each of their groups perform a role play task with a partner from that
group—ideally in a second language. Next, the students in each of the
three groups discuss the strategies that they used in role-playing.
Finally, groups of three are formed with a representative from each of
the “pre-speaking,” “while-speaking,” and “after-speaking” strategy
groups respectively, so that there is sharing across groups in triad
jigsaw.

The SSBI manual is intended to be adequately scripted so that those
who have taken the summer institutes can conduct the activities themselves
or guide their colleagues in conducting them. The best way for teachers to get
a sense of how they work is to participate in them as if they were their own
students. Then they should feel more comfortable trying them out with their
students.

The future for SSBI — talks, workshops, and institutes

The future looks bright for SSBI work. Already requests have come in
for outreach talks, workshops, and institutes. One encouraging sign that SSBI
is gaining momentum is that associations of teachers of
less-commonly-taught languages in the U.S. are interested in training their
teachers to use it in the classroom. For example, teachers of African
languages included a 4-hour SBI workshop at their annual conference in April
of 2001 at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and also a 5-day course in
their 3-week summer institute at the same institution. Another positive sign is
that the Defense Language Institute (DLI) invited Cohen and Weaver to
conduct two parallel 5-day, 15-hour SSBI courses for teacher trainers and for
teachers respectively in August of 2001. The DLI has over 850 instructors,
Teaching military personnel those less commonly taught languages that are
Critical to U.S. interests, and fifty of those involved with the teaching of
Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Turkish, and other languages
attended.

SSBI workshops continue to be offered in numerous locations both
with the U.S. and abroad. For example, over the last several years, SSBI
workshops have been held for foreign language teachers at Brandeis
University in Waltham, MA, as well as abroad - in Medellin, Colombia, in
Rio Cuarto, Argentina, and most recently in Edirne, Turkey.
New applications for the strategy work

An application to manual writing has also been undertaken in developing language and culture learning strategies materials for maximising the benefits of study abroad. Building on previous research and teacher resources, CARLA received funding in 1999 from the US Department of Education to create a set of user-friendly materials designed to support language and culture learning strategy use among language students planning to study abroad. Michael Paige, a Professor of Educational Policy and Administration and an expert in cross-cultural strategies, teamed up with the author in a project to produce a series of guidebooks for language and culture strategies for study abroad students, instructors, and programme advisors.

The initial writing phase of this project took place during the past academic year (1999-2000). The writing team was led by the author (on the language learning strategies sections) and by Michael Paige (on the culture learning strategies sections) and included two graduate research assistants, Julie Chi and James Lassegard. Drafts were created for all three guidebooks (by the end of year one – the Students' Guide, the Project Coordinators' Guide, and the Instructors' Guide.)

The following is a description of the three guidebooks:

1. The Students' Guide: This guidebook is intended to assist students in being more effective at selecting strategies for learning and using the target language both before, during, and after study abroad. In addition, the guide aims at supporting student efforts to be more effective at learning about and functioning within other cultures through a series of awareness-raising activities and tips on how to be more strategic while living in another culture. The guide, written in a highly-accessible and user-friendly language, will have an easy tab system so that students can readily find the kinds of language and culture tips they want, and will be replete with quotes from other students who have already done study abroad. It includes both the language strategy survey referred to above and a culture strategy survey as well. Responses on these surveys indicate to the student those areas in the guidebook which they may wish to read in greater detail.

2. The Instructors' Guide: The language material in this guidebook is based largely on the SSBI manual, while the cultural material is similar to that found in the Students' Guide. This guidebook has a series of activities to assist language instructors in integrating language and culture
strategies-based materials into language courses, helping to foster students’ language and culture learning strategies prior to their studying abroad or while they are already in the experience of study abroad.

3. The Project Coordinators’ Guide: This guidebook is for use in study abroad pre-departure orientation programmes – to provide project coordinators with an explanation of the rationale behind the Students’ Guide. In other words, the Project Coordinators’ Guide underscores the pointers to be passed on to students. It shows the value of using self-access manual in their pre-study abroad preparation, while in their overseas experience, and after re-entry into their home setting. This guidebook also contains a reduced-font version of the Students’ Guide so that project coordinators can see what students receive.

The field-testing/revision phase of the project began in Spring 2000 and was extended through year two. This phase was coordinated by Barbara Kappler, Assistant Director of the International Student Scholar Services at the University of Minnesota. The three guides were piloted with volunteer groups of language instructors, students, and study abroad project coordinators at the University of Minnesota, and selected sites throughout the country and abroad as well. Three undergraduates received funding as well to assist in the field testing phase. Based on the feedback already collected, revision of the guidebooks was conducted. Prototypes of significantly revised guidebooks are to appear by early 2002. At that point the guidebooks will be reformatted so that they are even more user-friendly and appealing to the students, project coordinators, and instructors who will be accessing them. The Students’ Guidebook, for example, already includes quotes about language strategies from students in study abroad experiences in Latin America, Germany, Greece, and elsewhere.

Once these prototype guidebooks are completed, the next step will be to fully explore the range of options in which these materials can be used effectively. To demonstrate how the study abroad guidebooks can be used in a wide range of teaching and study abroad contexts, CARLA will work in collaboration with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Global Campus at the University of Minnesota. These contexts range from student self-study to credit-bearing courses designed to improve the language and culture learning strategies of students who plan to study abroad. Based on experience gained in piloting the materials in the proposed contexts, CARLA will create a set of recommendations and guidelines for utilising the study abroad guidebooks. After another round of revisions, final versions of the
guidebooks and workshop materials will be made nationally available through the CARLA working paper series to language instructors, study abroad advisors, pre-departure facilitators, and language students. In addition, consultation by the project leaders and their training associates will also be made available to Title VI funded national resource centres, study abroad offices around the country, and Title VI-funded consortia that offer summer language instruction for less-commonly-taught languages (LCTLs).

Concluding remarks

As can be seen from this paper, efforts are underway to encourage second language teachers to consider incorporating principles and practice of SSBI into their classrooms, if they are not doing so already. Both research, action programmes, and manual writing efforts have been aligned on the principle that SSBI enables teachers to relieve themselves of part of the burden of imparting language knowledge and skills to students. Through SSBI, students become empowered to be more effective second language learners in partnership with the teacher.

The challenge is to engage more L2 teachers worldwide in not just teaching the language but also in training learners to be more in touch with (a) their learning style preferences and language strategy choices on specific tasks, and (b) their motivational temperature. If language learners are more aware of how they learn best and take more responsibility for their learning, they may have lifelong-learning rather than having the more typical learned-but-forgotten language experience.

Notes

2 Here is a way to distinguish global, particular, synthesising, and analytic from one another. A global person sees the forest as an amorphous unit; the particular person notices specific trees in it. The synthesising person can describe the forest in a succinct way; the analytic person can describe which insects attack the bark of which trees.
3 See Taking my motivational temperature on a language task by Andrew D. Cohen & Zoltan Dornyei (2001), downloadable from carla.acad.umn.edu/
A grant proposal has been submitted to the Office of International Education for an International Research and Studies Programme grant for approximately $450,000 over three years (2002-2005). If the grant is awarded, it will allow for careful and systematic research on the effectiveness of these guidebooks.

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Appendix B: Examples of Communication Strategies

AVOIDANCE OR REDUCTION STRATEGIES

- **Message abandonment**: Leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.
- **Topic avoidance**: Avoiding topic areas or concepts which pose language difficulties.
- **Message replacement**: Substituting the original message with a new one because of not feeling capable of executing it.

ACHIEVEMENT OR COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES

- **Circumlocution**: Describing or exemplifying the target word you cannot remember (e.g., ‘the thing you open bottles with’ for ‘corkscrew’).
- **Approximation**: Using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the word you cannot remember as closely as possible (e.g., ‘ship’ for ‘sailing boat’).
- **Use of all-purpose words**: Extending a general, ‘empty’ lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., the overuse of ‘thing’, ‘stuff’, ‘make’, ‘do’, as well as using words like ‘thingie’, ‘what-do-you-call-it’, ‘what’s-his-name’, etc.).
- **Word-coinage**: Creating a non-existing L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g., ‘vegetarianist’ for ‘vegetarian’).
- **Use of non-linguistic means**: Mime, gesture, facial expression or sound imitation.
- **Literal translation**: Translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1 to L2.
- **Foreignizing**: Using an L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphologically (e.g., adding to it a L2 suffix).
- **Code switching**: Including an L1 word with L1 pronunciation or an L3 word with L3 pronunciation in L2 speech.

STALLING OR TIME-GAINING STRATEGIES

- **Use of fillers and other hesitation devices**: Using filling words or gambits to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., ‘well’, ‘now let me see’, ‘as a matter of fact’, etc.).
- **Repetition**: Repeating a word or a string of words immediately after they were said (either by the speaker or the conversation partner).
INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES

- **Appeal for help**: turning to the conversation partner for help either directly (e.g., ‘What do you call ...?’) or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression).
- **Asking for repetition**: Requesting repetition when not hearing or understanding something properly (e.g., ‘Sorry?’, ‘Pardon?’).
- **Asking for clarification**: Requesting explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure (e.g., ‘What do you mean?’, ‘The what?’).
- **Asking for confirmation**: Requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly (e.g., ‘You mean?’, ‘Do you mean?’).
- **Expressing non-understanding**: Expressing that one did not understand something properly either verbally or nonverbally (e.g., ‘Sorry, I don’t understand’, ‘I think I’ve lost the thread’).
- **Interpretive summary**: Extended paraphrase of the interlocutor’s message to check that the speaker has understood correctly (e.g., ‘So what you are saying is ...’, ‘Let me get this right; you are saying that ...’).


Appendix C: Examples of Strategies Classified by Skill Areas

**LISTENING STRATEGIES**

**Strategies to increase exposure to the new language:**

- Listening to a talk show on the radio, watching a TV show, going to see a movie in the new language, or attending some out-of-class event conducted in the target language.

**Strategies to become more familiar with the sounds in the new language:**

- Looking for associations between the sound of a word or phrase in the new language and the sound of a familiar word.
- Imitating the way native speakers talk.

