

FELT Newsletter

The Forum for English Language Teachers in Ireland

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An Associate of



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Learning Authentic Language in Class

by Mary Shepherd

Language & Leisure International

Michael McCarthy, in the last FELT newsletter (Vol. 1, No. 4) wrote of frequency counts in corpora such as CANCODE and how they can be used to show how language is really used. The value of this type of research has not yet been fully interpreted, but the English Vocabulary in Use series (CUP) and the Collins CoBUILD project series show an excellent start in published resource material. How else can we use this fascinating research in the classroom in a less traditional way?

Most coursebooks would have us believe that people say 'I'd like a cup of tea please'. What would be more likely is 'giz a cuppa tea'...

McCarthy's article distinguished items of vocabulary, but the corpora that exist are composed of recorded conversations. So let's think of social exchanges that people actually use. Most coursebooks would have us believe that people say 'I'd like a cup of tea please'. What would be more likely is 'giz a cuppa tea', or 'em, er, I'd like, you know, a cup, em, er, of tea, er, yes, em, please', depending on which part of a city you happen to be in at the time. If I am in a queue, I will most likely just say 'tea please'.

So how is the poor student ever going to improve, when what s/he hears in the street, in the host family, in the classroom and on cassettes accompanying coursebooks all differ? How often have you heard yourself saying I'll explain it to you after class? When a student comes into class and greets you with how's it going? (usually sounding like "how's a gun?") - instead of being shocked, aren't you thrilled that s/he has learned something independently?

It begs the question - why aren't we teaching it in class? Local idiom, fast speech, fillers and other discourse markers - all are necessary in

the world we live in. Why should we leave our students to come across these largely by themselves? Ask a student which of the four skills s/he requires most, and the answer will most often be speaking and/or listening.

We know there is a need, so how can we use this new approach in the classroom? Simple. Ditch any printed dialogue you find that seems unnatural, and replace it with your own version. Record and transcribe what you need yourself.

If you cannot find an adequate cassette recorder, borrow a camcorder, it serves the same purpose. A Dictaphone can cost as little as £25 and a Sony Walkman cassette recorder will give good quality for about £80. It depends on how much you intend to use it.

What can be recorded? Two teachers can record themselves simulating a dialogue that needs to be more 'realistic', but ideally a recording needs to be true. This means (1) taking the topic you are studying, for example, the environment, (2) recording a dialogue between two people loosely based on an interesting facet of it, for example, the eco-warriors recently in the Glen of the Downs, Co. Wicklow, (3) and transcribing it, allowing one hour for every three minutes of recording time. Then use it in class.

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You could record a couple of teachers discussing a vocab point, like the uses in collocation of 'horrible' and 'terrible', as McCarthy has pointed out. According to CANCODE and other corpora, the specific use of 'would' in Ireland differs from our near neighbours in that we use it to be more polite, or less direct. Interesting, wouldn't you agree? You could record people discussing it, or simulate a dialogue.

How do you use this material in class? We can do the established exercises to accompany your transcript / recording, or we can take a next step and, for example, get students to pick

out what appears interesting, like using 'thanks' in placing an order, or the non-British use of 'would'.

What if you don't have the time to spend doing all this extra work? McCarthy has published a book of transcripts: *Exploring Spoken English* (CUP: 1997) which has a cassette. On one side you have the authentic recordings, crackles and all, on the other the same material, but with actors. I have found it a valuable resource. Even if you choose not to use it, it can be used as an example of how useful an exercise like this can be – at any level.

This book can be used effectively if you are inventive. For example, (1) ask groups or pairs to script a conversation about a similar topic to one that occurs in the middle of one of the transcripts. (2) Ask them why they included certain exchanges. (3) Ask them to listen to the authentic recording. (4) Listen to the actors or read the transcript of it, and comment on the differences they can identify. (5) Finally, you

could ask them to role-play the same or a similar situation, this time without writing it down first.

It's up to you as to how you implement the exercise in class. More power to the valiant researchers in corpus linguistics, here's to their patience and perseverance. Authentic recording is time-consuming, but fills a gap where non-realistic printed dialogues need replacing and local idiom needs to be experienced. One final word - as someone once said, hard work brings its own rewards.

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Mary Shepherd is Director of Studies at Language & Leisure International in Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. She is a member of the TIE Group at ACELS and will be presenting a paper at this year's IATEFL Conference, with Siobhán Denham, entitled '*Language Clinics as Part of a Negotiated Syllabus*'.

