

# ESL Education

## Theory and Effective Practice in the Creative Classroom

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*Abstract: The paper focuses on ESL education and the learning/teaching process. It discusses developing skills and understandings which encourage students to become creative and confident communicators. Multifaceted learning experiences allow primary and secondary school students to use their imagination even within the confines of syllabus requirements. While practical classroom activities are suggested for the different modes of reading, listening, speaking, viewing and representing, the main focus is on writing tasks. The strategies take into account the expansion of computer use in learning and teaching. The challenge is to use information and communication technologies as liberating, productive and creative resources to help students learn the English language. Activities discussed, often utilising the Internet, include: creating a classroom story, epals, web quests, role-plays and games. All activities are designed to promote successful language learning. The various practices are based on current theories about the nature of language and language learning/teaching (Ur 1996; Harmer 2001; Fairclough & Wodak 1997).*

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### Introduction

**T**HE PAPER FOCUSES on ESL education and the learning/teaching process in classrooms where English is the language of instruction. The main themes of the paper are i) the need for practical activities which will assist language learning and ii) the link between the practice of teaching and theory about the nature of language. The chosen activities, such as creating a classroom story, epals, web quests, role-plays and games, are designed to help students to improve their English language skills, particularly written expression. The theories discussed (and scholars associated with them) are genre theory (Martin, 1992) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1997).

### Theory and Practice

An understanding of theory gives the teacher a hypothesis which is generalisable. Testing the strategies in practice, however, will invariably lead to change in reformulation, adaptation or extension once students' different needs and different contexts are taken into account. Teachers construct their own theoretical frameworks based on successful/unsuccessful practice: 'A teacher who has formed a clear conception of the principles underlying a particular teaching procedure can then use those principles to inform and create further practice; otherwise the original procedure may remain merely an isolated, inert technique which can only be used in one specific context' (Ur 1996, p. 4). Approaching theory cautiously and reflecting on practice is instructive. Cri-

ticising and changing the activities to make them more meaningful and useful to students is therefore recommended. Pedagogical practices substantiated by research findings can assist students in more effective acquisition of the English language.

The need for an understanding of the link between theory and practice is raised by Ur (1996), and Harmer (2001) amongst others. Current theories about the nature of language and language learning/teaching and the principles behind effective classroom strategies can inform practice with the goal of helping students improve their performance. Research in systemic-functional linguistics and genre theory indicates the importance of sociocultural aspects of language learning, linking language to broader social and cultural concerns. Major theoretical assumptions underpinning the selected activities are: a) literacies (print and digital text) can be understood more fully if the cultural, ideological and social contexts of discourse are considered and b) scaffolding activities and guided interaction assist students in language acquisition.

Some current theories which inform the teaching of English in the classroom are briefly outlined below:

### Genre Theory

Genre theory (in Australia) has been developed from M.A.K. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (1994) which stresses the important of context in language choices. The genre approach to language



learning alerts students to the schematic structure of different text types. If students understand and have metalinguistic awareness of how texts are structured, they can practise how to copy and appropriate them for their own uses. Genres should not constrain students' creativity in written expression.

Knowledge of different genres allows experienced writers to exploit conventions to create new forms to suit specific contexts (Bhatia, 1997). However, for many ESL students the a specific genre will at first be used as a form to be replicated. Indeed, as Freedman & Medway point out, knowledge of the textual features of genres alone is insufficient: 'While a learned structure provides a crude framework as well as a set of constraints, achieving an effective text involves innumerable local decisions for which the decontextualised formal rules learned in advance will provide no guidance' (1994, p. 10). A wider understanding of the importance of context is needed.

A genre-based approach relates to much more than the language features of a written text. Other kinds of knowledge are essential:

*content knowledge*: knowledge of the concepts involved in the subject area

*writing process knowledge*: knowledge of the most appropriate way of preparing for a specific writing task

*context knowledge*: knowledge of the social context in which the text will be read, and contexts related to the writing task in hand

*language knowledge*: knowledge of those aspects of the language system necessary for the completion of the task

(Tribble 1997, p. 43).

