



Teacher Talking to Teacher

Newsletter of the JALT Teacher Education N-SIG

Volume 3, Number 1, February 1995

This Vision Thing... A Way Forward For Teacher Education

We'd like to thank all the many different contributors to this issue of the newsletter for taking time to share their perspectives with us and for helping the SIG to network. You'll see while reading through the pages what a great debt of gratitude we owe to John and Bobbie McClain for the tremendous amount of work that has gone into this newsletter. We are very lucky to have them as editor and program chair, respectively. Also, as you read through, you'll be able to make out the contours of the new spaces into which our understanding of Teacher Education is moving - spaces which we hope we can explore together

with a sense of fun, curiosity, and ever-increasing awareness through drawing on the enormous potential and interest among everybody in the SIG.

In the committee, we've had exciting discussions about what our priorities are and what we should be doing to get the SIG growing and thriving. Should we have a constitution? Do we need a statement of mission? What, in the end, is it going to be about?

Quite frankly, we simply don't know. And that is one reason for the excitement! At the same time, we would like you, the membership, to define for the SIG what different meanings Teacher Education may acquire. We're trying our best to network people and ideas and experiences concerned with teacher education - to network the resource of the

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PATHWAYS

DATELINES: Upcoming Events



Third International Conference on Teacher Education in Second Language Teaching Hong Kong City Polytechnic (March 14, 15, 16, 1995).

Info: Tel: 852-788-8859 FAX: 852-788-88994
E-Mail: ENCORINA@CPHKVX.BITNET

29th Ann. TESOL Convention Long Beach, CA (March 28-April 1, 1995).

Info: FAX+1-708-0836-7864

(Please note: An appeal is being made to academic professional organizations to boycott California's conference facilities to protest the recent passage of Prop 187, the anti-immigrant initiative now blocked in federal court).

29th International IATEFL Conference University of York, Kent, England (April 9-12)

Info: IATEFL, 3 Kingsdown,
Chambers, Whitschale,
Kent, CT5 2DJ England

Teacher Development: Three Views (April 29 in Kitakyushu, April 30 in Fukuoka) TE N-SIG, Fukuoka chapter and Kitakyushu affiliate chap-

ter co-sponsored presentation. Jan Visscher, Paul Beaufait and Bobbie McCain in a roundtable discussion of their research in the area of teacher development.

Info: Tel/FAX: Bobbie McCain: 0928-91-5750

Symposium On Strategies For Learner Autonomy Shizuoka-ken Sogo Shakai Fukusi Kaikan (May 1-4) Speakers in English and Japanese.

Info: Tel/FAX: Naoko Aoki: 054-272-8882
E-mail: PX113445@niftyserve.or.jp

Hokkaido Conference Sapporo (May 20, 21)

The TEN-SIG is currently negotiating the sponsorship of a speaker.

Info: Tel/FAX: Barbara Wright 011-816-8481

Tokyo Teacher Education Get Together (June 25, see below).

Info: Tel: Heather Sloat: 0463-76-5656
Tel: Andrew Barfield: 0298-55-7783

7th Annual Tokyo Conference Tokyo Keizai University (June 25). N-SIG presentations. One TE session will be Tokyo area TE members meeting.

Info: Tel: Peter Ross: 0423-21-1941
FAX: 0423-28-0745

ON-LINE: E-Mail Resources

As many of you know, having been on-line since October, JALTCALL allows computer access to teachers and educators in Japan and beyond. JALTCALL is free, and its discussion topics range from job listings to research reports, software advice to technical commentaries on how to best teach that impossibly obscure grammar point.

In addition, TESL-L, more international in scope, will bring you heaps of information indexed under about a dozen different headings.

For conferencing, there's Compuserve, a

commercial on-line service, which carries a Foreign Language Forum (GO FLETO), as well as Niftyserve (ETIC), cheaper, but far less user-friendly and maybe more lethargic alternative.

Two more computer resources you might benefit from are the NewEdu-L, a mailing list dedicated to new techniques in education, and Edstyle, aiming, as you might expect, at learning styles.

Finally, anyone curious about research possibilities via modem might begin with a quick perusal of Rory Britto's article, "E-Mail and Computer Networks," in the *CALLing Japan* newsletter (Fall, 1994), or take a look at Jill Ellsworth's *Education*

on the Internet (SAMS Publishing, 1994) for help getting started on the now booming World Wide Web. In addition to numerous site addresses, it contains separate chapters on doing research, distance learning and self-education by computer.

To subscribe to JALTCALL send an e-mail message to:

<majordomo@clc.hyper.chubu.ac.jp>

And type in:

<subscribe jaltcall>

<END>

Leave the subject header blank. Within minutes you ought to receive a welcome message with instructions on usage commands and proper JALTCALL etiquette.