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Distinctions & Dichotomies: Testing and Assessment in ELT

by Dave Allan

'Testing' and 'Assessment' are two terms which are frequently used together as a lexical 'chunk', like 'law and order', as if they were a single entity. They do have a lot of overlap in terms of common areas of use, and many shared characteristics, but they are not the same thing.

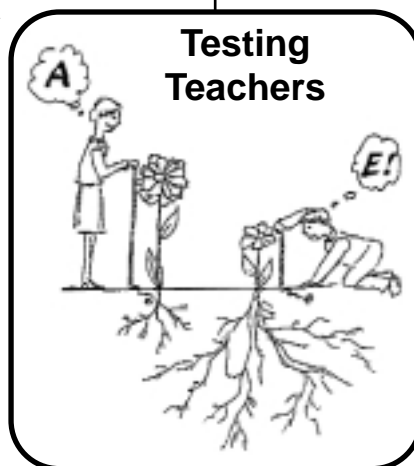
People tend to say 'Testing and Assessment' rather than 'Assessment and Testing', because in the world of ELT 'testing' has a very long history, and is a familiar part of most teachers' daily lives, whereas assessment is a much more recent arrival on the scene as a recognised, 'respectable' means of evaluating language learners' performance. While a few academics and a small proportion of the language teaching profession have for many years favoured different modes of assessment over testing, the majority of language teachers and teaching institutions worldwide have taken the view that the only reliable way to determine the progress, attainment and proficiency of language learners is by using language tests.

In fact, as language teachers we assess all the time. We do it unconsciously in every class we teach. Whether we have made a deliberate decision to assess our learners or not, after a term or a year of teaching a class we have a pretty good idea of who the good ones, and the not-so-good ones are. It has been a commonplace for teachers to think or say 'She shouldn't have failed the exam - she's much better than that' or 'The test grades don't reflect what I know them to be capable of', and yet for many years test and exam results have been assumed to have greater validity and reliability, and therefore credibility and currency, as measures of language ability, than assessments done by teachers.

This has largely been because a teacher's assessment of a learner's performance was held to be necessarily subjective and unscientific, open to bias and favouritism, whereas tests and exams could be relied on because they could be standardised, because all the testees could be required to do the same tasks in the same

amount of time and under the same conditions. But the assumption that tests are always going to be more reliable than teacher assessment is a false one. With careful planning, and the adoption of suitable frameworks and systems, the unconscious assessment that we do anyway can be complemented by a range of well-documented assessment procedures, both formal and informal, to provide reliable evidence of progress, attainment and overall language proficiency for each member of each group we teach. The one proviso is that there should be adequate contact time for a reliable sampling of each learner's language to be made.

In contexts where teachers have a high level of contact with learners, either on intensive courses or less intensively but over extended periods,



as is typical in many schools, assessment can not only offer much greater formative benefit to learners, feedback to help them improve, but also provide a basis for much fairer summative judgments. The reality is that institutional language tests and even national language exams can sometimes produce scores that bear little relation to the language learners' actual ability to function in the language, their operational command of the language in real-life situations. This is because the

exams very often do not test the full range of what has been taught, frequently seeking to find out what learners don't know, rather than what they can actually do with the language. At school level, tests often fail to reflect what learners can really do because very few language teachers have received more than the most rudimentary training in test design and production.

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As a result, they know little about what makes tests work, nor how to evaluate whether they are working as well as they should for particular purposes and in particular contexts. Most EFL teachers have learned about testing from their older colleagues. They follow existing practice, working within national and institutional traditions, repeating the familiar and imitating the formats of language exams whose concerns are almost entirely summative. Until relatively recently, most language testing

around the world has focused on knowledge of the target language as a language system, rather than on the skills and strategies which allow for effective communication, on grammatical and lexical accuracy rather than discourse skills, fluency, flexibility, range and delicacy, on the production of scores and grades rather than the provision of feedback for the learners and the teacher. Tests which have purported to provide accurate measurement of learner performance have often failed to sample the learner's range of language adequately, making predictions of overall communicative language ability on the basis of tests which have not even attempted to target the learners' spoken language, and which have often neglected key communicative skills.

This situation is now starting to change, and the most significant feature of this change is the increasing use of assessment rather than testing, or assessment in addition to testing, as the basis for evaluating the progress and performance of language learners. There is clear evidence of this change at all levels: in the changing titles and topics of conferences and colloquiums; in the appearance of 'assessment' in the titles and the content of publications of all kinds, particularly on the Internet; and in the renaming of the IATEFL Testing Special Interest Group (SIG) as the Testing, Evaluation and Assessment SIG, TEASIG.