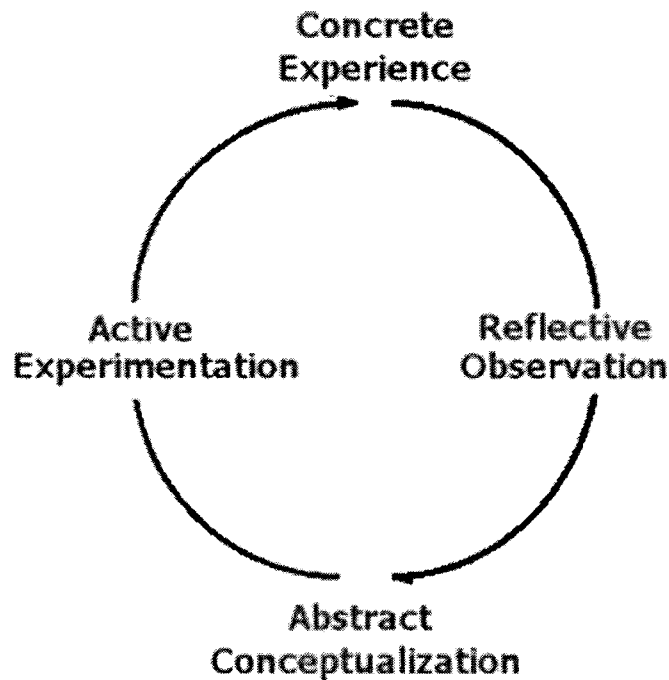
Badger & White (2004) suggest the 'process genre' approach is more useful. Providing a model of the genre is pedagogically useful since, by drawing attention to linguistic features specific to the target text, students can learn how to develop their own written style, appropriate to their own contexts. Through analysis and discussion of the wording and structure of a text, students can learn to distinguish how linguistic features have contributed to its specific style and genre.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is the study of language used by members of a speech community. It looks at the form and function of language in use, beyond the level of the sentence, including topic development and cohesion across sentences. The linguistic features of different genres and socio-cultural factors assist in understanding different kinds of texts and spoken expression (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). Critical discourse analysis provides a framework for analysing texts (and discursal interactions) with aspects of their social and cultural circumstances. Language is viewed as social interaction.

### **Activities to improve Language Proficiency**

The chosen activities discussed are experiential and, in some cases, follow Kolb's (1984) theory of a learning cycle, stemming from Kurt Lewin's concept of information feedback. this process involves modification through experiences.



## Kolb's Learning Cycle

**Kolb's learning cycle is based upon experiential learning theory which views learning as a process involving continuous modification of ideas and habits as a result of experience. Influences: Piaget, Lewin, & Dewey.**

Figure 1

However, this model needs to be enriched by reading and reflection from other sources (input from teachers, research, print and internet resources). The activities provoke thinking as well as linguistic skills and integrate different learning modes to help in language acquisition.

The activities are designed to allow learners to work in the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD), 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). A knowledgeable teacher or student can assist the learner through modelling or guiding the activity.

### Classroom Story

Creating a classroom story encourages language learning because of the interactivity between participants. The conditions for language learning include exposure to rich, comprehensible input; instruction

about language use (chances to focus on form); an opportunity for use of the language; and the motivation to learn/use language. Writing stories is intrinsically interesting to students if the subject matter matches their interests. The power of the narrative genre also offers 'an infinite well of vicarious experience with the capacity to transport the reader/hearer beyond all boundaries of time, space, language, ethnicity, class or gender' (Wajnryb 2003, p. 4).

The activity:

1. Read a story and/or show a video which models the narrative form

Ensure the selected text is appropriate to the students' interests with the recognition that texts are embedded in a sociocultural context.

Ask pertinent questions about what is happening, the characters' motivations, and the illustrations (Nodelman, 1988; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001).

Discuss the story briefly, checking that students have understood the point of the story.

1. Introduce idea of writing a joint story

Motivate the students to choose an appropriate topic and narrative line by guided questioning and by instructional conversation.

Brainstorm ideas about what makes a good story, discussing the plot, the characters and settings. Students write down ideas and select the high point of the story and what might happen.

1. Provide a model of the genre of the story

A model allows the student to use semantic knowledge about the topic, syntactic knowledge which can be utilised in the story, and grapho-phonetic knowledge about the sound-symbol system.

An explanation and written outline of the narrative genre serves as a scaffold for students' writing. The narrative genre includes:

Orientation (introduction of main character, setting, time, place)

Complications and problems the characters may encounter

Resolution of problem

Modelling may be done by the teacher writing part of the text on the board, explaining and commenting on what is being done so that students observe the writing process and the structure of the narrative genre, noting the choices/revisions made.

1. Highlight language features of the text

Demonstrate specific language features such as grammar, punctuation and spelling to the class as a whole, to small groups or to individuals, depending on the need. For example, discuss the effect that similes and repetition have on meaning, to heighten the saliency of specific language features.