To subscribe to TESOL-L send an e-mail message to:

<listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu>

type in:

<SUB TESOL-L <1st name> <last name>>

<END>

Again, leave the subject header blank. If you have any questions about JALTCALL, you may contact Steve McGuire at:

<steve@scs.chukyu-u.ac.jp>

And any inquiries concerning TESOL-L should be directed to Anthea Tillyer at:

<abthc@cunyvm.cuny.edu>

--John McClain

BASELINES

Teacher Education Interests Across the SIG

To start mapping out pathways of interest among the membership, we phoned round a few members at random and asked them about their interests and concerns having to do with Teacher Education. If you live in the following areas, please contact the people profiled and talk with them. We hope you'll then be able to find a colleague to start exploring with.

If your area is not represented, our apologies to you. To network your interests and concerns, please take time to fill in the *Networking Our Resources* page and send it off to the address given. We'll then include your profile in the next newsletter. Many thanks in advance.

◇ Margaret Otake

|||||Sakura-shi, Chiba

Margaret employs 14 teachers and is constantly involved with teacher training of her staff. She is concerned with finding ways to help teachers record clearly what has happened in a lesson, and to ensure continuity between teachers, learners and lessons. She wants her learners to feel that they have succeeded in acquiring their own English, and for teachers to find ways to achieve this.

She is also in a notebook-network, initiated through the Foreign Wives of Japanese Association. The network members write down their impressions in a notebook of things that have worked and not worked in their classes, and then pass the notebook on to the next person in the chain. The network is hoping to go e-mail rather than snail-mail, and Margaret is also interested in finding out more about this.

You can contact Margaret at: 043-462-0826 (tel), or 043-462-4331 (fax).

◇ Kaoru Hidesawa

|||||Kawachi-Nagano, Osaka-fu

Kaoru teaches for the Seikyo International Education Institute and completed an M.A. in TESOL in the States. His classes are young teenagers, and he is concerned with the gap between TESOL for learners in America and the reality of TEFL for his learners in Japan. He is struggling to adapt what he learned, given the cultural and educational differences and pressures of learning English in Japan, where there is no reason for his learners to use English outside the classroom.

You can contact Kaoru at: 0721-52-2964 (tel), or 0721-52-2972 (fax).

◇ Lyneve Rappell

|||||Utsunomiya-shi, Tochigi-ken

Lyneve is interested in developing her own teaching so that she can better identify and understand what happens in her classes. She has a particular interest in how children learn language, and in developing systems to record and document what children do with the language they are learning. From as young as three through to the teens, children not only learn language but also patterns of learning. She's concerned that if we don't understand what's happening at early ages, we will just keep on re-inventing the wheel. Interestingly enough, through talking with people teaching at universities, she's noticed that they have all studied how children learn languages, but there is little common knowledge or expertise currently being networked.

You can contact Lyneve at: 0286-47-0989 (tel and fax).

◇ Heather Sloat

|||||Hadano-shi, Kanagawa-ken

Heather is interested in reflective self-awareness as a means to improving teaching performance. In the past, with three other teachers, she helped design an intensive one-week long teacher development programme for Tokai High School teachers. In this work, she became aware that there's a limit to what learning new methods can do, if a teacher's own basic attitudes towards teaching, learning and language are not addressed. From this stemmed explorations of affective factors in learning. With a Japanese colleague, she looked at 880 student evaluations of first-year university English classes, and began to identify what the students considered to be important affective factors for successful language learning. She presented on this at the Second International Teacher Education Conference in Hong Kong, and her paper, "Exploring Second Language Teacher Development," has since been published in the conference papers. She is willing to help organize a Teacher Education Network Meeting in late May / early June this year for SIG members in the Tokyo area.

You can contact Heather at: 0463-76-5656 (tel), or 0463-77-9045 (fax).

◇ Chul Jung School

|||||Seoul, South Korea

The Chul Jung school is a major language school in Korea and offers courses for all ages from ten-year-old children through to corporate executives in their 60's. The school's main concern is how to improve the teaching standards throughout the school with newly arrived teachers from English-speaking countries who often have no formal training. How can the school train, in a short period, its teachers? More specifically, how can its teachers be motivated both to develop their teaching skills and to understand how their own atti-

tudes affect the language learning process and their teaching performance.

You can contact the Jung Chul School at: 82-2-563-6362 (tel)

The postal address is: Jung Chul Language School, 826-23 Yoksam-dong, Kanimun-gu, Seoul 135-080, South Korea.

EXPLORATIONS

INTERVIEW: with John Fanselow

John Fanselow has been observing teaching for thirty years and writing about it for twenty. He is the author of *Breaking Rules* (Longman, 1987) and *Contrasting Conversations* (Longman, 1992). Usually at Columbia University, Teacher's College, he's recently been a teacher trainer on Columbia's Tokyo campus.

JM: Dr. Fanselow, it appeared at the video colloquium in Matsuyama that your emphasis on the discrete guiding power of conventions is partly a consequence of your understanding of the unlimited actual possibilities available to us at any given moment narrowed down to the range of what we actually do say. Did this insight evolve out of your work with video, FOCUS, error correction, teacher training...?