So what then are the key differences between testing and assessment, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of these two ways of evaluating the performance of language learners? The most obvious (and very important) difference is that 'tests' are 'events', 'snapshots', relatively brief moments in the extended process of learning a language, whereas 'assess-



ment' is a set of processes which go on the whole time, but which can be formalised, systematised, harmonised and reported on in a variety of ways as required. Assessment is thus potentially based on much more extended samples of language performance and is likely therefore, in that respect at least, to have

greater content validity as a measure of overall language proficiency and to be more reliable than the briefer and inevitably more limited sampling taken by a test or even a series of tests.

Another advantage of assessment over testing is that the majority of assessment procedures can be much more flexible and more delicately tailored to the individual learner than is possible with most test instruments. While it is rare, for obvious reasons, for a language teacher to cre-

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ate individual tests for each member of a group, the very nature of assessment as a set of ongoing processes means that the teacher can focus on the performance and progress of individual learners in ways which allow for the individual differences which all good teachers try to recognise in their choice of materials and methods. It is widely recognised that personalisation and individualisation are positive features of what has been called learner-centred language teaching.

Assessment allows teachers to be sensitive to learners in ways that tests rarely allow, in that tests are usually fixed and standardising assessment instruments, which remain inflexible once they have been constructed. Tests with a 'Pass Mark' can be likened to a high jump bar which has been set at a fixed height. Assessment procedures can allow the bar to be set at different heights, as appropriate, so that at any given moment in an individual learner's development accessible targets can be set and positive progress registered.

In simple terms, assessment can allow us to achieve the formative objectives we have as teachers, the provision of feedback to support each learner's learning processes and maintain motivation, much more effectively than would be possible by testing alone. Testing and assessment should both have formative and summative objectives. We should operate with a range of procedures and instruments which we do for learners and not just to learners. In most EFL teaching contexts, though, testing has tended much more towards the summative, the provision of marks and grades, as a result of a worldwide historical tradition of expressing test results in figures, with their apparently more

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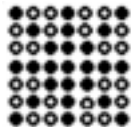
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scientific basis and greater susceptibility to statistical analysis than the description of language learning outcomes with words. A key difference between assessment and testing is that assessment procedures are open to reporting in much greater detail, with words as well as figures.

Words can provide the 'end users', learners, teachers, parents and employers, with 'results' which are much more meaningful and usefully informative than the marks and grades that are the typical products of language tests. Recent examples of language performance profiles, 'Can-Do' statements and verbal descriptors of the kind to be found in the Common European Framework for Language Learning, Teaching and Assessment are powerful testimony to the increasingly widespread view that we should be less concerned with making language learning outcomes measurable, the quantitative approach that has largely held sway since the early 1960s, than with finding modes of assessment which can provide a basis for more detailed description of language ability which the target audience can understand and use.

A further benefit of assessing learners, rather than just testing them, is that the variety of possible approaches allows a number of wider educational objectives - learning-to-learn objectives and attitudinal objectives, as well as language objectives - to be reflected. Assessment can include not only the assessment of learners by teachers, but peer assessment, self-assessment, negotiated self-assessment and portfolio assessment, each of these being formative instruments involving enormously powerful developmental processes, as well as sources of detailed summative information, including marks and grades, when required.

It will be clear that assessment can offer a great

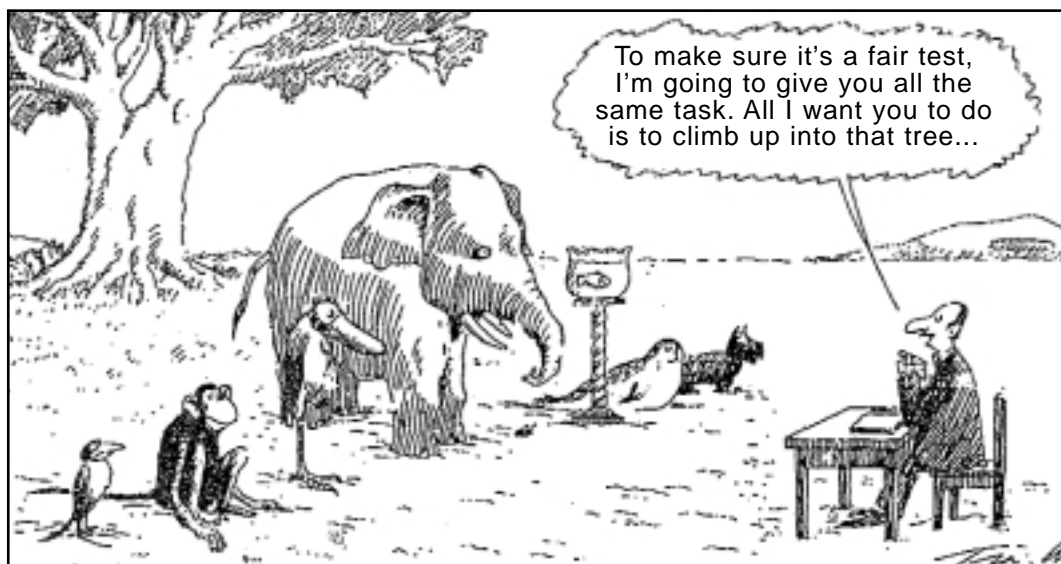
deal to language teachers as a major extension to their repertoire of instruments and processes for evaluating learner performance. Often it will be perfectly appropriate to assess without making any use of formal testing instruments, but it must be remembered that tests remain valuable tools, one of the modes of assessment particularly suited to determining language

