英語再教育(4)

内　田　勝　夫・ジョージ ナップマン・デビッド ロジャーズ
マーチン マーシャル・レズリー ホードリー *

English Re-education(4)

Yoshio Uchida, George Knapman, David Rogers, Martin Marschall, Lesley Hoadley

In 2007 we thoroughly revised the English education at Fukui University of Technology (FUT) by introducing some new ideas into classes to encourage students to use English. One of them is to give general English classes to first and second year students taught by not only Japanese teachers but also native instructors, using the textbooks published by an American company, Thomson. This report provides an overview of what the teaching staff has been doing for the classes and explains and justifies our ideas for our English re-education.

Revising classes

The goals of English education at FUT are to deepen students' understanding of language and cultures, to develop their positive attitude to learning English and to help them acquire basic communication skills. All we have to do to achieve these goals is to have good classes which encourage students to enjoy using English as much as possible. Fortunately FUT has four native instructors from Britain and Australia, and ideal classes are expected to help students get the abilities to obtain knowledge and information as well as the abilities to transmit information and to engage in communication. This report consists of five parts. The first part is the teaching plan for the open class of "Current English" for second year students by Uchida. The other parts show what have been done to revise the classes by native instructors.

1.　Teaching Plan　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　By Yoshio Uchida

This is the brief teaching plan for the demonstration class on July 3, 2007.　There are around 20 students in each elective English class. To help students do self-directed learning, the NHK TV program "English with Keywords" is used in classes and recommended to watch it regularly at home. To help the students join the class without being afraid of making mistakes in using English, the following three rules have been kept as an important key to success in the class. The author always remembers that knowing a language and being able to use it are not always the same.

　　1) To answer with three pieces of information to each question

　　2) To learn the core meaning of 100 key words well and fully use them

　　3) To learn the rules of basic sentence patterns well and fully use them

The theme of the class: The Traditional Life of The Amish

This is a three-class project. The first lesson introduces the Amish and their simple life. It also introduces vocabulary and grammatical points. In an interactive interview activity with the teacher, students learn about the differences between the Amish life and their daily life. Splitting into pairs, they ask each other and share their own life. In the "Follow-up Lessons" students get a chance to expand their knowledge about the Amish and share it with the classmates.

---

* 教養部

The topics of the textbook are a great incentive for our students to learn. Students can read about various topics in the world, and they can find how their lives in Japan are different from those of other countries. We expect our students will care more about the world through this class.

New vocabulary is explained on the screen and on each worksheet as they appear. Actual photos of the topics are a great visual aid. Lots of time is spent in doing activities such as pair works and presentations to peers. These activities are always evaluated by the teacher and help students motivate themselves to use English.

Aims of the class

-To be able to introduce themselves in easy and clear English   -To know about the Old Order Amish

-To think about the meaning of a simple life   - To be able to read the textbook aloud

Activities

-Reading about the Amish   -Practice reading English aloud   -Talking about their daily life

Teaching Procedure:

To learn: Reading a new material about "*The Amish*"

To use: Practice in pairs, Self-introductions, Reading aloud today's lesson

To expand: Internet work to know more about the Amish and think about the meaning of simple life

Teaching materials: Cassriel, B. & Reynolds G. (2006) "*Stories Worth Reading*" USA: : Thomson

REFERENCES

Harmer, J. (1998) *How to Teach English,* Essex: Longman Group Limited

Uchida, Y. (2005) *English RE-education (1),* Fukui University Of Technology: Japan

Thornbury, S. (2005) *How to Teach Speaking,* Essex: Longman Group Limited

An Action Plan to Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities" (2003), MEXT

2.　Motivating students at FUT   **By George Knapman**

It is generally acknowledged that motivation can be divided into two kinds: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation occurs as a result of external factors: for example, the desire to please a parent, or the desire to perform well on a test. The source of extrinsic motivation comes from outside the individual and in the absence of external pressures, such motivation disappears. Intrinsic motivation however comes from inside the individual, and represents a genuine desire to learn and to discover new information, because to do so is enjoyable and stimulating. We all know that a majority of students will be highly motivated to pass a test, but it is often the case that after such tests, students do little or no study on their own, and in many cases forget very quickly what they learned in order to pass the test. If this is true, then we have failed in our efforts to teach.