Analyse aspects of the text which will help students when creating their own stories. For example, write down selected descriptive adjectives used in the original story and add others to describe a new context.

Analyse grammatical features such as phrasal co-ordination, nominalisations, attributive adjectives.

It may help students to see how spoken texts differ from written texts in their relative informality or formality.

1. Construct the story

Brainstorm ideas about a new story. Utilise story maps and concept maps on the computer.

Write a draft of the story using the narrative genre. Handouts of the narrative genre will help

students organise their thoughts and try out ideas. When a joint classroom story is created, the students offer suggestions which are then written down by the teacher (on computer, overhead transparency or board). Alternatives are for groups of students to construct their stories and to choose the most effective text. Rewriting and changing text should be seen as the normal practice of good writers. Efficient use can be made of the computer when writing the narrative.

Students should be encouraged to reconfigure the narrative model with creativity and imagination. Moving students away from the 'Once upon a time' model or disrupting conventional chronology can encourage students to see that the genre model is not fixed and that their own creativity is welcomed.

A more direct opening may involve the reader in the narrative. Students may look at the opening sentence of the original story and compare it with others to see how the writer/composer has sparked the audience's interest.

Further research from Internet or print resources may be needed to expand their knowledge of the topic (Tribble 1997). It is unproductive and painful experience for students to write about subjects they know little about.

Draft writing and re-writing allows students to discuss and revise the text to convey the intended message.

Turbill (2000), in 'A Guided Writing Project', provides useful ideas for writing for younger students, especially in the importance of discussion and guided questioning to teach writing. She recommends strategies for teaching aspects of narrative such as: writing descriptive sentences, developing plot, grammar-sentence structure, teaching the use of phrases, developing descriptive language.

1. Provide feedback

Respond to the story with encouragement and/or specific instruction about editing eg examples of appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and word usage. Peers may also provide feedback.

Proofread for punctuation, spelling and choice of presentation to prepare the writing for an audience.

Share drafts of students' stories in groups or with the class and gauge response.

1. Publish the story

Writing for an audience has an important influence on composition, affecting how a story is written.

Publish story for class members on a website or in print, for large or small audiences. Share with other classes and bind into a 'book' format.

#### 1. Independent construction

After the modelling of the story and the joint construction of a narrative by the class, students should be equipped to write a narrative text independently in subsequent lessons.

### Choosing the Story

The narrative could be chosen from fairytales, legends, myths, cartoons, adventure stories which might appeal to students. The 'what if' element of fairy tales and the struggles encountered by protagonists make them ideal as exponents of narrative structure. Stimuli can be given from stories on videos and DVDs available with teacher's notes. For example, the traditional English tales: *Three Little Pigs*, and other children's classics such as *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Hans Christian Andersen, *Tikki Tikki Tembo* by Arlene Mosel (explaining why Chinese people no longer choose long names for their children). Some texts may be too long or difficult for students to follow. For this reason, classic fairy tales, often in illustrated versions can appeal to young and old, taking care that they are enjoyed first as literature and secondly as a text for language teaching.

Visual literacy is essential as there is an increasing shift from print to multi-modal texts. Instruction in visual literacy is essential for students as they increasingly rely on electronic and non-linear texts, including sound and moving images (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). Students need to be 'multiliterate' if they are to enjoy and utilise the full range of resources available (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). The interdependence of illustrations and language in picture books is ideal for second language learners' understanding (Russell, 1997) Students can observe illustrations closely to see how they interpret a text, how they inform the reader of the context and how they borrow from a long tradition of other illustrators (Anstey & Bull, 2000).

Using literature in activities has many advantages: introducing students to cultural knowledge; socialising students; stimulating creativity; providing example of different styles of writing and genres; and demonstrating authentic use of language features. Through listening, modelling, and writing their own version, students learn the art of the narrative, the rhythm of prose, and the power of imagination to transform lives.

Teachers may select stories from the cultural context or country which may have significance for students. In Australia, these may be prize-winning books such as: *Possum Magic* by Mem Fox, illustrated by Julie Vivas; *The Rainbow Serpent* by Dick Roughsey, a story based on Aboriginal dreamtime legends. *Girl, Fish and the Crown: A Spanish folktale* by Marilee Heyer (1995) has a clear narrative structure.