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learning outcomes in those situations and in relation to those skills where assessment is always going to be less effective. As language teachers we can only assess what we can see and what we can hear. That means that while it is true that we can assess in broad terms, over time, how a learner's reading and listening skills are developing, assessment is most effective in relation to the productive skills, speaking and writing. We will still need to use carefully designed tests to be able to determine in any detail the extent to which, for example, skills such as skimming, scanning, reading for gist and 'reading between the lines' are developing.

So the important thing to remember is that the good language teacher needs to have an understanding of, and an ability to use, a wide repertoire of test instruments and assessment procedures. The effective evaluation of learner performance in language programmes does not require teachers to make a choice between testing and assessment, but to use the right combination of both for the particular context.

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Dave Allan is Director of the Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE) and a Fellow of the School of Education and Professional Development at the University of East Anglia, where he runs a Masters Course in Testing, Assessment and Evaluation. As Co-ordinator of the IATEFL Testing, Evaluation and Assessment Special Interest Group (TEASIG), and an author for OUP, he has lectured and run courses and seminars in more than 30 countries worldwide. He is also a consultant to the TIE Group.

Legal, Decent, Honest... and Qualified???

A Look at TEFL Qualifications
by **Gronia deVerdon Cooney**
A Freelancer in ELT

So you saw this ad on your college notice board one day, right? 'Learn to teach English in a week-end!' it proclaimed. 'Find a good job abroad!' it tempted. And you were lured by the thought of that quick and easy qualification and the prospect of living it up in the more exotic corners of the world while doing nothing but speaking your own language.

...teacher trainers, school owners and directors of studies should be aware that 'qualified' means 'having a post-graduate diploma'...

You phoned for details, paid your money, and went along to the appointed location on Friday night or Saturday morning. Now it's Sunday, and Hey, presto! You're a qualified teacher! Or are you?

Well, sorry to disappoint you, but it doesn't work like that any more. To begin with, in Ireland, after a weekend (usually 40-hour) course you're not even legal, let alone qualified. To be legally employable in this country you must have a primary degree and a TEFL certificate of at least 70 hours (presently to increase to 100 hours). These requirements

vary from country to country, but reputable schools almost everywhere in the world stipulate 'Deg+cert' as a minimum.

So, you've spent three or four years getting your degree, a fortnight or a month doing your TEFL cert – now you're a qualified teacher? Sorry to disappoint you again, but no - you are now a certified (if not yet actually certifiable) probationer. To become a qualified teacher you must have a Diploma, and dips are a lot harder to come by than certs.

Compare this with the situation for school teachers. They take their degree and then spend a full academic year on the philosophy and psychology of education, pedagogic theory, practical skills, subject knowledge and mentored teaching practice with real students for whom they have long-term responsibility, before they can call themselves qualified teachers. A 100-hour TEFL cert probably represents less than a third of this.

The nature of the TEFL business means that this kind of training course is not always feasible, partly because it is usually impossible to include extensive teaching practice. As a result, TEFLers are given a crash course in classroom skills (and little else), a sketchy introduction to English grammar, and opportunities to practice on each other or – on the

better courses – 15 or 20 minutes with a few Japanese volunteers. Then, armed with that precious certificate, they take their place among the nations of the world.

Let's face it, how many of you want to be TEFL teachers when you're 30? 40? You're really only doing this until you can get a proper job...