In discussing "intrinsic motivation", Illich (in Harmer 2001 p. 70) suggests controversially that 'In fact, learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting.' In the language classroom, it is therefore important that students should not be overly criticised for making mistakes. The consistent appearance in second language learners, of an 'inter-language" encourages us to resist constant and pedantic correction of learner errors. There is no point in being pedantic about the "correctness" of speech when systematic errors represent an important stage of language development.

Regarding a more 'acquisition based' view of learning, Illich (1971, p. 12) states that:

A major illusion on which the school system rests is that most learning is the result of teaching.

Teaching, it is true, may contribute to certain kinds of learning under certain circumstances. But most people acquire most of their knowledge outside school, and in school insofar as school has become their place of confinement during an increasing part of their lives.

If this statement is true, then it is important to make classes as comfortable and natural as possible. If students have an enjoyable time in my English class, then they will be more likely to continue to learn English outside school in the future. There are a number of approaches to language learning I would like to mention. Communicative language teaching (CLT) emphasises communication, which I think is important in motivating students to learn English. I am always most motivated to learn Japanese after real attempts at communication with Japanese people. One problem in classes at FUT, is that students often seem unwilling to communicate with each other either in English or Japanese. The kind of lecture theatres in the tower building with fixed chairs and desks also make communication difficult. With larger classes, I prefer to use the older rooms in building one, where I can move tables and chairs, make groups, and encourage social and communicative interaction among students. The sociolinguistic/ social psychological models of language teaching view the learner as essentially a "social being". These models include the study of emotion, motivation, the role of language 'anxiety' (students will not speak because of a fear of being incorrect), as well as the 'attitudes of the learner towards the target language, its speakers and the learning context' (Mitchell and Myles, in Candlin and Mercer 2001, p.24).

It is important for teachers to avoid frustration or anger, because a students' interaction with foreign teachers may be the only interaction with foreigners they may have. If it is negative, then this will make any future English learning more difficult. Teachers should be friendly, supportive and maintain a sense of humour. Teachers need to motivate students by engaging their identities and their sense of "self" in the classroom environment. One way to do this is by relaxing teacher control, allowing greater student autonomy and providing more communicative activities specifically of the kind in which students can express their unique "selves". For example, in one of my first year classes last semester, we were studying English texts about animals. I asked the students to invent a "hybrid animal" (example, the pig dog) and to write about it. This task had good student response, perhaps because it was a task in which students' unique identities could be expressed.

Specific English teaching practices may be useful in some settings and problematic in others. There is a general acceptance among second language acquisition researchers of the usefulness of CLT in most settings and a criticism of transmission based language teaching with its attention to grammar and language form/structure. Relying heavily on transmission based teaching practices results in students being less able to use the language creatively in real communicative situations. Nevertheless, some students seem to prefer attention to form and structure because it gives them a sense of stability and supports their self esteem. It may also be what they expect of teachers. Throwing beginners into communicative activities can increases their anxiety and decreases motivation since they are unable to complete the task. Harmer notes that despite the current trend in CLT, the benefits of controlled practice and drilling include encouraging motor skills and providing students with the illusion of progress, which increases motivation. Recently I have included more regular vocabulary practice and drill exercises in my classes and have found that students respond well to these.

Teachers should consider all the various options available to them when considering a teaching pedagogy that is appropriate for their specific teaching context. It is not sufficient for teachers to decide on one approach and then try to apply it in all contexts. Teachers need to put together an eclectic program with their students' needs in mind. All students have different ways of learning, in line with multiple intelligence theory, and progress

should not always be measured by the observable.　It is the teachers' job to keep lessons fluid, variable and responsive to possible learner differences and to provide a rich variety of "texts" (I mean "texts" in a broad sense), in order to meet the needs of various student learning preferences.