JF: I am often asked how my insight concerning the tension between conventions and possibilities evolved. I am not at all sure how it evolved. Nor, do I think about the insight itself as you phrase it. One reason I find it useful to respond to questions is that those who ask often make explicit what one does. The phrasing of the question clarifies my thinking. One possibility for the insight might be related to the fact that I majored in literature for both of my first degrees. Literature is about possibilities, about using a few words in a great range of ways. Literature is also about revolt, about criticism of the status quo, about questioning. How much can one stretch

the convention of the sonnet and yet create something different? How must one move beyond the forms of the day to evolve a new form? Novels from the nineteenth century and twentieth century are as different as language teaching methods from both centuries. Authors stretched the forms.

Observing a lot of classrooms and observing people on a daily basis in a range of activities also, of course, reveals the possibilities we have and the tension between conventions and possibilities. During the week one can see high school students in uniform. On Sunday, the same students--the males--wear extra large jeans below their hips, belts with the loose end hanging a foot beneath their waist, etc. Look at the hair styles of ten people on any train and you see the range of possibilities. Even at schools where the distance from the bottom of the dress to the floor is measured to assure strict adherence to convention, you can find small differences between how students wear their socks, the way they fold up their sleeves.

JM: You also noted that people talk about three kinds of learning:--L1 and L2 being cases of knowledge transferred from one individual to another, and L3 being a case of learning shared by two or more individuals. You said, "I don't know and you don't know. And what can we learn from this?" Is the difference between the Ls, so to speak, epistemological or pragmatic and socio-cultural...?

JF: I have not thought of the differences between the three types of learning I talked about as being epistemological or pragmatic and socio-cultural. The examples I usually give identify one type of learning as direct. I tell you that two times two is equal to four. I tell you that there are three branches of government in the U.S. federal system. Another type of learning I identify as indirect. I know that two times two equals four, but I want you to discover this fact. So, I give you some coins and ask you to start manipulating them in a such a way that after a while, you realize that two times two is equal to four and that two times four is equal to eight.

The other type of learning I identify is discovering something that neither of us knows. In a science lab at a company dedicated to discovering new drugs, the participants do not know what they will discover. They have a need they want to fill such as a drug to kill a certain type of bacteria that infects apples. In order to do their work, they had to have had a great deal of indirect and direct learning. Knowing how to use an electron microscope, for example, will probably come in handy, so they can observe the bacteria as it grows. But no one working on the project knows the answer to the problem they are trying to solve. In another lab, others might be trying to fight the bacteria by using other bacteria or viruses or insects. In this case, knowledge learned directly such as the characteristics and life cycles of various insects and viruses might come in handy. But what has been learned directly or indirectly is not maximized

until the problem is solved and something new is learned: L3.

In a fashion studio, photographers might have images in their minds, or in the minds of their clients, that they want produce. To do what they want, they need to know a great deal about lighting, about film, about lenses, about distances, about dealing with people's emotions, probably. These things they have probably learned directly and indirectly through their years of experience. But the photographers who create are those who move beyond what they have learned directly and indirectly about either the creative or mechanical aspects of their work to produce effects that others have not yet produced.

There is a buzz word in the United States these days: mastery learning. It sounds good, I suppose. But to me one implication of mastery is limitation. There is always more to learn about anything, more ways to express what we have learned and new understandings to be discovered. One can never master the piano, a language, a subject or a dance step. As Thoreau reminded us, there are as many possibilities in life as there are radii in a circle! Yet, as he also implied, we usually make use of only a small number of the radii available. L1 and L2 without the possibility of L3, I think, are potentially stultifying rather than liberating.

BM: At this point in your life, you say L3 is all you are interested in or what you feel gets you anywhere. What techniques do you use as a teacher trainer to help teachers learn to approach their own teaching in this way?

JF: The techniques I try to use in my own learning and my own teaching to try to enable some L3 to occur are to ask questions such as, "What else might you mean?" "What evidence can you find that contradicts your understanding?" As I said earlier, I was a literature major. When we interpret a poem, or any other creation, we ask similar questions. What is the literal meaning of the word? What are some other meanings of the word?

Why did the author select that word rather than this word? What else does the word mean? What associations did the word have at the time it was used? The goal is to understand. To understand, one has to keep asking for alternative possibilities.

Notice that in interpreting literature, or art or music for that matter, we have at hand samples of the poem, the painting or the sounds. In the same manner, in order to discover new understandings about our teaching, either in the form of video or audio recordings or transcripts. So, in a nutshell, my method of trying to understand something about teaching that we did not know before--L3--is to have samples of teaching before us and question over and over the interpretations we make, comparing what we say with the reality in front of us.

In *Contrasting Conversations* (Longman, 1992), I have a longer version of these steps. And in *Gyaku o yotte miyo. [Try the Opposite]* (Simul, 1992), I have a different version of these steps. Also, in my 1987 *Breaking Rules* (Longman), I have a different set of steps, more technical than those in later books. These books, as well as the articles I write and presentations I make, illustrate the fact that I believe that in order to get to L3 in the area of classroom observation, one needs some L1 and L2. In these books there are a number of examples of direct and indirect teaching to free people to move to L3. Remember, the photographer needs a great deal of technical information and formal knowledge about the creative process as well, perhaps learned from direct and indirect teaching, to create.