ESL students may gain particular pleasure and instruction from reading a version of *Cinderella*, a universal tale, from their mother tongue language background. Traditional versions of the fairy tales could be compared by older, more sophisticated students: eg the Cinderella where the ugly step sisters cut off their toes and heels to fit into the shoe and the animated Disney versions. Students may enjoy feminist readings of Cinderella such as Babette Cole's *Prince Cinders*, which subvert the expected pattern of the fairy tale. Iconoclastic versions appeal. Variations for young adult readers can be found in imaginative retellings such as Jon Scieszka's *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairy Tales* (1992).

### Epals

The transition from penpals to epals has facilitated opportunities for language learning (Hennigan 1999). The speed of replies as compared with 'snail mail' is a motivating factor. Email correspondence can enhance writing skills because of the novelty of communicating with someone from another culture. It allows students to do classroom projects and transmit cultural information (geography, statistics, pictures, and schools) about their countries. Since word processing eliminates illegible, clumsy handwriting, it is a boon to students whose mother tongue script is quite different from English. The writer can edit easily, move text around and check grammar and spelling errors. Facilities for the exchange of opinions, teacher resources, technology, mentoring, projects, and research can facilitate the epal experience.

Using the Internet has the potential to contribute to multicultural education teaching and learning (Gorski 2001) even though it is open to many problems of access and applicability as Teeler stresses (2000, pp. 175-176).

It can be argued that the shortcuts of email language do not encourage students to express themselves most effectively. The formality of written prose is often undercut in emails: 'With a word processor, writing becomes a happening; it can be scrolled up the screen so that it unfolds in time, like speech. The tape-recorder made speech more like writing; the word processor has made writing more like speech' (Halliday, in Burns & Coffin, 2000, p. 188). Email communication is characterised by short

paragraphs, the messages often being under twenty-five lines long. The brevity and truncated nature of the email has led to creative punctuation (smiley emoticons :-) sometimes borrowed from the world of advertising. Even so, email communication can encourage reluctant writers to expand their writing output.

Communicating with a pen pal to practise English and to share cultures can be arranged relatively easily. Choice of websites on the Internet will be determined by availability (and sometimes financial cost). Epals [[www.epals.com](http://www.epals.com)], established in 1996, is the largest online provider of student-safe email. 4.6 million students and teachers from 191 countries, and over 100,000 classroom profiles link schools as cross-cultural learning partners and friends.

While some have commercial links, most sites have a free educational service which allows users to start a project with another class, or to create a new friendship with someone on the other side of the globe. From most sites users can give their address, age, hobbies and languages and an epal from another country can be located.

Features to consider when joining an email/epals club are safety and privacy, translation facilities, ease of joining, availability of resources, interactivity option such as discussion boards. A protected environment is needed to minimise risk so that emails can be exchanged safely and students can take part in discussion boards and chat rooms. 'Walled Gardens' can provide educationally relevant websites so that when students web surf, they are not accessing inappropriate sites. Message monitoring is possible for students' incoming and outgoing messages if this is considered necessary. Some sites have multilingual tools for translation which can provide basic language translations for a number of languages.

Finding the right match between epals is important if the communication is to continue. Search engines allow partners to key in information such as desired location, language, subject studied (if classroom project is desired), and age of participants. Some sites offer interesting activities and publish original student work which can motivate interest in writing. For example, in an ePALS classroom project, the results of a Space Day project are published where teams of students designed solutions to challenges confronting astronauts in collaboration with NASA and the Johnson Space Centre. 'English-To-Go' provides lessons based on Reuters' news stories, supplemented by exercises and teachers' notes. Interactivity options through Discussion Boards for teachers and students encourage the exchange of opinions, the sharing of ideas and the asking and answering questions about new project ideas.

## Web Quests

Web quests are guided Internet searches (usually problem-based scenarios) where students work in groups to investigate issues or problems. They give students practice in finding relevant information from the vastness of the World Wide Web, encourage cooperative learning, and develop critical thinking (Dodge 1998; March 1998a). Web quests have appeal because of the ease and speed of seeking information via the screen of the Internet rather than print resources. They have the potential to be creative, interesting and challenging tasks which can focus on the students' interests, March (1998a) points out that the crucial advantage of the web quest is the critical investigation of an issue from many sides, not the transmission of codified knowledge or rote comprehension.

A critical awareness of language is essential so that students have insights into why a particular discourse is chosen and how they can examine its impact (Fairclough & Wodak, 1998). Teaching students to think and to argue is the cornerstone of the webquest. Web quests can be linked with curricular areas which foster critical thinking. Those trialled by schools and professional teacher organizations, containing worksheets and teaching notes, are most useful as exemplars. A web quest on Ancient Egypt may require students to complete a travel log of experiences in searching for information; or the task is to imagine you are a group of authors working for a publishing company. The assignment is to write and illustrate a book about Ancient Egypt.