**Strategies for better understanding the new language in conversation:**

**Before listening to the language:**

- Deciding to pay special attention to specific language aspects - for example, the way the speaker pronounces certain sounds.

**When listening in the language:**

- Listening for word and sentence stress to see what natives emphasise when they speak.
• Practicing "skim listening" by paying attention to some parts and ignoring others.

If some or most of what someone says in the language is not understood:
• Making educated guesses and inferences about the topic based on what has already been said.
• Looking to the speaker's gestures and general body language as a clue to meaning.

READING STRATEGIES
With regard to reading habits in the target language:
• Making a real effort to find reading material that is at or near one's level.

As basic reading strategies:
• Planning how to read a text, monitor to see how the reading is going, and then check to see how much of it was understood.
• Making ongoing summaries either in one's mind or in the margins of the text.

When encountering unknown words and structures:
• Guessing the approximate meaning by using clues from the surrounding context.
• Making use a dictionary so as to get a detailed sense of what individual words mean.

SPEAKING STRATEGIES
In order to practice for speaking:
• Practicing new grammatical structures in different situations to check out one's confidence level with the structures.
• Asking oneself how a native speaker might say something and then attempting to practice saying it that way.

In order to engage in conversations:
• Initiating conversations in the new language as often as possible.
• Asking questions as a way to be sure to be involved in the conversation.

When not able to think of a word or expression:
• Looking for a different way to express the idea; for example, using a synonym or describing the idea or object being talked about.
• Using words from one's native language, perhaps adding vowels or consonants so that they seem like words in the target language.
WRITING STRATEGIES
As basic writing strategies:
- Planning how to write an academic essay, monitoring to see how the writing is going, and then checking to see how well the product fits the intentions.
- Making an effort to write different kinds of texts in the target language (e.g., personal notes, messages, letters, and course papers)

While writing an essay:
- Reviewing what one has already written before continuing to write new material in an essay.
- Postponing editing of the writing until all the ideas are written down.

Once a draft essay has been written:
- Revising the essay once or twice to improve the language and content.
- Looking for ways to get feedback from others, such as having a native writer put the text in his/her own words and then comparing to one’s original version.

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES
To memorize new words:
- Analyzing words to identify the structure and/or meaning of a part or several parts of them.
- Making a mental image of new words whose meaning can be depicted.

In order to review vocabulary:
- Going over new words often at first to make sure they are learned.
- Going back periodically to refresh one’s memory about words previously learned. In order to recall vocabulary:
- Making an effort to remember the situation where the word was heard or seen in writing, and if written, trying to remember the page or sign it was written on.

As a way of making use of new vocabulary:
- Using words just learned in order to see if they work.
- Using familiar words in different combinations to make new sentences.

STRATEGIC USE OF TRANSLATION
In order to enhance language learning and use:
- Planning out what one wants to say or write in the L1 and the translating it into the target language.
- While listening to others, translating parts of what they have said into one’s own L1 to help store the concepts.

**To work directly in the target language as much as possible:**
- Making an effort to put one’s native language out of mind and to think only in the target language.
- Being cautious about transferring words or concepts directly from the L1 to the target language.

5 Learning to teach EFL by teaching EFL

Anne Kavanagh, Mick Kavanagh and Don Snow
The Amity Foundation, PRC

Introduction

Foreign English teachers working in Chinese tertiary institutions have often had relatively little previous preparation for English teaching work, either formal training or previous teaching experience. They thus acquire their ELT skills naturalistically through experience during their first year of teaching, a period when the learning curve seems especially steep.

This paper reports on a study that followed ten novice foreign EFL teachers through their first year in China. The participants had all had little or no previous training or experience in EFL, yet were teaching English (mainly conversational English) full-time at the junior college level. Through interviews, we attempted to find answers to two broad and seemingly simple questions: How do novice teachers develop and grow over their first year of teaching? What can we do to help?

Our main motivation was to attempt to find out what (more) can be done to assist this type of teacher in such situations to more quickly master basic aspects of ELT, both for their sakes and for those of their students.

Researching teacher learning

While Freeman and Richards insist that little attention has been paid to understanding how teachers learn to teach (1996a), there is a body of literature related to teacher learning, attending to both teaching in general and teaching languages in particular. Naturally, the methodology applied in such instances varies. Richards and Ho (1998) summarise several studies involving journal-keeping, concluding that they have certain limitations, such as being time-consuming, artificial, unfocused, tedious, difficult to analyse. Jarvis (1992) points out difficulties some journal writers have in getting
beyond listing and summarising and on to more obvious reflection on practice. Many studies which investigate teaching practicums do so within the context of postgraduate degree (Johnson, 1996; Richards & Ho, 1998; Numrich, 1996) or teaching certificate programmes (Almarza, 1996), and others look at the first year of teaching (Richards & Pennington, 1998). No literature that we have found specifically focuses on the type of teacher we are interested in. Not only are they new to teaching, but they are also minimally trained, and venturing into a very challenging situation in a volunteer capacity. This is a potentially vast field; there are large numbers of foreign teachers of a similar ilk within China, tending normally to teach speaking courses.

**Background**

The Amity Foundation is a Chinese non-governmental organisation set up in 1985 to promote education, health, social service and rural development in China, and its Education Division recruits and places overseas teachers in tertiary institutions. While a few teach German or Japanese, the vast majority teaches English, and serves for a period of two years. Currently more than 70 teachers are placed in 9 provinces. The level of training and experience amongst new teachers varies widely, with a mixture of all three of Maley’s (1986) categories of foreign teacher. There are young graduates, some of whom may be Maley’s “see China and die” brigade (1986, p. 106) with no training or experience; teachers of other subjects; and professional EFL teachers. However, among new recruits each year the proportion represented by the first category is fairly large, and it is with this group that we are primarily concerned here. In addition, for many this is not only their first experience of living abroad, but also of full-time employment.

Amity placements are generally made in tertiary institutions which provide pre-service training for teachers of Junior Middle school. This is an attempt by Amity to enhance English language teaching at what is an important stage for Chinese children. In particular, Amity teachers are placed in colleges which would otherwise find it difficult, either financially, practically, or both, to find and keep foreign teachers. This means that our teachers are effectively working at the lower range of tertiary education. Teaching has long been a poor career choice in the eyes of Chinese students, and it does not attract the best available. It could be said that conditions have not changed radically in the decade since Paine described teachers’ colleges as “second-class citizens in the educational hierarchy” (1990, p. 133). Such colleges, then, in which our teachers are placed, often suffer
from a certain lack of vision and leadership. Foreign teachers often find themselves looked up to as “experts”, but - or perhaps, therefore - are left to their own devices regarding course content, teaching methodology, and assessment procedures.

Under such conditions, it is important to provide orientation and guidance for new teachers. Catering for such a broad spectrum of people is no mean task but over the years Amity has developed a basic framework of training and support. Most, though not all, novice teachers arrive having completed at least a preliminary training course in TEFL/TESOL in their home country. Thereafter, any training or support takes place within mainland China. Upon arrival in August there is an orientation of three weeks for all new teachers, where adaptation to a new culture and environment are as important as preparation for teaching. There is an annual winter (i.e. mid-academic year) conference which includes workshops on teaching-related issues. A regional meeting is held in each province once a term when teachers are required to hold at least one formal session on teaching issues. Division staff visit each institution once a year, though these visits do not always attend to teaching matters.

Research questions

Amity is always trying to tailor its provision of support and training to suit its teachers. Even so, especially given a wide geographical spread in placements, teachers can initially feel quite isolated. Both living and working in a new culture under relatively poor conditions must involve some strain, to say the least. Once the excitement of arrival and a host of related experiences has died down, teachers find themselves at their placements. Rather than being the object of preparation and initiation, now it is their turn at the chalkface, as it were. How do they cope, specifically with their teaching? In order to understand this process better, and thereby to tailor our support more effectively, as we approached the orientation of summer 2000 we attempted to find out:

- What ideas about language teaching and learning the teachers brought with them into the experience;
- What challenges novice teachers face during their first year, and how they cope with them;
- How the perspective of these teachers changes over the first year.

In order to answer these, we began the Teacher Development Project (TDP),
the first stage of which was to investigate that first-year experience, through the eyes of those involved. We deliberately focused on the teaching of speaking as this forms the major part of most foreign teachers’ timetables.

The study

The decision to conduct the study through interviews was based on both practical and pedagogical concerns. Given the ‘volunteer’ nature of our teachers, and the pressures and excitement of their new venture, we felt it unlikely that any would persist in journal writing, especially at such a distance from any of us. We thus wished to avoid problems evident in the literature mentioned above. In addition, we are not in any official way ‘supervisors’ or ‘tutors’ to the group. Our help is largely voluntary and lacking in institutional authority, so there could be no sense of obligation on the part of the teachers. Lesson observation was largely out of the question due to the massive geographical spread of the group and our own commitments.

More positively, though, we did see discussion as both a practical possibility, and a desirable approach. We wished to put ourselves into the position of colleague-researchers. In other words, we intended to engage the novices in an extended discussion as a way of encouraging the expression of their experience and to enhance their development as teachers.

Ten teachers were voluntarily involved in the project, and divided into three groups for interviewing purposes. These represented those taking part in the TEFL teaching practice at the Nantong orientation course. Their details follow, showing a great deal of variety in previous education and experience. All were in their early 20s, apart from Teacher G, in his 50s.
The Hong Kong Institute of Education Library

Learning to teach EFL by teaching EFL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
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</table>

The interviews were conducted at three stages over the first year of their teaching, each fitting into the normal pattern of Amity life, as it were. The initial phase was during the Amity Orientation course in August, very soon after the teachers had first arrived in China, and while they were still taking part in orientation classes, Chinese language learning, and a necessarily brief EFL teaching practice. The second stage was during the Amity winter conference in Sanya, Hainan. On each of these occasions, individual teachers were interviewed by the same interviewer using a semi-structured format. (See Appendix for questions.) Interviews were taped and transcribed. The third ‘interview’ was not actually such. Due to logistical difficulties, we decided to ask questions and receive answers electronically. A list of questions were sent by email to each subject and their replies arrived in the same way.