A critical reminder, though, is that one does not have to spend a great deal of time with L1 or L2 before moving to L3. All three can be going on in whatever period of time teachers and students are together. Participants can move from one to the other in any sequence. As the photographer uses his lens in a new way and produces a photograph not previously produced, the photographer increases L1 through L3. As the biologist observes an insect that has been selected based on known information eat some

bacteria, the biologist might discover something new that the insect does--L3.

BM: *What techniques or tools can a teacher use to promote L3 in the classroom?*

JF: To promote L3 in the classroom, we have to feel free to be ignorant. If we believe that we must respond to any questions with information considered the right answer, and if we ask questions to which we accept only the answer we have in mind and expect is the only possible answer, then it will be hard for either us or our students to learn much that is new. Let's say I draw three 40 centimeter lines on a whiteboard, with the two ends of each line touching the ends of another line. Let's say I then ask others in the room to identify the figure. If I am ready to accept only what I think I have drawn as an acceptable answer, then neither I nor anyone else is likely to learn anything new in the exchange. Let's say that when I ask, "What's this?" one person says, "A mountain." If I then say, "Who knows what it really is?" because I want to teach the word *triangle*, I am limiting the discourse to L2. I want others to try to guess what I am trying to teach. If I accept answers such as these--a pyramid, a steep roof, of a house, a kite, a hat, a part of a bikini, to name a few possibilities--then participants are not prevented from learning the word I feel they should know--*triangle*. But they also can make new associations with the word *triangle* as well as the figure itself. What if a reader thinks of the three sides as L1, L2 and L3? If I am keen on L3, I will be delighted. If I am keen on L1 and L2 only, then I might be disappointed.

BM: *Doesn't this approach presuppose a certain level of language ability? Can it be used with all ages and abilities? Can you give some examples of how you have seen this approach put into practice with students of differing abilities?*

JF: The example I just gave concerning the drawing of a figure on a whiteboard illustrates a way to deal with L3 with all levels, abilities and ages. The heirar-

chical system of learning we have in place with strict age limits for different classes, and in some cases ability grouping, is based on unproven assumptions. The first question that people usually ask when they observe a videotape of a class is, "What level are the students, and what type of students are they?" If level is clear or ability is clear, why do we need to ask before we look? We should be able to tell from observation.

In a school I worked with in Rochester, New York, a science teacher and special education teacher combined their classes, over the objections of the chairs of their departments. After the two groups of students had been in class for around six weeks, the teachers asked their chairs to observe the class. The chairs asked for a seating chart to show which students were "regular students" and which were the "special education/handicapped students." The teachers said that if the differences the chairs had said existed in arguing against integrating the classes existed, there was no need for such a seating chart.

Well, the chairs observed and misidentified most of the students. (Some of the ones they thought were regular students were in fact formerly in the special classes. And some of the regular students were identified as having handicaps.)

If we see learning as teaching each person the same information and each person learning the same information, like an assembly line in which we fill bottles with one soft drink, then grouping makes sense. One cannot have 2 liter, 1 liter and 100 milliliter bottles next to each other going down the same assembly line. Nor can one put tomato juice in one, coffee in another and a soft drink in another. But if one believes that each person makes quite different sense of what is presented and that most of us can benefit from talking with a wide range of people about what we are being presented with, then it makes sense to have a range of people of different ages and abilities.

Some colleges in Japan are allowing older students to enter undergraduate

programs, because there are not enough high school age students to fill the classrooms. When a professor in a class of students made up of recent graduates from high school and some who have raised a family says something such as "Marriage is an option, not a necessity," and the recent graduates can hear many in the same class who have in fact married state some support for such a claim, and also point out some negative features of not marrying, all potentially gain. The range of perspectives is widened for all. If we are serious about internationalism, then we cannot limit learning to L1 and L2. Once we see that practices we consider ineffectual have positive results in some different places, we will realize the limitations of our own vision.

JM: *"If you say something is 'X'--either a student is 'X' or the class is 'X' or the interaction is 'X' --then I say, well now, what are some other ones that are also 'X'? And then, how are they not 'X'?" seems to be an effective way of moving from absolutes to more concrete observations. How did you work out this formulation?*

JF: The question of how I moved from absolutes to some attempt to see multiple characteristics of the same phenomena, like the question of how I came to my interest in opening possibilities, is not easy to answer. As I said earlier, studying literature provides one with samples of limitless possibilities as arguments against the potential tyranny of conventions. The opportunities I had had of living in a range of places--two years in Nigeria, two years in Somalia, the equivalent of one year in French speaking west Africa, the equivalent of many years in Japan, as well as in many cities in the United States--also might have contributed. During summers of my college years, I did electrical and heating work. And, my father had been an electrician. So I was very aware of conventions concerning switches. In the United States, when we push a toggle