When planning the web quest, take into account the level of student language skills and interests. Common features of webquests are: an outline of the task(s) to be completed with a time line (written handout or online); the web sites to consult; and a copy of an assessment rubric. Various sites are available to assist in making web quests more interesting by creating customised puzzles, word searches, mazes, matching and gap-fill, multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, acrostic poem exercises for the web. Templates of online learning activities are useful for busy teachers and allow contextualisation of Internet searches thus focusing on their students' interests and needs.

## Web Quest Activity

### 1. Scaffold the activity

Give students the web quest instructions and introductory information explaining the importance or relevance of the quest, creating interest in the task. The introduction section should be motivational.

Clearly delineate what the quest is requiring students to find out by spelling out the task(s). Explain what research needs to be done; or if an oral presentation or written pamphlet is required.

Scaffold the activity by looking at the first homepage on the screen. Discuss its content and how to 'read' the page and navigate to other links.

1. Select the roles to be taken by participants or have the students self select. Ensure that the task is at the cognitive level of the students and that the standard is appropriate for them.

Scaffold the process by instructing students on how to complete the task(s) eg information gathering from sites which give background and those which give specific information. Ensure that resources are relevant and available.

1. Give instruction on the genre of discussion for the written/oral presentation, eg an opening statement which presents the issue; the arguments/evidence for and against the question posed; a concluding recommendation, making sure that the web quest is answered. Scaffold grammatical features used such as degrees of modality. Discuss how the information might be relevant in the real world and their own environment. When writing the report, insist on a list of resources to show which authorities have been consulted.
2. Evaluate

Web quests facilitate authentic assessment.

Provide a rubric/assessment grid for assessing the web quest (March, 1998b). Ask students to assess their own progress in addition to evaluation criteria.

### Role-plays

Role-plays are drama activities which can encourage communication practice in language skills. The simulation of role-play allows students to become more involved in a situation, and therefore in their own learning. To be effective, the role-play must be constructed so that it is meaningful with genuine communicative intent and students possess the appropriate background information to play their assigned roles effectively. Students can use their imagination and past experience to convey a message or emotion. Role-plays encourage empathy with others as students take on other personalities and attitudes different from their own perspectives.

The main advantage of using role play in the language classroom is that students can practise 'authen-

tic' language, which is more like the speech they hear in the community in real life situations than the language of textbooks and the classroom. Comparing spoken and written texts reveals the basic dichotomy between the spoken and written word. The spoken dialogue when recorded will often appear very discursive, unlike textbook dialogues. Even so, there are still similarities between the disjointed *verbatim* script and the written version that requires editing for both content and form.

Role-plays encourage the use of a wider range of language and registers than is used in some more task-centred activities (Harmer 2001, p. 275). 'Chunks' of language and the interplay of dialogue (unpredictability, interruptions, misunderstandings, fragmented sentences) reflect/simulate real life speech. Turn-taking, sequencing of moves, and negotiation of meaning can all be practised through role play activities (Kasper & Dahl 1991, 228-29).

Al-Arishi (1994) casts some doubt on the effectiveness of role-play in communicative language teaching. For many students, role-play can be fun and motivating, however, shy students may find them daunting even if precautions are taken to alleviate stress. As Pearn (2003) points out: 'students are being asked to not only expose themselves in language but simultaneously wrestle with several cognitive tasks: the role play itself, character expression, maintaining conversational markers etc' (2003, p. 2). Despite these reservations, acting out in oral performance generally encourages confidence in speaking, giving students the opportunity to express their opinions.

### Role-play Activity

1. Choose an activity which will facilitate understanding of the social contexts of discourse. For example, students work in pairs with one Student A (seeker of information) and Student B as a (provider of information) giving them different kinds of information, using real life information such as train, bus timetables (Harmer 2001, p. 275). Authentic situations such as an accident scenario involve students (Wajnryb 2003, pp. 123-124).
2. Give opportunity to discuss the scenario and choose players.
3. Practise in small groups and gain constructive feedback from teacher and other students. Role-play cards may be given to participants to indicate how participants feel. Extra support can be given to self conscious students through props, reading aloud from script or pair work.
4. The teacher can prompt and encourage meaningful, appropriate language. The language focus may be on past tense forms (past simple), including negative and interrogative forms question and response forms.