We approached the data from two perspectives. Firstly, in looking at responses to certain questions across the board, and searching for key words or concepts, certain patterns and commonalities became evident. Other, more individualistic comments also stood out. Secondly, we looked at individual development chronologically through the year.

Discussion of findings

The impact of previous language teachers and language learning experiences

Many writers have described the link between teaching and previous learning. Freeman and Richardson propose that previous learning experiences, beliefs, and knowledge act as ‘a powerful determinant of teachers’
perceptions and practices’ (1996a, p. 6). Numrich reviewed the language learning histories of participants on an ESL practicum, noting that ‘in conjunction with their diary entries [these histories] showed clearly the effect of learning an L2 was often carried over to their teaching of an L2’ (1996, p 137-138). We found that our group responses fitted this kind of pattern. Almarza (1996) refers to evidence linking previous experience and teaching practice. In particular, she refers to an ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (1996, p. 51) Our findings indicate that our novice teachers, as students, had indeed taken mental notes about their teachers, which they then intended to employ in their own teaching.

In general, their language learning experiences were fairly limited. Interestingly - for people coming to China to teach language - none had majored in language as undergraduates, apart from the two Filipinas who rated themselves as bilingual anyway. Many had learned a language at school and/or college, but did not continue or use their second language after graduation. In only two cases had an interest in learning Chinese preceded their decision to come and teach here.

For some of our group, language learning had been a somewhat negative experience, and most did not see themselves as natural language learners. In other words, they often expressed difficult experiences, and in one or two cases actually characterised themselves as interested but not talented.

Initial responses referred to the learning process:

I think it’s important that a teacher be challenging to the students ... but not too much so, that it becomes intimidating or that, or frustrating to the students. (Teacher A)

This teacher had already described her own experiences as “frustrating”, while another had fonder memories:

I still remember a lot of ... her techniques that she used with us ... that were just excellent. (Teacher C)

As mentioned earlier, not all experiences were positive. Teacher B remembers not being able to follow the teacher’s French, and getting extremely difficult homework. Teacher F, in contrast to grammar-centred German courses he had taken, felt a good language teacher should steer
students away from approaches too grounded in grammar.

Others, especially prompted by the “ideal teacher” revealed ideals formed through encounters with actual teachers. Teacher D emphasised that a good teacher should be “entertaining” and ‘captivating’, like one of her own teaching role models, and Teacher E said that her ideal language teacher should give herself fully to the students, like a Spanish teacher she once had who was generous in giving time to students. Teacher G had strong memories of brilliant theology teachers. Another, Teacher J, stressed how much impact the attitude of teachers has on class atmosphere, either for good (like a Spanish teacher she had) or for ill (like a French teacher she had).

Challenges and coping with them

We used different questions to try to elicit the teachers’ predictions of challenges, their actual challenges, and ways in which they dealt with them. While they were already predicting difficulties, these were not always clearly envisioned, and not always the same as those they eventually experienced.

(a) Before teaching

When asked how they were intending to teach, some expressed a very honest blank slate. However, this did not necessarily mean they had not thought about the impending challenges, and it was this term which gave us some insight into their predictions. Many began with concerns about how they would fare in class, often expressing concern over lack of student response, and their own ability to handle the classroom situation.

I’m just afraid that no-one will speak ... (Teacher D)
Probably my biggest fear, really something I would find difficult, is if I pose something to the class and there’s just silence, and I wouldn’t know how to get a response out of the class. (Teacher A)
I don’t want ... to move too fast you know and the students aren’t getting anything and I don’t wanna go too slow where they’re sitting there bored because I’m doing reviews all the time ... (Teacher J)

The second early concern was with preparation of lessons and pacing them correctly:
... planning things because I don’t know, I don’t know about time, I don’t know how long something is gonna take to do, or if it’s appropriate ... (Teacher A)
... making sure that I’m on top of things in terms of getting to know my students ... making sure that I’m preparing ... well ahead so that they get the most out of it. (Teacher B)
I’m nervous about making sure I have enough stuff to do every day ... (Teacher C)

Many also begin by emphasising the importance of the teacher’s positive affective impact on students - creating a comfortable and safe classroom atmosphere, and engaging, motivating, and even entertaining students.

... I want the students to learn ... I’m worried about not being flexible enough, I guess ... I don’t even know if that’s really gonna be a problem in the Chinese classroom, because, you know, Americans we like to have the variety ... (Teacher J)
I’m thinking of not scaring the students, so I want them to be comfortable first, and let them do drills if that’s the way they would feel comfortable ... (Teacher E)

(b) After one term

While some signs of concern about students had been evident in the first interview, they became far more obvious after a term’s teaching, when our teachers began more often to mention such points as diverse levels of English and motivation:

... presenting all of my students with the opportunity to speak ... that was very very difficult, especially when you’re in a classroom situation where people are very very different: different English levels, English abilities, and ... confidence levels vary. I think that’s been my biggest problem ... other problems have been ... keeping my students motivated ... letting them know that they can do it, and that their English is not poor and that they are improving ... I just try to get them to understand that every time you speak you’re improving, you’re taking a step in the right direction. (Teacher B)

This teacher had noted a typical difficulty in English classrooms - that of differences between students. This is not a difficulty only relevant to China,
of course. However, the Chinese situation is marked by extreme diversity, and by the sheer size of the teaching task:

I felt like there’s too many students and they all wanted to get to know me so much and I wanted to help them by getting to know them more and interacting more with them, but there was just too many and I feel like ... I wanted to put all my energy towards students but then there was always extra people coming ... (Teacher D)

It is not unusual for a foreign teacher to become the focus of attention from people outside their own institution, a situation this teacher found to be rather overwhelming. But even without such attention, the numbers of students in China make even knowing names a gargantuan feat.

They mentioned several overarching teaching and planning problems, most of which they had not predicted in the first interview: difficulties with the textbook; managing class time; course planning; managing teaching workload; last-minute schedule changes. Other difficulties were related directly to teaching the students: creating speaking opportunities for students; getting students to talk; assessing the level of students’ English; motivating students; balancing teacher/friend roles. We noted a definite response towards problems with students’ behaviour: speaking Chinese in class; cheating in class activities; not doing homework; a general obsession with examinations.

(c) After a year

Certain instructions to ‘self’, as it were, arose after a year’s teaching. The teachers reflected on both macro and micro teaching issues, from goal-setting to their own performance in class:

I have found giving detailed feedback from assessment, setting clear goals and holding students accountable to them helps them see their progress. (Teacher I)
Don’t talk so much in class; I have learned to talk less and monitor more - giving students some time to listen to me, but more time to practice together. (Teacher C)

There were concerns over relationships with students. Teachers, especially young ones, often find that Chinese students are happy to befriend them, but
coping with two roles, and in an appropriate way relative to the culture, is not easy:

I have also learned that I have to be strict and pull out the bad guy mask at times in order to establish any authority. In the classroom I feel as if I must demand respect from them. (Teacher D)
You need to know the culture well. You need to get to know your students so you can help them better. (Teacher F)

Changes in perspective

Potentially the most interesting area of inquiry, this also produced a great variety of responses. It could be said that this is where we saw 'the teacher' emerging, as a result of the interaction between a background of previous experiences and the dynamics of challenge.

(a) After one term

One teacher noted that she now felt as if she was doing what she had come to do:

I feel as though I kind of am teaching them ... so I felt as if finally things were starting to go the way I planned before I came instead of having to improvise. (Teacher D)

Another had a lot to say about what she'd learnt about both teaching and language:

... there is a fairly direct relationship ... the amount of time you put into preparing a lesson and how well it goes. ...you can't teach people something and just expect them to know it in language learning ... the English language is so much more complicated than I'd realised ... actually it's a lot more fluid ... (Teacher I)

One teacher felt a need for larger-scale organisation:

... as far as the semester as a whole went ... I was lacking in sort of an overall organisation scheme ... maybe I learned that format for how to do a lesson, but maybe I didn't know how to do a whole semester, and perhaps - well, not perhaps - this semester was lacking in some consistency on the whole (Teacher A)
(b) After a year

The process required was very succinctly put, again by Teacher I, perhaps speaking unlike a teacher of only one year’s standing:

I think you need to start by asking yourself “What do my students already know? What do I want my students to be able to do by the end of this year? What topics do I want them to be able to talk about? What skills do I want them to have developed? How will they gain a sense of having developed their language since last year?” and then you work out how to get there. (Teacher I)

Of course, the working out of how to get there may not be a simple process, but it is quite impressive that after such a short teaching “apprenticeship”, this teacher could put the problem so clearly. Evidently, she had moved away from a ‘survival teaching’ situation.

By now, our subjects were beginning to think much more clearly of what students themselves wanted, specifically mentioning language systems and interesting topics:

... all of the students wish they would have had more opportunities to practice their English with me in class. (Teacher B)
I wish they had had more work on pronunciation and on conventions in spoken English. (Teacher C)
I think they would want me to do more teaching of structures and patterns. (Teacher F)
Most ... seemed pretty satisfied ... the best students in one class found it frustrating that we focused more on daily life and world around us type topics and I avoided more abstract discussions (Teacher I)

Teachers were also expressing quite strong opinions on what students needed.

