ICC Journal

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From the editor

Welcome to our second ICC Journal of the year, an issue packed with exciting Keynotes, news of the EUROLTA online training programmes, a fascinating teaching tip using Group Communication Learning (GCL) to engage learners and write-ups of webinars delivered by Geoff Tranter warning language teachers to beware of staying in their comfort zone, Anna Soltyska on e-cheating and why it matters in language assessment, Chia Suan Chong with tips on how to be a successful international communicator and Russell Stannard on how to use three online apps really popular with language teachers. But don't just read the summaries. You can follow the recordings with all the slides at www.icc-journal/webinars. And, as always, we end with a new book review of special interest to intercultural teachers and trainers, *Anthro Vision* by the anthropologist and leading journalist, Gillian Tett.

ICC-Languages has been involved in some fascinating projects this year. One of them is the EU sponsored CATAPULT project. Rob Williams writes how to assess and meet the real needs of business language students, using a reverse planning process in lesson planning to make classes more relevant to what learners really need in order to improve performance.

Still on business communication, there is a trend to look again at old manuscripts to see how organisations can improve performance. Jean Langlois and Xiaoman Yang have translated part of the ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching but in doing so have focused on giving it a stronger business application. The result, with a commentary by Jean Marc Bossuet, is impressive.

Another conference ICC-Languages was involved in was the 6th Saarbruechen Conference on Language Teaching organised. by Professor Thomas Tinnefeld. I presented a workshop on 'New Paradigms in Intercultural Training' which is also summarised here.
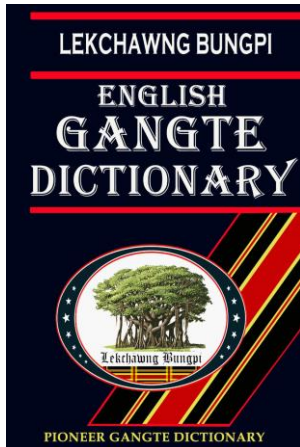
Now here is an interesting and unexpected linguistic insight. Over 700 languages are spoken in India and one of them is the Gangte language, spoken in Manipur province in North Eastern India by about 17,500 people (est. 2011).
It is one of the Sino-Tibetan languages and its author, Paulalson Gangte has sent us the dictionary. The Gangte tribe is a small community with 90% literacy and Gangte has been classified as an MIL (Major Indian Language) by the Indian government. It is an English-Gangte bilingual dictionary and its aim is to help students find the meaning of and familiarise themselves with English vocabulary and terminology, especially in science and technology. It aims to help Gangte speaking learners increase their knowledge and mastery of English as an international language.

Why does it matter? Obviously it helps learners master English but also we are so pre-occupied with world languages, including Hindi and Tamil, that it is easy to forget the regional languages which reflect how local people see the world. In the interests of diversity. it is important that we protect local languages. Languages may die because their last speaker has passed on but they should not be allowed to die of neglect. Congratulations to the author on his 30,000 word dictionary of the Gangte language, a five year effort. If you want to know more please contact me at ICC-Languages.

FINALLY, if you have an article, teaching tip or review you would like to get published in our next edition, please let me know. I'd love to hear from you.

Enjoy the ICC-Journal, available free online at ICC-languages.eu/ICCJournal.

EUROLTA news

Myriam Fischer-Callus
EUROLTA Project Manager,
https://icc-languages.eu/teacher-training/

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the education sector globally. Schools and universities went into lock-down, classes had to be suspended to enforce social distancing and educational institutions had to shift to teaching online. ICC and its network of leading institutions of adult education in Europe and around the world responded to this development and launched a language teacher training programme in October 2021.

The new EUROLTA course started on October 9th, Module 1 of an 8 module course that takes place on Saturdays (0900-1800 BST) and ends on Mar 12th 2022. Called EUROLTA Online, it allows teachers to follow the complete programme online.

EUROLTA is a qualification for language teachers and focuses on how to Analyse language, Language and Culture, Language Learning, Language Teaching. Planning and Evaluation and Self-Assessment and Development.

The 120- hour programme breaks down into 80 hours with live synchronous sessions with a tutor and 40 hours self-study for reading, lesson planning and writing assignments.

Progress is assessed by a portfolio made up of online task assessments, four final written assignments of 100-1500 words, and observed teaching practice both on the course and in a 'real' classroom. Successful graduates receive a EUROLTA teaching qualification.

What makes EUROLTA different from other teacher training courses is that it is open to teachers of all languages, it is practical and flexible and learner-centred.

Teaching languages online

The sudden transition from face-to-face to online teaching and learning presented many issues and challenges for educators and practitioners all around the world. Many teachers were thrown into online teaching with hardly any preparation. For that reason, enhanced awareness of the specific techniques of online teaching is a must! Teachers with a qualification in Online Teaching will be in demand so ICC-Languages has offered a 30-hour online course: HOW TO TEACH LANGUAGES ONLINE.

This short training programme is designed for all teachers and trainers who would like to acquire new skills and gain experience in online teaching. The programme is spread over four weeks and comprises two face-to-face online

sessions (two x eight hours) with a tutor and fourteen hours of home assignments and self-study.

By the end of the course teachers will develop the key skills needed to enable them to plan and deliver online lessons. They will be able to adapt the face-to-face teaching skills they already have to the online environment and will be able to use technology with confidence in their online classrooms.

KEYNOTE ARTICLE 1

Needs, objectives and reverse planning in teaching languages for special purposes

Rob Williams

University of Westminster

ICC Board member

Based on a lecture during the CATAPULT conference of April 17th 2021 this article asks whether teachers are really meeting learners' needs in teaching languages for special purposes and how a different planning methodology might help us do better. The planning methodology is called Reverse Planning Procedure.

Introduction – the problem

It all started with my experience of meeting client needs in business language and cultural training. I once had to run a seven-day programme for Japanese managers newly arrived in the UK to work in a firm in Liverpool in the north of England. Their level of English was CEFR A1 Level (Beginners). How could we possibly raise their level of English sufficiently in one week to work in a UK company where their local colleagues and managers did not speak Japanese? In another situation, I had to train a team of managers at CEFR A2 level (Elementary) to negotiate with native speakers of English managers in another company. In the short time allowed, could they possibly develop the competence and the confidence they needed for successful negotiation? Was there a difference between what they really needed and what they thought they needed?

The situations described above raise a number of other questions. Do the learners in occupational language courses know what they need? What do the stakeholders think they need? How realistic are the aims of the learners and the stakeholders and is it reasonable to ask someone to come to the UK and expect them to be able to deal with business negotiations with native speakers in a very short time? In many cases there are clearly discrepancies between what the learners

felt they needed, what the stakeholders felt they needed and whether we as teachers could manage what was needed in the time available.

Another problem is that the contract will have been signed by the school administration with the company concerned but it is the teacher who has to manage expectations and satisfy the needs of the learner, but who has no control over the time allocated.

Not only this, but it is a mistake to assume that all learners of languages for occupational purposes are highly motivated. They may not be motivated by their assignment or the job they have been given to do. They may not enjoy the teaching environment. Their expectations may not be the same as their managers' or of the person paying for the course. Then there is the question of cost and perceived value for money. Any of these factors may lead to resistance to learning a language or even being in a language learning situation.

This can put teachers in a difficult situation. They are not quite sure what outcomes they are planning for. They may not feel they can achieve what they have been asked to achieve. They may not be sure who they can go to in a situation where they feel they can't manage or whether they just have to make the best of the situation they're in. Experienced LSP teachers learn flexibility and the ability to adapt to whatever situation is presented to them. Less experienced LSP teachers may be overawed by what they are being asked to do and feel much less confident in dealing with it.

Is there an area where we can draw on our own understanding of what communication is and what needs to happen for successful communication to occur?

An answer

Language teachers teach how to use a particular code (English, French, Chinese etc) to communicate effectively. In this we could be thought of as communication specialists. Part of our job is to put that knowledge and understanding into particular professional contexts. In doing so, we can begin to develop our own syllabus, identify what we think is needed, engage critically with any

materials we might be given and elicit relevant information from people within the professional arena we are teaching in.

Often there is a reliance on needs analysis. But we need as teachers to approach the syllabus from both directions. We can use needs analysis and conversations to get clearer statements of what is needed than the often global statements of 'I need more English.' Or 'I need to be able to present'. We can use our experience to focus on finding out what the students actually need through needs analysis questions and expanding on those in conversation with the students we are working with. At the same time, we can use our understanding of communication and our general world knowledge to identify key interactions that are likely to occur in a given professional context. We can do this with reasonable certainty.

I want to propose a planning backwards activity which will help LSP teachers faced with a new group of students or one-to-one teaching. From the outside in approach, we might need to create a needs analysis or to take a needs analysis we have received and negotiate with our students to get more detail of precisely what they need. From the inside-out approach we use our world knowledge and understanding of interactions. This allows us to come up with outcomes that are realistic and can gain student buy-in.

The planning backwards process

We can divide planning backwards into a four-step process. Starting with the outcomes we can then map out a route of how to get there. In this way we focus on what is key for the particular learners we are working with and can tailor communicative effectiveness and language use to their particular level.

STEP 1 Performance in context

What communication competences do the learners need to develop in their work? We could define this in general skills terms such as more listening or more writing, but a more targeted way is to take a scenario and deconstruct it. Imagine you are training a particular professional group, for example, nurses in the medical profession. We can explore what tasks they need to undertake in the course of their

work and then take a specific event and break it down into specific communicative acts, for example, taking information from a patient. Obviously, a nurse would need attentive listening skills to understanding the patient. Speaking skills, perhaps to ask questions to get more information and to re-assure patients, are important. Maybe writing skills are involved, for example, writing the information gathered from the patient into a report to present to a doctor. They may need to read out the conclusions in a face to face briefing.

This could be seen as normal integrated skills activity. However, the balance between the different skills may be unequal. There may be more listening and speaking. Reading procedural forms may become routine and be just a question of ticking boxes in the appropriate place on a page rather than reading through a form in detail. The focus of each skill is targeted towards a successful overall performance and the event itself has its own chronology. No longer is it a case of simply understanding what a patient says. The design of each event comes to have a beginning, middle and end – and the outcome becomes a question of how effectively information is obtained, moved and shared through the entire scenario.

Understanding these issues early on through needs analysis, focused conversations with the learners and gathering experience of the process of interaction will help teachers plan the practice activities to build the skills needed in the foreign language.

