effective classroom procedures and materials, as well as in the teaching and learning principles behind them.

The number of people who could potentially benefit from this project is large and so hopefully what has been created in this project will be able to improve the lives of many people. The purpose of the project is clear: to provide quality training to novice teachers who would have limited access to it otherwise. It seeks to present the most important basic principles that novice teachers should know in order to prepare them for their ESL teaching experiences and be successful in them. It also seeks to be a cohesive program with interconnected units and valuable lists of resources for further study that novice teachers can seek out if desired.

In short, the *BTR TESOL* program seeks to make the world a better place by filling the gap in existing training materials for novice ESL teachers and by providing quality training in ESL instruction for teachers around the globe. I am happy to have been part of the development of this *BTR TESOL* project and to have contributed to it as I carried out the requirements for my TESOL MA project.

References

- Breen, M. & Candlin, C. (1980). The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 89-112.
- Brown, H. D. (2006). *Principles of language learning and teaching (5th edition)*. New York: Pearson ESL.
- Brown H. D. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language teaching and pedagogy (3rd Edition)*. New York: Pearson ESL.
- Cazden, C. B. (1983). Adult assistance to language development: Scaffolds, models, and direct instruction. In R. P. Parker & F. A. Davis (Eds.), *Developing literacy: Young children's use of language* (pp. 3-17). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language (3rd Edition)*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Center for Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education. (1986). Adult literacy programs; Services, persons served, and volunteers. *OERI Bulletin*. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED268387)
- De Bot, K. & Verspoor, M. (2005). *Second language acquisition*. New York: Routledge.
- Doughty, C. & Pica, T. (1986). Information gap tasks: Do they facilitate second language acquisition? *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 305-325.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *Second language acquisition (Oxford introductions to language study)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gass, S. & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course*.

- (3rd edition). London: Routledge.
- Gleason, J. B. (2005). *The development of language (7th edition)*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching (4th Edition)*. New York: Pearson.
- Harrington, M. & McLaughlin, B. (1989). Second-Language Acquisition. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 10*, 122-134.
- Henrichsen, L. (2008). A flexible, hybrid approach to providing basic training and resource connections for novice ESL/EFL teachers. In K. McFerrin et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2008* (pp. 430-435). Chesapeake, VA: AACE.
- Klippel, F. (1985). *Keep talking: Communicative fluency activities for language teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned (3rd edition)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Neu, H. & Reeser, T. W. (1997). *Parle-moi un peu!: Information gap activities for beginning French classes*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Novice. n. d. In *The Free Dictionary*. Retrieved June 1, 2010, from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/novice>.
- O' Grady, W. & Archibald, J. (2005). *Contemporary linguistics (5th edition)*. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin.
- Raptou, V. (2001). *Using information gap activities in the classroom*. Retrieved July 22, 2009 from Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers website: <http://www.caslt.org/Print/gapp.htm>
- Richards, J. C. & Rogers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching (2nd*

- edition*). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2008). *Moving beyond the plateau: From intermediate to advanced levels in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Savignon, S. (2001). Communicative language teaching in the 21st century. In M. A. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language (3rd edition)* (pp. 13-28). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Saville-Troike, M. (2006). *Introducing second language acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schutz, R. (2007, July 2). *Stephen Krashen's theory of second language acquisition*. Retrieved July 3, 2010 from English Made in Brazil website: <http://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html>
- Smith, P. L., & Ragan, T. J. (1999). *Instructional design*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Spada, N. (2007). *International handbook of English language teaching*. New York: Springer Publishing.
- Swann, M. & Smith, Bernard. (2002). *Learner English (2nd edition)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Warschauer, M. (2000). The changing global economy and the future of English teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 511-535.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1997). *Second language acquisition (Oxford introductions to language study)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix A: *BTR TESOL* Program Prospectus

Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More

Prospectus prepared by

Dr. Lynn Henrichsen and the *BTR TESOL* Team (names below)

Department of Linguistics and English Language

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602

801-422-2937, Lynn_Henrichsen@byu.edu

Product Overview

Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language; The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More is a paper book and website (supplemented by video clips) that utilizes a minimalist, connectivist approach to helping minimally trained, novice ESL/EFL teachers be more effective, professional, and successful. It is usable in two ways: in a traditional, face-to-face class with a teacher and regular meetings, or by independent self-study, according to an individual's particular interests, needs, and schedule.

Rationale

Many countries in the world are lacking professional teachers of the English language. Because of this, many schools decide to employ untrained people or novices (mostly native speakers) who are willing to teach English in spite of the fact that they lack teaching education and experiences. Nevertheless, teaching English is more than just speaking the language

(Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003, p. 341). It requires knowledge and experiences in many areas such as curriculum design, material development, teaching methods for grammar, reading, listening, speaking, and effective writing. Gilbertson (2002) states that in some instances untrained teachers can do more harm than good (p. iii). That is why it is necessary to provide specific guidelines to help inexperienced and nonprofessional teachers with the challenges of this profession. Currently, as expressed by leaders in the linguistic field such as Diane-Larsen Freeman, very few materials are available that would serve as a guideline to novices who are teaching English as a second language (Henrichsen).

Audience/Market

Many untrained or minimally trained people teach ESL/EFL in community programs, commercial schools, public libraries, churches, homes, language schools abroad, etc. Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language; The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More is designed for the thousands of untrained or minimally trained teachers of ESL (in the United States and other English-language environments) and EFL (in other settings around the world). It will also be attractive and useful for untrained people who on the verge of teaching ESL/EFL. For various reasons (finances, timing, location), most of these teachers are unable to enroll in full-scale TESOL teacher-preparation programs, but they still need and want basic training in effective classroom procedures and materials, as well as in the teaching and learning principles behind them.

No one knows exactly how many novices or volunteers teach ESL/EFL around the world. No one tracks them, so data in this area is scarce. The number, however, is undoubtedly large. A 1986 study of adult literacy/ESL programs in the United States alone found that about half of the 2,900 adult education programs and nearly all the 1,300 English language and literacy

programs used volunteers. Starting with these figures, simple mathematics results in an estimate of 107,000 volunteers in related ESL programs. The 2005-2006 Statistical Report of ProLiteracy states that 120,480 volunteers worked in its 1,200 affiliate programs, 88% of which provided ESL services. The number is undoubtedly greater today with the recent floods of refugees and immigrants to English-speaking countries and the growing demand for English around the world. Many companies advertise several tens of thousands of ESL/EFL teaching jobs in many locations around the world. *Some of these programs, of course, provide at least minimal, in-house training for their volunteers. The number of untrained teachers who work independently or in other programs that provide no training is still very large. These people constitute a huge but invisible/ignored group of teachers needing preparation. That is the market for Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language; *The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More*.

*For example: <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/work/esl/index.shtml>
http://www.oxfordseminars.com/Pages/Teach/teach_services.php

Approach and Distinctive Features

Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language: *The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More* employs a minimalist and connectivist approach to teacher preparation. It does not attempt to cover every teacher-preparation topic in great breadth and depth. Rather, in a large number of short chapters (5-10 pages each), it introduces teachers to key concepts and procedures related to a particular teaching topic and then directs them to other sources for additional, in-depth information.