I have really just come to understand how crucial confidence is in the learning process and how it can really help or hinder one’s ability to improve their spoken ability. (Teacher B)
I find it difficult to generalise about learners’ needs, as all of my
students are individuals with very different needs. Many still need confidence and practice at producing language freely; others have no shortage of confidence and can talk on a wide range of topics but cannot use the past tense at all. Others have their confidence and communication skills undermined by pronunciation difficulties. (Teacher I)

At the second year level, it seems like language learning no longer is about increasing vocabulary. Learning new words is still a vital part of their language learning experience, but now they have enough vocabulary to actually communicate their ideas and opinions accurately. At this point it becomes more about application. (Teacher A)

I feel now that what they need is practice more than anything. I’m amazed at some of my students’ vocabulary etc. and they need pushed a bit into using what they know. I realise they also need help with grammar and pronunciation and more native/modern expressions but they know so much already. (Teacher F)

Several of the groups gave expression to certain “truths” or “beliefs” about teaching and learning that they had assimilated. For example: language is a very complex phenomenon; all students are different; the best lessons are those in which students create something; timing is very important; the teacher’s attitude affects the class a great deal. Problems sometimes arose, however, such as where one teacher found a vast difference between his perceptions of learners’ needs and their own expectations:

... it’s almost a moral dilemma, knowing whether to give in to them and to give them what they’re gonna need to pass exams in the future, or whether to just break away from all of that and do what I want to do ... (Teacher F)

He had also previously been critical of Chinese teaching methods, but now had changed this opinion, also implying that it is the students who learn:

I now realise how little I really teach my students and how much they gain from the Chinese teachers’ grammar and intensive reading especially ... sometimes our modern, advanced language teaching techniques aren’t better than some traditional Chinese methods. (Teacher F)
I feel as future teachers that they need to become better at helping each other and to realise that the foreign teachers are not the only people who can help them improve their language. I have been working with my second years on critical listening so they can correct each other’s mistakes. (Teacher 1)

**Major difficulties**

After reviewing and analysing our data, it became clear that much of the work already routinely done by Amity is proving itself worthwhile in terms of preparing and supporting teachers in their placements. However, we were able to identify two main problem areas where more is needed, and crucially - where assistance is within the bounds of possibility. These were focusing on students and their needs, and long-term planning, both related areas where improvement could be mutually beneficial. It is interesting that these are also the two areas noted by Numrich: “Their expressed need to be innovative often outweighed any concern for identifying materials that best suited their students’ needs or planning any kind of syllabus for their 10-week class” (1996, p. 135-136).

**Focusing on students and their needs**

Part of our thinking when setting up the project was that in itself it might form part of the solution to the problem. That is, simply by asking the questions we did would hope to engender an atmosphere of reflection on teaching. Additionally, we ourselves would be participating in a discussion with our teachers which might offer opportunities for exchange and growth.

A more formalised expression of such discussion has grown out of the original TDP. During the current academic year it was decided to begin a mentoring scheme, whereby novice teachers were given the option to be linked up with a longer-term, more experienced teacher. We chose an optional route given the various attitudes to development and involvement our teachers have. In this way, it is hoped, those with an interest in developing their teaching will do so in cooperation with someone whose experience may be put at their disposal. After an initial introduction after the Nantong orientation course, it has been deliberately left up to the novice teacher to initiate any contact during the term. In most cases, contact is made by email, sometimes by phone.

New teachers obviously need as much information as possible, before
they arrive. However, with so many different colleges, each with their own timetable and staff changes, it is neither realistic nor possible to be fully accurate several months ahead of a new teacher’s first lesson. But students do not change so rapidly, yet they are the major focus of a foreign teacher’s time in China. Few teachers, though, have had experience of Chinese students (or any students at all in some cases), so we feel it would be prudent to provide some exposure early on in the orientation process. To that end, we have undertaken to produce audiotapes of students of various levels of proficiency talking with their present foreign teacher. These will be passed on to sending agencies who are responsible for pre-departure preparation courses. It is our hope that these might prove useful in firming up expectations about students.

Long-term planning

It seems not uncommon for new teachers to have been given a grounding in lesson planning. Several of our teachers mentioned this as a strength of the Nantong orientation course. However, it is less normal for much guidance to be available on planning longer-term. Usually, in a foreign language department or language school, this task might be left to more senior figures. An official syllabus would be available, and expected to be followed. In mainland China, however, this is very often not the case. Teachers - even those with little or no experience - are left alone to put together their own course. At best, this happens. At worst, and arguably more often, a rather poor course is delivered.

For these reasons, some of our teachers expressed a desire to have an overall course scheme. In one or two cases, there was a very early expression of concern in this area, probably prompted in at least one case by previous experience within China:

... learning how to set up a course ... I’m really not very sure where I’m going to ... what extent ... am I basically going to be designing a syllabus? And how I’m going to sort of create clear aims for a term ... I’ve got to work out how to sort of plan for a whole semester ... (Teacher C)

Of course, the question asked here reflects Amity’s dilemma to some degree. We simply often do not know what individual teachers will be expected to do. They may well not find out till they arrive at their college. Equally, with so many different placements, it has so far not been realistic for Amity to come up with a one-size-fits-all syllabus. If one is to exist, it is already to be found
in outline form in material given to new teachers each year.

One very perceptive comment, after a term’s teaching, is also relevant here:

... this past semester was kind of sussing things out, as opposed to really getting down to what needed to be done ... but I don’t know if there something that I could have learned in August [orientation] that would’ve made a big difference in that, or if this sort of working things out period is necessary in itself. (Teacher A)

She may well be right, in that the orientation course is already packed with three main kinds of input. One more might be too much, and perhaps it is necessary for teachers to work things out for themselves. We would agree that a Chinese term is rather too long a period for such a lone discovery venture by a novice teacher. Certainly the situation is not ideal, but it is the situation we have to deal with, and we hope that the other support facilities are enough to help teachers cope.

Our best solution so far, apart from depending on the supports already mentioned (which are also being discussed with a view to improvement) is to provide a session at winter conference, specifically aimed at new teachers and their needs. It is our intention that this not be prescriptive, but rather, in keeping with constructivist theory, based on teachers’ experiences and illustrated with examples by more experienced teachers.

Conclusion

Along with others, this teacher acknowledged that the students’ learning had been impressive:

I realise they also need help ... but they know so much already ... (Teacher F)

echoing Scovel (2001) who expresses “a sense of awe about how anyone can ever learn any second language” (Scovel, 2001, p. 11). Further, he summed up teaching:

I see now that language teaching is not easy. (Teacher F)
It is not inappropriate, then, not only to agree with Teacher F but further, to paraphrase Scovel by expressing our own sense of awe that these novice teachers themselves learn to teach by the very act of teaching itself, and that in quite difficult circumstances.

Quite apart from our intentions for follow-up work within the organisation, several areas of interest for further study are indicated. While some writers have investigated Chinese conceptions of teaching and learning, it would be interesting to follow up on some comments made by our teachers on their views of Chinese education. It was obvious from some of the interviews that, while arriving with relatively negative views in this respect, some teachers had changed their minds, seeing more value than they had expected in Chinese ways. Put simply, students whose only English teachers hitherto had been Chinese did have quite good English.

More detailed study of the novices’ growth as teachers would be beneficial to our project. There is more here than the admittedly fascinating discovery of how this happens, albeit a discovery worth making for its own sake. The Amity Teachers’ Project could well benefit from a deeper understanding of the process. Fairly obvious areas of improvement, then, could be in teacher preparation and support, but others also spring to mind, such as recruitment and preparation periods in teachers’ home countries.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

**Interview 1** (August 2000: Orientation Programme, Nantong)

Preliminary chat about general educational background.

1) Tell me about your previous language learning experience.

2) What do you expect the biggest challenges to be?

3) Tell me as much as you can about how you think you’re going to teach oral skills.

* We want to understand how your ideas about teaching evolve over your first year, so we are interested in knowing what ideas - any ideas - you have now.

* Tell me about some of the things you want to do in class.

4) What should an ideal teacher do?

Can you think of a very good teacher, that you would like to emulate.
5) What do you think will be most rewarding in your teaching?
* Back-up prompts, used if respondents ran dry.

**Interview 2** (January 2001: Winter conference, Sanya)
1) Can you tell me what Oral Skills courses you taught last semester?
2) Can you tell me in general how you taught these classes?
3) What would you say were your biggest challenges last term?
4) What would you say was the easiest thing in teaching so far?
5) What would you say has been the most rewarding?
6) Looking back on your pre-service training: What do you think was most useful, or what do you wish you had more of?
7) What kind of help or support has been useful to you in the first semester? The sort of thing we’re thinking about is from Amity or Amity teachers, or materials.
8) What kind of help - that you didn’t have - do you think would have been helpful?
9) Was there any other help that you could have, or perhaps should have had from other people, or from materials, that wasn’t available?
10) What lessons did you learn over your first semester teaching, and how did you learn them?

‘**Interview**’ 3 (June 2001: by email)
1) Over the past year, what do you think students have gained most from your (oral skills) courses? What do you think they wish they had had more of in your courses?
2) Over the past year, have your ideas about what learners need changed? Are there other ways your perspective on language teaching has changed? Are there other lessons you have learned?
3) What do you think you have learned about teaching over the past year? What do you think you have learned about structuring a learning experience for students?
4) What courses and classes will you be teaching in the next school year (if you know)?
5) How do you plan to approach your (oral skills) courses next year? How can you create a better learning experience for students in your courses next year? What do you plan to do more or less the same? What do you plan to do differently?
6) If next year you have the same students as this year, what will you do more or less the same as you did this past year? What will you do differently?
Organisational patterns of text: The effects on reading comprehension

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Introduction

Reading is an interactive process and may be seen as "a dialogue between the reader and the text" (Grabe, 1988, p. 56). The notion of interactivity usually refers to the use of both bottom up and top down reading processes. The first of these requires decoding of the graphic features and grammatical characteristics of a text, while the second requires an ability to recognise global features and brings in the readers' background and cultural knowledge.

Beginning readers frequently decode print into speech. The process is both orthographic and phonological. The more practiced the reader becomes the more automatic the decoding becomes. Readers identify lexical items and through interaction with items held in memory, and their background knowledge, select appropriate meanings.

Is this process different for readers reading in Chinese? Chinese characters are often represented as morphemes and according to Koda (1987) are processed without phonological transfer, but are essentially transfers from orthographic form directly to meaning. However, apart from this possible distinction, the processing of Chinese and English appears to be essentially similar (Just & Carpenter, 1987). The more skilled the reader the more automatic the reading process becomes.

Reading comprehension involves lexical processes, syntactic processes, inferential thinking and non-linguistic knowledge. Does the L2 reader follow the same strategies and processes as the L1 reader? It seems likely that both L1 reading ability and L2 proficiency are both factors in comprehension (Block, 1986; Clapham, 1996). Inevitably less proficient readers will focus on word level/lower level cues rather connections between sentences and more global meaning identified from the rhetorical
structure of the text. The L2 reader may be similar to the less proficient L1 reader (Clapham, 1996) and may not be able to access appropriate formal and content schemata, i.e. they may not have adequate background knowledge of the rhetorical structure being used in the text they are reading (formal schemata) or they may not have adequate background understanding of the topic which the text is discussing (content schemata). Accessing appropriate schemata are essential to comprehension and it may be that the organisation of a text which gives this access to meaning is of considerable importance (see evidence detailed below).