switch on a wall up, we turn the light on. When we push the switch down, we turn a light off. The first switch I touched in Nigeria worked in the exact opposite way: down was on and up was off. At first, believe it or not, I thought that the person who had installed it was incompetent. But over time, I realized that the British system was simply different. Somehow, I had been ready for Nigerians driving on the opposite side of the road from Americans. But the switch convention, I had not been prepared for. Of course, the small concrete actions we perform differently are trivial in a way. But they remind us of the fact that saying there is a "right" and "wrong" way, rather than a range of different ways, can only produce a great deal of frustration, if not anger, rather than excitement and new learnings about the range of possibilities. If we move from small actions that might not mean much, to ways of viewing reality, we realize that even within the same group, there is a wide range. But many are fearful of sharing their different view of reality, because they have been taught that different is wrong. Each time we say, "Who knows the right answer?" "Can anyone help so and so?" we are suggesting that different is wrong rather than creative, inspiring or thought provoking. Of course, two times two is four. And when a person says, "I am boring," meaning that the person is not excited by what is happening and needs to know the difference between *bored* and *boring*, some L1 or L2 is called for. But rather than saying "Wrong!" one can write a range of words down, either on a whiteboard or in private notes and then at some point compare a range of forms. One can even identify the speakers when examining the data.

In examining the data, one can, with the learners, look at similarities and differences between the various forms collected and see what else in the sentences or the dialogs signals what is meant other than the distinction between *-ing* and *-ed* rather than simply indicating what is right and wrong. In short, one can examine the data from

a range of perspectives, and thus potentially learn a range of perspectives about the samples of language being studied.

JM: Is making "interpretation" a problem the key to the "flip-flop" you discuss in the "Smile, You're on Candid Camera" article (TLT, Oct. 1993)?

JF: Making "interpretation" a problem is not the key to the idea of "flip-flop" that I discuss in TLT in October, 1993. As you know, there is no key, but rather a range of keys, a few combinations and a couple of doors or covers that simply snap open. The usual conversations that we have about teaching tend to be on-dimensional-weak class; posit simple cause-effect relationships--students who wear jeans are lazy; look at characteristics of people rather than interaction--the students are not motivated vs. three students answered one question when asked to respond orally; forty students answered one question when asked to respond in writing and the oral questions were about their favorite singers while the written questions were about word meanings; are aimed at problem solving or improvement rather than understanding--if you are more enthusiastic and smile more, things will get better; are judgmental rather than descriptive--great dictation vs. the students took sixty seconds to write the first few sentences and one hundred and twenty seconds to write the last few sentences; all the sentences were the same length; you said the first few sentences faster than the last few; assume that the conscious behaviors we exhibit are the most important ones and that we are aware of what we do and how we act, and, finally, are general rather than specific, illustrated by all the other examples!

Changing these normal dialogs to abnormal ones, what a philosopher called Rorty has called "edifying discourses" is not a simple matter. A Heidegger has said: language speaks us. We do not have

conversations, conversations have us. We are not so much the leaders as the led in conversations. There are conversations for funerals, for post office purchases, for consoling the ill, as well as for talking about teaching, and for teaching languages. So change requires a wide range of different steps, a wide range of concrete activities that force us to move to a different type of dialog, to an abnormal way of discussing what we observe.

BM: Can you recommend any authors who you feel illustrate further either your ideas relating to L3 or the "flip-flop" approach? We are especially interested in readings that may not necessarily be about 'teaching' per se, but authors who have influenced your thinking in these directions.

JF: There are different kinds of authors to recommend. First, there are authors who consider the types of practices I engage in dangerous and who make a point of omitting my works from their bibliographies, even when they write on the topic of observation or teacher preparation. So, look at some recent books on observation or teacher preparation. Read the books where my works are not cited and try to pinpoint ways the point of views of those authors differ from mine.

Another category of author to read is the type who refer to my work, but present my work a just another example of a way to look at classes, not noting that, in fact, I am raising some very different questions. If you read these two types of authors at the same time as you work your way through any of my books or articles, you will get a clearer sense of what I am saying.

I know that so far, I have avoided your question, which is, "What authors have influenced me?" Well it is hard to say what authors have influenced me, just as it is hard to know how I developed the stance I seem to be taking. But some authors that present some thinking I find exciting because they raise questions that attempt to change the dialog

are the following: Michael Lewis, *The Lexical Approach*; Jacques Ranciere, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*; Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*; Earl Stevick, *Images and Options*; Douglas Barnes, *From Communication to Curriculum*; Paolo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*; Jacob Bronowski, *Science and Human Values*; Idries Shah, *Tales of the Dervishes*; Julian Edge, *Cooperative Development*; mysteries by authors such as Colin Dexter, Georges Simenon, Ngaio Marsh, Dorothy L. Sayers.

I list these authors with the reminder that they have not necessarily influenced my thinking—I do not want to blame anyone! And some have published their books subsequent to my most recent publications. But they each in their own way present different perspectives. Mystery authors in particular remind us that what seems to be true on the first observation is often not and how subconscious behaviors we all engage in often reveal much more than the conscious behaviors we exhibit and perhaps plan to display.

John and Bobbie McClain would like to thank Prof. Fanselow on behalf of the membership, and we invite readers to respond. (This interview was conducted by mail in writing).