In contrast to many TESOL teacher-education textbooks that present teaching/learning theories and practices in a didactic fashion and then hope readers will be able to apply them in

actual classroom settings, each chapter in *The Least You Should Know* takes an engaging, highly practical, problem-solving approach to teacher preparation by beginning with short case studies and classroom scenarios situated in ESL (in the United States) and EFL (in Asia and Latin America) settings that illustrate the challenges that teachers face in the real world. In this way, each chapter immediately confronts teachers with authentic instructional challenges and involves them in realistic analytical and problem-solving tasks. To support the textual explanations in the book, many of these case studies and scenarios are also viewable on an accompanying DVD or at a designated Web site.

The Least You Should Know about Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language also focuses primarily on proven instructional procedures that can immediately be put into practice. In accordance with Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model, the book's underlying approach recognizes that the preparation needs of teachers vary depending on their levels of competence and commitment. Novice, short-term, volunteer teachers—in contrast with the committed, experienced, career-oriented teachers found in many graduate-level TESOL teacher education programs—typically need and want simple, directive instruction of a “teacher training” sort. Therefore, *The Least You Should Know* provides specific instructions for classroom teaching strategies. Chapter one introduces the reader to the scope of this material, however there is no specified sequence to these chapters. Novice teachers are able to assess their needs and focus on relevant units that interest them. Each chapter carefully guides novice teachers through the process of identifying language-teaching problems, setting goals, developing action plans, carrying them out, and evaluating their success. At the same time, it helps them recognize and understand the underlying principles that affect success in language teaching.

Competition

More Than a Native Speaker. Author: Snow Don. Publisher: TESOL 2006. ISBN: 0-939791-64-1. \$31.20. Audience: native English-speaking volunteer teachers.

Features: could be useful with other materials that will add more practical information, text is user friendly and readable.

Weaknesses: even though the book gives different examples of assessment, teaching principles and subjects to teach, it will be difficult for new or less experienced teachers to decide in what situation, for what level to use them, the title does not give us any hint that "More Than a Native Speaker" is a guide for volunteer native English teachers teaching abroad, contains only plain text, no graphic, pictures, very little about different proficiency levels, classroom management etc.

Basic Smooth Moves. Author: Hopkins Dave. Publisher: undecided-not published yet. Audience: teacher programs, volunteers, novice English teachers.

Features: topics with related video, useful references, tasks and questions for the trainers and teachers, online references, systematic sequences based on principles.

Weaknesses: it may not be easy for novice teachers to grasp some principles and do tasks alone because tasks and activities are designed to do some group discussion, page design is not structured in user-friendly fashion so it is not easy to follow and what the author wants or means.

Teach English: A training Course for Teachers. Teachers workbook and Trainer's Handbook." Author: Doff Adrian. Publisher: Cambridge University Press. 1990. ISBN for the trainer's manual: 0-521-34864-1 for \$18.79 - \$32. ISBN for the teacher's workbook: 0-521-34863-3 for \$ 2.51-\$28.00. Audience: teachers and teacher trainers.

Features: step by step instructions, pictures, example lesson plans, activities to be used and copied in class, unit on the importance of assessment and how to use it effectively.

Weaknesses: it seems to be old, but it has been reprinted in several editions, and the cover does not look interesting enough.

“TESOL Core Certificate Program.” Author and publisher: TESOL website based resource. TESOL member: \$1000; TESOL global member: \$400; Nonmember: \$1000. Audience: current or prospective teachers and administrators with limited training.

Features: includes a 60-hour course on language skills and assessment, in the second course one has the option of focusing on adult or young learners, the course designers and teachers appear to be qualified, it has the TESOL name, focuses on ESL and EFL.

Weaknesses: it is costly- one must register months in advance so it is not immediately accessible, limited availability (limited number of openings), it is not necessarily connected to a real teaching position (limited applicability).

Colorin Colorado. Author: WETA- with funding from the American Federation of Teachers, National Institute for Literacy and the U.S. Department of Education. Publisher: no publisher-free web-based service launched in 2008. Audience: educators and parents of Hispanic and English speaking children K-12.

Features: good for an ESL, mostly U.S. setting, has online webcasts with professionals, good resources for parents and educators; good resources for boosting reading.

Weaknesses: mainly targeted to the Hispanic ESL learners, with only materials up to the third grade in Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Korean, Navajo, Russian, Tagalog, Vietnamese, only targets children K-12, not adults, would not always be as beneficial in an EFL setting, only targets reading specifically and not all skills.

A Training Course for TEFL. Authors: Hubbard Peter, Hywel Jones, Barbara Thornton, Rod Wheeler. Publisher: Oxford University Press. Published in 1983. ISBN: 0194327108 for \$15.00. Audience: teachers of English as a second or foreign language for anywhere in the world.

Features: offers discussion examples of dialogue between students and teachers; provides references for further readings, charts, graphs and symbols to illustrate principles and ideas, communicative teaching tasks, offers techniques for all skills to be taught.

Weaknesses: outdated, now there are other techniques and strategies that need attention, may be out of print, for more technical and graduate level students, not built for volunteers with little or no understanding of language jargon.

Project Rationale

Many countries in the world are lacking professional teachers of the English language. Because of this, many schools decide to employ untrained people or novices (mostly native speakers) who are willing to teach English in spite of the fact that they lack teaching education and experiences. Nevertheless, teaching English is more than just speaking the language (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003, p. 341). It requires knowledge and experiences in many areas such as curriculum design, material development, teaching methods for grammar, reading, listening, speaking, and effective writing. Gilbertson (2002) states that in some instances untrained teachers can do more harm than good (p. iii). That is why it is necessary to provide specific guidelines to help inexperienced and nonprofessional teachers with the challenges of this profession. Currently, as expressed by leaders in the linguistic field such as Diane-Larsen Freeman, very few materials are available that would serve as a guideline to novices who are teaching English as a second language (Henrichsen).

Scope and Sequence

The 45 units in *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More* cover a broad range of teacher-preparation topics and are divided into 10 major areas:

1. Introduction: Basic Concepts

- A. “The Least You Should Know” (the purposes and delimitations of this program and suggestions for follow-up TESOL courses, resources, and professional organizations).
- B. Differences between teaching English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL).
- C. Tutoring vs. teaching: How they are different.
- D. Dealing with cultural differences and culture shock (in your students and yourself).
- E. Working successfully within foreign educational and administrative systems.

2. Designing Language-teaching Programs, Courses, and Lessons

- A. Setting up and operating successful courses for adult English language learners (i.e., administrative concerns).
- B. Planning a curriculum that fits your students and meets their needs.
- C. Designing effective lessons for language learning and teaching (i.e., curriculum and lesson planning).
- D. Assessing your students' language proficiency (for course design purposes and for determining student placement).

3. Developing Fundamental Teaching Skills

- A. Developing a successful teaching personality.