STEP 2 Language functions and discourse management strategies

We now need to consider what language functions are required to complete the tasks contained within the event. Speaking might involve functions such as introductions or daily greetings, asking initial questions from a form, and asking follow-up questions for clarification, explaining procedures and reassuring the patient. It might also include providing verbal summaries of conditions to a doctor. To enable a learner to do this effectively and professionally we are not only having to teach functions but also discourse management strategies, for example how to negotiate meaning to arrive at understanding a patient. This is not going to be a question of simply asking for repetition or saying, '*Could you expand on that?*' It involves the process of selecting the information that you need clarifying, of reframing the response from the patient in your own words to check that you have

understood – and that the patient knows this and feels reassured. Similarly, reporting back to a doctor or colleague does not simply involve reported speech. Rather, it includes a summarising competence (the doctor may not have much time) and a gatekeeping role – deciding if some of the information is unnecessary and so needn't be passed on.

STEP 3 Language structures

Having understood what competences the learner will need to build and practise and what language functions and discourse management strategies need to be taught and practised, continuing the example, we can now focus on the specific language terms and grammatical structures that may be needed in talking to the patient and the different structures that may be needed when reporting back to a senior member of staff. The advantage of this process is that if learners and their teachers understand the process of the interaction and the language functions and management strategies that might be involved, a scenario forms where the structures and vocabulary and usage needing to be practised become more obvious. If we start from the idea that the learner needs, for example, reported speech, then the focus may start from the grammar and we create unrealistic models or don't situate the structure into a larger discourse chain.

STEP 4 Level

Once we identify the structures, expressions etc that can be used in the scenarios we have defined, we can establish level in two ways. We can determine the level of language needed to perform effectively in the scenario. We can also map this against the level of the student. This allows us to determine if the learner will be able to reach the desired outcome of a course in the time available. If the requirement of the overall course is to raise the CEFR level of the learners we can determine whether we can achieve this or whether to prioritise certain specific job areas as these occur more frequently. It can also allow us to select the input that the learner will be able to manage on the programme. After all there are many ways that questions can be asked, for example.

Add-ons

After completing this we have to ask ourselves the question, is it enough? If we agree with Hutchinson and Waters (1987) (Hutchinson T and Walters A. *English for specific purposes: a learner centred approach*, Cambridge University Press) that the focus should be on the competence of the leaner not just the language of the target situation, then should we not build in more variables into our scenarios? Many models train communication in a situation where there is a positive result but should we also not train learners to deal with less successful communication, such as misunderstandings, and to have repair strategies they can apply? Should we not even provide the learner with the capacity to handle communication in conflict situations. The learner needs to develop a whole range of strategies to deal with different situations that might arise in the target context. You could argue that these strategies are key to successful communication regardless of level. In some ways they could enable a lower level user of a language to succeed since knowing what strategies to adopt would empower that person to maximise the language resources they do have.

The importance of mediation

A lot of professional work involves people mediating information received in one context and transferring. Taking the nursing example earlier, the nurse mediates the content of the form requiring patient details to the patient. They explain reasons for the form, possibly explain certain points on it as they ask questions. They then mediate the patient's responses onto the form. They might then mediate the overall patient condition to a doctor by selecting details or summarising information to them. Such movement of information or opinions is a key component of communication. It can become fundamental in a workplace, because if communication is mishandled then there are consequences which may be financial or worse than financial in certain professions. So one of the checks we can give ourselves as we design LSP content or use ready- made materials is to what extent are we presenting a context where information is mediated through a scenario or to what extent are we focusing on discrete form based short exchanges? Reverse planning should lead us to the first of these.

Conclusion

So what can we learn from this? First, we need to teach communication and mediation strategies above and beyond the specific purpose vocabulary you might need to include. You can look up the vocabulary online but you can't look up the communication and mediation strategies. So perhaps our work is as facilitators of tasks and scenarios to encourage learners to practise communication and mediation strategies such as negotiating meaning, information handling and information structuring and understanding what it means to operate in a multicultural international space.

Information handling can be seen as the movement of information from one particular source to another through mediation. Information structuring is how to organise information so that recipients receive it well. Some people learn phrases, such as linking expressions, that they can use in particular language transactions such as presentations. However, there is a danger that learners may randomly insert phrases they have learned which, if wrongly misused or correctly used but in the wrong place, may get in the way of the sense of the presentation and affect the way it is received by the audience. One example, I vividly remember was the speaker who introduced himself and the subject and then added, "That is the first point I want to make". But he hadn't made a point! His audience was left in confusion and it affected the rest of how the presentation was received. A solution is to run sessions on how to structure information for different target audiences in different environments and how to sequence the information so that the recipients actually receive it well.

Added to this, are we aware of how different language communities organise information and structure it for presentation to other audiences and should we adapt to that? If we think we should adapt, should we not include it in our LSP teaching, even at lower levels because the consequences of miscommunication may be quantified in money terms and maybe by harm done in difficult situations? We need to manage expectations of learners and clients in the way that standard language teaching doesn't.

Reverse planning is one tool that can help us in this. It allows us to envisage what actually takes place in a professional environment before we start thinking about specific forms of language. In our mind's eye we can build in variables to our scenarios, imagine participants with different personalities and backgrounds. Effective conversations with learners about their professional contexts and what they actually have to do, coupled with our own world knowledge from real life, books, movies etc give us the fuel to do this. Our expertise as communications specialists means we can identify precisely what may be needed in a way the learner and other stakeholders would not be able to. If we combine these we can then create LSP courses that are relevant and which can hopefully be transformative for the learner.

KEYNOTE ARTICLE 2

Teaching business language and strategy with the Tao Te Ching

Xiaoman Yang and **Jean Langlois** with commentary by **Marc-Olivier Boisset**

Management training has always used classical works of literature as a guide to management practice and leadership and with the importance of such qualities and skills such as emotional intelligence and mindfulness and classical literature applied to management and also to military strategy the texts themselves are beginning to be taught on management and military training programmes. So why not as part of language training?

Jean Langlois and Xiaoman Yang have translated the Tao Te Ching, attributed to the scholar Lao Tzu (meaning the Old/Venerable Master). The word 'Tao' means the Way, the word 'Jing' means the book and 'de' means virtue so the Tao Te Ching is the 'Way and Virtue Book'. It is the founding work of philosophical Taoism (to be distinguished from the Taoist religion). The 'T' in Chinese is pronounce as 'D' so you will mainly hear the pronunciation of the 'Tao' as the 'Dao' or the 'Dao de Jing'.

Little is known about Lao Tzu himself. Most of what we know comes from the Chinese historian Sseu-ma Tsi'en (145-86BC) who tells us Lao Tzu was born in what is now the Hunan province in China and served as a historical archivist for a time at the court of the Chinese emperor. Disgusted by the corruption he tried to leave but was asked by the guardian of the border to leave some writing. The result was the Tao Te Ching. Apparently, Lao Tzu also met with the Chinese philosopher Confucius who apparently considered him 'elusive as a dragon'.

There have been many translations into English of the Tao Te Ching and it is a very difficult book to translate. The Chinese vocabulary is quite difficult to understand and a knowledge of Chinese philosophy can be very useful. As Holmes Welch notes, the written language "has no active or passive, no singular or plural, no case, no person, no tense, no mood » (Holmes Welch, *Taoism: The Parting of the Way,* Beacon Press, 1971).

The advantage of this translation is that it focuses on Lao Tzu's views on strategy. The Tao Te Ching is a fundamental piece of work on decision making in uncertainty. Therefore it is a very valuable text for people who want to deal with the difficulties of taking decisions in a constantly changing environment, people who have to deal with dynamic situations and have to develop a sense of problem resolution when the problem evolves through time.

More than ever, the Tao Te Ching seems to be necessary for managers in the military and in business because it deals with ubiquity, the role of appearance, how to use one's strength to defeat the adversary etc. This masterpiece deals with strategy in its most profound sense.

More and more specialists are trying to analyse what makes strategy and they are developing tools and methods when the core of strategy are meta-theories and, with the Tao Te Ching, an approach of life.

This translation focuses on the 20 'firsts' of the Tao Te Ching and is oriented towards strategic application. It is a useful study aid for learners from CEFR B2- C1 upper intermediate to advanced levels. (And why not C2 native speaker levels as well?).

This article follows the translation in English by Xiaoman Yang and Jean Langlois and finishes with a commentary and a suggested activity by Marc-Olivier Boisset. In doing so it re-inforces the role of the fine arts and classic literature and philosophy in the development of language, cultural and management skills.

The Tao Te Ching

I

Words are not enough to account for Tao and when described it is not about it

The phenomena of the world cannot be born without the Non-Being but they are animated by the Being

We apprehend them starting from Non-Being but we analyze them starting from Being

Although differentiated Being and Non-Being come from the Way

Impossible to know, they are nevertheless the necessary path to understand the phenomena and their evolutions.

II

Virtue and Vice go hand in hand
Kindness and Malice are complementary
To be and not to be are brothers

Complexity and Simplicity intersect
Distance and closeness as altitude and depth only exist in relation to each other
Information and what it reveals go hand in hand
What was and what will be are linked together

The strategist therefore devotes himself to non-action
He transmits this message without constraints
The men are set in motion by themselves
They are not worried about the defeat of a battle because pride does not concern them

III
The strategist does not reveal his best men, his greatest possessions and his various riches so as not to arouse attention and greed.

He sets an example by not seeking honors and by strengthening heart and mind.
He counteracts greed and reminds that knowledge is not enough for action
Through non-action he coordinates, without failures.

IV

Tao is absence; When used it is plentyness
It is bottomless and the origin of all things
It is not pride, attachment, splendour but it is discreet
It is there without appearing to be
Who knows where it came from. It seems to pre-exist all things

V

Similar to Heaven and Earth, the strategist does not encumber himself with affect
and lets the destinies unfold by themselves
Tao is inexhaustible but there is no point in trying to exhaust it with words and
explanations
By observing the non-action then we walk towards the Tao

VI

Emptiness and absence allow opacity and depth
The impenetrable is at the origin of all things
It is a constant movement that seems to exist and that we can make our own through
non-action

VII

Earth and Heaven are eternal because they do not live for themselves
Similarly, the strategist does not live for himself and his private interests.
This is how we recognize him.

VIII

Excellence is like water, it adapts and collaborates everywhere without unnecessary
struggle
It invests the lowest places
It leads to the Way
Similarly, the strategist must be humble
Its heart remains deep and calm and its blessings flow to all
His words are right, he conforms to Tao in his actions
He is not driven by his desires, there is no reason to oppose him

IX

The vase must not be filled too much
A sword that is too sharp cuts the hand that touches it
A room full of wealth is hard to keep secured
The man covered with honor attracts misfortunes
Likewise, one who has accomplished great things must retire to enter the Way.