Critical Language Study: *Socio-Political Critique Enriches English Language Learning*

Lynne T. Diaz-Rico teaches at California State University, San Bernadino. She edits the teacher education column for *TESOL Matters*.

Critical language study forms an important part of the curriculum for prospective teachers of English to speakers of other languages. Teachers need to understand deeply the communicative subtext of language in order to teach language that incorporates authentic social functions. Authentic language is vital to second language acquisition/learning because it is a legitimate reflection of the target culture, incorporating real discourse. Essential to this reality is a discussion of the power relations that govern who speaks to whom, what can and cannot be said, and how grammar, syntax, and vocabulary is constrained. These power relations lie at the heart of language; to gloss over or underrepresent these relations is to render language superficial or impotent.

In his 1989 text Language and power, (Issex, England: Longman) Norman Fairclough looks at language using three levels of analysis: the impersonal constructs of the discourse (interaction); the institutional influences upon the content of discourse (interpretation); and the context provided by the society or culture sponsoring or enveloping the discourse (explanation). Visualize these levels as nested boxes; at each level, the subsequent analysis provides new insight as the context is enlarged.

To provide a simple illustration, imagine a simple memorandum from the Home Office to a franchise fast-food outlet, authorizing a beginning date for the most recent sales promotion. The discourse itself--the memo--has a distinct form. The physical form, the time and space of the memo (weight of the paper, letterhead, means and rapidity of delivery) is a physical manifestation of the resources of the company, as is the more subtle physique of the contents (type

style, word processing sophistication, signature). The relations between individuals (to whom, from whom) is represented within the memorandum's opening format, and the syntax, grammar, and vocabulary choice is predictable given one's knowledge of business English. The context of the memorandum is also predictable given knowledge of the sender and receiver, an in-depth analysis of the company's next stock offering, for example, is precluded.

At the next level of analysis, the institution in which discourse takes place influences what is said or written. The president of the company does not address franchisees on the topic of routine sales promotions; the regional sales manager is a more likely sender of the memo. The local franchise manager is the likely recipient of the memo rather than the sales clerks. The institution has certain standard channels of communication, of which this is a unit within sales. Account payable and receivable communication is another potential avenue of communication, usually written. Shipping and receiving products are another potential avenue of communication, one that is primarily oral. Each channel of institutional communication has predictable formats and interlocutors.

The third level of analysis, the social context, in turn, provides a deeper and more subtle constraint on whose language is featured at the level of the institution. Given the demographics of the class structure of the United States, it is a more likely occurrence for both the local manager and the regional sales manager to be male; if the proceeds of the promotion were to benefit a local charity and the memorandum were from the company's public relations manager,

the chances would increase for the memo writer to be female. These unspoken assumptions underlie the language forms chosen as well as the intent and potential of the discourse.

Stepping back to the first level of analysis, the level of discourse, Fairclough considers the following: How does the language chosen reflect the experience of the subject? What relation does it propose between speaker/listener, writer/audience? What ideology is implicit in the choice of words? How complex is the utterance, presupposing what cognitive level of understanding? What classification schemes are drawn upon? What metaphors are used, what type of imagery conjured up?

Using the fast-food memorandum as an example, the terse, businesslike tone of the discourse assumes that sender and receiver share value of impersonal factual communication, with minimal social "strokes" necessary as a part of the interaction. Indeed, sender and receiver may never have met personally. Sentences are brief, with a shared vocabulary common to the chain as a whole. The communication is as timely as it is brief, with the assumption that it will be carried out in a timely fashion.

Fairclough's second level, interpretation, is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction, setting each text within the institution of production which constitutes a wider matrix as context for the text. This level of analysis foregrounds the interaction conventions that constitute institutional preconditions for discourse. The intended action which serves as a goal of the discourse is based upon institutional objectives. This level of analysis also ac-

counts the internalized perceptions of the "other" that determine the personal and professional boundaries that confine and define discourse.

Again using the example of the fast-food memo, the intended action is that each outlet in the chain begin the promotion at the same time. No threats of enforcement are included, assuming that each franchise member is a willing participant and will not violate shared procedures. The assumption is also that the memorandum is a part of a sequence of directives, each of which is filed and constitutes grounds for legal action should the franchise holder not act within institutional norms.

This level of analysis is an inquiry into the belief set underlying the discourse, including views about the institutions that provide a working set of expectations for each conversant. Another feature of this belief set is the internalized relationship to the institution and its authority structure that delimits discourse. The interpersonal and institutional components of language are evident in any discourse, and form a rich texture for analysis. Students are fascinated to receive insights into language use that can be simultaneously simple and sophisticated. Critical language study provides a complex vehicle for analysis based upon Fairclough's three levels of analysis.