And this is as far as it goes for most TEFL teachers; but teachers, teacher trainers, school owners and directors of studies should be aware that 'qualified' means 'having a post-graduate diploma' of the standard of, but not necessarily identical to, a university H. Dip in Ed. Dip TEFLs are not readily available, and to be accepted onto a course you usually need a cert and two years teaching experience. After that, if you've stuck it out that far, you can call yourself a qualified English language teacher.

So all you TEFLers will now be rushing out to look for a suitable Diploma course? I wouldn't count on it! Let's face it, how many of you want to be TEFL teachers when you're 30? 40? You're really only doing this until you can get a proper job, aren't you? TEFL isn't a profession – it's a long-term holiday! So why are we bothering to monitor training courses and insist on certain standards?

Qualifications?
Who the hell cares!

What's Wrong with Many Traditional Training Programmes: A Demonstrative Experiment... by **Martin Eayrs**

1. Start with a cage containing five apes. In the cage, hang a banana on a string and put stairs under it. Before long, an ape will go to the stairs and start to climb towards the Banana.

2. As soon as he touches the stairs, spray all of the apes with cold water. After a while, another ape makes an attempt with the same result - all the apes are sprayed with cold water.

3. Turn off the cold water. If, later, another ape tries to climb the stairs, the other apes will try to prevent it even though no water sprays them.

4. Now, remove one ape from the cage and replace it with a new one. The New ape sees the banana and wants to climb the stairs. To his horror, all of the other apes attack him. After another attempt and attack,

he knows that if he tries to climb the stairs, he will be assaulted.

5. Next, remove another of the original five apes and replace it with a New one. The newcomer goes to the stairs and is attacked. The previous Newcomer takes part in the punishment with enthusiasm.

6. Again, replace a third original ape with a new one. The new one makes it to the stairs and is attacked

as well. Two of the four apes that, beat him have no idea why they were not permitted to climb the stairs, or why they are participating in the beating of the newest ape.

7. After replacing the fourth and fifth original apes, all the apes which have been sprayed with cold water have been replaced. Nevertheless, no ape ever again approaches the stairs. Why not? Because "that's the way it's always been done around here".

FELT Editorial

M E M B E R S H I P of FELT started off sluggishly enough again this year. Was £25/€31.74 too much? Or were things just a little slow after Christmas - perhaps a bit of both. Some have suggested that the additional cost of FELT this year represents poor value for money for those who can't attend the IATEFL conference in Dublin. The conference (which you are no doubt sick of hearing about, by now) is not the only thing that IATEFL offers - you also get 6 copies of IATEFL Issues a year, membership of the book club, reduced rates on various journals and publications and, of course, reductions on the cost of joining special interest groups (see FELT Newsletter Winter '99, Vol.1, No4).

Those who have the time... but can not afford the registration fee for the IATEFL Conference (we all know that ELT is not the most lucrative of career paths), should take a look at the advertisement on the top of page 16. IATEFL is looking for stewards at the conference - they will pay you real money and allow you access to the conference too, as well as the odd sandwich in return for helping out with registrations, guiding people around the conference venue and giving helpful local information on pubs, clubs and so on to the delegates and speakers. This is a wonderful opportunity. . . so, hurry.

TEFL ACCREDITATION SCHEME

The long awaited TEFL Accreditation Scheme is under way at last. Standards and norms for TEFL course providers are to be laid down for those who seek recognition by the Dept. of Education & Science. The ACELS budget for this year has been swelled substantially by increased fees agreed by recognised schools and a matching increase from the Dept. of Education & Science. ACELS, since its re-constitution in 1995, has suffered from a grave shortage of resources and so its Board decided to put the TEFL Accreditation Scheme on hold while the New Model Inspection/Recognition Scheme was implemented.

The New Model Inspection/Recognition Scheme protects students through school-centred quality control evaluations. The commencement of the TEFL Accreditation Scheme will begin to protect the teacher, the trainer and, most importantly, the trainee-teacher who has no point of reference. It can only protect students and schools too, as they need quality certified and qualified teachers.

The marketplace is filled with cowboys and semantics - teaching observation does not mean watching a class on video, - 5 hours teaching practice does not involve sharing your hours with other people (after all, an hour is an hour, and we all know that an hour is 50 minutes). And what is a 70 hour TEFL Cert. anyway? Let's hope it is 70 hours spent with trainers, not 30 hours with a trainer, 20 hours preparation time and 20 hours reading time... - correspondence courses in TEFL, I ask you?