- B. Adjusting your spoken English to make it comprehensible and helpful to English language learners at various levels of proficiency.
- C. Managing classes of English language learners (encouraging participation, maintaining discipline, building a supportive sense of community, avoiding demeaning or negative behavior, setting up groups, dealing with multiple levels of proficiency in the same class).
- D. Correcting language learners' errors productively, and developing their self-monitoring skills.

4. Understanding Key Principles Behind Successful Language Teaching

- A. Understanding basic principles of second language acquisition.
- B. Creating and using exercises for mechanical, meaningful, and communicative practice.
- C. Using communicative language teaching principles and information gap exercises.
- D. Encouraging cooperative and collaborative learning to increase student interaction.
- E. Creating activities that provide imitative, rehearsed, and extemporaneous practice.
- F. Developing an awareness of teaching styles and cross-cultural style differences.

5. Knowing Your Students: Learner Types, Styles, and Strategies

- A. Understanding, respecting, and appreciating adult ESL learners.
- B. Working successfully with young English language learners.
- C. Understanding your students' language learning styles—including cross-cultural differences in learning styles—and then teaching them accordingly.
- D. Recognizing multiple intelligences and their implications for language teaching.
- E. Teaching your students to use language-learning strategies commonly employed by successful language learners.

6. Developing Language Skills

- A. Developing English language learners' listening skills.
- B. Developing English language learners' speaking skills.
- C. Developing English language learners' reading skills.
- D. Developing English language learners' writing skills.
- E. Integrating multiple language skills in one class.
- F. Teaching content-based language classes.

7. Teaching English Language Components

- A. The least you should know about English grammar and how to teach it.
- B. The least you should know about English pronunciation and how to teach it.
- C. Planned and unplanned vocabulary teaching.
- D. Vocabulary teaching and learning strategies that work well.
- E. Understanding and teaching about culture.

8. Making Language Teaching and Learning Enjoyable and Memorable

- A. Conducting effective and enjoyable conversation classes.
- B. Using songs and chants to increase participation, recall, and enjoyment.
- C. Using games, and other fun yet effective activities for English language teaching.
- D. Using computers and Internet resources for English language teaching.
- E. Using video for teaching English.

9. Testing English Language Skills

- A. Widely used general proficiency tests (e.g., TOEFL, BEST, CET).
- B. Developing valid and reliable local measures of student achievement.

10. Choosing, Creating, and Adapting Language Teaching Materials

- A. Locating, evaluating, and selecting authentic, effective print/electronic teaching materials for language learners.
- B. Collecting and creating your own language-teaching materials.
- C. Successfully adapting existing materials for greater teaching enjoyment and success.

These units are designed to be used independently, in any sequence, according to users' interests.

Ancillary Materials

Each unit includes video clips of ESL/EFL teachers in authentic classroom situations. These clips illustrate the principles and procedures described in the unit, and they provide the basis for observation and reflection activities. For the paper book, these videos will be provided on an accompanying DVD. They will also be available online as part of the website.

Current Status of the Work

Number of units completed: 8 (video clips to be inserted later)

Number of units nearly completed: 4

Number of units under development: 22 (various stages)

Number of units no one is working on: 6 with others posited as well

Over the next year other units will be developed and finished available for use. As they become available they will also be posted to the website.

The Authors

Lynn Henrichsen (Ed.D, University of Hawaii) has over 30 years experience teaching English to speakers of other languages in a variety of settings around the world. A former chair of TESOL's Teacher Education Interest Section, and former chair of the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Brigham Young University, he regularly teaches courses in TESOL methods and materials. He has authored 7 books and over 70 chapters in books and articles in professional periodicals.

Beth Anne Schnebly is currently a graduate student in the TESOL Masters program at Brigham Young University (BYU). She has had extensive experience tutoring and teaching ESL/EFL for six years in different locations throughout the world, including interning as an EFL assistant language teacher in Japan, tutoring several international ESL students in speaking, writing, and grammar and a professional businessman in ESL pronunciation, and teaching at the English Language Center at BYU in Utah, tutoring Korean students online, and tutoring Chinese writing students through an online program with the City University of Hong Kong.

Eleanor Clark is a graduate student in the Brigham Young University TESOL Master's program. She has had experience teaching in ESL contexts, with particular interests in reading and literacy. Eleanor has also had the opportunity to tutor in EFL and ESL contexts. She has lived on three continents and experienced various aspects of second language learning, both as a student and as a teacher.

Paul Scholes is currently a student in the TESOL Master's program at Brigham Young University. His experience with second language acquisition stems from teaching English in two different contexts. He taught for 1.5 years to adults in the Provo, UT school district's Adult ESOL Program and is currently teaching university-age students at the BYU English Language

Center. He has also successfully completed a graduate course in Second Language Acquisition at BYU.

Kyle Johnson is part-time teacher at Brigham Young University's English Language Center where he has been teaching for the last year while completing an MA in TESOL from BYU. He has earned a Bachelor's degree from BYU in Linguistics. He has taught ESL classes in applied grammar and academic writing, which he is also currently teaching. He has helped organize and implement extracurricular activities at the ELC. His interests include ESL writing, ESL volunteer training, and language program administration.

Iva Crookston is a graduate student in the Brigham Young University TESOL Master's program. She earned her bachelor's degree in German Literature from BYU. She has experiences with teaching several languages such as German, English and Czech while being fluent in four. She has taught English listening-speaking class to prospective collage students of the ELC institute in Utah, as well as tutored English pronunciation classes to non-native university students. She is currently teaching a Czech language class at the Brigham Young University.

Monty Colver is a graduate student in the Brigham Young University TESOL Master's program. He completed a BA TESOL at BYU-Hawaii in 2004 and has several years of experience teaching EFL in South Korea. He enjoys learning new languages and cultures and has lived in various multicultural environments. His primary interests are speaking/listening, using technology in the language classroom, and understanding and teaching culture.

Inho Jung is a graduate student in the Brigham Young University TESOL Master's program. He completed a BA TESOL and Secondary Ed. at BYU-Hawaii in 1999. He has more than 10 years of teaching experience in America as well as in Korea and he also has five years of running

an English institute. He is currently working on developing teaching materials for his students. He is interested in vocabulary and material development.

Minhye Son is finishing a graduate degree in TESOL at BYU. She graduated from BYU-Hawaii majoring in TESOL education. Upon her graduation, she got Hawaii Teaching License and taught at Hawaii public elementary schools for a year. She is currently teaching at the English Language Center in Provo, Utah.

Appendix B: Original Drafts of Units

TLYSK Unit 13

© Lynn Henrichsen, 2008

Understanding Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition

When one is learning a second language, there are many processes at work. What happens in a learner's brain is indeed a complicated process that is still being researched and better understood. Fortunately, there are some key principles at work that researchers have identified that help us understand these processes. Knowledge of these processes can help teachers in several ways: 1. Teachers can gain insights into how to facilitate second language acquisition. 2. Teachers can better understand students' language production and how to guide it. 3. Teachers can better understand the challenges learner's face and how to help them with these challenges.