X

Are your mind and body really inseparable?

Your concentrated will and your instincts tamed, will your energy be as flexible as for a newborn baby?

Delivered from the lights of intelligence, will you not have less weakness ?

With generosity and appeasement towards others, will you not achieve non-action?

Will you be able to remain serene when the movement of life sets in?

If you are full of wisdom will you be able to pass yourself off as ignorant?

Let it be born, let it multiply, without controlling. Building great things without taking the credit. Lead without considering yourself a master. This will allow the De.

XI

30 spokes may well be united to make a wheel, it is thanks to the void between them that the car rolls

We mold the vase with a lot of clay but we can only use it thanks to the vacuum

Doors and windows can cover a house well, it is through the void that they are useful

Utility certainly comes from full, but use comes from emptiness

XII

The sight of man is weakened by the spectrum of the five colors

Human hearing is blunted by the specter of the five notes

The taste of man is damaged by the specter of the five tastes

The heart of man is led astray by the races and the hunts

To acquire certain goods, Man does not hesitate to do acts that will harm him

The Strategist does not allow himself to be seduced and knows how to get inside himself

He rejects this and adopts that.

XIII

Glory and disgrace are things the Strategist avoids; listening to one's impulses is a source of calamity.

What does it mean: "Glory and disgrace are things the Strategist avoids"?

Glory is a low thing: obtained it is a source of joy, but you immediately worry about its potential loss. That's why we dread fame and disgrace.

What does it mean: "to listen to one's impulses is a source of calamity"?

We experience calamities because we listen to our impulses. If we disregard these impulses, what do we experience?

That's why anyone who is afraid to lead for himself can be given the command

XIV

You look at Tao without seeing it, it is colourless
You hear Tao without listening to him, we say it voiceless
You touch it without being able to grasp it, it is said to be elusive
These three qualities cannot really be described in words, which is why they are confused
When it rises up it is not radiant. When it sets it is not dark. It is eternity and cannot be named
It is the form of the formless, the image of the immaterial but this description is only a vague approximation
Going in front of it doesn't make you see its front and following it doesn't make you see its back
By observing the immemorial Tao one can order the existence of this day; Thus unfolds the son of Tao

XV

In ancient times, those who excelled in the practice of the Tao displayed finesse, abstraction and penetration.
They were so deep they couldn't be known
Although unknowable, let's try to describe them
They were hesitant like the one who will have to cross a torrent in winter
They were on their toes like one who does not want to attract the attention of his neighbour
They were humble like the stranger who learns from his host
They were erased like melting ice
They were as simple as wood that has not yet been cut
They had made themselves empty like a valley
They were turbid like rushing water
What can take away his agitation?
What can gradually gain understanding?
Whoever keeps Tao wishes to keep emptiness
Not being too full, he accepts his faults and does not wish himself perfect

XVI

Reaching the height of emptiness we can hold firm rest
Ten thousand beings are born together then we see them return
Having each been in a flourishing state they return to their origin
The origin is rest; rest is back to life
This return to life is a constant law
To know this law is to be enlightened
Whoever does not recognize this constant law exposes himself to disarray and disorder
Whoever recognizes this law has an enlarged soul
An enlarged soul makes it fairer

Being fairer he is taller
By this he makes himself identical to Tao which is duration
By this he avoids unnecessary dangers

XVII

In ancient times the people only knew who were in charge.
The following they loved them and praised them
The following he feared them
The following he despised them
Because he who does not trust others does not obtain their trust
The first rulers were reserved in their words
They acted in such a way that the people did not know what they owed them

XVIII

It is only in the absence of Tao that one notices justice and humanity
Caution and dedication only come about in the presence of too much hypocrisy
It is in family wars that filial pity is noticed
It's when institutions sink that her true servants are revealed

XIX

Give up imposing wisdom and prudence by force, men will benefit from it
Give up saying what is human and just, men will return to the just tradition
Give up valuing luxury and profit, thieves and bandits will disappear
So give up dictating these three specious things
Find what you're leaning on
For this simply try to get closer to what is not an artifice or the product of greed, personal ambition and desire.

XX

Whoever stops constantly seeking the truth outside of himself will end unnecessary pain

The little difference between two words can turn out to be a big difference in meaning,

Is the gap between values so big?

Although without being too attached to it, the strategist is aware of it

Men surrender to an endless quest

They exalt with joy in abundance and never feast as in a constant celebration

I rest without letting out my desires, like an infant who has not yet been tempted to reveal his desires to his mother, like a man who would not aim for a specific direction

They are in abundance, I remain in the absence

I stay in the dark

If the men are under the light, I stay in the dark

They see things so well, I stay blind

I stay cloudy like the sea, I spin around like I don't know how to stare at you

They are full of abilities, I am full of hardiness

It is that respects too much what the Tao really is, he who animates them in spite of themselves

Alternative approaches to strategic thinking

As we see in the translations, the Tao Te Ching is surrounded by a special aura which is often misunderstood and perceived as "magic thoughts". However, this is a very serious work for understanding time and space in a paradoxically innovative way.

While we are generally inclined to "force" our environment to adapt to our goals, the Tao treats ubiquity as a source of opportunity as soon as we allow the moving forces to evolve. Taoism describes the environment with the metaphor of water. A river feeds on several tributaries which each have their internal movements. To consider that we actually have extremely little control over the forces involved, that is to say, to spin the metaphor, accepting to sail on the river rather than swimming against its current is a strategy as such. And this strategy can be effective as we will see.

We notice that the way in which strategy is generally understood by managers in the military and in business corresponds to the adaptation of a pre-existing reading grid to a changing situation.

An operational mindset which is structured in such a way as to evaluate and tackle an issue according to a pre--destined chronology of micro--actions can be seriously challenged by the disruptive and fast--evolving aspects of strategic decision making in uncertain and evolving environments.

With the present translations we have some keys to try to understand changing environments. A certain approach is described several times in the Tao Te Ching, *Wuwei*. This concept is generally translated as "non-action", but it by no means refers to an attitude of inaction or passivity. *Wuwei* refers to the idea of acting in accordance with a changing environment. We understand it naturally, a military or a business action respecting the principle of *Wuwei* takes full measure of the continual variability of the factors of time and space. For a strategic action to be in line with the principle of *Wuwei* the following conditions must be met:

i) It must be as consistent as possible with this environment at the precise moment when we decide to act. Active monitoring and systematic analysis of weak signals is therefore preferable to planning.

ii) It takes into consideration that each action changes the environment and therefore an action can be very expensive and that no action is irreversible. Taking the initiative is not always the right solution. It may be better to let the other make mistakes.

iii) Prefer the invisibility of an action to its visibility and do not seek success for the sake of honour. The only thing that counts is success, not the attention it brings.

iv) An action is always judged by its effects and not its means. It is not the quantity of personnel and material resources and the over--multiplication of contradictory strategic doctrines that will make it possible to develop a winning strategy but a strong conception of priorities and a clear audit of victories and not of the number of battles fought at the same time.

Using the Tao to promote language awareness in class or in seminars

The translation of the Tao will make participants in classes or seminars think and remember. Following these steps might help in using the translation as a basis for a classroom activity.

1. **Setting the task**
   Maybe better to study one or two parts at a time over half an hour and break the group into pairs or small groups (maximum 5) either face-to -face or using breakout rooms.

2. **Vocabulary**
   Take a problem-solving approach. Get them to work out any vocabulary they don't know. Don't pre-teach but ask what words or phrases are causing them difficulty.

3. **Meaning and message**
   Now for the fun bit. In pairs or groups ask them to work out what the text means and what its message is. If you are teaching one-to-one then you are the pair. Encourage your student to work out meaning and message.

4. **Discussion**
   Stop the breakout rooms and get groups and pairs to report back.
   Go into a general discussion. Can the class reach agreement on the meaning and message of each stanza 1-20?

5. **Implementation**
   How will they use what they have learned in their own business or organisational environment? What is their action plan?

Conclusion

Everyone is asking how will education change when the pandemic finally recedes? One feeling is that teaching will change and that with climate change, political and economic changes our teaching and materials used may become more reflective and inward looking. If that is so then the arts and literature have a role to

play not just as study but as a memorable and thought-provoking stimulus to language and lifelong learning.

KEYNOTE ARTICLE 3

New Paradigms in Intercultural Awareness Training

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Based on a workshop delivered to the 6th Saarbrücken
conference on Language and Intercultural training, October 2021.

Introduction

"Why can't we live together?" was a famous pop song recorded by Timmy Thomas in 1972. The question many are asking in the wake of the pandemic, the threat of climate change and the huge expansion of global communication through international trade and the Internet is how we can live together better. Is there a new paradigm for intercultural training that we can follow?

What we are finding is that intercultural training is expending fast in the business, social, educational and professional environments. So intercultural training is expanding rapidly. Here are eight ideas you can try to develop your intercultural training and help organisations and people build stronger relations.

The eight ideas are:
- Dealing with misunderstandings and the use of mixed media
- Critical incidents and the MBI process
- Avoiding 'Essentialism' and organising the 'Get to know Jo' activity
- Do your cultural due diligence.
- Teach Concepts not Models.
- The Lithuania quiz
- The INCA project
  And
- a new Constructivist paradigm helping us understand each other better and work together.

1. Dealing with misunderstandings and the use of mixed media

A training manager advised me that the use of mixed media in the training room was one of the best ways to keep learners engaged. So, I use press photos, short articles and YouTube videos to keep learners engaged.

One very useful YouTube extract was a 30 second TV ad advertising a car. Although the ad was shown in Italy and never shown in China it went down very badly with officials in China who saw it. Why? It featured the Hollywood film star, Richard Gere, who is also a devout Buddhist and a follower of the Dalai Lama, and as a result, persona non grata with Chinese authorities. The leaners' task was to describe the situation, identify the problem and suggest solutions. Excellent language practice but also developing critical thinking and intercultural understanding.

Lesson plan:

- Choose a video, press photo or short article.
- Set the task:
- Describe the situation.
- Identify the misunderstanding.
- Suggest a solution to establish/restore good relations.
- Show the video, photo or article.
- In groups or breakout rooms participants discuss their views and solutions to the problem. What intercultural issues are at stake here? NOTE: It is a good idea to ask each group to appoint a rapporteur. It saves time in getting feedback.
- At the end of the exercise students reflect on what they have learned about identifying and resolving intercultural misunderstandings.
  Source: (www.youtube.com **Richard Gere - New Lancia Delta**)

2. Using Critical Incidents to resolve intercultural conflicts

One thing teachers should do more is to ask learners about the intercultural difficulties they have faced and note them down. Write them as short up to short situations. Participants can analyse the problem, suggest solutions and the critical incidents provide useful material for future classes. When the opportunity arises, use them for a ten-minute language practice and teach the MBI process as a system for identifying and resolving intercultural conflicts.