(This is the first of a two-part article)

—Lynne T. Diaz-Rico
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Some Thoughts on Teacher Self-Development and Action Research

Kevin Mark is Associate Professor at Meiji University

If I look back at my own experience of teaching in Japanese universities for the past ten years, I see that one of its as-

pects has been a process of freeing myself from tendencies to think in certain ways that are not helpful. My "devel-

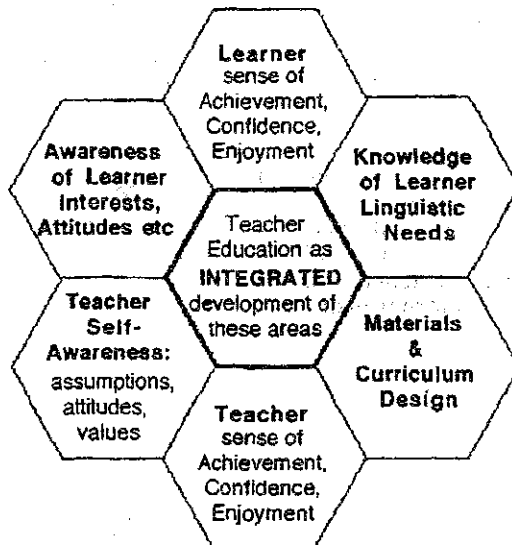
opment" as a teacher has thus not been to fill myself with more information. Instead, it has involved letting go of the idea that there is something wrong with being confused or of *not* understanding how to teach. If I were not ignorant I would not need to learn. This is not to deny that I can learn from what others--teachers or researchers--have to say. Rather it is an affirmation that wherever I am in my development, there is nothing to be ashamed of. I can feel confident in an "unreasonable" way--not for the reason that I have read X number of books, or that I know something which somebody else does not, but simply because I am human being who wishes to do good work and is prepared to listen, observe and learn. Another aspect of my development has been an increasing awareness of the primacy of my own experience and intuitions. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the "experts" or published researchers--often, if not usually, people who have chosen to go deeply into a narrow field of inquiry. I sometimes need to remind myself that no matter how well read I become or how well I grasp this or that theory, knowledge of this kind does not lead to enjoyment and a real feeling of competence without observation and reflection on what is going on in and around me in my actual teaching. Now, it so happens that to observe and reflect on what is going on in and around me at any moment or for a period of time is quite a tall order, because it is rather complex. Here are just a few of the questions: how do people learn a language, what are my own students learn-

ing (if anything), what do they need to learn, how do they like to learn, what are their motivations, how can I motivate them, how can their interest and attention be maintained, etc. There are also questions concerning myself: how can I enjoy my work more, what underlying "messages" am I giving the students, how can I be more observant, sensitive, etc., how can I be more effective and efficient?

It seems to me not unreasonable to expect conscientious teachers to be interested in all these questions, but somewhat unreasonable to expect them to be specialized researchers or "authorities" in any of them. What teachers can be authorities on is what they have lived through themselves: their own experience.

The outer hexagons of the diagram below illustrate the personal "fields of enquiry" that have emerged for me as a teacher/action researcher. While they are personal, they also seem to offer a useful framework to the teachers whom I teach.

I have indicated, with the center hexagon, that I see development of all these areas in an integrated way as central to teacher education. This does not mean that I feel critical of teachers who go into one of these areas more deeply or systematically than others at a given time. It simply reflects my feeling that to be a good teacher involves synthesizing insights in all these areas, remaining at the same time open in all of them, and remembering above all that we are human beings first, teachers second.



—Kevin Mark

PERSPECTIVES

Review:

Inside Teaching by Tim Bowen and Jonathan Marks, Oxford, UK: Heinemann, (1994) 176 pp.

Anxiety may be a feeling common enough to teachers, and can sometimes underscore the almost compulsive faith that we want to place in the experts. We want to know the right way to do things; we want answers quick, and, incidentally, please help, what am I going to do with that class? You know - the one I had trouble with...Tell me! Please!

Tim Bowen and Jonathan Marks do help in *Inside Teaching*, a new teacher's resource book in the Heinemann Teacher Development Series. They help by providing a structure and rationale for becoming your own expert, a reflective practitioner, if you will, of the art of teaching. The authors are experienced teachers and teacher developers/trainers from the UK, who are ready to share and analyze a wealth of experience from across the world with the reader. But not only that ... one of the many attractive features of this book is the inclusion of a whole variety of remarks by different teachers and learners from many different countries. In reading this book, you may sigh with relief, then smile that so many teachers and learners see things in the same way as you - and in many different fascinating ways too.

It's an exploration, in other words, because:

The authors are themselves exploring, and invite you to bring your own experience to the study of (this book) while at the same time learning from the experiences of others. (They) encourage you to observe, value and understand your own experience, and to evaluate and integrate relevant external practice and knowledge into your own internal evol-

ving model of effective teaching and learning" (Adrian Underhill, Series Editor).

Each chapter begins with a detailed overview of the sections in it, and then, through a combination of reader tasks, discussion and quotes by different teachers and learners, and commentaries by the authors, gently leads you towards a positive reappraisal of your teaching and learning, encouraging you to begin an exploration of whatever it is that may foster your own development. The chapters also feature a recommended reading list and a short bibliography. The book is not for the starting out teacher, and is therefore, strictly speaking, not a training manual; it is for those teachers that have some years experience and wish to go further.