Also of vital importance is the attitude of the teacher. A bored teacher cannot inspire a class. Teachers need to be careful not to become apathetic or too attached to a particular lesson format because their lessons may become stale and boring. Interested teachers become interesting but bored teachers become boring. Recently, the creation of multimedia power point presentations by native English teachers at FUT has provided an exciting new lesson format which has increased student interest. However, we need to be careful not to use the exact same format every week, since this would lead to decreased student interest. Variation is essential.

Putcha and Schratz (in Harmer, 2001 p39) see problems with teenagers resulting in part from the 'teachers' failure to build bridges between what they want and have to teach, and their students' worlds of thought and experience.' They recommend tailoring lessons to the students own interests rather than just abstract theory or questions. We need to find out what is important for Japanese young people and what they are interested in. One way to do this is to give a class survey on areas of interest, then to download relevant videos from U-tube (an internet site), which can then be used as a stimulus for language learning, or to support existing text book material. Another way to make classes more interesting is to select modern English songs appropriate to the current topic or language point, and to teach these songs in class. In my case, I can play the guitar and sing which also adds interest. Music has a mysterious effect on learning and learners will sometimes find themselves quietly singing a song after the lesson without actually thinking about it.

An appreciation of the unique Japanese culture and style of education is also important for English teachers. Yamanis Yamagishi (1998) notes that 'Japanese people of the students' parents' or their grandparents' age were brought up to be submissive or obedient to older people and to their teachers.' To learn (manabu) simply meant to imitate rather than be original. As a result, in Japanese classroom, students still tend to learn "facts" and memorise them as well as possible. Eye contact is also not encouraged especially between people of different social status and although current young people in Japan are exposed to a lot more influences especially through media such as video and TV, old traditions and customs prevail. Culture progresses slowly after all. Yamagishi also notes that Japanese students 'may appear very shy, excessively self conscious, or may be afraid of making mistakes, or they may not want to appear pushy in classrooms, or rather, peer pressure tells them to just listen and not show off.' The saying in Japan "still waters run deep" apparently means that quietness or silence is the proof of deep thought. Conversely, Japanese people will often think that too much talking is a sign of immaturity.

These cultural points may appear to native English teachers as a complete disaster for the language classroom, however Yamagishi suggests that teachers should negotiate cultural differences, and attempt not to embarrass their Japanese students in university classes, not to surprise them with suddenly asking them to speak up, or maintaining eye contact in an embarrassing way. Teachers should encourage students with patience. He also notes the importance of helping students to understand their goals and the reason why they are learning English.

Another researcher; Clenton (Web page), has extensively researched the learning styles typical of Japanese students and a summary of his findings are also important for native English teachers to consider. Japanese students favour an analytic approach to learning, with highly structured and deductive classes (p.7). Clenton cites Peak (1991) and points out that Japanese educational practice aims to 'promote continued repetition of routines in its learner, favouring the accuracy and step-by-step approaches indicative of the analytic style

dimension' (p.7). Japanese students prefer authority figures (p.8). Japanese students make judgments on analytic thinking rather than feeling. Japanese students are more reflective than impulsive in instructional environments, preferring fewer errors instead of task completion. Japanese students have a concrete sequential style of learning, and favour a step-by-step teaching approach 'demonstrating distress in the absence of comprehensive knowledge' (p.10). Japanese students favour closure-orientated styles and are intolerant of ambiguity . Japanese students are introverted and favour impersonal goals rather than social rewards (p.11).