What is meant by rhetorical organisation? Technically it is the relationship between groups of propositions and the way these groups are classified (the logical organisation of the text). The way these rhetorical forms operate has been described by De Beaugrande (1980), Meyer (1975), and Grimes (1975). Armbruster (1984) has recognised five groups of rhetorical, top level relations in expository text:

- **Listing** (a listing of items or ideas where the order of presentation of the items is not significant)
- **Comparison/contrast** (a description of similarities or differences between two things)
- **Temporal sequence** (a sequential relationship between ideas or events considered in terms of the passage of time)
- **Cause effect** (an interaction between at least two ideas or events, one considered a cause or reason and the other an effect or result)
- **Problem-solution** (similar to the cause-effect pattern in that two factors interact, one citing a problem, the other a solution to that problem)

**The importance of rhetorical structure**

The importance of rhetorical structures in reading comprehension, particularly for children, has been observed by Brown, Day and Jones (1983), Slater and Graves (1989) and Dole et al. (1991) and Sharp (1999). McGee and Richgels (1985, p. 739) comment “... research ... has shown that the structure of text and how adeptly a reader recognises that structure affects the amount of information the student remembers”. Leon and Carretero (1995, p. 204) note the importance of text structure in “helping readers to differentiate between important and unimportant information as well as in the organisation and recall of information”. Some studies have been able to show that pre-teaching rhetorical structures to children has a
significant effect on many aspects of reading comprehension (e.g. Horowitz, 1985; Piccolo, 1987; Bodycott, 1997).

An examination of the literature on this subject shows that little attention has been paid to the comprehension problems of readers whose first language is Chinese, but who are required to read in English. Do the rhetorical patterns which are common in the subject’s first language have an effect on the reader’s ability to understand texts in English when it is their L2? Kaplan’s (1966) ground-breaking study in contrastive rhetoric is well known, although it refers specifically to writing, not reading. The argument for culture specific rhetorical patterns and preferences in writing has been supported by the work of Connor (1984), Clyde (1987), Eggington (1987) and Hinds (1990) and many others. The cultural and social orientation of the reader is also likely to be an important ingredient of reading comprehension which will have strong influences on any experiment to determine the effects of rhetorical organisation. One of the purposes of this paper is to observe what these influences might be.

The experiment

In this section I will detail the methodology I used to establish if variable rhetorical form affects reading comprehension.¹

The reading passages used in this experiment were selected from a secondary school science textbook (Chan et al., 1993) used by the majority of English medium secondary schools in Hong Kong. 490 Form Three pupils (254 girls, 236 boys, mean age 14.1) were tested with four versions of a text adapted from information on health education in the textbook. The subjects were all from “Band 1” English medium secondary (High) schools, in an education system which, at the time, banded children from 1-5 after primary school tests in English, Maths and Chinese (band 1 being the most able). All were Cantonese, L1 speakers, of Chinese ethnic background, living in high-rise housing blocks in medium income areas of the New Territories of Hong Kong. The reading texts were about the topic, Healthy Eating. This topic had been taught in integrated science classes during the preceding term. It was therefore assumed that background knowledge of the topic would be similar for all pupils. Four re-writings adapted the text into different rhetorical forms: description, cause-effect, listing and problemsolution. (The texts are shown in Appendix 1). Text lengths were 147, 165, 143 and 167 words. Texts of this length were considered manageable and appropriate for form 3 level, L2 students. The length of the texts is similar to

Comments on text construction

Each text was given an identical introductory sentence.

(a) The problem-solution construction then divides the information into two parts:

- the problems presented by nutritional deficits
- the solutions to these deficits

Discourse markers were added:
the problems of ... may be solved ...
a particular problem
the problems of ...
the solutions to these problems

(b) The listing construction

The listing construction was indicated by enumerating the substances required for good nutrition and at the same time indicating which foods provide these substances.

Discourse markers was added:
follow the advice in the list below:
the first, second, third, fourth, finally

Although cause-effect was implicit in the text, this was not made explicit and the listing of the substances is the predominant form used.

(c) Cause-effect construction

The causation pattern was indicated by three conditional sentences:

If our bodies are provided with food ... then we are less likely to become ill.
If we are able to eat plenty of carbohydrates ... then the body will be provided with energy.
If we eat too much animal fat instead of vegetable fat ... then this may cause heart attacks.

Discourse markers were used explicitly to indicate causation:

* Cause ... disease
* result in illness
* are a cause of problems ...
* may cause heart attacks.
* because of high animal fats

**Description**

The interrelationship of the components was unstructured in the description text, with no clear relationships being evident. The ideas are associated, but they are not sequential or chronological. They are rather a collection of attributes about the nutritional value of various foods, with no evident hierarchical organisation. The description text therefore, was not as highly organised as the other three texts.

**Judgement of rhetorical forms**

It was recognised that there is a certain amount of overlap in these constructions. The *problem-solution* construction contains elements of causation. The *listing* construction contains elements of both of these. However, the texts appear to exemplify the rhetorical forms required by being essentially different - a difference confirmed by eight professional colleagues who were asked to pass judgements on their organisation by applying a range of labels to unmarked texts. 100% agreement on the recognition of the rhetorical forms was given.

**Methods of testing reading comprehension**

A wide range of methods have been used to test reading comprehension. The most appropriate methods to test a more holistic view of reading in this experiment were considered to be a text based cloze procedure and a recall protocol. The cloze procedure was based on Farhady and Keramati’s (1996) research, which demonstrated the superior qualities of a text based design, deletion rates being calculated after taking into account the number of noun phrases in a text. Farhady and Keramati contend that such a design takes better account of the “discoursal and linguistic structure of the language used and is superior because of improved
reliability and validity" (Farhady & Keramati, 1999, personal communication). A discoursal cloze, as suggested by Deyes (1984) was considered inappropriate because of the additional processing difficulties it would put on the subjects to be used in this experiment, who were only at an intermediate stage in their language learning. Random deletions have also been frequently used in cloze design, but these have been heavily criticised as measures of reading comprehension because they may only measure local coherence, or “lower order skills” (Alderson, 1979). I have considered cloze to be a suitable measure after considering the views of its many critics (e.g. Shanahan & Kamil, 1982; Alderson, 1979) and its supporters (Jonz, 1990, Chevez-Oller et al., 1985; Brown et al., 1983). I have contended that the modified text-based cloze of Farhady and Keramati (1996) allows a more global comprehension test to be possible. Both acceptable and exact word scores were used in the testing procedure. (The reader may like to refer to Farhady and Keramati’s article for further details on text-based cloze construction.)

The second testing method selected was a recall protocol. This has been the most common method employed in testing reading comprehension in research of this sort. It requires that the text be divided into idea units or propositions or a constituent structure (e.g. Meyer, 1975; Johnson, 1970). The subject reads the text and his/her recall is similarly divided and compared with the number of units in the original text. Comprehension is therefore measured by the amount of information in the response. The procedure is not hampered by possible interference from test items and is more likely to focus on the communication between text and reader. The assumption is that recall indicates something about the readers’ assimilation and reconstruction of text information and therefore reflects comprehension. The texts in this study were segmented according to Johnson (1970), with “pausal boundaries” being designated to allow quantitative assessment of recall. In order to account for qualitative/importance level differences in recall, the idea units were also rated for importance within the text. The quantity and quality of pausal units was determined by asking eight university colleagues to assess pausal boundaries and importance levels. Agreement was reached by totaling the choices made by the raters (see studies by Brown & Smiley, 1977; Fuchs, Fuchs & Maxwell, 1988; Armbruster, Anderson & Osterag, 1987). A template was then available for scoring purposes (see Appendix 2 for an example).
Organisational patterns of text: The effects on reading comprehension

Procedure

Hong Kong school English exams were used as a criteria measure against which to compare the results of the cloze and recall tests. These school exams offered a general proficiency test and were used to divide the subjects into four ability groups. The four rhetorically different texts were then distributed evenly throughout each of the four groups. This was done to see if higher or lower ability groups differed in any way in the scores they produced for each text. Each student received an envelope containing one reading text (either description, cause-effect, listing or problem-solution), a cloze test on the same text and a questionnaire (as a distraction task). Students were given a brief introduction informing them that the reading was to be about healthy eating. They were then given 8 minutes to read the text. After replacing the text inside an envelope they then completed the questionnaire, which took a further 5 minutes. At this point the subjects were told that they should write a recall. 10 minutes were given for this. The recalls were then also placed in the envelopes. The cloze test was then attempted (a further 10 minutes).

Results

Table 1. Cloze 1 (exact word), cloze 2 (acceptable word), recall (quantitative) and recall (importance/qualitative) scores for the 4 texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text 1 description</th>
<th>Cloze 1 Mean (S.D.)</th>
<th>Cloze 2 Mean (S.D.)</th>
<th>Recall (quantitative) Mean (S.D.)</th>
<th>Recall (importance/qualitative) (S.D.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text 2 cause-effect</td>
<td>61.5 (14.0)</td>
<td>68.7 (15.3)</td>
<td>33.8 (15.9)</td>
<td>33.8 (17.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text 3 listing</td>
<td>42.4 (14.2)</td>
<td>47.2 (15.6)</td>
<td>35.4 (15.6)</td>
<td>32.4 (16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text 4 problem-solution</td>
<td>43.2 (19.9)</td>
<td>53.0 (21.1)</td>
<td>37.3 (21.2)</td>
<td>38.5 (22.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>50.9 (16.2)</td>
<td>58.9 (19.1)</td>
<td>35.0 (21.6)</td>
<td>32.2 (22.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-statistics</td>
<td>49.5 (17.9)</td>
<td>56.9 (19.6)</td>
<td>35.4 (18.7)</td>
<td>34.2 (19.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p-value < 0.1  ** p-value < 0.05  *** p-value < 0.01

One way ANOVA was used to investigate the effects of different texts on the test scores. As expected cloze 1 (exact word scoring) and cloze 2 (acceptable word) were highly correlated. (0.899 overall correlation for the four texts). Cloze testing (which I have indicated as a measure of global reading comprehension) showed significant differences between the four texts, with the most loosely organised (description, text 1) scoring significantly higher. This effect appeared to be the most difficult.
The results of the recall protocols, using a quantitative measure, (based on the number of idea units recalled) indicated no significant difference between the text types, suggesting that the structure of the texts was irrelevant when this measure was used. When consideration is given to the qualitative/importance rating of recalls the more loosely organised texts (listing & description) score most highly.