Pondering the Puzzle of Second Language Acquisition: The case of Mike

Mike is currently enjoying his first English teaching experiences in China. At the moment, he is teaching two English classes--one to Chinese school children during the day and another to Chinese adults in the evening. After the first week, he has noticed that there are marked differences in the way the students are learning and that these differences greatly affect the way he is planning his lessons. He had always heard that children learn quicker than adults but he doesn't understand if that's true or why that would be the case. He begins to ponder deeply about the subject of second language acquisition, something he hadn't thought about much before, but he feels it's important to understand the differences in the ways his students learn.

As he ponders further, his mind goes back to when he had previously taught English classes to adults in Korea, and he notes differences in the language difficulties of the Chinese and Korean adults. For example, the Chinese adults seem to have less of a problem with word order but they have different pronunciation problems than the Koreans. He also notices differences in learning styles but he is not sure how to describe them or what they mean. All of these things make him ponder how second language acquisition takes place and what the key issues that guide its development are.

Objectives of this unit

After completing this unit you will be able to...

1. Understand the basic principles of second language acquisition.
2. Understand the effects of age on second language acquisition.
3. Understand the effects of language background on second language acquisition.
4. Understand the effects of other factors and how to apply this knowledge in the classroom.

The least you should know

Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition

When someone learns a second language, what exactly is learned?

The components of any language can be divided into five main categories: Lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse. The components of each of these are listed below. You may be surprised by how much there is to learn.

Lexicon (vocabulary)

- Word meaning

- Pronunciation and spelling
 - Part of speech(grammatical category)
 - Possible occurrence in combination with other words and in idioms
- Phonology (sound system)
- Speech sounds that make a difference in meaning (phonemes)
 - Possible sequences of consonants and vowels (syllable structure)
 - Intonation patterns (stress, pitch, duration), and perhaps tone
 - Rhythmic patterns (pauses and stops)
- Morphology (word structure)
- Parts of words that have meaning (morphemes)
 - Inflections that carry grammatical information (like number or tense)
 - Prefixes and suffixes that may be added to change the meaning of words or their grammatical category
- Syntax (grammar)
- Word order
 - Agreement between sentence elements (as number agreement between subject and verb)
 - Ways to form questions, to negate assertions, and to focus or structure information within sentences
- Discourse (ways to connect sentences and organize information across sentence boundaries)
- Structure for telling stories, engaging in conversations, etc.
 - Scripts for interacting and for events. (p. 33)

Although this is a long list, hopefully it doesn't overwhelm you or your students. Keep in mind that language learning is a gradual process and that all of these components can begin to emerge simultaneously the more experience the learner has with the language, both through formal instruction and real-world contact.

So what happens during the learning process?

Interlanguage

A principle that reinforces the fact that learning a language is a gradual process is that of interlanguage. This principle attempts to explain what happens while someone is attempting to move from fluency in a first language (L1) to fluency in a second language (L2). It refers to the intermediate states that one encounters in this process.

Some advertisements claim that their product will help you to speak a language instantly, but there is little that is instant about long-term language acquisition. It is a gradual process and learners will experience intermediate states of language along the way as they move from their L1 to their L2. According to many researchers (41), this is a creative process, driven by inner forces (mental processes) in interaction with environmental factors (exposure and contact with the language). It is also influenced both by the learners knowledge of their L1 and by input from the target language or L2. For practical purposes, the interlanguage can be considered a third language in its own right, sharing characteristics with both the L1 and L2.

How can this be applied?

In teaching, you will become aware that the language a learner produces will have characteristics of both the L1 and L2. It's important to help them recognize the differences between the two languages so that their language can continue to approximate the L2. It's also important to be patient with them and guide them along as this process takes place. Do not expect learners to be perfect but always encourage them to try. Their language will develop gradually as they traverse these intermediate states and it is your responsibility and opportunity to guide them.

Contrastive Analysis: Form, Meaning, and Distribution

One of the most important factors regarding second language acquisition is the difference between the first, or native, language of the learners (L1) and the target language to be learned (L2). This field of study is known as **contrastive analysis**. It involves predicting and explaining learner problems on the basis of similarities and differences between the L1 and the L2. In its simplest form, the theory states that the easiest things for learners to acquire in L2 are the ones that are most similar to L1. The converse is also true: the things that are the most different in the two languages will be the hardest to acquire. This can explain the differences between the Chinese and Korean adults in "The Case of Mike" or any group of English learners who have different native languages.

What a learners learn are often referred to as language structures. These structures vary based on three factors: form, meaning, and distribution. The structures likely to be acquired first will be those that exist in the learner's L1 with the same form, meaning, and distribution. This is known as **positive transfer**, because the learner's knowledge of the L1 facilitates acquisition of the L2.

For example, "my father" in English has the same form, meaning, and distribution as "mi padre" in Spanish, so based on contrastive analysis, this should not be hard for a Spanish-speaking English learner to acquire. Conversely, differences in form, meaning, and distribution between the two languages can have an inhibiting effect. This is known as **negative transfer** because prior knowledge of the L1 inhibits learning the L2. Take for example "the blue flowers" and "las flores azules." The meaning of the two phrases is the same, but in Spanish, the adjective often follows the noun rather than precedes it. Because of this difference, a native Spanish-speaker may have the tendency to say "the flowers blue" or even "the flowers blues" to match the form of their L1 and its distribution of the plural s.

What if the form is similar but the meaning is different? Take for example the Spanish verb "asistir" (to attend) and the English verb "to assist." Instances like these are known as "false cognates" or "false friends" and can greatly impede L2 learning. A native Spanish speaker may be heard to say, "I am going to assist class today" intending to mean "I am going to attend class today." This difficulty, like many which students will have, is tied directly to the influence of the student's native language.

How can this be applied?

Perhaps the most important thing one can learn from contrastive analysis is that there are reasons why learners have specific language difficulties and that these difficulties can be influenced by their L1. With knowledge of the learners' L1, you can predict the errors they will make and better understand why they make them. You will also be better able to help them understand the differences between their L1 and the L2, and you can gain insight into the importance of teaching correct form, meaning, and distribution in the L2 so that learners can understand the differences and won't repeat the same mistakes.

Receptive vs. Productive knowledge and the four modes of learning

We now return to the question of what is learned by English learners. Perhaps the simplest way of looking at it is in terms of **receptive and productive knowledge**. Receptive knowledge is knowledge of input received by the learners while productive knowledge is the learner's knowledge of how to produce language. Of the following four modes of learning, which do you think could be called receptive and which productive?

Reading Writing Listening Speaking

If you answered correctly, you said that reading and listening are receptive activities and that listening and speaking are productive activities. Reading and listening are receptive because they involve receiving input from outside sources, whereas the productive activities of writing and speaking require the learner to produce something from inner sources.

So which of these activities are the most important? The answer to that question depends on the needs of your learners. What are their goals for the language? What are their intended uses of the language? For example, for academic learners, reading and writing will generally have more importance than for learners who want to improve their interpersonal competence. For them, listening and speaking may take prominence.