I try to use several approaches to teaching, applying them in a way that is tailored to Japanese students - within a framework that is structured, deductive, analytic, sequential and unambiguous. An example of this kind of activity is a board game designed as a test preparation. Students work in teams and move around a board by throwing dice. Each square in the game has an English language task. If the student completes the task correctly, they can stay in that place. If it is incorrect, they have to go back. The answers are on a separate sheet of paper which is passed around the group, so that the person throwing the dice cannot see the answers, but the other team can tell them exactly the correct answer. This learning activity is fun, promotes communication and autonomy, yet avoids ambiguity. In adopting an integrated teaching approach at FUT, I think it's important to both cater to the learning styles of Japanese students (outlined above) as well as to encourage them to develop new styles, more appropriate to the task of learning a language. For example, I try to encourage students not to worry about making mistakes and to focus on getting the message across (communication). As Clenton suggests (p.5), 'ultimately teachers and students need to share the responsibility of becoming more flexible in order to promote achievement and satisfaction in the E.S.L. (English as a Second Language) classroom.'

REFERENCES
Candlin, CN and Mercer, N 2001, *English Language Teaching in its Social Context.* London: Routledge.
Harmer, J 2001, *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Harlow: Longman.
Illich ID, 1971, *Deschooling Society.* Great Britain: Calsar & Boyars Ltd.
Yamagishi, Y 1998 *Modern English Teaching* April 1998: Kenkyusha
Clenton, J. (web page) retrieved from: www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/documents/learningstylesjapanese.pdf

3. A Perfect Balance of Academic and Active Language Production   By David Rogers

Native English language teachers at FUT are providing general English courses to first and second years and an "eikaiwa" conversation course to third and fourth year students. Designing appropriate course material involved hypothesising realistic goals to set students, then evaluating the development of those goals as the course progressed. In setting goals the main task was to identify what motivations a student might have, bearing in mind they were taking an elective course, which was only loosely related to their major. For this analysis I want to focus primarily on the first year class, where the results were most interesting.

The nature of first year classes required a slightly different approach to our backgrounds in teaching, something we initially looked at with a great deal of trepidation. Our needs analysis of the students suggested that they would need English predominantly in a casual social sense and that concentrating on this aspect would help to sustain their motivation. However by the end of the course it became clear that, providing it was presented well and innovatively, English "for its own sake", as an academic exercise in itself, could also provide sufficient motivation to gain good results.

The more conventional reading-based vocabulary and grammar textbook, "Facts and Figures" did not seem to tie into our goal of giving students real and useful day to day conversational language. It was hard to see how students could be motivated in the same way by a purely academic approach. The process that followed was one of trial and error and can be divided quite distinctly into the first and second semesters.

During semester one our plan was to adapt the textbook to our teaching style as much as possible. Vocabulary exercises, reading and listening tasks to check comprehension, followed by the introduction of new grammar taken from that week's text, aimed at moving to speaking exercises as soon as possible. For example week two, "The Camel", was adapted into a speaking lesson using comparatives ("a camel is bigger than a rat"). We hoped that by changing the material to make it more student-centred, thus giving students the chance to talk about themselves, we could maintain motivation around the subject matter, even though it was unrelated to their daily life. We supplemented this with a variety of interactive games and physical activities that made the text less study-intensive. It was hoped that changing the way the text was presented each week would keep it fresh and exciting. We also tried to keep the emphasis away from "teacher time" and get the students talking.

There was a lot to be said for this approach. We were able to build camaraderie among students who, though initially quite reluctant to communicate with each other, became quite comfortable and talkative when given the opportunity and safety of well-designed speaking activities. Creative writing exercises were also particularly successful. When students were asked to design their own "hybrid animal" and hybrid plant", we were all surprised and pleased by the amount of effort and thought that students put into the tasks.