The results (details not shown here) were not affected by gender, both boys and girls producing the same rank order of text difficulty. Three schools were used in the study: one coeducational, one boys only and one girls only. The rank order of the texts was identical in all three schools. All four ability groups also ranked the texts in the same way, so English proficiency levels appeared to have no effect on rhetorical preferences. The pattern of scores for the recalls, quantitative and qualitative, were also consistent with the rank order of the school proficiency tests.

The test measures themselves (i.e. cloze and recall) did differ in the results they produced. The possible reasons for this will be discussed in the next section.

A questionnaire was distributed as a distracter before the recalls were requested. This was designed to elicit more information about the difficulty subjects may have experienced with the texts. The questionnaire responses indicated that girls found the text easier to understand and this was actually reflected in the test results. Girls scored generally higher on recalls and cloze tests (although the rank order of texts was the same for both sexes). The fact that girls scored generally higher marks is consistent with Hong Kong and international scores that suggest that girls score higher on language related tests than boys (Chan, 1986).

Discussion

The specific aims of the experiment described here were to investigate if differing rhetorical organisations affected comprehension. The results indicate that this does indeed seem to be the case. Surprisingly, it is not the more tightly organised texts that score highest, as was most frequently found in other experiments of this type (e.g. Carrell, 1984). In cloze scoring the description text was found to be significantly easier for all proficiency groups and both sexes. Below I will discuss what I consider to be the essential causes of these results.
A. Subject-Verb-Object constructions. Some of the results in the current experiment may be explained by Chinese-English language contrasts, although it is not entirely clear what form these may take. Chinese is traditionally thought of as having a SVO word order. Rutherford (1983) sees Chinese as topic-prominent and English as subject prominent. Perhaps this contrast may have caused additional processing difficulties for Chinese native speakers reading English. Text 1 (description) does have a higher proportion of SVO constructions and may have scored higher because of this factor. Unfortunately some researchers, such as Sun and Givon (1985) and Wang (1988), in doing statistical studies on the frequency of SVO sentences in Chinese, found no clear dominance for SVO order. So it would seem that the inconclusive position on Chinese SVO order may remove this factor, at least at the moment, from consideration as a cause of text 1 scoring so highly.

B. Cohesive devices. Text 1 has no explicit use of signalling words. Johns (1984) has noted the underuse of such words by Chinese users. Hu, Brown and Brown (1982) have also noted the difficulty that Chinese speakers have with such cohesive devices. Young (1982, p. 83) noted that Chinese speakers favoured an indirect approach and that English connectives, such as because, as and so were “invested with meaning ... different from their usual association in English”. It may be that the cohesive devices in text 2, 3 and 4 caused extra difficulty for the school subjects in my experiment, and this goes some way towards accounting for the significantly higher score for text 1.

C. Counterfactuality. Text 2 scored lowest on the cloze testing. It may be that this was influenced by the fact that the cause-effect text contained counterfactual statements, considered by Bloom (1981) and Kaplan (1987) as being more difficult for Chinese speakers. Counterfactuality is defined by Kaplan (1987, p. 4) as “if-then” statements “marked by past tense in the dependent clause and an appropriate modal+infinitive in the independent clause ...”. Kowel (1998) agrees with Bloom (1981) that counterfactuality may be more limited in Chinese. “... Chinese speakers in general, by contrast to their English speaking counterparts, do not have at their disposal already prepared cognitive schemas specifically designed for interpreting information in a counterfactual way” (Bloom, 1981, p. 28).

Text 2 (cause-effect) does have three sentences which could be described as counterfactual (although they do not contain the past perfect):
If our bodies are provided with food that contains the right substances then we are less likely to become ill.
If we are able to eat plenty of carbohydrates then the body will be provided with the energy it needs.
If we eat too much animal fat instead of vegetable fat then this may cause heart attacks.

D. Rhetorical Style. Was text 1 (description) found to be easier because it is “turning and turning in a widening gyre” and is more indirect, as Kaplan (1966, p. 10) contends Chinese writing is prone to do? Does it follow a pattern that is more familiar to Chinese students, accustomed to Chinese rhetorical patterns? Text 1 is the most indirect of the texts and is perhaps the most incoherent (at least from a native English speakers’ viewpoint). Could this account for text 1’s higher score? There is evidence that western rhetorical style is not taught in Hong Kong and that school pupils are not familiar with western rhetorical patterns (Bodycott, 1997, Mohan & Lo, 1985).

E. Reading Strategies. Mohan and Lo (1985) report that the learning experience in Hong Kong emphasises accuracy at the sentence level. This was also found in a more recent study (Johnson & Ngor, 1996). The latter study reports that students use low level reading strategies in an attempt to cope with texts that are too difficult for them. Such strategies require attention to short phrases and single words, with little attention being given to how these phrases and words relate to the text as a whole. This factor may explain the lack of differences in quantitative recall: the low level, word or phrase based, strategies students are reported to use (by Johnson & Ngor, 1996) may have over-ridden the effects of rhetorical differences. In addition, the Hong Kong education system traditionally emphasises memory related tasks. There is evidence that Chinese students have better memories than western students, apparently because of the training required to learn Chinese written characters (Hoosain, 1991; Murphy, 1987; Ballard & Clanchy, 1984). These improved memory skills may also influence the results of comprehension testing. Hong Kong has an exam orientated system and it may be that although I did not suggest to students that they would be required to recall what they had read, they may have assumed that a test would follow, because this was the usual follow-up to reading. Text organisation may have been irrelevant to students used to this style of learning and who were used to using lexically based strategies and frequent memorisation in school. The recalls may have encouraged the use of these strategies. The elocute procedure, less frequently used in schools, may have
Organisational patterns of text: The effects on reading comprehension

offered a more novel, and in this case more valid method of testing comprehension in these circumstances.

Conclusion

The results of this experiment demonstrate that organisational patterns can have a strong influence on reading and that the separation of various textual features for measurement as factors in reading difficulty is problematic, but can be achieved. The text which appeared to be the most incoherent (at least to native English speakers) may have scored more highly because of rhetorical preferences in the Chinese learning situation. This poses an interesting dilemma for the teaching of reading and writing to Chinese students and suggests that models of academic writing based on a western ideal may be less accessible to Chinese learners and that more attention should therefore be given to teaching and familiarising students with western rhetorical patterns. In order to demonstrate the reliability of the results found in this experiment further studies are needed, with large samples and consistent, carefully explained procedures, established with students of similar proficiency levels and similar cultural backgrounds.

Note

1 A fuller description can be found in Sharp (2002).

References


Alastair Sharp

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Alastair Sharp

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Organisational patterns of text: The effects on reading comprehension

Appendix 1: The reading texts

Text 1: Description

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. We may avoid bad health if we eat a variety of foods.

Protein is needed for children to grow healthily. Fibre provides a substance that helps prevent constipation. Vitamins can be obtained from fruit and vegetables. Protein is also important for good health. Energy levels will be reduced by a lack of carbohydrates. Vegetable fats are better for our health than animal fats. We should try to eat more vegetable fats. Carbohydrates can be found in foods such as bread, rice and potatoes. Protein can be found in eggs, fish and meat. Lack of vitamins can cause diseases such as rickets and scurvy. Eating vegetable fats rather than animal fats will reduce the risk of heart attacks, particularly when we get older. We should avoid eating in McDonalds. Fibre can be found in cereals, vegetables and fruit.

Text 2: Cause-effect

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. A poor diet can cause disease.

If our bodies are provided with food that contains the right substances then we are less likely to become ill. A lack of vitamins can cause diseases like rickets and scurvy. Fruit and vegetables are necessary to avoid these diseases. A lack of protein can also result in illness, but this can be avoided by eating eggs, fish and meat. If we are able to eat plenty of carbohydrates then the body will be provided with the energy it needs. Carbohydrates can be found in foods like potatoes, bread and rice. Lack of fibre from foods like cereals, bread, vegetables and fruit are a cause of problems such as constipation. If we eat too much animal fat instead of vegetable fat then this may cause heart attacks, particularly when we get older. McDonalds’ restaurant food may be unhealthy because of high animal fats - we should eat there less.

Text 3: Listing

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. Bad health can be avoided if we follow the advice in the list below.
Alastair Sharp

The first substance required for good health is vitamins. Without them diseases such as rickets or scurvy can occur. The second substance required for good health is protein and this can be obtained from fish, meat and eggs. The third substance we are going to consider is carbohydrates. These can improve our energy levels and are found in potatoes, vegetables and rice. The fourth substance is fibre. This can help constipation and can be found in cereals, bread, vegetables and fruit. Finally, mention should be made of animal and vegetable fats. Too much animal fat can cause heart attacks, particularly when we get older. To stay healthy we should eat more vegetable fats and go to McDonalds less often.

Text 4: Problem-Solution

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. The problem of bad health may be solved if we eat a variety of foods. A lack of vitamins may cause illnesses like rickets or scurvy. A lack of protein will affect the growth of the body and a lack of carbohydrates will reduce energy levels. A shortage of fibre will cause problems like constipation. One food substance often mentioned is animal fats, these are a problem because they may cause heart attacks, particularly when we get older. The problems of eating too much animal fat when we go to restaurants like McDonalds is well known.