MBI stands for Map, Bridge, Integrate and it offers a formula participants can learn and use in their own lives. The table below suggests the questions you can ask in each category.

MAP	BRIDGE	INTEGRATE
What are they doing? What do I normally do? IDENTIFY BEHAVIOURS	Why are they doing it? How am I perceived? EMPATHY AND VALUES AND ATTITUDES	What can I change? What have I learned? What will I say, do and THINK differently next time? ADAPT and REFLECT

Lesson plan:

- Choose a critical incident.
- Teach the MBI process.
- Share the critical incident you have chosen.
- Learners apply the MBI process to identify the intercultural misunderstanding and suggest solutions.
  Source: Source: "Creating value with diverse teams in global management", Distefano, J. J., & Maznevski, M. L. (2000), *Organizational Dynamics, 29*(1), 45-63.

3. Avoiding 'Essentialism' and 'Get to know Jo'.

As the cultural trainer, Bob Dignen, once said, "You do business with people not countries." Countries are a useful shorthand but you can think immediately how many people are not typical of their 'country culture'. 'Essentialism' is a theoretical term which describes the danger of stereotyping people according to their national identity. In fact, we can identify at least five cultural influences on personality; nationality, region, profession, social background and personal experience. 'Get to know Jo' is an exercise that learners can do in pairs or small groups to practise. It helps people to find out personal information without being intrusive. The questions are simple.

NATIONALITY: Where are you from?
REGIONAL: What part? What is special about it?
PROFESSIONAL: What did you do before your present job? How was it different from what you are doing now?
SOCIAL: Where were you brought up? What was it like?
PERSONAL: Have you travelled a lot? What's your favourite place? What do you like about it?

The exercise helps learners get to know each other better and they often find out things in common between them that they didn't know before. A very good ice-breaking exercise.

Lesson plan:

- Divide the class into pairs or small groups.
- Get them to ask each other the questions.
- After five minutes the other participant takes over and asks the questions.
- After 10-15 minutes, gather the group together and ask, "Who learned something interesting that they didn't know?"
- Participants volunteer what they have learned.

4. Do your cultural due diligence.

Due diligence is what accountants do to check the profitability of a new company in a joint venture or merger and acquisition. Cultural due diligence is about analysing the 'human capital' of those you are dealing with, especially in international business.

I suggest the ECOLE framework to guide your cultural due diligence analysis, especially in contact with business and professional organisations, ECOLE is an acronym. It stands for:
E- Expectations (the values and attitudes of the organisation or person you are dealing with)
C- Communication style (verbal and paralinguistic communication, including how to present, how meetings work, negotiation and networking styles)
O- Organisation (attitudes to time, how teams and groups operate and their routines, how people organise their time)

L – Leadership (authoritarian or egalitarian, how decisions are taken and communicated and also diversity issues in society)
E – Etiquette (Greetings, how to show respect, formal or casual dress code, gift giving and receiving and also hospitality conventions)

Lesson plan:

- Begin by explaining ECOLE and what it means.
- Use ECOLE as the basis of a course design and teach either as a series of modules in a language course or as the basis of a one-day course.
- Explain the concept of cultural due diligence.
- Explain ECOLE concept by concept with examples.
- Elicit examples from the participants.
- Encourage learners to use ECOLE as part of their cultural analysis of a new community or business market they are involved in.
Source: Tomalin B and Nicks M (2014) World Business Cultures

5. Teach Concepts not Models.

This may be a bit controversial and some teachers may choose not to adopt it. Nevertheless, it needs putting forward. The intercultural training profession is founded on the pioneering work of scholars like ET Hall, Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars, Richard Lewis, Erin Meyer and others. Each set out a group of principles (sometimes overlapping with each other) presented as a model of intercultural values and attitudes and behaviour which have formed the basis of intercultural scholarship, teaching and training. All of these models identified these concepts by the countries which were supposed to represent them, e.g. Germans - strict time keepers, Italians – relaxed about time. The concepts themselves are extremely valuable and should be used to crystallise learners' understanding of intercultural differences. But they shouldn't be totally linked to countries (there is too much internal variety) and they are best introduced as individual concepts to explain issues raised by the learner experience, for example in their critical incidents. The country identification is a useful shorthand reference but does not represent the people you are discussing, who, as the experts themselves recognise, are much more varied in their beliefs and behaviour. So, introduce the concepts as appropriate but do not identify whole countries as embodying that concept and do not feel you have to teach a complete model. Be selective according to needs of your learners.

6. The Lithuania quiz

I learned this activity from a Lithuanian teacher on a training course. It is a great way to disabuse people of misunderstandings about a country, in this case, Lithuania. The quiz consists of 10 statements, 5 of which are true and 5 of which are false. The important thing to note is that the 5 false statements are based on common misconceptions about the country. As a result of doing the test and seeing the answers, learners can see how their conception of the country concerned has changed and how they can adapt their thinking and behaviour. Here's an example with True./False answers in brackets.

LITHUANIA QUIZ

1 Lithuania is a Balkan country. (False)
2 Its capital is Riga. (False)
3 There is a statue of US pop musician Frank Zappa in the capital. (True)
4 Lithuania is 5 hours from London by air. (False)
5 Lithuania's population is about 2 million. (True)
6 Vilnius University is the oldest in Central and Eastern Europe. (True)
7 Lithuania was the first country in the region to declare independence
from the Soviet Union in 1990. (True)
8 Most Lithuanian business is with Russia. (False)
9 The Lithuanian currency is the Euro. (True)
10 The traditional gift for Lithuanian hosts is vodka. (False)

Lesson plan

1. Prepare the quiz or get your learners to prepare a quiz and share it with the class. Remember, 5 statements should be true and 5 false.
2. Course participants have 5 minutes to complete the quiz (i.e. 30 seconds per statement).
3. Go through the test with the participants and elicit which statements are true and which are false. (Where participants have set up the quiz they can act as assessors).
4. Ask the learners what they have learned about the country that is new to them and how their perception of the country has changed.

7. The INCA Project

The INCA (Intercultural Competence Assessment) project was a Council of Europe initiative developed by Professor Michael Byram of Durham University in the UK and published in 2009. It assessed intercultural awareness at three levels, Basic, Intermediate and Full and has a test and a series of assessments based on results. You can access it at the URL below. Byram identified six key concepts which show a level of intercultural awareness. I offer them in a simplified form below.

1) Avoid othering. Be inclusive of foreigners.
2) Exercise patience. Be tolerant of ambiguity.
3) Be flexible. Recognise local solutions may be better.
4) Show empathy. Put yourself in the other person's shoes.
5) Show interest. Show interest in your colleague's/client's culture.
6) Learn a few words in the local language. It builds good relations.

Lesson plan:

- Introduce the INCA project to your class.
- Go through the 6 key concepts listed above as indicators of intercultural awareness.
- Ask the group (or divide the group into pairs or small groups to ask each other) what key concepts they feel they need to work on.

- A few weeks later remind the group of the 6 concepts and ask them how well they are doing in improving their intercultural awareness.

Source: Byram, M. (2009) The INCA project

www.ec.europa.eu /librarydoc

8. A new Constructivist Paradigm

The concept of a new Constructivist Paradigm bringing people together instead of setting them apart was presented by Milton Bennett. Bennett is the founding director and CEO of the International Development Research Institute (IDRI) and is perhaps best known for his DMIS (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity) designed to help people moving to a different country navigate the challenges of integration. In a recent webinar for SIETAR Europe (Society for International Education Training and Research), basing himself on Thomas Kuhn's "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" (1962) Bennett put for forward the concept of a constructivist paradigm. He identified four paradigms of civilisation's development:

- The Traditional paradigm ('gods and monsters')
- The Newtonian paradigm (observer independence/ linear causality)
- The Einstein relativism paradigm (everything is relative/ dependent on context)
- The Constructivist paradigm (tolerance/empathy and responsibility)

As Bennett presented it, facts exist only in context in the Einstein relativistic paradigm and when presented through factual disputes are seen as a clash of narratives. What happens is that argument becomes the manipulation of facts to create a more powerful narrative. It means that news reports can easily be subjective, both 'real' and 'fake'.

So what are the qualities of a Constructivist Paradigm? Bennett identifies 5 qualities.

- Humility (one culture is no better than another.)
- Tolerance
- Respect
- Awareness of difference and of what brings us together
- Empathy and mutual understanding

And how can we build these through our language and intercultural training?

- Build understanding (awareness of context).
- Build empathy (feeling cultures, not just information).
- Encourage adaptation (foster the ability of each side to adapt).
- Establish commitment (foster ethical commitment not just conviction).
- Encourage internationality (applications to intercultural citizenship and the creation of global citizenship).

Source: Bennett, M. 2013, *Basic Concepts*, Intercultural Press
- Bennett, M. August 2020, www.youtube.com Dr Milton Bennett 1 and 2 Sietar RG Frankfurt YouTube

Conclusion

What lessons can we learn about language teaching and intercultural training, especially as we emerge from Covid-19? A lot of intercultural training focuses on explaining different narratives (how we think, how we manage). Are there ways we can find to focus more on what brings us as multinationals together? Finding ways to focus more on cooperation than managing difference is the way forward.

ICC-LANGUAGES WEBINARS

Beware the Comfort Zone!

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Introduction

What do we mean by the Comfort Zone? Ray Bennett in his book, *The Light in the Heart* says, "*We have to be honest about what we want and take risks rather than lie to ourselves and make excuses to stay in our Comfort Zone.*" He went on, "*The Comfort Zone is a psychological state in which one feels familiar, safe, at ease and secure. You never change your life until you step out of your Comfort Zone; change begins at the end of your Comfort Zone.*" (Bennett R (2016) *The Light in the Heart*, Roy Bennett). Shannon L Alder says, "*Life always begins with one step outside of your Comfort Zone*" (Shannon Alder, InQuotes.com). Another definition is by Pandora Poikilos who says, *"We are so accustomed to the comforts of 'I cannot', 'I do not want to' and 'It is too difficult' that we forget to realise when we stop doing things for ourselves and expect others to dance around us, we are not achieving greatness. We have made ourselves weak."* (Poikilos P (2011) *Excuse me, my brains have stepped out*, (Pandora Poikilos).