The downside of this approach was that the lessons took on a slightly schizophrenic quality, the first half based around the textbook, and then often spinning off in an unrelated direction as we attempted to adapt grammar points for students' more personal use. Not only did this make the lesson seem incoherent at times, it also required a great deal of preparation time, with unpredictable results. Some games proved too complicated and time-consuming for students to engage in effectively, requiring a great deal of new vocabulary (on top of that already introduced from the textbook). We were going against the textbook, which offered an academic approach to English, and instead attempting to force a more eikaiwa-like style, which was sometimes confusing for the students and doubled the amount they had to remember. This was ultimately not the best way forward, though this cannot detract from the fabulous learning curve that the first semester provided. We learned a great deal about the ways in which Japanese students of English can be pushed into new learning directions. With the second term, however, we moved away from the "schizophrenic" approach, returning to the text as much as possible.

In the second semester we initially focused exercises within the textbook and less on handouts we prepared ourselves. These academic exercises were predominantly gapfill and comprehension exercises that we had been previously setting for homework (with mixed results). Students' poor ability at vocabulary gapfill exercises was reflected in tests. To improve this, we helped students to identify the words as noun, verb, adjective, or other, and then use that as a basis to narrow down their choices. The results were very encouraging. We also spent time on "Wh-questions" to help students when answering the comprehension questions that accompanied each week's lesson. The first test in the second semester was a great success, so we continued with this method, analysing the text each week and going through vocabulary exercises, then finishing off with a fun activity centred round a grammar exercise which led into a writing task, either in class or for homework. As the semester progressed however, we found

students' attention was drifting, especially as the main body of each lesson was lecture-style and teacher-centred. Realising we had gone too far in the other direction, shooting from "too student-centred" to "too teacher-centred," we began to introduce more communicative activities and games each week to supplement the more academic approach. It became clear the best way forward was a balanced approach, offering structure in the form of vocabulary and grammar analysis, which students were familiar and comfortable with, while at the same time introducing activities and speaking games which challenged their purely academic ideas of English, thus re-motivating them to study.

All this became possible as we began to use power point presentations to run the class. We were able to first see the effectiveness of this teaching method during the model lesson provided by Mr. Uchida during the first semester. An invaluable presentation tool, it allowed us to organise our classes far more efficiently while providing a visual prop that kept students' attention. Lower level students tend to get lost, panicked, and de-motivated listening to long streams of instructions from native speakers. With Powerpoint we were able to effortlessly maintain the attention of the whole class. It also saved time that was previously spent writing on the board. Various things we had wanted to do, that had until then been impractical, had now become incredibly easy. We could display various role-plays each week as warm-ups, which were fast and easy, thanks to the animation tools and pictures we could incorporate into the lesson using Powerpoint. Valuable time, that had been wasted trying to get instructions through the language barrier, was now saved with short animations that quickly demonstrated a given task. Checking and error correction became much quicker. By far the biggest bonus was the ability to manipulate the reading text on the screen, breaking it apart and adding pictures, and also providing onscreen translation of difficult words, or more example sentences to better explain new vocabulary.

Overall the second semester can be said to have been a far greater success, in that we achieved a sense of solidity and structure in lesson presentation, while still being able to provide adequate chance for students to grow and develop more active speaking skills, which is reflective of our backgrounds as native English teachers. We will continue to work towards a perfect balance of academic and active language production in General English first year classes.

4. Motivation
By Martin Marschalll

Student's often find themselves juggling their studies with social lives, family and part time jobs. This can occupy a substantial amount of their time and leave English as a distant last priority making the time spent in the classroom vital to motivate the students, not only for the face to face time but also to continue their studies and complete homework activities outside of class. Especially students that work part time, often into the early hours of the morning, getting to university for a first period English lesson is not the most exciting of prospects. Therefore giving the students a bundle of written textbook exercises for the day's class is simply not an effective or viable method of teaching (rather it is a good way to put them to sleep!). A textbook may be used as a basis, or as a guide so that the students have something to refer to and a regular order of progression for the classes. I believe that in order to enable the students to successfully learn, and actually remember the content it in necessary to create a level of motivation or interest in the subject.

This occurs naturally to a certain extent with the prospect of failure, however it has long been considered to be a highly ineffective and limited motivator. At best, students may do what they absolutely have to, to barely pass.