The solution to these problems is to eat the right kind of food. Fish, meat and eggs provide protein. Eating potatoes, bread and rice will provide us with carbohydrates. Fibre can be found in such foods as cereals, bread, vegetables and fruit - these foods will prevent constipation. Eat more vegetable fats and go to McDonalds less to stay healthy.
Appendix 2: A sample template with pausal units and importance / qualitative notation

**Description: Text 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number indicating level of importance</th>
<th>Pausal/Idea Unit</th>
<th>Recall Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>We may avoid bad health. if we eat a variety of foods.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Protein is needed for children to grow healthily.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fibre is a substance that helps prevent constipation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vitamins are obtained from fruit and vegetables.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Protein is also important for good health.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Energy levels will be reduced by a lack of carbohydrates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vegetable fats are better for our health than animal fats.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>We should try to eat more vegetable fats.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Carbohydrates can be found in foods such as bread rice and potatoes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Protein can be found in eggs, fish and meat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of vitamins can cause diseases such as rickets and scurvy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eating vegetable fats rather than animal fats will reduce the risk of heart problems particularly when we get older.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We should avoid eating in McDonalds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fibre can be found in cereals, vegetables and fruit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key to Importance Level rating:**
3/ Main generalisation. 2/ Supporting generalisation. 1/ Supporting detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of units</th>
<th>= 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of units actually recalled</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage recalled</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance total possible</td>
<td>= 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total importance level actually scored</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage importance score</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading? No thanks!
Issues of motivation as choice

Julie Hamston
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Introduction

Issues of motivation are key to understanding how all students learn, how they engage with the teaching strategies they encounter, how they enthuse about the worlds offered to them through different textual encounters. Such issues preoccupy teachers and parents alike, for the question of how to establish a child’s interest in learning and maintain this interest as he or she matures is paramount. In recent times in Australia and internationally, there has been growing concern over boys’ education and, in particular, how boys develop and maintain literacy practices (see for example, Hall & Coles, 1997; Office for Standards in Education, 1993; Gilbert, 1998; Wilhelm, 2001).

Much of the recent literature in Australia relating to issues of boys and literacy focuses on literacy as a set of practices and examines boys’ motivation and success in literacy as matters inherently social. For example, researchers such as Alloway and Gilbert (1997) argue that boys may be marginalised as a consequence of pedagogical practices that privilege certain text types, such as narratives, over others. Davies (1997) advocates that boys will increase their success in literacy and enjoyment of literacy if they are engaged in critically literate practices. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), Martino (2000) and Millard (1997) focus attention on how masculinity is constructed and propose that boys are de-motivated to read because they view reading as a ‘feminized practice’. Others such as Nichols (1994) and Moloney (1999, 2000) argue that males operate as powerful role models for boys, and fathers have an important responsibility to motivate their sons to read.

However, there appears to be little attention in the literature devoted to motivation to read as a matter of choice or appropriation of valued social practices. Motivation in reading is a complex phenomenon that varies with context and social relationships (see for example, Arizpe,
1993; Bintz, 1993). The study of a cohort of boys who are reluctant readers: those who can read, but choose not to (Chambers, 1969), provides insights into motivation as appropriation and opens up dialogue about the role of the individual in social theories of language.

**Overview of the study**

The research described here constitutes a case study of boys (aged 11-17) as differently committed leisure-time readers. The study was conducted within the context of a private boys’ school in Melbourne and took place over a three-year period (Love & Hamston, 2001; Hamston, 2001; Hamston & Love, forthcoming). The first stage of the research focuses upon 91 boys identified as good and committed readers. The second stage of the research examines 75 boys identified as generally able readers who choose not to read. We have also explored the role of the family in assisting boys to construct themselves as particular sorts of readers across a wide range of reading materials. In both stages of the research we have investigated the reading practices of parents and the ways they share reading with their sons. Quantitative and qualitative data have been elicited from questionnaires and interviews.

It can be argued that the boys in this study possess what Bourdieu (1992) refers to as cultural and linguistic capital. In this sense, their membership in relatively affluent families, their enculturation into literacy practices that are valued by family, school and society- which Bourdieu refers to as ‘habitus’ - have provided the boys with access to privileged discourses and texts (Bernstein, 1990). In view of this relatively privileged ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1992), these boys have been well positioned in terms of resources, habits and practices, to become comprehensively literate and to take on the ‘linguistic and cultural futures’ expected of them (see Heath, 1993).

However, not all of these boys have simply appropriated the dispositions towards reading their families have guided them towards and which the school expects of them. The boys who are reluctant readers demonstrate that their resistance, their exercising of choice about whether to read or not, about what to read and when to read, challenges any assumption that the relationship between enculturation and life trajectory is tidily linear (c.f. Bourdieu, 1991).
Enculturation and appropriation

Socio-cultural theory is one theory of language that focuses on the relationship between enculturation and appropriation. Socio-cultural theory breaks down divisions between the ‘social’ and the ‘individual’ and socio-cultural research centralises the concept of mediated action. In this sense, an interplay between individuals and social, cultural and historical contexts is mediated and a dialectic relationship between individuals and such contexts is established (see Rogoff et al., 1993; Rogoff, 1995; Wertsch et al., 1995). Drawing upon concepts such as Bourdieu’s (1992) ‘habitus’ and Bakhtin’s (1981) concepts of appropriation and ‘becoming’, socio-cultural theory foregrounds the relationships that occur between individuals, the language used to establish and maintain such relationships, and the internalisation of social practices (see Vygotsky, 1978; see Lantolf, 2000 for the application of socio-cultural theory to second language learning).

In attempting to ground the theory of mediated action within the context of day-to-day human lives, Rogoff (1995; Rogoff, Goncu & Mosier, 1993) presents a multi-dimensional framework that posits three planes of analysis for research into language as mediated action. In this model, Rogoff (1995; Rogoff et al., 1993) centralises the relationship that develops between parents and children through the plane of guided participation. Guided participation, an interpersonal process, refers to the mutual involvement of individuals and their partners participating in structured, collective activity. Here, the focus on enculturation into family practices and the socially valued practices of the broader community is foregrounded. The plane of apprenticeship applies to any community, such as a school, where individuals participate with others in culturally organised activity. Through such participation, less experienced people develop mature participation and take on greater responsibility for an activity. The plane of participatory appropriation relates to how individuals take what they have learned in families and community settings and apply this to new situations. This is a personal process, “a process of becoming” (1995, p. 166, after Bakhtin, 1981).

The plane of guided participation has been used in our research to theoretically inform the methodology of the study of boys as differently committed readers and as a heuristic for the analysis of discursive data. This plane of analysis was selected for its capacity to ‘unpack’ enculturation into literacy, in this case reading, and the various ways that boys take on the practices they are enculturated into. Guided participation, as a plane of
Julie Hamston

analysis, offers a template for exploring the ‘habitus’ and the linguistic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1992) these boys have acquired.

Of note, Bourdieu’s (1992) concept of ‘habitus’ is given a sharpened focus by the detailed description of guided participation that Rogoff provides and her research which is situated in the lived experiences of families. Working from case studies of parents and young children, Rogoff (1995) and Rogoff et al. (1993) describe guided participation as including: intergenerational patterns; interpersonal relationships; collaborative (often tacit) activity; explicit (often distal) guidance. The feature of intergenerational patterns highlights the historical and traditional elements of guided participation that exist within families. For example, a family may have established a strong tradition of bed-time reading whereby parents and grandparents participate in reading with younger children. Interpersonal relationships are those relationships that develop around and grow out of the guidance that parents offer children. It may be common, for example, for parents and children to share their reading in close and intimate proximity to each other. Collaborative guidance refers to purposefully organised activities that are often tacit. This tacit guidance may be realised in such things as a visit to the library or a book shop, or in the daily delivery of a newspaper to the home. Explicit guidance relates to those planned activities that focus on instruction of some sort. An example of explicit guidance may be where one parent shows a young child how to locate information in a factual text such as an atlas.

These features of guided participation have been applied to the discursive data in several ways. They have been used as the framework for sorting through all the discursive data collected from the boys and their parents and for the coding of this data. These features have also shaped the types of questions asked in interview of a small group of boys and parents. Framing the interview questions in this way allowed for the ‘voices’ of boys and parents to be captured and also highlighted the nuances of guided participation potentially undiscovered in other forms of data collected in the study.

To use guided participation as a plane of analysis, however, it was important to apply our ‘reading’ of Rogoff’s model (1995; Rogoff et al., 1993) which is included here in Figure 1.
Figure 1. An interpretation of the features of Guided Participation: As culturally structured activity (Hamston & Love, 2001, after Rogoff, 1995; Rogoff et al., 1993)

Guided participation

Intergenerational patterns

Culturally structured activity (parents/children)

- collaborative
- tacit
- explicit
- distal

In Rogoff's model of mediated action, appropriation is the acceptance of intergenerational patterns, familial dispositions and the active use of the explicit and collaborative strategies in other contexts. With the cohort of committed readers we operated with this sense of appropriation as emerging from well-established and maintained practices around reading. We asked these boys to explain how and why they appropriate the reading practices valued in their families.

In the case of the reluctant readers we emphasised the boys' perceptions of the reading habits, dispositions and traditions evident in their homes and the strategies their parents employ to guide and facilitate their reading. We then asked the boys to explain the choices they make to accept or reject these aspects of guided participation.
Figure 2. An interpretation of *Guided Participation*, with an emphasis on appropriation (Hamston & Love, 2001, after Rogoff, 1995).

Our study of reluctant readers presupposes that these boys are making decisions not to participate fully in the valued literacy practices around leisure-time reading encouraged in the home and expected by the school. Our emphasis on the boys’ view of what occurs in their family around reading and their responses to this works from Bakhtin’s (1981) view that individuals exercise choices over which aspects of the world they appropriate. We acknowledge the potency of individual agency accordingly and believe it important to discover more about the underlying reasons as to why these boys resist the traditions and expectations of their ‘habitus’ (c.f. Bourdieu, 1991).

**Patterns of differential appropriation**

Overwhelmingly, data collected from boys who are reluctant to read in their leisure-time reveal patterns and themes that contrast with those evident in the study of committed readers (see Love & Hamston, 2000). In sum, the data point to different *reluctances* that attest to the highly individualised and personalised responses of the boys.
One dominant pattern in the data suggests that boys who are reluctant readers exercise different choices around the types of texts they read. Such choices are evident in the types of texts nominated as favourite reading materials as shown here in Figure 2.