Among the many pathways that open up as you read through the book are: teachers and terminology; collaborative classroom research; the role of mistakes in spoken English; the significance of grammar; vocabulary; listening; reading and humanistic approaches. The book concludes with a final chapter that takes you through a sequence of action research (one of the authors had noticed that he was always repeating his learners' answers, and so set out to investigate this, and then began to discover a lot more...), as well as offer support for how you may take you own teacher development further, whether alone, or in a group (see the following for more information).

If you have a chance, please take a look at this book. It's got a refreshingly clear open-ended style and content. It's not trying to tell you how to teach - just aiming to lead you to becoming the best teacher that you can be. A good companion, then, for us all.

--Reviewed by Andrew Barfield

**** A possible procedure for a group of teachers interested in working on their professional development**

1. Individually, brainstorm qualities of a good teacher (or of a good English language teacher specifically).
2. Compare lists in twos. This may suggest additions and alterations for clarification.
3. Gather everyone's suggestions together on a blackboard or flipchart. Edit the combined list to remove overlap, clarify, add anything new that arises.
4. Individually, select those qualities (a certain number could be specified) which are particularly important to you - at your stage of development as a teacher, or in the particular work you're doing at the moment.
5. From the resulting list, choose two or perhaps three qualities which you feel you succeed well in, and three where you would like to score better. (You could perhaps give yourself a score out of ten for each quality.)
6. For each high-scoring quality, write down how you can maintain and enhance your excellence. For each low-scoring quality write down how you can improve. It's most helpful if you write in concrete terms of behaviour which will be observable.
7. Work with a partner. Either show what you've written, or relate it verbally. Clarify as necessary, and, if you want, ask for comments and suggestions.
8. If your action plan is too long to be achievable, or even manageable, select a few points which can take priority and which can be implemented before the next meeting of the group.
9. Decide what kind of support, if any, you will want from your partner or other colleagues - some discussion after you've put some of your points into prac-

tice, someone to listen to you, someone to sit in and observe according to an agreed contract?

10. Ask yourself whether you really will do what you've intended. If you don't think you will, change it to make it less ambitious.

11. Decide how you will recognize when you have achieved what you intend.

12. Carry out your plan. Record the experience and the results in any way you think will be useful - keeping a journal, sharing it with a colleague ...

13. Bring the experience back to the group. If you're ready, move on to another, or revised set of issues.

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A Message From The Coordinator

Our last issue in October 1994 carried an announcement that I had left Japan. Well, I have moved to Sapporo to enjoy the snow and Winter Sports and my new Phone/FAX number is 011-816-8481. I will be meeting personally with our Hokkaido members at the February Hokkaido Chapter Meeting. If you have not received your announcement, please contact me at the indicated number.

Regarding the Hanshin Earthquake, while we are praying for the survival of our friends and colleagues in Kobe, let's also take time to ask ourselves if we are prepared for the next big earthquake (the one that is being predicted for Tokyo). This earthquake may come while we are in the classroom.

After such natural disasters as the Kobe earthquake and similar devastating events in California, teachers and schools have been called upon to take a leading role in crisis management, counseling, organization and commun-

ication. We are responsible for the safety and welfare of our students when they are in class. After the disaster happens, clear thinking and well-prepared teachers can help to provide the calm continuity which their students need.

Our sincere respect and admiration go to the teachers of Kobe who have acted very professionally in a time of crisis. Our sympathy goes to the families of Miss Wong and Jeanne Miller, two English teachers who died in Kobe during the earthquake.

--Barbara Wright

This Vision Thing (Continued from pg. 1)

SIG, or rather to network you - so that this grassroots process can grow.

To do this - to be able to talk about this - we've been faced with the need for some kind of common language, for some kind of metaphorical base by which to map out routes to explore. And this has kept bringing us back to 'this vision thing.' We're convinced that we need such a vision - and for the moment, the vision is one of exploration, perspectives and pathways. Hence the section titles in the newsletter, and the interweaving of these concepts with networks and resources. But such a vision depends on what individuals can do creatively together. So, we hope that your personal vision and interests can be progressively networked through the newsletter and through Teacher Education events. Please take time to let us know what your concerns are.

With best wishes to everybody,

--Andrew Barfield

Election Results

The election of N-SIG executive officers took place on October 7, 1994 in Matsuyama at the annual N-SIG business meeting. A SIG-wide "Doomo arigatoo gozaimasu" to Barry Mateer, outgoing Membership chair, and to Heng En Feng, outgoing Treasurer. They have performed yeoman service in carrying out their

respective duties. We shall miss them. The 1995 executive officers are:

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Editor's Note: In The Next Issue

The next issue will feature Part Two of Ms. Diaz-Rico's article in addition to Paul Beaufait on a learner-centered teacher education program at Prefectural University of Kumamoto. Also expect observations by Stephen Hanpeter on how Japanese and English teachers work together in groups and separate reports from the Vietnam Study Tour Group and on the upcoming Teacher's Conference in Hong Kong. Finally, of course, we would like to include as many member profiles as we can. Our best wishes to all.

--John McClain