Looking at it from the teaching point of view, the Comfort Zone is something that is negative. We can look at the Comfort Zone in three ways as shown below.

COURAGE ZONE contains	COMFORT ZONE contains	EXCESSIVE RISK ZONE
-Things I am afraid of -Things I've never tried - Hard moments - Potential - Unexplored territory - Risk, - Bravery - Opportunity and adventure	- Things I like doing - Safety and security - Freedom from risk - Things I am accustomed to	

A much more important series of zones contains the Comfort Zone, but this time with different qualities as shown below.

STRETCH ZONE contains	COMFORT ZONE contains	PANIC ZONE contains
- Anticipating - Excited	- Lifeless - Secure	- Fearful -Tense

- Willing to risk - Challenged - Expectant - Alive - Exhilarated	- Unchallenged - Bored - Stable - Comfortable - Safe - Easy	- Exhausted - Fed up - Anxious -Disinclined -Annoyed -Frustrated -Tired and stressed

Obviously, I don't want to be in the Comfort Zone but in the Stretch Zone. What does this mean in practice? Let's take an example from outside teaching. The Final of the 2020 UEFA Championships between England vs Italy in Wembley in the UK went to a penalty shootout at the end of extra time. The captain of the England team, Harry Kane, took the first penalty shot and scored. Harry Maguire scored the second penalty, However, Marcus Rashford and two others missed their penalties. The final result was Italy 4, England 3. What went wrong? The two England players who scored penalties were in the Stretch Zone. They had been on the pitch for the whole match. The three who failed to score were in the Comfort Zone and, when sent on the field to take penalty shots, went straight into the Panic Zone.

How does this apply to us as teachers in language classes? We need to know which zone we are in and which zone our students are in, as the following scenarios illustrate

SCENARIO 1 listening comprehension

Imagine you tell your class you will do a listening comprehension exercise. You can hear a groan in the classroom. Why? Because the learners may feel uncomfortable. They may feel fear and embarrassment and they may not know why they are being asked to do the exercise.

It is important that the teacher explains the practical relevance of the exercise and what the learners should listen for and identify. If possible, it is best to work in pairs or small groups, have the opportunity to listen more than once and make sure the TASK is at their level. Don't make it too difficult. Finally, it is often a good idea to do the task again, say six weeks later, so they can see how they have improved. Doing this will help improve learners' confidence and reduce adverse reaction.

SCENARIO 2 Progress plateau

Another situation occurs with learners at CEFR B1 level. They may have progressed successfully through A1 and A2 levels but at B1 level they appear to be at a standstill. Why? Many learners reach a plateau at B1 level. They are independent users of the language according to the CEFR descriptors but become stuck in a new Comfort Zone. Also, they may not know what B1 and B1+ means and the teacher should explain openly what it signifies both in terms of the progress they have made and the work they now need to do.

Explanation and transparency are keys. In addition, if the teacher can offer ideas and techniques for improving quality, that is positive. An example is

highlighting a word in a text you are writing and pressing the right hand side button on your computer mouse to see other synonyms which will give the learner a greater choice of vocabulary. Finally, the teacher should be prepared to push the learners to go a little faster and a little further. For example, you may want to ask questions like 'What is a native speaker?' and ask learners to give more information such as 'What are the qualities of a native speaker?' etc. This pushes the learners to give fuller and more comprehensive answers and is really important with higher level learners, especially in an academic environment where they are preparing for English language examinations such as Cambridge Proficiency.

SCENARIO 3 Discussion groups

In discussion groups some learners can feel very uncomfortable because they are afraid of making mistakes, don't like speaking in larger groups of 12 or more and maybe having to raise their voice to do so and dislike having to talk about something personal and being asked to share their opinions about a topic they haven't chosen. There are various ways teachers can help. They can delegate the choice of topic to the learners. They can break down the audience into smaller groups. They can also train the learners in conversation techniques, for example, how to start off a conversation and how to respond and step out of their own Comfort Zone by actually joining one of the conversation groups if the learners are happy for you to do so. Forcing yourself on a group may have the opposite effect. Don't do it to check or control but to stimulate the conversation or provide continuity.

SCENARIO 4 Advance notice

Another problem is some learners needing advance notice of lesson content, for example, to have a summary of what will be studied and copies of any text material to study prior to the class. Why? Once again, the learner feels forced out of his or her Comfort Zone and wants to avoid surprises, fears overload, wants to exercise control and possibly lacks self-confidence. The teacher can explain the need to train students in spontaneity and ability to talk without preparation on certain topics. Receiving texts for preparation before class would remove that opportunity for learning and skills development. This also meets the requirements of CEFR B1 to C1. The teacher can also help the learners develop reading strategies where they learn to accept texts where they don't understand every word and can work in pairs or groups to share ideas and improve their understanding. They also find out they are not the only ones who don't understand every word but together they can work together more effectively to complete the task.

SCENARIO 5 New words

In some texts learners encounter words they are unfamiliar with and do not know. Even though the words themselves may not be central to the text's message some learners may ask for translation into their first language. Why does this happen? Once again, it's about moving out of their Comfort Zone, fearing they are missing something or fear of the unknown, leading to loss of control and lack of self-confidence. What strategies can the teacher employ? First explain why you are doing it. Secondly, although you may be tempted to give a translation, paraphrase by explaining more simply. Synonyms can be helpful but may cause more confusion.

Where all learners speak the same language translation is quicker but it is better to teach reading strategies where learners distinguish between words that carry the message and need to be understood and those which are less important. As an exercise you can pass your class a reading text of two pages and give them 4 minutes to read it and then in pairs or small groups they summarise the key message and share it with the group.

SCENARIO 6 Learners don't like free language practice periods without the textbook.

Some learners depend on following the textbook and being asked to close the textbook and be involved in free language practice is a threat. They feel dependent on the authority of the textbook and are insecure when it is closed as they feel they need its support. A free language practice period adds to their fear of making mistakes. What can the teacher do? First of all, the teacher can explain the reason for and importance of a free language practice session. After all, they can hardly walk around the country whose language they are learning with a textbook in their hand. Most important, give them advanced notice so they can prepare and teach them compensation strategies so they know what to do if they can't think of a word In live conversation.

SCENARIO 7 New students join the programme

Sometimes new students join a course which has already been running and this can cause anxiety in students who have been there from the beginning. Why? Fear of people they don't know and the fact that they can't choose who they work with having got to know everyone else in the class. There may also be a fear of competition. In this case the teacher needs to integrate the new arrivals into the group as soon as possible using QandA sessions, pair and small group work and, above all, teaching all the learners, new arrivals and old hands, in exactly the same way.

Out of the comfort zone but avoiding the panic zone

In the scenarios discussed above and others that may arise, certain strategies are essential. The table below summarises key strategies (WHAT) and explains why they are important (WHY) for avoiding panic when students are outside their Comfort Zone.

WHAT	WHY
Transparency is essential.	Explain the context for everything. Say what you are doing and why you are doing it.
Authenticity is important.	Put things into a RELEVANT context for your learners. The more authentic materials you use, the closer the class relates to the learners' out of class experience.
Equip	Provide learners with relevant resources (including the opportunity to use

	smartphones for dictionary work) to help them deal with difficult texts.
Build up confidence.	Repeat activities later so learners can see their progress.
'999' Strategies	Teach compensation strategies to help learners deal with difficult texts or demanding conversations. (Dial 999 is the emergency number for the police or ambulance services in the UK.)
De-isolate	Encourage regular pair and group work, with different groups.

The role of the teacher

The teacher's role is essential in helping learners leave their Comfort Zone and move into the Stretch Zone and avoiding the Panic Zone. The teacher should be a role model for the group. Certain teacher qualities summarised below will help achieve this.

1. Don't be a know-all.
2. Don't insist on perfection.
3. Be prepared to say, "I'm sorry, I don't know, but I'll have the answer for the next lesson."
4. Allow learners to use the resources they usually use outside the classroom.
5. Be prepared to depart from the coursebook.
6. Take on special courses, e.g. Languages for Special Purposes.
7. Be flexible. Don't stick to your plan. Respond to sensible ideas suggested by learners.
8. Try out things you have never tried out (dared to try out) before.
9. Wherever appropriate, take part in the groupwork as a participant. Explain you are there as a listener and participant, not to check mistakes.
10. Show understanding of the situation of the learners – empathy.

Summary

As a teacher don't be afraid to leave your Comfort Zone and go into the Courage Zone and the Stretch Zone. You can only grow when if you are willing to feel uncomfortable and awkward when you try something new. The Blunt Educator has a sign which says, *"Your Comfort Zone is where good instruction goes to die*." Another saying from www.takethelidoff.blogspot.com goes like this. *"The more you stay in your Comfort Zone the smaller it gets. The more you leave your Comfort Zone, the bigger it gets."*

E-Cheating. What is it and why should we care?

Anna Soltyska

Webinar delivered on ICC-Languages Webinars on august 26th[th] 2021
Visit www.icc-languages.eu/Webinars

Introduction

Anna started by establishing the terminology, distinguishing between cheating and e-cheating and went on to discuss why cheating in cheating and e-cheating in particular threatens our security assessment processes and their reliability and what aspects of test security are relevant when assessing foreign languages. Assessment and digital assessment are popular in various areas and we as language experts need to be aware of how it affects us. Finally, she presented ideas on what measures can be taken to counteract and prevent digital cheating. The problem is that digital cheating is changing all the time and what we learn today may be updated tomorrow. So, it is a continuing and growing problem. Whenever we as test administrators, test developers and teachers find a problem and deal with it the cheats will find another way to get round it. It's a constant battle.

Terminology

Cheating is generally regarded as academic malpractice, a transgression against academic integrity by taking unfair advantage, thereby misrepresenting the examination taker's ability and knowledge by breaking the rules in the academic context. Another definition defines teaching as any action taken before, during and after the administration of a test or assignment task which is aimed at gaining unfair advantage or to produce inaccurate results, (Cizek, 2012 *Setting Performance Standards*, Routledge) The definition makes clear that cheating is always on purpose, to make some appear better than they are.

Fremer and Mulkey (2005) in *Cheating in Schools* made a list of the 'most-wanted' ways of cheating.

1. IMPERSONATION – sending someone else to take your exam for you
2. ROBINHOODERY – helping other test takers improve their score (often done by teachers or parents)

3. INSIDER TRADERS – anyone from within the testing institution willing to share information about the test

4. TIME TRAVELLERS – e.g. Test takers in one time zone passing details of test questions to test takers in another time zone, talking advantage of time differences.