**Figure 3. Comparative analysis of the favourite reading materials of boys identified as committed and reluctant readers**

The noteworthy difference for the cohort of reluctant readers is in the choice of Internet and magazines over novels. This choice may relate to the boys’ desire to focus on personal interests such as sport or, importantly, that the boys are able to exercise some sense of control over these texts types. Reading the Internet and magazines entails different types of reading than those involved in reading fiction. These texts are multi-textual (including graphics, illustrations and so on in addition to print) and they allow for self-direction and self-pacing.

However, in a similar way to the committed readers, the data reveal that the reluctant readers display a pragmatic orientation to reading. In short, they read what they like, what interests them and what is of use to them. Differences exist in what may be termed an ‘inverse pragmatism’ evident in many of the comments from the boys who can read, but choose not to. Such inverse pragmatism is expressed in terms of not seeing any point to reading, knowing that reading is important, but choosing not to engage in spite of this, and a lack of pleasure gained from reading.

The following transcript of an interview conducted separately with a mother, Irene, and her son, Phil, illustrates Phil’s reluctance to engage in reading fiction written for teenagers because it serves no purpose for him. It
is also possible to see in this interview the types of explicit and collaborative strategies that Irene, as the parent who assumes responsibility for Phil’s reading, employs to motivate Phil to read in his leisure-time. Of note is Phil’s insight into the differences between what Irene sees as important for him (that is, reading more fiction) and the fact that she does not engage with this type of text herself. Further, it is the deliberate absence of Phil’s father from the guided practices around reading that Irene determinedly facilitates. Phil’s parents are Malaysian Chinese and English is not the first language of the home. Phil is in Year 9 and is 15 years old.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irene</th>
<th>Phil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I value reading a lot partly because when I was brought up in Malaysia there was not even a library, just had textbooks, I found because of that my English is not as good as other students in higher levels of schooling – this was a drawback for me – so as a result I always encourage my children to read and make sure reading material is available to them, take them to the library.</td>
<td>Mum strongly believes in reading, most newspapers. Herself, she doesn’t read novels much, but mostly business stuff, things like property guides and share market prices and travel books. I’m trying to get mum to read novels – it’s a bit boring seeing her read things she reads all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My husband will read the paper but sister and I best reading models. Husband doesn’t intervene much he may mention Phil go and read but my husband doesn’t really play a key role in education, I wish he could be a bit more supportive of what I do with the children, he feels one person doing it is enough.</td>
<td>Dad doesn’t encourage me to read - he leave that up to Mum. Mum wants me to read more because she say it will increase my vocabulary. She would also like me to read for pleasure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have had to put a limit on the amount of time he works on the Internet – it is a shame he relies on Internet rather than books for information.</td>
<td>Mum often won’t let me on the computer till I’ve done some reading. She says ‘You can’t go on it till you’ve read for one hour’. I do the reading just to get on the computer. I sit with her most nights and we read together. It improves our relationship, I suppose. She sits beside me and reads her books and I read mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribery, I use to pay him $1 - $2 for every book he read when he was younger, the Goosebump books. If you can finish 2 books these holidays you will get rewarded. This doesn’t work as well these days.</td>
<td>She doesn’t give me books any more for gifts because she knows I’ll probably get angry with her. She tries to give me rewards for reading. She says “If you finish this book, I’ll give you $10”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is gradually coming around to realising reading is for his own good rather than what mum wants me to do. He grumbles when I encourage him to read – ‘oh mum reading again’ he protest but 9 out of 10 times he will do it, whether just to please me I don’t know.</td>
<td>Whenever I bring up something up about a book, she’ll like spring up and like get all excited. If I talk about other things, like what happened at school, she says ‘Oh yeah?’ but when I talk about books, her eyes really light up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Encouraging him to read definitely created tension when I mentioned the word reading, sometimes he could just throw up, sometimes he would just do it to shut me up, when he wants something for me he will tell me he has just read for an hour. If I suggest he go and read he will have a temper tantrum it can explode into something quite major.

He really enjoys reading Jeffrey Archer books – the real teenagers books are not as interesting for him, I’m pleased about his interest in JA books.

I hope he doesn’t get too distracted by computer technology, playing games. Maybe not so much reading novels but reading the newspaper and keeping up with things I will be happy about that – what is happening is important and socially and reading business section is important.

Not concerned about his future he is a very bright boy.

I find the teenage novels boring. There’s no real story line and they’re not troubles I deal with. Most of them are about surfing, smoking, running away, kids on the street. I prefer reading Jeffrey Archer. That’s got a real story, with turns and a good plot, twists and turns at every turn.

I probably won’t read anything different. If I was in Uni, I’d probably read the stock market and find out what’s going on. Issues in the paper, like a murder, they interest me now, but say in the future, they’re gone. Politics, share markets are more important. I think that’s probably what I’ll be reading about. The main reason for that is growing up with mum probably.

Reluctance is also expressed by some boys as a lack of motivation to share reading with their parents. From these boys’ self-reports, it is possible to get a sense of how successful some of them have been in resisting the enculturation into reading that their parents have established and wish to maintain. One comment from a father hints at the sense of frustration, or even failure, that grows out of such strong resistance:

*I am unable to convince him to read regularly for pleasure. I believed that by reading aloud together when my son was young would encourage him to read more extensively for pleasure when older, but so far it has not paid dividends.*

Similarly, one mother reports that:

*As Craig gets older he is less interested in discussing his reading with me. He feels I place pressure on him to read (probably true). I feel that I am turning him off reading as he feels I over encourage him and he feels that I think ‘he is*
hopeless' because he isn't that interested! The sharing is limited these days.

Other parents talk of being kept 'at bay' by their son, where all attempts to engage and motivate their son in reading are resisted in a hostile way. The following comment from a father suggests the painful encounters that occur between he and his son and hint at the guilt he feels at not having participated more fully in his son's enculturation into reading:

When attempted, like drawing teeth. Probably at least related to my very own lack of discipline in ensuring we have the time on a regular basis.

As a reaction to strong reluctance to collaborative, tacit strategies, some parents default to familiar explicit strategies to motivate their son to read. Strategies such as requiring their son to read out loud, making their son sit next to them and read, checking for comprehension of what has been read out aloud, placing limits on other activities such as watching television and computer time, and resorting to bribery are described in the data.

Thus, reluctance also manifests in different 'reading relationships' between boys and their parents (see Hamston, 2001). It is important to stress that strong resistance to sharing reading is not evident in all reports from boys and parents. However, in the main, reports of the intimacy and mutuality of relationships described by many of the parents (particularly mothers) of boys who are committed leisure-time readers are noticeably absent from many of the reports of parents of reluctant readers.

Finally, reluctance is expressed by some boys as a lack of motivation to read at all. This comment from Richard (Year 9) indicates the strength of his general reluctance to reading:

Here's the things, I don't read cause I can, I don't read cause I don't want to I don't read cause I think it's stupid. I mean, why would they have invented TV if everybody liked reading. I don't read!!!!!

Reflecting on enculturation and appropriation

The development of comprehensive and effective literacy practices is a desirable goal of the families and school community central to this study.
However, significant differences are evident in the way some boys appropriate the socially valued literacy practices they are enculturated into and others respond to their enculturation by asserting different ‘reading selves’. Importantly, boys who choose not to read in their leisure-time, or who choose to read texts that are not privileged texts, have a powerful shaping influence on the enculturative practices of their parents. In short, these boys are able to constrain their parents’ attempts to guide and facilitate their reading.

Such ‘inverse’ enculturation sheds an interesting light on the plane of *guided participation* as Rogoff (1995) sees it and Bourdieu’s (1992) concept of ‘habitus’ which centralised enculturative practices. Rogoff talks in terms of individuals ‘becoming’ through their active application of social practices in other contexts. Similarly, Bourdieu (1992) suggests that an individual’s ‘habitus’, most often the result of enculturation within families, creates particular social dispositions that are taken up and applied in other aspects of life. However, there is an assumption here that appropriation is a natural extension of mediated relationships and that an individual’s life trajectory is determined by exposure to habits, traditions and resources within his or her habitus. For Bourdieu, ‘habitus’ and the cultural and linguistic capital acquired in families underpins language as socially constructed access to dominance and power. There is little, if any, discussion of *individual resistance* in Bourdieu’s theory (see Turner, 1994) and little sense of choice and agency.

This is not to suggest that the boys described here will dismiss future opportunities to exploit the linguistic and cultural capital they have acquired in terms of reading. However, rather than utilising the capital they have acquired as a means of gaining access to power, many reluctant readers have exercised power thus far in the form of resistance (for a full discussion of such issues see Hamston & Love, in preparation).

The tension between enculturation, expectation and appropriation necessitates dialogue about the nature of motivation and how an individual’s motivation is judged in relation to socially valued literacy practices. If students such as the boys described here are always expected to show enthusiasm for something they do not value, then their relative lack of motivation will always be an issue. Further, the acceptance of *reluctances*, rather than a homogenised reluctance to reading allows for different features of motivation. The findings described here signal the need for dialogue about what constitutes reading, what constitutes ‘text’, and the
dominance of privileged texts. Exposure to strategies that draw students into reading a whole range of texts and strategies for parents and teachers to help students connect with what they read are possible outcomes of this dialogue.

Conclusion

The application of the concept of guided participation as a theoretical framework and research tool has allowed for a complex view of appropriation of socially valued literacy practices to emerge. Findings from the study, described in brief here, illustrate how a cohort of adolescent boys choose to differentially appropriate the dispositions towards reading they have been enculturated into within their families.

For those involved in the education of ESL students, the relevance of the concept of guided participation and the attendant focus on key concepts of enculturation and appropriation holds promise. If ESL students are unmotivated to learn English or to extend themselves in English, in spite of the social dispositions of their families and school communities, then such reluctance may be related to how the student ‘reads’ these social dispositions and asserts ‘self’ in relation to these. An exploration of the reasons behind the choices individuals make and the importance of capturing the ‘voices’ of students is an important feature of research into motivation. For although issues of individual choice may seem to be common sense, they are perhaps overlooked as explanations for why some students choose not to engage with particular linguistic practices in spite of their capacity to do so.

Importantly, the view of motivation as choice or appropriation challenges some of the more deterministic features of social theory. The study described here offers insights into the dynamic complexities of human relationships (Bakhtin, 1981).

References


Moloney, J. (1999). We don’t read because we want to be men. Magpies, 14(1), 1-4.