FELT is most keen to have your views on this most important matter - FELT is your association and it can bring your views directly to the ACELS Academic Committee and the ACELS Board. Among the most pressing questions are 1) should there be separate certifications for part-time/junior/summer-only teachers as opposed to full-time/career minded professional EFL teachers? 2) How long should initial pre-service certificates be? 3) What should be included in their content? 4) How much teaching practice and teaching observation should be included? 5) What should the minimum qualification for trainers be? 6) What should be the minimum requirements be for entry to Diploma courses? And so on... the questions are endless. In an effort to start people thinking and to elicit their views, FELT asked Gronia deVerdon Cooney, a freelance teacher trainer in TEFL, to provoke us with some of her thoughts - see her article on page 8.

RECRUITMENT PROBLEMS

Schools are beginning to report recruitment problems outside the summer season. We know that there are shortages of qualified and certified teachers during the busy summer peak as our schools are flooded with junior students - one of the largest EL schools in the country now retains a recruitment agency to find EL teachers for its centres. In response to shortages of teachers several years ago, ACELS introduced a temporary derogation to allow state school teachers (B.Ed. and H.Dip.Ed.) to teach on junior summer programmes.

One begins to wonder how temporary this measure can be, given that experienced TEFL teachers are leaving the industry faster than new ones are being trained. The career path for professionals in ELT is an open invitation to leave teaching for the more lucrative world of industry training. Teachers have become extremely mobile in these economic conditions - schools that offer less than IR£13/€16.50 per hour are finding it hard to retain fully qualified, competent teachers. Recognised schools are required to provide on-going training and professional development to their teachers. Contracts are still a comparative rarity - though there is no doubt that conditions are substantially better than they were even two years ago.

It may cause some discomfort to have these issues probed so openly. One wonders why this is so, in an industry that prides itself on the quality of service it provides every day of the week. We have much to be proud of, we have among the most capable teachers in the world, we have quality assurance systems in place, more in the pipeline and we have pride and confidence in ourselves. We need to take a longer term view to secure the future of this magical world we call English language teaching in Ireland.

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EFL Represents over 10% of Irish Tourism Revenue

Study puts value at over IR£230 million per annum

For many years EFL in Ireland has been considered a cottage industry and has never really been taken seriously by the other sectors of tourism. While many prefer to view EFL solely as a sector of education and training, figures from a study by Jaqueline Joyce of MEI/RELSA show that the value of the EFL student to the economy is far greater than that of visitors coming in on other types of holiday - 72% more valuable.

In the past, Bord Fáilte figures estimating the numbers and categories of tourist to Ireland have excluded under-16s - leading to an under-reporting of the numbers of people coming to Ireland to learn English. Bord Fáilte figures suggest that there were 139,000 EFL tourists in the 1998 season, while MEI/RELSA puts the figure (including the under-16s) at closer to 185,000. Including course fees, accommodation as well as spending money the average student is conservatively estimated to spend IR£1241/€1,576 - giving a total value to the economy of just over IR£230/€292 million in 1998.

IR£1.8/€2.29 billion in government revenue came from taxation of foreign tourist expenditure (Source: BFE Tourism Facts '98). The EFL industry contributes between IR£115/€146 million and IR£131/€166 million to the Irish Government. If we take IR£120/€152 million as a conservative middle figure, the EFL sector represents 10% of tourism earnings.

This figure is based on the average figure issued by Bord Fáilte. In reality, EFL is a more labour intensive industry than most. More importantly, the majority of the employees in this industry are skilled and professionals- teachers, administrators, accommodation officers, marketing staff etc. It is more likely, therefore, that these figures under-represent the amount of tax, PRSI etc., that the Industry contributes to the economy.

It is also important to remember that long-haul figures since 1993, when these students were worth IR£3,487/€4,428 per capita, have increased quite dramatically. One can easily check the statistics from the Dept. of Justice for visas issued. e.g. In January 1998 approx. 20 visas approved for Chinese students of EFL. In January 1999 124 visas were approved. Since last May, the evidence suggests up to 1,500 study visas were processed - approval rates are running at 84%. Many of these students are signing up for 3-6 month programmes and spending an average of IR£5,000/€6,349 each.

With impressive figures like these, it would be reasonable to expect that EFL has been one of the best supported sectors of education and training in Ireland. This has not been the case over the last number of years; however, the forthcoming budget allocations by the Dept. of Education & Science to ACELS ought to make a substantial difference to Ireland's ELT sector in its continuing quest to be *the* world class EFL destination.