Variables that affect second language acquisition

In developing a course for second language learners, one must consider several factors. These include the nature of the learners (learner variables), the manner of instruction, and the similarities and differences between the native language of the learners (L1) and the language to be acquired (L2) (linguistic variables). First, learner variables:

Age and time of acquisition: Many people believe that the best time for someone to acquire a second language is when they are child, although this is not necessarily the case. Support for this phenomenon is often explained by the critical period hypothesis and the principle of fossilization. The **critical period hypothesis** states that children have only a limited number of years during which they can achieve native or near-native proficiency in an L2. After that, a process known as fossilization is more likely to occur. **Fossilization** refers to a state in which L2 learners cease their interlanguage development before they reach complete ability with the L2. Essentially, this means that they are no longer progressing in their L2 learning, despite continuing L2 input and/or instruction. These two principles underscore the main disadvantages of older learners and are the reason why many people think that it is harder for them to learn a language than younger learners.

In addition to this evidence, there is evidence of advantages for both older and younger learners. Younger learners generally have an advantage in being less analytical, in usually having fewer inhibitions, and in having more years to learn the language before ultimate proficiency is judged. Older learners, on the other hand, generally have greater learning capacity, analytic ability, pragmatic (practical) skills, real-world knowledge, and greater knowledge of their L1.

Advantages of Younger Learners.

Less analytical--It is partly because children are generally seen as being less analytical that it seems that they learn more naturally and with less effort. Instead of thinking about and analyzing what they are learning, they try to absorb it in the context that it is presented in. That is why games and hands-on activities are so effective for children.

Less inhibitions--Younger learners are generally seen as having less inhibitions although this is not always the case. However, it has been shown that the extent to which learners are willing to take risks and avoid self-conscious behavior the more quickly their learning can occur. It is important to try to get learners of any age outside their comfort zone and actively participate as much as possible.

More years to learn the language before ultimate proficiency is judged--People marvel at the ability of young children to learn any language they are presented with. According to the critical period

hypothesis, younger brains can have a greater ability for second language acquisition in some areas. However, it's important to remember that their effective learning of a language takes place over the course of at least several years before they gain any kind of fluency. On the other hand, adult learners' proficiency can be assessed daily in a classroom and ultimate proficiency can be judged after just a few weeks of instruction. Therefore, be patient with older learners and remember that they do have some advantages over younger learners which may in part account for these expectations of quicker results.

As stated above, older learners generally have an advantage in learning capacity, analytic ability, pragmatic skills, greater knowledge of their L1, and real-world knowledge. Furthermore, it is possible for older learners to achieve near-native competence in an L2, although less likely than for younger learners.

Advantages of Older Learners

Learning capacity—Because many older learners have more practice and experience learning, they may have more capacity for learning than do younger learners.

Analytic ability—This is a big advantage of older learners. Unlike younger learners, they can be more directly taught about the mechanics of language, including the rules of a language and why, when, and how to learn certain language structures. You shouldn't have to worry as much about them not grasping more difficult concepts.

Pragmatic skills and real-world knowledge—Simply put, older learners have more life experience and more experience to tie their learning to so they should more readily understand why something is being taught and how it can be used.

Greater knowledge of their L1—It is possible that older learners have a greater knowledge of their L1 which knowledge can aid in the acquisition of the L2. Once again, they will have a better understanding of what needs to be learned and why.

Why is this important?

This knowledge is important for two main reasons. First, it is important to realize the strengths of older and younger learners. Older learners do have advantages in some areas. Second, lessons should be tailored to the strengths of the age group being taught. For example, children can benefit from simple games, role-plays, and hands-on activities. Adult lessons can include more difficult and abstract concepts and should include practical situations and topics that occur in adult life.

Other important differences among learners

Regardless of age, other learner variables can come into play that effect the way learners learn and how successful they are.

Aptitude: Learners differ in the capacity to discriminate and process input, identify patterns and make generalizations, and to store linguistic information in memory. (178) Simply put, some learners may be better at doing the things that are required to learn a language.

Motivation: Motivation largely determines the level of effort which learners expend at various stages in their L2 development and is often a key to ultimate level of proficiency. You will find that some learners are more motivated than others and this can also have an effect on their learning. As a teacher, it is important to motivate students and to encourage their self-motivation.

Instruction: Quality of instruction makes a clear difference in formal contexts although there doesn't seem to be a proven instructional method that works better than all the others. Type of instruction should be tailored to the students' individual needs and learning styles. Keep in mind that how well you perform in your teaching preparation and presentation does affect how well and how quickly your students learn.

Personality and learning style: There are some personality factors that are positively correlated with L2 acquisition. These are associated with being extroverted (outer-directed) or introverted (inner-directed). There is no clear advantage for either type of personality but there are positively and negatively correlated traits for each. For example, for extroverted people, positively correlated traits are being self-confident, adventurous, and risk-taking. For introverted people positively traits are being imaginative, empathetic, and tolerant of ambiguity.

Conversely, negatively correlated factors for introverts are being anxious, risk-avoiding, and shy. For extroverts they are being impulsive, uninquisitive, and uncreative. Once again, there is no clear advantage for introverted or extroverted personalities, although for either there is a clear advantage for being cognitively engaged. That means that regardless of learning style, the students need to pay attention, focus, and be actively engaged in their learning. And that is something that teachers can help their students do (89-90).

Comprehension (and reflection) questions

Looking back at the explanations above if necessary, answer each of the following questions in as much detail as possible.



1. What are the basic principles of second language acquisition?
2. Explain the advantages and strengths of older and younger learners (try to think of at least three for each).
3. What are some other important variables that affect second language acquisition in the classroom? (try to think of at least five). As a teacher, which ones can you have the most effect on?

Video examples

Introduction to the video clip(s)



Reflection and Responses

Think about each of the following questions related to the video you just watched. Write a sentence or two in response to each one.

1. What type of error(s) did the student make?
2. What action did the teacher take in response to the error(s)?
3. Compare the teacher's action to what you read in the "The Least You Should Know" section above.
4. Compare this teacher's action to your own teaching experience.

Where to go to learn more

If you want to know more about TOPIC, you can refer to these additional resources.

Connections to other units in this program

Unit 19: Understanding, respecting, and appreciating adult ESL learners.

Unit 20: Working with young English language learners.

Unit 21: Understanding your students' language learning styles—including cross-cultural differences in learning styles, strategies, and expectations—and then teaching them accordingly.

Unit 34: Using games, and other fun yet effective activities for English language teaching.

Online and other electronic resources

www.tesol.org (the language teachers)

Print and paper-based resources

Saville-Troike, Muriel. (2006). *Introducing second language acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-79407-7.

TLYSK Unit 15
© Lynn Henrichsen, 2008

Using communicative language teaching principles and information gap exercises

One of the main goals of most learners of a language is to learn how to communicate effectively in that language. This entails being able to listen to others and respond to them appropriately in whatever setting or circumstances they may be in. This ability is known as communicative competence and is important for most students. Sometimes students are better at listening than speaking, so they don't have a complete set of skills for communicating effectively. Others may be able to read and understand the language but have difficulty understanding it when it is spoken. How can students be helped to communicate more fully and fluently?