5. DIFFERENT COLLABORATORS – by SMS, and physically with A and B,

6. SMUGGLERS – smuggling illegal aids into exam rooms

Why is cheating so common? Increased competitiveness, simple inability due to poor time management or poor study skills, lack of proper supervision or invigilation, poor quality of assessment, a cheating culture where people are tolerant of cheating are all factors to take into account. Testing has become ever more important as an indicator of successful performance. You need to achieve IELTS 7.5 or 8 to follow certain courses at university, CEFR B2 at least to undertake a Masters degree or to achieve 3.0 to be accorded credit points for a particular course. Access to higher education, job opportunities, promotion opportunities, immigration and citizenship are all more and more dependent on having qualifications and passing a test.

Language testing malpractice can also be linked to a more fluid notion of what is ethical and what is not. In another context the difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion suggests that whatever is not forbidden by law is permissible in practice. The conventions differ from country to country and between cultures and there are other reasons why malpractice is so common in language testing both in face-to-face and online settings.

The threat of e-cheating

E-cheating is a threat as it is anonymous. It is imposed and omni-present and is happening everywhere. If you go onto a site to ask for essay writing help you will not necessarily get advice but an offer of a product, such as a ready-made essay. E-cheating is fuelled by copying and sharing the content and the work to be submitted for assessment. Also, there is advice available offering guidance on how to cheat on certain tests and unfortunately whatever we learn today will no longer be active tomorrow. E-cheating is evolving at unprecedented speed so we as teachers, examiners and test administrators have to stay up to date. This is important, as

advice about how to circumnavigate and get round new anti-cheating measures are being continuously discussed and shared online.

The danger of ignoring e-cheating is enormous; reducing protection for society, causing distress and tension for those involved and posing a clear impediment to learning and understanding. High test results may be achieved as a result of cheating. However, the high results may make test creators think the test was too easy and raise the level next time round, possibly extending beyond the limits of CEFR or other benchmarks of language proficiency. Last but not least, not confronting and dealing with cheating may result in a loss of reputation and credibility of the institution concerned. As a quality assurance issue e-cheating should be tackled urgently because, if not, your credibility may be at risk.

E-cheating is not a victimless crime. If you are an e-cheat you damage your integrity, you dull your conscience, you present a false image of your ability to the teacher, and you unjustly benefit at the expense of students who are not cheating. A lot of personnel might be involved in failing to root out cheating, ranging from teachers, directors of studies and examinations departments to school or institution authorities. In addition, dealing with entrenched e-cheating can cause a significant drain on resources if not tackled early.

How to minimise cheating and e-cheating

It is not enough just to educate the public about the role of tests in society and why cheating undermines the principles of meritocratic states. Raising awareness is important but it is not enough. So, what can we do? Dawson (Dawson P. (2021) *Defending Assessment Security in a Digital World*, Routledge) suggests four approaches.

1. **ONLINE SURVEILLANCE** – highly invasive but effective, Verify the identity of your test taker and monitor their activity online. You can use Analytics, Online Proctoring, Access and Biometrics (in some countries).

2 **INTRODUCE LOCKDOWN** – Take control of the circumstances in which a test is taken through disabling some features or networks on the device being used for the test. It has a high invasive character denying students full use of the devices or the networks. Lockdown can be achieved by certain online

exam platforms, certain online exam browsers, by some assessment apps, or even by network blocks or outages if test takers are seated in a room where no other networks or devices can be accessed.

3 **STYLOMETRICS** - Make sure the test taker is really the person we know by analysing and comparing their writing style with writing they have produced previously. We as teachers can do it anyway but AI (Artificial Intelligence) can do it as well as us. It also includes Google searches of work produced by others which seems suspiciously good or doesn't reflect teast takers' submissions so far.

4 **CONTENT MATCHING** - Teachers don't always have the resources for these devices so we have other techniques we can use. We can check authorship and we can introduce a certificate of originality which has to be signed and submitted prior to test assessment. We can establish control questions, a kind of Viva requiring an oral defence of the work submitted. This is especially useful in assessing portfolio work. We can also examine the writing process, asking test takers to submit different versions or multiple drafts of their text so that we know the work submitted is an original production.

A very easy way to minimise the use of Google Translate and programmes like that is to ask for the texts to be handwritten and photographed or scanned before submission. Test takers would be less willing to copy and paste into a translation. You can also reduce the temptation to cheat by giving texts as a JPEG file rather than as a Word doc or a PDF. This way it is more difficult to copy and paste words into a dictionary to get a translation into the test taker's own language.

Testing oral skills, for example in presentations, you can ask test takers to share their whole screen with you so that you know they are not just reading notes off their screen. Limiting the time of the test can reduce opportunities for asynchronous communication between test takers taking an exam at the same time. You can also randomise test questions and create multiple test versions so it is less easy for test takers from the same group to communicate. Using delayed feedback means you don't have to give the answers straight away; only after everyone is finished or not at all. Finally, use test formats that require more

individual and creative responses, for example, open and semi open formats as opposed to closed questions. Use personalised and individualised open questions. Use tests which are competence and task-oriented rather than rely on recall of theoretical knowledge and grammatical rules. Ask your students to analyse, synthesise and evaluate and construct their own response rather than simply answer a factual question. Finally, you can adjust your assessment criteria to reward more creativity and more reflection. One more initiative would be to introduce language mediation tasks into testing, using Open Book or Open Web, by interlinking reading and listening in the same test task.

Conclusion

Ultimately, whatever the redesign of tests that we may undertake, the aim is to have meaningful, authentic assessment. The shift over the years towards more progressive and more learning- focused assessment and away from exclusively summative assessment has been beneficial and if we follow our e-cheating 'panic' many of the gains may be undone. We must not underestimate cheating and e-cheating but we must also not lose gains we have made in testing and assessment.

NOTES

- For more information, visit the TEASIG (IATEFL Testing, Evaluation and Assessment Special Interest Group at tea.iatefl.org.
- You can watch Anna's presentation by visiting www.icc-languages.eu/webinars

Becoming more effective international communicators

Chia Suan Chong

Webinar delivered on ICC-Languages Webinars on September 30th 2021
Visit www.icc-languages.eu/Webinars

What does it mean to be an international communicator? Most of our students are learning English so that they can communicate internationally but not so that they can assimilate themselves into a particular English-speaking culture. What are the skills of an international communicator?

Ten key skills

1. ***Self-awareness and the ability to reflect on our own practices*** - *awareness of how we communicate. Only when we develop that awareness can we improve our communication skills.*
2. ***Curiosity about the other*** - *Show interest in others, their background, their interests, what motivates them, their intentions.*
3. ***Mindfulness and perceptiveness*** - *Be sensitive to what the other person is saying. Be open-minded.*
4. ***Open-mindedness and non-judgementalness*** - *Don't jump to conclusions. Leave room for other ways of looking at things. Put yourself in the shoes of your audience. Be aware that there are different ways of looking at the same thing.*
5. ***Patience and tolerance of ambiguity*** - *Accept the 'grey' area when you don't know which things may be right or wrong.*
6. ***Emotional strength*** - *the ability to make the effort to listen and respond to those with different cultural backgrounds and ways of expressing their thoughts and ideas, ability to build resilience to manage the strain of adapting to people with different attitudes and values and beliefs*
7. ***Interpersonal skills*** – *the ability to build rapport, show respect and adaptability. Become an influencer and develop the ability to build rapport, manage conflict, build trust and build relationships.*
8. ***Communication skills*** - *Develop the ability to incorporate others in a conversation. There is not just one way to communicate.*
9. ***Flexibility and adaptability*** – *the ability to involve others in a conversation.*
10. ***Sense of identity and objectives*** - *Retain your sense of identity, even when speaking a foreign language. Maintain your sense of the objectives of the conversation and the goal you want to reach.*

Ultimately, it's all about how to communicate effectively with people from cultural backgrounds different to our own. When our students outside the classroom communicate in English they are instantly communicating across cultures. But what is culture? When we teach English are we talking about the British experience, for example, the history of the Royal Family? No, but many English language teaching publications still focus on the main English-speaking countries, UK, US, Canada

(alongside French) and Australia and New Zealand. However, things have changed. The majority of English users around the world are not native-speakers and in our materials and our teaching we need to reflect this diversity.

Small talk is something we often teach but we tend to impose our own ideas on what is acceptable whereas students from different cultures might see things differently. One way to test this is with this exercise. Which of these small talk topics do you consider unacceptable? Which would make you feel uncomfortable? Why?

The price of your car	*Football*	*Your children's education*
The weather	*Your age*	*The latest piece of technology that you own*
Travel plans	*Politics*	*Unsavoury news about people we know*
Your parents' health	*Religion*	

For example, you may feel talking about your age is inappropriate but in Vietnam and some other Asian countries asking your age might be the prelude to a conversation as it helps your interlocutor decide what it is appropriate to talk about and how to show respect.

Cultural filters

One of the things to avoid is 'dos and don'ts'. When we try to define culture we have to recognise that each individual has a number of cultural filters. These may include:

- Nationality
- Company
- Professional/function role
- Gender
- Age
- Religion
- Political affiliation
- Region
- Class
- Ethnic group
- Special interest

The philosopher, Carl Rogers, said, *"Being empathetic is seeing the world through the eyes of the other not seeing your world reflected in their eyes."* There is a danger that we think our views and our ways of expressing them are universally understood. This is known as the *'illusion of transparency'*, the illusion that what you think and how you express it is clear to others. We tend to overstate the degree to which our mental state is known to others. We always know what we mean and expect others to know it too.

A good example of a misunderstanding is the example of a manager named Elizabeth checking that a staff member (Thiago) has obeyed her instructions. The conversation goes like this.

Elizabeth*: I thought I specifically told you to put those books away after I left. You didn't do it?*
Thiago*:   No.*

What does Thiago mean when he says '*No'*. What kind of misunderstanding could take place? What Thiago meant was, '*No, I did do it.*' But just saying '*No'* suggests to Elizabeth that he didn't. As the author and playwright, George Bernard Shaw, once said, *"The biggest single problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."* As teachers we can find little critical incidents like Elizabeth and Thiago and ask the learners to work in pairs or small groups to discuss what was really meant and why the misunderstanding occurred and what is the best solution. In business it is easy to misunderstand what people really mean by misinterpreting what they say as an indication of negativity. The philosopher, Karl Popper, said, "*Nothing can be said in a way in which it cannot be misunderstood*."