A c r o n y m s i n I r i s h E L T

ACELS - The Advisory Council for English Language Schools - the semi-state body that regulates Irish ELT on behalf of the Minister for Education & Science - FELT has a seat on the board of ACELS. Schemes run by ACELS include the Inspection/Recognition scheme for EFL schools, the TEFL Accreditation scheme to regulate standards in TEFL certification and TIE the Test of Interactive English. ACELS also has an extensive ELT and academic management library which is available to all EL teachers.

MEI/RELSA Ireland - Marketing English in Ireland/The Recognised English Language Schools Association - the largest EFL trade association in Ireland - originally two organisations - now just one! MEI/RELSA schools have an ethical code and a code of conduct.

Many also offer teacher training in the form of the RELSA Preparatory Certificate in TEFL. This association is well known around the world as it conducts extensive marketing of Irish EFL.

ATT -The Association for Teacher Training in TEFL - another Irish trade association representing a number EL teacher training institutions. It offers a range of 6 externally moderated TEFL certificates.

FELT Ireland - The Forum for English Language Teachers in Ireland. This organisation was (re-)founded in December 1998 from the dying embers of NATEFLI, its predecessor. FELT is a full associate member of IATEFL. FELT also nominates a member of the ACELS board to the Minister of Education in order that EL teachers and trainers may

have a say at regulatory level.

ITÉ - Institúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann, or the Linguistics Institute of Ireland, is the national centre for research on state language policies in Ireland. Its principal function is the provision of research and advice services to all organisations dealing with language issues. ITÉ also house one of the best Applied Linguistics libraries in the country - contact the Librarian for further details. ITÉ receives funding from the national Lottery.

TIE - Test of Interactive English. An easily prepared Irish examination in English as a foreign language which grades students according to the Council of Europe system of language levels. See page 6 for further details on this examination.

ACELS Awaits News on 3-Year Strategic Plan

ACELS, the Advisory Council for English Language Schools, submitted a strategic plan to the Department of Education & Science last autumn, for the next three years. The Department is widely expected to substantially increase its funding in light of the ELT sector's value to the Irish economy.

As expected, the teacher-friendly 'New Model Inspection Scheme' is being introduced fully this year, as a substantial number of pilot inspections have already been carried out and the new Inspectors have been trained. Additional inspectors are to be trained and taken-on.

Further, planning for the 'TEFL Accreditation Scheme' is back under way, having been delayed by several years due to lack of resources. This naturally is welcome in a market where there is wide variation among many of the TEFL Cert. course providers. This move should also strengthen the already strong reputation of Irish EL teachers working abroad, when recognised certificates go in to circulation.

The Test of Interactive English, TIE, is also

expected to receive the funding it badly needs to make it commercially available, after almost 5 years in development. With this, a part-time Examinations Officer is to be appointed by ACELS to oversee the administration of the exam.

The Materials Development Group is to be resurrected after lying dormant for over a year - this group aims to provide pedagogical materials suitable in the Irish context - this is a welcome move, as it not only provides professional development in materials design for interested teachers and trainers, but will also provide the much needed Irish source material that is so rarely provided by the large British and International publishing houses.

The increase in funding is wonderful news for all working in Irish ELT and is a fitting recognition by the Government of the superb work done by all in our industry - ACELS, its academic committee, testing group and materials development group, not to mention Recognised Schools and the sterling work done by Irish EFL teachers.

It has been confirmed that the new Minister for Education & Science, who is well acquainted with ELT, will officially open the IATEFL Conference at the end of the month.

Will he have an official announcement for us?

The Advisory Council for English Language Schools

invites applications for the post of



PROJECT DIRECTOR

(Accreditation of EFL/TEFL Services)

ACELS, working under the aegis of the Dept. of Education and Science, is responsible for the accreditation of EFL and TEFL services in Ireland.

The principal duties of the postholder will be to administer and implement the EFL Inspection / Recognition Scheme under the direction of the Chief Executive.

*Further details may be obtained from
ACELS, 44 Leeson Place, Dublin 2.*

Tel. (01) 676 7374 Fax (01) 676 3321E-mail: acels@iol.ie

The Advisory Council for English Language Schools

invites applications for part-time posts of



TIE EXAMINERS

(The Test of Interactive English)

ACELS, working under the aegis of the Dept. of Education and Science, is responsible for the accreditation of EFL and TEFL services in Ireland.

Examiners will be needed to administer written and oral components of the Test of Interactive English, according to market demand. Extensive training will be provided before the examination becomes commercially available this summer.