Scenario: The story of Jan

Two years ago, Jan taught community ESL classes in the western United States. The make-up of her classes was mostly people of Hispanic origin and her classes tended to be lively and amusing. There was a good level of participation and the students enjoyed working in groups. The main problem was that sometimes the students' pronunciation wasn't very good.

Jan now has the opportunity to teach at a Korean high school and it is her first teaching job overseas and her first class of all Asian students. When Jan entered on the first day of class, the students were silent and attentive, waiting to see what she would do next. Jan wondered if they had ever seen an American before, based on the puzzled look on their faces. Of course they had, since there were quite a few Americans in Korea, but she also noticed that they did not speak out unless called upon and the conversation among each other was minimal. As she was teaching, she noticed that the students seemed to have a good understanding of grammar but their speaking ability was minimal and she noticed that they were often reluctant to speak during group activities. This was quite different from her ESL class in the United States. Jan wondered why this was the case and what could be done about. After all, if they didn't practice speaking, how were they going to improve their listening and speaking skills?

Objectives of this unit

After completing this unit you should be able to...

4. Understand the basic principles of communicative language teaching.
5. Understand what information gap activities consist of.
6. Understand the importance of 1 & 2 and know how they can be applied in a classroom setting.

The least you should know

Communicative Language Teaching

Over the last 30 years, a technique for language learning has been developed that has come to dominate the field of language teaching and in many cases is replacing older techniques. The focus and goal of this technique is to achieve effective communication, therefore, it has come to be known as communicative language teaching, or CLT. The communicative language teaching approach is currently a generally accepted norm in the field. (Brown 2001). So what exactly does it entail?

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach to language teaching in which the focus is on communication and the ability to communicate is the primary goal. In order to achieve this goal, CLT places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts as well as learning the functions of the language. Unlike other methods, its primary focus is on helping learners create meaning rather than helping them develop perfect grammatical structures or acquire native-like pronunciation. This means that successfully learning a foreign language is assessed in terms of how well learners have developed their **communicative competence**. This term can be defined as the ability to apply knowledge of the aspects of a language with adequate proficiency to communicate and the ability to use the linguistic system appropriately and effectively. In other words, effective communication is the goal.

Some of the basic principles behind CLT are listed below as well as how these ideas contrast with earlier ideas about language teaching.

Basic premises of CLT

1. **Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.** This contrasts with earlier ideas that learners must first acquire formal knowledge of the language (structures, grammatical systems, etc.) before they are ready to communicate. In CLT, learners are encouraged to practice communicating during all stages of learning including the beginning stages.

2. **Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.** Communicative activities that involve spontaneous speech in applied contexts are frequently used to encourage authentic communication. Dialogues, if used, are not usually memorized but are allowed to occur more naturally.

3. **Fluency is an important dimension of communication.** Fluency and acceptable language use (communicative competence) is the primary goal. Accuracy is still considered important but is not the primary goal. Errors are not always corrected immediately but can be later brought to attention if deemed necessary.

4. **Learning is a process of creative construction that involves trial and error.** As learners construct language through communicative practice, it is accepted that errors may occur frequently as learners try to discover what works and what doesn't. This is considered a natural part of the learning process and one that facilitates communicative competence. Learners are not expected to be perfect in their communication but they are expected to try to communicate the best they can.

5. **Communication involves the integration of different language skills.** Other forms of communication such as reading and writing can be taught before speech is mastered or simultaneously with speaking. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Because of its focus on communication, CLT involves unique roles for the teacher and the learner that contrast with older forms of teaching.

Teacher and Learner Roles

Teacher roles

1. **Facilitator**--The first role of the teacher is to facilitate the communication process between all members of the classroom and between the various activities and learning materials presented. Part of this involves checking on individual groups to see if they are communicating effectively and to give help where needed. A secondary but similar role is to be to an independent participant within each learning group. In this role, the teacher can take the role of an active participant in communicative activities rather than just that of facilitator.

2. **Needs analyst**—In this role, the teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learners' language needs (R167). This may be done informally with individuals or groups or could involve a formal assessment such as a formal survey devised to assess students' needs. The results of the analysis should then be analyzed by the teacher and used to determine the form that future instruction will take.

Learner roles

1. **Negotiator**—The primary role of the learner is to be a joint negotiator within groups as the groups seek to achieve effective communication. The learner is often not an independent learner but is interdependent on others in the class and should try to contribute as much as they gain from other learners.

The expectations of learners in CLT may also be different than their preconceived notions of what learning should be like so learners may have to adjust to these expectations. For example, in CLT students are expected to interact primarily with each other and not the teacher. Students may have to adjust to that. Also, error correction in CLT is often infrequent or absent whereas learners may be accustomed in other environments to frequent error correction. It is also important that learners understand that successful communication is a joint responsibility of both the speaker and the listener. Failed communication is not the fault of either the speaker or the listener individually so learners are expected to learn to work together and not blame each other.

So how can these principles be used in the classroom? First, let's do a quick review.

Comprehension and reflection questions

1. What sets communicative language teaching apart from previous teaching methods?
2. Without referring to the list above, list as many of the basic premises of communicative language teaching as you can.
3. Now return to the list and see which premises you did not remember.
4. Without referring to the list above, name and describe the roles of both the teacher and the students in communicative language teaching.

Information gap activities

One of the most important kinds of communicative activities is the information gap.

Information gap activities include a tremendous variety of techniques in which the objective is to convey and request information. The defining characteristic of these activities is the necessity of communicative interaction to reach the objectives of the task.

In an information gap activity, one person has certain information that must be shared with others in order to solve a problem, gather information, or make decisions. These types of activities can be extremely effective in the L2 classroom. They give every student the opportunity to speak in the target language for an extended period of time and students naturally produce more speech than they would otherwise. In addition, speaking with peers is less intimidating than presenting in front of the entire class and being evaluated. Another advantage of information gap activities is that students are forced to negotiate meaning because they must make what they are saying comprehensible to others in order to accomplish the task

The characteristics of a successful speaking activity:

Learners talk a lot. Learner talk occupies as much time as possible of the period of time allotted for the activity.

Participation is even. Classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants--all get a chance to speak, and contributions are fairly evenly distributed.

Motivation is high. Learners are eager to speak: because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective.

Language is of an acceptable level. Learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

Information gap activities satisfy all of the above criteria.

Steps in designing a successful information gap activity

5. Task Explanation and Review. Often, the teacher first explains the activity and reviews the vocabulary potentially needed for the activity.
6. Modeling. Next, the teacher focuses students' attention on the gap that exists so they understand what is expected of them. This is often accomplished through having the teacher model the activity in front of the class.
7. Performing the Task. Students are divided into pairs or groups and then left to complete the task. The task is designed so that each participant plays an important role and the task cannot be accomplished without everyone's participation.
8. Teacher monitoring. Also during this time it is the teacher's responsibility to monitor student practice and to provide feedback.

Given below is an example of an information gap activity that follows these steps. The purpose of this activity is for students to find out from each other what they did the previous weekend.

1. First the teacher explains the task and reviews the vocabulary. The teacher can even present the students with a list of questions they can ask and use as a guide:

1. What was your favorite thing you did last weekend?
2. What was your least favorite thing you did last weekend?
3. What was the most memorable thing you did last weekend?