5. Perform role-play in front of class audience.
6. Evaluate the role-play (both teacher/students). Role-plays can be filmed on video so that further feedback can be given, eg looking at para-linguistic features.

### Writing and role-play

Role-plays, as well as encouraging oral fluency, can be used to develop writing skills and consolidate patterns of language. Written communication may foster more thoughtful, reflective responses, after the relative spontaneity required in a role-play. Cohen and Olshtain's study (1993) found that in delivering speech acts (apologies, complaints, and requests) in a role play between a native and nonnative speaker, half of the time respondents did not plan their vocabulary and grammatical structures, often thought in two or three languages and were not too concerned about grammar nor pronunciation. As Ur warns, the unpredictability of authentic speech in communicative activities can be a disadvantage: 'a lot of initiative and sheer hard work is demanded of both teachers and learners in suggesting and then recalling or noting down the new language' (1996, p. 96).

Some students may wish to learn segments of the dialogue and although this may lack spontaneity, beginners can use it as a scaffold for practice. Discussing and writing down excerpts from the dialogue can teach students how to choose correct grammatical constructions, add to their vocabulary and edit their texts (Wajnyb 2003, pp. 123-124). Repetition in listening to tape recordings of role-plays makes the input comprehensible if there is explicit, focused instruction (Krashen 1996; Larsen-Freeman 2003).

### Games

The experiential nature of games can promote the communicative use of language and support the language curriculum. Games and role-play have particular advantages in the ESOL classroom: 'social in the sense of creating a positive, motivated and interactive class-culture; educational in the way that games or role-plays focus on and offer practice with language points or lexical sets, or language functions' (Pearn 2003). Games can be used to practise specific language items or skills. For example, 'A popular spelling game involves two teams who start off with the same word. Each team has half the board. They have to fill up their side with as many words as possible, but each new word has to start with the last letter of the word before. At the end of a given period of time the team with the biggest number of correct words in the winner' (Harmer 2001, p. 139). Many students, familiar with the complexity of video games and the cognitive ability they require, may find such

activities limiting (Gee 2003). Good learning principles are built into good games, giving them the potential to be more than 'warm up' activities.

Games assist language learning because they require concentration, have a limited lexis, are problem solving, and follow rules. The repetitive element reinforces patterns of language and gives practice in interaction such as turn taking. The stressful and negative aspects of games can be deflected by the spontaneity and involvement required by the game. Pairs and groups cooperating to gain an outcome can reduce the competitive aspect of games.

### Activity

1. Choose language skill(s) you want students to practise and link to an appropriate game. Sources of games can be found in the Internet TESL Journal ([itesl.org/games](http://itesl.org/games)) or in texts describing communication games such as Twenty Questions, Just a Minute, Call my Bluff, Fish-bowl (Harmer 2001, p. 272). Creative writing can be encouraged by asking students to invent a story using at least three of the images in front of them (on cue cards, for example). They can tell them to have a conversation about a specified topic, and at various stages during the conversation, they have to pick a card and bring whatever that card shows into the conversation' (Harmer, 2001, p. 135). This may be linked to other activities such as role play, eg

'To prepare students for the appropriate registers, pronunciations, pitch and stress required in a role play. Provide emotional prompt cards, 'angry', 'bored', embarrassed etc and phrases can be used. Students match 'an emotional register of voice with the corresponding phrase' (Pearn 2003, p. 5).

1. Explain rules of game and language items to be practised.
2. Scaffold and practise activity Ask students to make observations on their involvement as they watch partners and reflect on their own strategies.
3. Students carry out game independently or in groups.
4. Reflection on activity and checking of language items.

### Conclusion

'Scaffolding' of learning through models of genres such as the narrative of story, provides the learner with needed guidance. As a teaching tool, scaffolding activities enable students to extend their skills (Vy-gotsky 1978). The activities described, from classroom story to debate, generally follow a learning



cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation, all of which can contribute to language skills (Kolb, 1984).

Communicating ideas and information in the written mode assists English language learning. Activities which utilise the computer can tap into students' interests, provide a vast pool of resources, and facilitate the writing process, particularly for ESL students. In order to become confident and creative communicators, students need planned language activities to guide their learning. Good English

is critically important for those students who want to gain academic success and/or to communicate in multilingual societies.

Essentially, an understanding of the link between theory and practice can assist teachers in identifying students' language needs; responding to students' questions; selecting appropriate classroom activities; and assessing students' language proficiency. While it is unrealistic to think this understanding is a panacea, nevertheless, well chosen classroom activities can enhance students' language acquisition.

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