One of the most important components of education is not simply content such as vocabulary and grammar exercises but also giving the students tools to further their education in the subject long after the class or even their university studies are over. This means that creating a level of interest in the subject, "positive motivation", is perhaps the most important function we can fulfil as a teacher. Once a student has reached a certain level of motivation and interest they will naturally learn English from whatever sources are available to them. Not because their university course requires them to study it but because they themselves WANT to learn.

Personal experiences:

From my first year here at FUT I have found a number of methods effective for generating motivation among the students in my classes. These include the use of short videos, games and other activities that are outside of regular textbook type exercises and that require active participation from the students. Generally this is not what students are expecting from an English class. Their experience is often limited to high school which has been largely grammar and vocabulary, pen to paper, type classes. This means that when students begin the classes they seem to expect a continuation of their high school lessons. And often, they appear less then inspired at the prospect.

Encouraging two way interaction and communication among the students, and between students and teacher also has a greatly beneficial effect upon the class. This can be achieved in many ways from simple games that require them to ask questions and find answers from their fellow students or short discussions over a range of different topics that catch their interest.

The expectation of the students appears to be a teacher that stands at the front of the class and delivers a lecture. Varying from this initially makes some of the students uncomfortable as they are required to both think and actively participate in the class. Over time students become accustomed to the differing class format and in most cases openly enjoy the class. The majority of my classes have been delivered in a presentation style through PowerPoint but even this includes many slides with exercises and questions that generate student involvement.

One of the greatest challenges is adapting classes to the level of the students and managing the different English levels within each class. For example a first year class may have twenty students, five of which have little or no English language skills, ten have a reasonable understanding of grammar and some useful vocabulary and the remaining five who are so far ahead that that it is possible to have a relatively natural conversation with them.

Some classes are smaller and made up of lower level or more advanced students only, but generally there is a cross-section making it difficult to deliver a lesson that is manageable for the lower levels but also gives the advanced students something new. Often, to address this problem I have given additional exercises or activities for the advanced students who have completed the classes work far earlier than the others. This takes the form of spoken activities and short games that the lower level students may also listen to as they attempt to complete the regular class work.

5.　An Approach to Teaching　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　By Lesley Hoadley

When being interviewed for an English teaching position at FUT I was told that I would encounter students that, whilst being polite and good, were in many cases either exceptionally shy or harbored a negative attitude toward studying English as a second language. Having previously encountered

similar problems whilst teaching in Australian High schools, and also being a second language learner myself, I took on the position determined to make a positive difference in my students lives and their preconceptions of ESL learning.

To be able to initiate change, an understanding of the student mind-set as they step through the classroom door is necessary. Many students enter a First Year University English class armed with, 'I'm fine thank you, how are you?' and a sense of their time about to be wasted, as they struggle to see how studying English will benefit them in their current Engineering/mechanical/computing degree. Their prior experiences with High school English already having determined their attitude towards that first University class, be it positive or negative. Most will enter with varying levels of shyness, and an unwillingness to attempt something incase they make a mistake. Added to this are late nights spent at part-time jobs, studying, or playing computer games. Therefore, a Second Language University Teacher is, in many cases, presented with: a shy, overly tired, slightly resentful, out of their comfort zone student.

To overcome these hurdles it is the teacher's responsibility to provide the students with a comfortable, motivating, learner supported class environment. The first step to which is teacher attitude and expectations. Students are far more likely to react positively towards English classes if they're presented with a teacher that is confident, energetic, professional, approachable, and above all a teacher that believes that every individual is capable of success. It's very easy to determine if a person has low expectations of you, which more often than not breeds resentment and an immediate sense of failure towards the impending task. Why attempt something if my teacher already believes that I'm incapable of successfully completing it? However, a student presented with a teacher who has high, positive expectations, will be more willing to attempt unfamiliar tasks and be more comfortable taking learning 'risks'. It becomes vital for teachers to leave their own personal baggage at the door, and enter each lesson in a positive, motivated, student focused frame of mind.