2. The teacher can model the activity by simply answering the questions above.
3. Students can be assigned into pairs and then ask the questions of each other.
4. The teacher will walk around the room and provide help where needed.

In another type of information gap activity, the students will be asked to come up with their own questions in order to obtain the desired information. They can be given a table that requires them to ask get-to-know-you questions of their classmates in order to complete the table. An example appears below:

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Name			
Address			
Phone Number			
Favorite Food			
Favorite Color			

This kind of task will require the students to formulate questions on their own such as

6. What is your name?
7. What is your address?
8. What is your phone number?
9. What is your favorite food?
10. What is your favorite color?

Use of information gap activities

Information gap activities are appropriate from beginning through advanced levels. Typically, in tasks for beginning-level students, the gap is narrow and may require questions and answers of only a word or two (e.g., the cost of an item, an address, a birthday, or a telephone number). The activity can be used to reinforce previously practiced material and is often done in pairs. In tasks for higher-level students, the gap is wider and therefore more demanding linguistically (e.g., following directions to a place). The activity may be structured for students to work in groups of three or four rather than in pairs.

Many information gap activities are highly motivational because of the nature of the various tasks. Activities that require the solving of a problem or a mystery are especially effective. Teachers should try to determine whether an activity is of an acceptable level of difficulty for their students. If the students are sufficiently prepared for the activity, the level of language accuracy will be acceptable.

Comprehension (and reflection) questions

1. What is the defining characteristic of an information gap activity?
2. What kinds of information gap activities are appropriate for beginning levels?
3. What kinds of information gap activities are appropriate for advanced levels?
4. What are the four steps in designing an information gap activity?



Video examples

Introduction to the video clip(s)



Reflection and Responses

Think about each of the following questions related to the video you just watched. Write a sentence or two in response to each one.

5. What type of error(s) did the student make?
6. What action did the teacher take in response to the error(s)?
7. Compare the teacher's action to what you read in the "The Least You Should Know" section above.
8. Compare this teacher's action to your own teaching experience.

Where to go to learn more

If you want to know more about TOPIC, you can refer to these additional resources.

Connections to other units in this program

Unit 12 Providing performance feedback to language learners, correcting their errors productively, and developing their self-monitoring skills.

Unit 14 Creating and using exercises for mechanical, meaningful, and communicative practice.

Unit 16 Encouraging cooperative and collaborative learning to increase student interaction.

Online and other electronic resources

www.tesol.org (the language teachers)

Print and paper-based resources

Appendix C: Survey of Second Language Acquisition Terms

Term	Definition	Item 1 How easy is this term to understand? 1=very easy 5=very hard	Item 2 How easy would it be for you to come up teaching applications with this term? 1=very easy 5=very hard	Item 3 How well do you think you could apply such applications in your teaching? 1=very easy 5=very hard
Universal grammar	The concept that there is a set of innate grammar principles common to all languages	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Feedback	Information provided to the learner about their performance	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Chunking	Presenting and learning groups of words together	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Connectionism	Strength of associations between concepts, pieces of language, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Input	The language that learners receive from others	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Interaction	The concept that conversations (spoken or in writing) are necessary for language learning.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Noticing	Noticing specific aspects of the language you hear.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Attention	Attending to input	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Automaticity	Degree of control over linguistic knowledge (higher degree of control and speed of both processing and producing language are evidence of automaticity).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Fossilization	Cessation of learning once a learner has established some rules for using the second language.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Positive and negative transfer	Influence of the first language (positive or negative) on second language.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Second language interference	Interference of the first language on learning a second	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Critical period	Learning needs to occur before children reach a certain age (roughly around puberty)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Acculturation	Adapting to a culture and becoming more like the native speakers culturally.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Competition model	A model that says learners have to interpret many cues when processing a second language and that these cues sometimes compete and conflict with each other	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Markedness	The concept that certain aspects of language are more common to the languages of the world and more easy to understand than other aspects.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Social-cultural theory	Learning is a social process that involves interaction	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Affective filter	When people are rather nervous or anxious, they are less able to understand and process a second language.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Aptitude	One's innate ability to learn a language	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Motivation	Desire; Reasons for learning a language and how these affect language learning	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Personality	Specific individual traits (introversion, anxiousness, friendliness, etc.) and how they affect language acquisition	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Learning styles	Students prefer different ways of learning a language.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Output	Students need to produce language in order to acquire it	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Scaffolding	Building on a framework to help learners perform at a level that's slightly above their current level; involves providing teacher and peer support	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Monitor model	When students are monitoring their speech to determine how to say the right thing and if what they are trying to say is grammatically correct	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Error analysis	Analyzing and attempting to explain learner errors	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Contrastive analysis	A way of comparing two languages to try to predict problems learners will have based on these differences	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Interlanguage	The set of rules (often not accurate/native-like) that a learner has	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Competence	Underlying knowledge about language rules, which contrasts	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

	with performance, or what they produce in their speech or writing			
I + 1	The idea that the language learners are exposed to should be just one notch above their current ability (i).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D: Results of Second Language Acquisition Terms Survey

(Averages of response ratings of 10 survey respondents, bolded terms are featured in the Second Language Acquisition Unit)

Term	Item 1 How easy is this term to understand? 1=very easy 5=very hard	Item 2 How easy would it be for you to come up teaching applications with this term? 1=very easy 5=very hard	Item 3 How well do you think you could apply such applications in your teaching? 1=very easy 5=very hard
Universal grammar	1.57	2.71	2.86
Feedback	1.29	1.43	2.14
Chunking	1.57	1.86	2.57
Connectionism	2.29	2.43	3.00
Input	2.29	2.71	4.43
Interaction	1.57	2.43	2.57
Noticing	2.29	3.43	3.71
Attention	2.29	2.86	3.71
Automaticity	3.29	3.57	4.00
Fossilization	2.57	2.86	3.86
Positive and negative transfer	1.57	2.86	3.57
Second language interference	1.71	2.86	3.00
Critical period	1.86	2.86	3.14
Acculturation	2.00	2.86	3.29
Competition model	2.57	4.00	4.14
Markedness	1.57	2.86	3.29
Social-cultural theory	1.57	2.29	2.29
Affective filter	1.14	2.14	3.00
Aptitude	1.43	2.86	4.00
Motivation	1.29	3.00	3.29
Personality	1.57	2.86	3.29
Learning styles	1.43	2.57	2.71
Output	1.86	3.14	3.71
Scaffolding	1.43	2.86	3.00

Monitor model	1.71	2.71	3.71
Error analysis	1.43	2.71	3.57
Contrastive analysis	1.57	2.71	3.86
Interlanguage	2.43	3.14	3.29
Competence	2.71	4.14	4.71
I + 1	2.29	3.29	3.14

Appendix E: Record of project hours for the TESOL MA project

Initial draft creation stage (summer 2009)

6/24/9--4

7/13/9--3

7/14/9--5

7/27/9--2

7/28/9--2

8/11/9--3

8/13/9--2

8/18/0-.5

31.5

Team meetings and editing of unit drafts (fall 2009-first half)