So are there principles of communication we can advise teachers to adopt?

Principles of communication - SCORE

The SCORE Communication principles offer a good example. SCORE is an acronym.

S = Simplify and clarify.
C= Clarify and confirm – Don't assume.
O= Organise and outline - clear structures, cohesion and coherence
R= Rephrase and reframe – use different simpler words to say the same thing.
E= Explain with examples – give reasons, help people understand what you mean with examples.

SCORE can be used as a way of giving tools to students to help communication both inside and outside the classroom. The tools don't have to be introduced all at once but can be introduced as a series of activities during the course.

BODY LANGUAGE IN COMMUNICATION

Body language can also raise problems in communication. An American in China signalled he wanted two cups of coffee using his extended forefinger and thumb. He got 8 coffees. Why? The extended forefinger and thumb is the Chinese symbol for A = 8 in Mandarin. In Singapore the same symbol means 7. So the simplest body language through gestures can also lead to communication misunderstanding. Even smiling is interpreted differently in different cultures, in some cases positively and in others negatively. Andy Molinsky, the author of *Cultural Dexterity*, wrote that, *"It's behavioural flexibility that matters, not just cultural awareness."* In other words, be aware of differences but adapt and adjust your behaviour accordingly.

THE ADAPT MODEL

ADAPT is an acronym that can help people in a different culture adapt to situations they're not used to.
A = Awareness – What's happened?
D = Don't judge – Be careful that your reactions may be based on your norms not others'.
A =Analyse – Why do others behave the way they do?
P = Persuade yourself – Find a way to persuade yourself of your interlocutor's values and you can then better understand their point of view.
T = Try – Go some of the way to show willingness to adapt a bit so your interlocutor can see you as accommodating them too.

NOTES
1. Chia's book, *Successful International Communication* is published by Pavilion Books, Brighton and is available online as well as in print via Amazon.
2. You can watch an exercise based on Chia's explanation of ADAPT at www.icc-languages.eu/webinars (52'00" - 56'00 approx))
3. SCORE, published by Berado and Deardoff (2012) *Building Cultural Competence*, Stylus Publishing
4. Watch Chia's presentation at www.icc-languages.eu/webinars. Scroll down till you see her presentation advertised and press *Watch Video*. We've also attached an article Chia wrote for Training Language and Culture journal (RUDN.TLCjournal.org) on *Successful International Communication*.

What are the key technologies impacting on teaching and learning?

Russell Stannard

Webinar delivered on ICC-Languages Webinars on October 19th 2021
NOTE: This webinar was not recorded.

SUMMARY
Russell's talk covered the following:

Working with Wordwall
https://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/complete_wordwall

Working with Google Earth
https://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/language-learning/google-earth_in_education

Working with Zengengo (this includes a discount code for 20%)
https://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/ideal_language_learning_platform
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jn-s7INphG4

In his presentation, focusing on just the most widely used technologies, Russell highlighted how knowledge of just a couple of simple to use technologies can impact on a whole range of areas of teaching and learning. This was a talk full of practical examples that you can apply in your teaching and learning immediately. In his webinar Russell covered feedback, speaking fluency, reflection, learning input and activities to make lessons more engaging.

WORKING WITH Google Earth

The focus of the webinar was on three tools impacting teaching and learning today. This first was **GOOGLE EARTH**, showing how to use it in language learning tasks. It is really worth learning how to use Google Earth and teaching with it if you work in language education because there are so many things you can actually do with it. If you're working from a book and there's a text about, say Niagara Falls or Thailand, you can bring it to life by showing the place to the learners using Google Earth.

Google Earth is terrific for bringing things to life. As Rs I was teaching from a book and a text about Venice appeared. As Russell explained, *"I took the learners off to Venice on Google Earth and I showed them The Grand Canal and St Marks Square and even the hotel I stayed in."*

So, if you've got something in your book and you want to bring it to life, Google Earth is brilliant. There aren't many tools to learn with Google Earth so you can zoom in, zoom out or go the 3D view with no problem. Also you can create a human figure and see the scene you have chosen from the figure's point of view.

WORKING WITH Wordwall

We can also combine Google Earth with a language activity using another terrific piece of technology called **WORDWALL**. Wordwall is a platform that enables you to create lots of language learning games. Example 1 is about Chelsea Football Club and this activity gives you a format for a word order exercise. When the activity is complete, Wordwall will calculate your answers and show you how well you did. Russell explains. Here's the example.

Example 1: Chelsea Football Club

"Showing Google Earth, we can see Stamford Bridge in London; the home of my favourite football team. Chelsea is probably the football stadium closest to central London and holds about 42,000 people.

Moving around, using Google Earth to show 3D views you can see a railway line just next door to Stamford Bridge and you can a see a museum and two hotels. If I zoom out a bit you can see Chelsea is actually in the suburb of Fulham and close to the river Thames. It was founded in 1905 in Fulham but called Chelsea because a football team called Fulham already existed. In 3D mode you can really see around the stadium. I've been a supporter of Chelsea since 1972! So as I talk about Chelsea you can actually see it as if it were live. Then, using Word Wall I can create a listening comprehension activity in which learners have to answer questions about what I have said."

Example 2: Learner presentations

As well as using Google Earth to bring your texts to life you can also use it to get learners individually or in groups to make their own presentations on Google Earth showing their countries, places they have visited or famous places they know etc. It makes presentations much more exciting and memorable. Learners can prepare presentations for homework and present in groups or even just one learner coming to the front and presenting to the rest of the class.

A couple more facilities in Wordwall are also fantastic. As Russell explains, *"If I set up a task based on a presentation or a text, I can see immediately how many got things right and what mistakes they made and then go on to elicit correct answers. This way you can make a presentation in class or online and use Wordwall to practise language use and test understanding.*

I was invited to do some training with someone who worked for Wordwall. If you create a language game you can Select SHOW ALL, which will display all the different activities. You can then click on a different template and your game will transmute automatically into the different format you have chosen. You can also press EDIT and add a new title and make changes and then press DONE and you have a new game with no extra work.

With just one click you can present the same language point as a variety of games and edit and change each one a little bit as you proceed and by changing just one or two things you can be incredibly creative."

Example 3: Ordering activities

Here's another example, using Wordwall's Ranking game. After teaching adverbs you can put them into an activity asking the learners to put the adverbs in order of frequency. To prepare the game, type in the adverbs you've taught and Wordwall will set up the ranking automatically, mixing up the adverbs. You can test the game by putting them in the right frequency, going from 'always' to 'rarely' and then test you've got the setup right by pressing SUBMIT and it will tell you if you're right or wrong. You can then set the activity for classroom use or for homework.

To create a game in Wordwall is very quick and you can change it in just a few seconds.

Subscribing to Wordwall

Wordwall is well worth learning and there is even a multi-group activity. There is a subscription fee but your first five activities are free and you can successfully edit and use those five activities at different levels without having to pay the subscription fee. That being said, Wordwall is one of the most useful and versatile and simple to use tools you can find for creating language learning games to enhance your online teaching. It has 36 games on syntax, grammar and vocabulary. *Random Wheel* is great for discussion. *Find the Match* is great for sentence completion. *Missing Words* is great for vocabulary and *Jumble* is great for grammar and syntax. There are some great games like *Airplane* and *Whackamole*.

Creating teacher and student presentations online

Although nothing can take away from face-to-face interaction, online teaching has become much more common and that is unlikely to change. The way Russell presents to camera is to select a green screen behind him and then he can project videos on to the green screen as he wishes. You can see the effect on his website **Teacher Training Videos.com**.

Students can use Wordwall and create their own games to try out in class. That way they are using the technology to practise and improve their language and communication ability. There are so many possibilities.

WORKING WITH Zengengo

The third platform Russell discussed was ZENGENGO (originally called **Teacher Digital**). This is a subscription website but is really worth it and you can sign up and use it for 30 days completely free of charge.

Example 5: Text gap-fill activity (Zengengo)

Create an activity, open the app and write or paste in a text (take care over copyright). Then click on OK. The platform asks you which words you want to include in the gap-fill. So you click on the words you want to include. Click on SAVE and the game is created. Then you click on COPY and the game can be transferred to all your students. You share the link and the students can click on it and it is perfect for homework. Students can listen to or read the text and do the activity. Then they'll see their marks and, if they have given you their emails, you can check the results.

Example 6 Text to test (Zengengo)

Give the activity a title. You can choose from a variety of languages. Write or paste a text and click on PROCESS. You can then select the words and grammar you want to test. What it does is get you to re-order the text. Click on SAVE and it is ready to use. Test the activity out by having two browsers open. One is Teacher and the other is Student. The first example is definition. You can see what the questions are and you can test it out. Then you can do the second activity, which is put the words in the right order. There are 10 games you can try out, each with multiple options.

Zengengo is a complete platform that gives you a wide range of activities, wider than Wordwall, which is also very good, and is well worth looking at.

CONCLUSION

It is really important to try and learn a few technologies really well, seeing what the differences are and what works successfully. Use technologies that you are going to use again and again like the ones discussed in this webinar. There is little point in spending time learning a technology you are only likely to use once. So we have to focus on frequently used technologies and also to work with our students to help them improve their technical skills in using them. That is going to make extra demands on us and our time and teaching and learning is going to be focused slightly differently. Russell likes technology and thinks it has a great role to play in online class and out of class learning but any day he says he would prefer to be in a classroom working with a teacher.

If you go to Russell's website www.teachertrainingvideos.com you can download videos of all the platforms he discussed and also details of a discount he has been able to arrange on Zengengo subscriptions. If you send him an email at russellhandout@gmail.com he can send you all this information direct to your email address, including videos on how to use each technology. However, just to summarise, here once again are the details of the platforms he discussed in this webinar.

Working with Wordwall
https://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/complete_wordwall

Working with Google Earth
https://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/language-learning/google-earth_in_education

Working with Zengengo (this includes a discount code for 20%)

https://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/ideal_language_learning_platform

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jn-s7INphG4

TEACHING TIPS

Learners' Engagement through Group Communication Learning (GCL): an illustration from EFL Algerian classes

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Abstract

The levels of motivation students bring to the classroom while engaging in communicative tasks, can be transformed by what happens in the classroom. With this conviction, I used what I labelled 'Group Communication Learning' (GCL for short) to raise the willingness of low proficiency EFL learners to speak and to increase their opportunities for classroom interaction.