The next ingredient to a successful learning environment is content. Even the most highly motivated of teachers will fail if what they are trying to teach lacks relevance and a clear purpose. Therefore, when planning each lesson the teacher must ask themselves, 'What do I want my students to be able to achieve at the end of this lesson and how will that benefit them in their lives?' Once these questions are answered the teacher can confidently set about developing an engaging and life relevant lesson.

As certain classes use textbooks the themes are often already set, therefore the teacher must analyse the text to extract relevant and important grammatical points and provide students with extra examples and practice opportunities. For classes that do not have a set textbook, student involvement and input into learning topics can be highly motivating. When I asked my Third Year classes to write down topics they were interested in learning about in English, a sense of ownership and involvement was created. Students felt as though they had some control over what they would be studying, which also helped them feel more at ease as well as sparking their interest.

Once the key learning points for a lesson have been determined, following the structure of 'Mine, ours, yours' can be a helpful tool in language production. 'Mine' represents a model piece of text or

conversation that can be analysed and deconstructed to highlight key grammatical points. 'Ours' represents a set of tasks or productions which both the student and teacher complete together, hence providing students with support and scaffolding. 'Yours' refers to tasks set that are designed for students to take what they have learnt from the previous two steps and independently create a text or language production. This tightly scaffolded approach gives students a sense of supported learning and provides for a high opportunity to succeed.

Having a positive attitude and relevant content is not enough to captivate and engage a young student's mind; therefore it becomes important for teachers to look for new and interesting ways to present this information. There are a multitude of methods to convey knowledge, all with their own merits. Textbooks provide students with a sense of security and a concrete reference point. They alsoprovide students with extra opportunities to practice what they've learnt in class.

Teaching with Powerpoint presentations allows the teacher to highlight important information easily, as well as providing the opportunity for visual stimulants such as pictures and relevant video clips. The saying, 'A picture tells a thousand words.' can be applied here in its fullest respect. Powerpoint's also contribute to a more comfortable learning environment for those students who find understanding a native English speaker daunting, as they are able to gain understanding through what they can see on the screen, coupled with what they are hearing.

Teachers however, must be careful not to rely solely on one method as this can become monotonous and students will lose interest quickly. It is also important to remember that each student is an individual and has a different style of learning. Some are visual learners, requiring lots of visual cues; whilst others are more suited to a 'hands on' approach. Lessons need to be structured in a way that provides opportunities for all styles of learners to succeed. If the aim of the lesson is to provide Third Year students with the skills to be able to converse in a certain situation, then ample varying opportunities and scenarios must be provided so that all students can confidently achieve this goal. Activities such as role-plays, quizzes, gap-fills, listening comprehension tasks, independent writing tasks, group/pair activities, brainstorming, concept webs, are all useful in the advancement of English learning.

A final consideration when developing a successful learning environment is the issue of feedback and assessment. This should be done using a variety of methods. In-class positive and genuine feedback is essential to the self-esteem and confidence of a language learner. Simply telling a student that they did a 'Good job' provides students with a hollow sense of achievement- what exactly was 'good' about it? Expanding this comment to point out what they did well allows the student to feel more valued and confident in their English abilities. Other forms of assessment such as examinations and reports should be used as a way of gauging students understanding of taught concepts, with this knowledge being used to help develop and fine tune future lessons. Once again, students need to be *able to see relevance in how they are being assessed, as this will motivate them to succeed.*

Each ESL class is uniquely different and should be treated as such however, a few fundamental ingredients remain vital; a professional and highly motivated teacher, life relevant content, and the opportunity for every individual to succeed. A difficult balance to create, but one that we all have a responsibility to achieve.

6. Conclusion There is still plenty of room for improvement and things we can do for our students. The key is whether we can keep enthusiasm for our work. We believe we can.

(Received March 31.2008)