9/14/9--1.5--Met with the team and Dr. H individually

9/15/9--1--Looked at potential videos

9/16/9--1--Looked at more videos

9/21/9--1--Made a powerpoint of Unit 13 for I-TESOL

9/22/9--1--TLYSK meeting

--1--Watched and selected videos for units

9/29/9--1--TLYSK meeting

10/5/9--1--Edited powerpoint for I-TESOL

10/6/9--1--TLYSK meeting

--1--Edited powerpoint for I-TESOL

10/9/9--1--Presented at I-TESOL

10/13/9-1--TLYSK meeting

10/20/9-1--TLYSK meeting--We talked about reviewing the competition

10/27/9-1--TLYSK meeting--We shared sample units and talked about the prospectus

14.5 = 45

Team meetings and editing of unit drafts (fall 2009-second half)

11/10/9-1--TLYSK meeting--We discussed things we need to do for the prospectus. I need to transfer the information about potential competitors to the table on our Google doc. I also need to send my completed units to Eleanor for revision. I also think I will start on a new Unit--Pronunciation teaching since I still don't have that many hours logged in yet (37 so far). I also chose the exact times (start and finish) for the video clips for my units.

11/17/09-1-TLYSK meeting--We discussed further things we need to do for the prospectus. We need to gather more information about the target audience including an estimate of the number of novice teachers around the world who could benefit from this resource. We need to send our units to Eleanor for editing and suggestions. Read two articles each related to our target audience and be prepared to give a synopsis at the next meeting. We also need to register for the graduate student forum. We also shared the details of our project with some new prospective members of our team.

11/18/09-2-Application--Worked on and submitted an application to present a sample unit at the TESOL Graduate Student Forum.

11/21/09-4.5-Editing--I spent about an hour editing the table of contents for Unit 13. I had to get sources and information about sources from the internet. I spent about 2.5 hours formatting Unit 13 into the new template and editing its length and content. I began to format unit 15 into the new template as well.

12/01/09-1--TYLSK meeting--We discussed what we need to do for the presentation of our final project for the coming Friday. We discussed details for improving our units, including formatting, editing, and adding pictures. We also discussed further details needed for the prospectus.

12/02/09-1--I worked on editing Unit 15. I put it in the new format using the new template and I also edited it for content. I had to cut out a few things that were redundant or unnecessary. I also revised a lot of the language to make it more readable, understandable, and clear for those not professionally trained in the field. It may need some further editing but it is now much better than it was and also in the right format.

10.5 = 55.5

Christmas break and early 2010

12/28/10-1--Began writing the project description

12/29/10-1--Continued writing the project description

01/06/10-1.5-Continued writing the project description

01/08/10-2.5-Worked on the content for the Pronunciation unit.

01/11/10-.5-Discussed unit with Dr H. Determined course of future action.

01/19/10-4--Edited both existing units including simplifications and formatting.

10.5 = 66

Winter 2010

1/21/10-1--BTR TESOL meeting. We discussed what we need to do now for our final projects. We discussed deadlines and the outline of our final write-up. We also briefly discussed what we will be presenting at TESOL.

1/28/10-1--BTR TESOL meeting.

2/5/10--1--BTR TESOL meeting. We briefly discussed some issues regarding the website.

2/8/10--3--I edited the final write-up and included portions on resources used and rationale for

the content of the units.

2/12/10-.5-Committee meeting. Discussed changes that could be made in the project.

2/19/10-.5-Discussed suggestions from the committee meetings we have had.

2/26/10-.5-Talked about the upcoming presentations.

3/1/10--1--Worked on Powerpoint for TESOL.

3/2/10--1--Worked on Powerpoint for class presentation-SLA.

3/5/10--1--BTR TESOL meeting. We discussed the upcoming presentations in Ling 377.

3/10/10-2--Presented the SLA Unit to Ling 377 two times. I also received and analyzed feedback of the presentations.

3/12/10-1--BTR TESOL meeting. We discussed the results of the presentations in Ling 377. We discussed changing some aspects of the units including the text content and videos. We also discussed the upcoming presentations in Ling 377 this coming week.

3/17/10-2--Presented the CLT Unit to Ling 377 two times. I received and analyzed their feedback and also received feedback from Dr. Henrichsen.

3/19/10--1--Edited powerpoint for the graduate student forum.

3/24/10--.5-Presented project at the TESOL graduate student forum.

3/26/10--1-Presented project with others at the TESOL technology village.

18 =84

Editing the final write-up—Spring 2010 (stage one)

3/30/31--1-Edited the project write-up.

4/02/10-.5-BTR TESOL meeting. We discussed finalizing our projects, including setting up a time-line for defense and completion.

4/05/10--2-Met with Dr. Henrichsen to discuss the project. We discussed possible changes to the content of the unit including having sound clips of second language learners' speech rather than video examples. We worked on the video for the other unit as well. We thoroughly discussed what needs to be done for project completion and made a time-line.

5/13/10-4-Edited final write-up for submission.

5/18/10-2-Met with Dr. Henrichsen for an hour and discussed what needs to be completed in order to submit the final draft to him. We also discussed the project defense schedule. I then selected the audio recordings to be used for the SLA Unit.

5/20/10-6.5-Made changes to the final write-up including writing Chapter 1 and Chapter 6.

15=100

Editing the final write-up—Spring 2010 (stage two)

5/21/10-6-Edited the final write-up and added the introductory pages.

5/25/10-1-Met with Dr. Henrichsen and discussed a plan of action.

5/26/10-2-Presented my units to HELP International and then discussed revisions of the final write-up.

6/01/10-7-Edited the final write-up.
 6/02/10-2-Edited the final write-up.
 6/03/10-1-Met with Dr. Henrichsen about the final write-up
 6/04/10-3-Edited the final write-up.

 22=122

Editing the final write-up—Summer 2010

6/11/10-2 hours—Met with Dr. Tanner
 6/14/10-2 hours—Met with Dr. Tanner
 6/17/10-2 hours—Met with Dr. Dewey
 6/22/10-4 hours--Editing
 6/24/10-4 hours--Editing
 7/1/10—2 hours--Editing
 7/6/10—2 hours--Editing
 7/9/10—4 hours--Editing
 7/14/10-4 hours--Editing
 7/15/10-4 hours—Editing
 7/16/10-4 hours--Editing
 7/23/10-3 hours—Editing
 7/24/10-2 hours—Editing
 7/26/10-3 hours—Editing
 7/28/10-2 hours—Editing
 7/30/10-3 hours—Editing
 8/02/10-4 hours—Editing
 8/03/10-5 hours—Editing
 8/04/10-4 hours—Editing
 8/06/10-6 hours—Editing
 8/09/10-4 hours—Editing
 9/12/10-3 hours—Editing
 9/26/10-3 hours--Editing

Summary and Grand Total

Initial stage	31.5
Fall 2009	25
Winter 2010	28.5
Spring 2010	37
Summer 2010	70
Fall 2010	28
Grand total:	226