Reflection on my Teaching Practice

On a practical level, learning EFL speaking poses difficulties for many students in the English Department, mainly first-year undergraduate students. They have to perform in a language that they know they lack competence in both in quality and quantity. Some examples of this perceived failure in our classrooms can be observed in students' avoidance of participation and lack of interest in the topics discussed in EFL speaking classrooms. The position I take is that, if students enjoy their learning experience, they will be highly engaged and willing to participate continuously. This springs from my concern to make students project their thoughts 'naturally', rather than giving 'artificial speech'. So, how could teachers of speaking skills enhance students' need to communicate in the EFL classroom?

Before I explore ideas about the use of collaborative learning in teaching speaking skills, I shall discuss how the classroom has been managed as well as students' attitudes to the activity. Next, I shall point out some practical considerations to foster students' engagement and motivation in learning to speak and communicate in the EFL classroom. For communicative cooperative learning, it is worth noting that classroom management is of crucial importance. The idea of what I named 'CGL' is inspired by the way I managed the classroom. This will be followed by feedback from some of my students showing their attitudes to the activity and reflections on the outcome.

In the classroom: Use of 'GCL'

From the first session of teaching speaking skills, the students were asked to give lists of topics that interested them. The first sessions were mainly concerned with giving guidance on vocabulary selection. Gradually, the students were given specific phrases to express some cultural aspects of the target language. This means that, in teaching speaking, the language input can be derived from a wide range of sources including the use of proverbs and idiomatic expressions. Besides, the students were also taught phrases to express opinion. These were extensively used activities as a starting point in a variety of opinion-expressing activities.

However, those students who were silent most of the time seldom took advantages of the opportunity to take part in conversations. From their journals, reasons for silence in the EFL speaking classroom were the following:

- Low proficiency level in English as a foreign language.
- Little vocabulary to express ideas and opinions in English.
- Lack of interest in the topic (we usually select one topic).
- Difficulty of listening and understanding what the teacher or the students say.

Because of the reasons given by the students about their lack or low levels of motivation in EFL speaking, I thought of ways to make them willing to speak and feel motivated. The classroom, therefore, was organised in a way whereby students could listen and see each other. The students' seating formed a circle. They were grouped into pairs and they were asked to select topics matching their interests. Because of different ability levels, not all of the students were able to find topics easily. To cope with this problem, some of the students were provided with suggested topics.

In the classroom, the student's preparations for their debates and conversations could take about five to ten minutes. They might use dictionaries or ask for the teacher's help whenever they had difficulties. After that, each pair in the circle had to present their topic. Engagement in meaning negotiation was attempted by every student. One cannot deny that in providing one general topic, only those students who were interested were ready to take risks and participate. After each topic discussion, the students were asked to evaluate and assess the presentation by their peers. This created some competition in the classroom. I found that students' topics that stemmed from their personal interests made for very stimulating presentations.

Since motivation can greatly influence the ongoing language learning process, the students were asked to give feedback. The comments below illustrate how some students reacted to small group work in learning to speak and communicate.

S1:"…*The activity of today is better than the last one. I think that it is exciting! and I enjoyed it. I can develop my ideas and work with my friends. It is better than working alone…*"
S2:"…*I found the activity of today very interesting. I prefer to speak about a topic that I choose because some of the topics do not interest me. I also think that, if everyone can speak about the topic he is interested in, all the students can learn from each other…*"
S3:"… *I am motivated today because we have changed the manner of seating in the classroom. It is better to sit in a circle so that we hear and see everybody…*"
S4:"… *when I choose the topic. I feel more comfortable because I know what I am speaking about. I have more vocabulary…*"

What conclusions can we draw from the feedback provided by the students in their journals? I think we can take away four lessons.

1-Students learn when they enjoy their learning experiences. The willingness to preserve in a learning task is enhanced when students see purposes and ultimate goals in some activities. In (1) the purposeful aims perceived by the student are the development of personal ideas through fulfilling communicative needs in collaborative learning.

2-Students learn to communicate better when they are given the chance to generate topics that reflect their interests. The teacher's selection of topics may negatively influence the student's engagement in communicative tasks. In the case of (2), the student is motivated because he/she feels that speaking about topics of personal interest makes him/her perceive that learning can be gained from both the teacher and the other learners in the group.

3-The provision of variety in classroom speaking activities is of crucial importance. Since speaking is linked to listening, difficulty in listening to other peers may generate feelings of boredom and can weaken students' curiosity. After all, students' involvement in communicative classroom practices is our ultimate objective.

4-Students' expectancy of success in giving a meaningful speech is based on their selection of topic and choice of vocabulary.

Conclusion

By designing tasks and activities which are based on students' needs and interests, we can keep them continue enjoying their learning experiences. In so doing, students can gradually participate in classroom communication confidently. I hope that this humble reflection will contribute to a better understanding of our future instructional roles to provide stimulation in our classrooms.

REVIEWS

Anthro Vision
How Anthropology can Explain Business and Life
By Gillian Tett
Published by Penguin Random House (2021)

Reviewed by Barry Tomalin

To any language or intercultural trainers wondering what a book called *Anthro Vision* is doing in the ICC-Journal it is worth remembering that some of the most famous scholars in intercultural awareness, including Edward T. Hall, started out as anthropologists. Indeed, as Gillian Tett, herself an anthropologist and US based Editor at Large at the London Financial Times newspaper, points out, leading corporations are now employing anthropologists to examine how their company works internally and to propose solutions to improve performance.

Anthro Vision is also about how business corporations are changing their attitudes and policies to embrace ESG – environment, social issues and governance. In doing so they are moving away from the sole focus on profitability for their shareholders, advocated by the Chicago economist Milton Friedman in the 1980s. The book contains interviews with business leaders in which they express how their views and how company policy is changing. As a result, *Anthro Vision* is an excellent source of information on changing policy and practice.

The book is divided into three parts, Making the Strange Familiar, Making the Familiar Strange and Listening to Social Silence. There are ten chapters in all together with an introduction and a coda.

It is a fascinating read for teachers of languages for special purposes, language teachers and intercultural trainers, with examples and mini-case studies that can provide a basis for classroom exploitation.

Anthropology is traditionally viewed as the study of local communities – exploring kinship patterns, lifestyles and rituals. However, as Tett, explains it is much more than that. "*Anthropology.*" She writes, *"is an intellectual framework that enables you to see round corners, spot what is hidden in plain sight, gain empathy for others and fresh insight on problems.*" She identifies three key principles of anthropology that apply to dealing with issues in business and politics, First, the key characteristics of anthropologists are their ability to cultivate a *"mindset of empathy for strangers and to value diversity."* Secondly, listening to other people, even if you don't agree with them, builds empathy and also encourages you to see yourself. Thirdly, it enables us to see blind spots in others and ourselves.

Anthro Vision also encourages close observation of behaviour and language use to identify why things may be going wrong within a community or an organisation. As intercultural trainers will know, part of the solution to problems faced by companies operating internationally is often due to identifying issues within the organisation itself either in the way they run their operations or in relations between multicultural teams with different attitudes and values and management styles. In a

world affected by imminent climate change, global pandemics and economic uncertainty, VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) as western military experts describe it, the opportunity to listen, observe quietly and take an unbiased view is paramount. Therefore, as Tett, emphasises, the skills of the anthropologist are similar to those of an intercultural counsellor working with companies.

Anthro Vision means applying a different set of skills to problems emerging in business, finance and the professional world, increasingly used to solving problems with scientific data, big data and other matrices. Anthro Vision means essentially listening to the language people use and observing how they behave to find solutions to problems that data management on its own cannot resolve. Big Data is good at identifying what is happening and allowing people to see what might be going wrong. It cannot identify why because, as Tett summarises, *"correlation is not causation"*. That is where Anthro Vision has a role to play.

In fact, although traditionally associated with 'exotic' communities, frequently in traditional or emerging economies, anthropologists have been called upon to advise companies since the 1920s. In the early 1930s the linguist and psychologist, Benjamin Whorf, was asked by an Insurance company to explore why empty oil drums kept exploding in the storehouse of one of their clients. Observing and listening to the workers, Whorf noticed people would smoke in the room where the empty oil drums were kept although they were very careful when around oil drums marked 'full'. 'Empty' for them meant 'nothing' in English but empty oil drums still have flammable fumes, hence the explosions. Whorf asked the manager to explain the situation to the workers and the explosions stopped.

One common problem addressed by Tett is how products and advertising produced in one country can have a completely different effect in another. Globalisation and the explosion of digital communication have emphasised the need to understand that a product advertised in country A might get a completely different reaction in country B. Kit Kat is a well-known biscuit bar covered with chocolate, marketed by Nestle internationally with the slogan, *'Have a break, have a Kit Kat.'* Unfortunately, this did not work with Japanese students. So the local Nestle executives remarketed Kit Kat as *'Kit (to) Sakura Saku'* (Wishes Come True). Sales expanded massively as Japanese students treated the Kit Kat bar as a good luck charm (omamori) to help them pass their exams.

The story as told by Gillian Tett is absolutely fascinating and serves as a very useful story of intercultural co-operation and adaptation. In class, a summary of the story could serve as a reading passage as the basis of a critical incident. The teacher would get the students to discuss the situation, identify the problem and suggest solutions,

As a leading international journalist on the Financial Times, Tett, has access to some of the top players in industry and commerce and her discussion of her interviews with Bernard Looney, Chief Executive of BP and his work to decarbonise the company by 2050 is fascinating. Another really important part of the book is her discussion of AI (artificial intelligence) and its influence through companies like Amazon.

Summarising her argument, Tett identifies five key ideas behind the adoption of Anthro Vision and intercultural understanding in business. First, we are all creatures of our environment in an ecological, social and cultural sense. Secondly, it is important to recognise there is no natural cultural frame; human existence is about diversity. Thirdly, we need to immerse ourselves in the lives of others, even if only briefly, to gain empathy. Fourthly, we must look at our world through the lens of an outsider to see ourselves more clearly and fifth and last, we must actively listen to social silence and think about the rituals and symbols that shape our routines.

In doing so Gillian Tett introduces a number of key anthropology ideas such as habitus, sense-making, liminality, incidental information exchange, pollution, reciprocity and exchange, all of which are explained in the book.

In endorsing Anthro-Vision, leading authorities such as Mervyn King, former governor of the Bank of England, Niail Ferguson, leading author of contemporary life and politics, and Melinda Gates of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation., Melinda Gates writes, *"Anyone working to rebuild a more equal world will benefit from Tett's well-argued case that to solve twenty-first century problems, we must expand our fields of vision and fill in old blind spots with new empathy."* As an anthropologist and an intercultural lecturer and trainer, I couldn't agree more.

ICC Journal

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