*Further details may be obtained from
ACELS, 44 Leeson Place, Dublin 2.*

Tel. (01) 676 7374 Fax (01) 676 3321E-mail: acels@iol.ie

Computer Haiku

by Sam Holman

Haiku is a very short poetic form consisting of three lines of 5, 7 and 5 syllables each and must have a special word which evokes the season. It is probably the shortest poetic form in the world and is probably familiar to those of you who've taught Japanese students.

Students and teachers of a second language appreciate Haiku because it helps with listening skills, organises words, can be used for communicating and it naturally introduces environmental issues. The best Haiku is clearly written; without metaphor, personification and other literary devices. Simple, clear images written in the shortest form possible but arranged so the words last as long as possible in the minds is the power of Haiku.

Write three short lines, edit all superfluous words, pare the lines down to their verb and noun roots, question whether the adjectives and adverbs are necessary. Keep the poem simple; try not to distract the reader with simile, metaphor or rhyme unless necessary to convey the image you see.

*"Looking for the moon
In a lonely autumn sky
-mountain castle lights."*

That's the theory and the good news is that the 5-7-5 syllable rules of Haiku in Japanese are not as widely accepted by writers of Haiku in other languages. In practice one of the best ways to encourage students to write Haiku is to ask them to write about something they feel strongly about! The following examples do not follow the rule of using a "season" word but any Windows users will relate to them easily.

Sony has announced its own computer operating system now available on its hot new portable PC called the Vaio. Instead of producing the cryptic error messages characteristic of Microsoft's Windows 95, 3.1, and DOS operating systems, Sony's chairman Asai Tawara said: "We intend to capture the high ground by putting a human, Japanese face on what has been until now an operating system that reflects Western cultural hegemony. For example, we have replaced the impersonal and unhelpful Microsoft error messages with our own Japanese Haiku poetry".

The chairman went on to give examples of Sony's new error messages:

A file that big
It might be very useful.
But now it is gone.

The Web site you seek
Cannot be located but
Countless more exist

ABORTED effort:
Close all that you have worked on.
You ask way too much.

Yesterday it worked.
Today it is not working
Windows is like that.

A crash reduces
Your expensive computer
To a simple stone.

Having been erased,
The document you're seeking
Must now be retyped.

First snow, then silence.
This thousand dollar screen dies
So beautifully

Windows NT crashed.
I am the Blue Screen of Death.
No one hears your screams

Stay the patient course
Of little worth is your ire
The network is down.

You step in the stream,
But the water has moved on
This page is not here

Three things are certain
Death, taxes, and lost data.
Guess which has occurred

Serious error.
All shortcuts have disappeared.
Screen. Mind. Both are blank.

Language Learning in the Year 2025

by Martin Eayrs

I was recently at the MATSDA conference in Dublin and at the end of the conference (at a session based, if memory serves, on trends in course books used in English language teaching programmes) in a hazy, postprandial Guinness assisted euphoria began to speculate on what form the 'course book' might take in twenty-five years' time, that is in the year 2025. Here, in slightly more sober terms, is where my rambling took me.

The increasing trend towards specialisation in language teaching is likely to make the general, non-specific course book redundant...

The increasing trend towards specialisation in language teaching is likely to make the general, non-specific course book redundant or at least relegated to a few TENOR (Teaching English for No Obvious Reason) situations. The idea of a one-size-fits-all course book, to be sold globally with no regard to the language difficulties - syntactic, semantic, lexical, morphological and phonological - brought to the learning process from the structure of the learner's first language will long have been abandoned in favour of a learner-specific approach, customised for each and every learner.



Most ESP situations have in common that they need to match a profile - consisting of an analysis of the learner's needs and an assessment of his current language ability in different skill areas - with a methodology and set of materials that will best service these requirements.

The conventional way of doing this is very time consuming as there is often a large number of variables to take into account and many teachers are

unable to find the time or to handle the enormous volume of data involved. This is where we turn to man's faithful and patient friend, the computer.

Journey with me, not into the dim and distant past but twenty-five years into the bright and beckoning future. Sit with me as I ask my terminal to download the latest version of OLFETS, the Oxmann and Longbridge Fully Integrated English Teaching System. I say 'ask', because VR (Voice Recognition) software is now an everyday reality and the 'computer' of the year 2025 is far from the primitive box we knew back at the Millennium.

OLFETS boots in nanoseconds (it resides of course not in our computer's hard disk but on what used to be called the Net, now known for reasons not wholly clear as Matrix 7, to which we are permanently hardwired. The M7 assistant asks metallicly what kind of service we require. We ask for a standard needs analysis form which we can either print, save to disk or work on in real time. Cost is no longer a factor here - everyone is permanently hooked up and the service has long been free - but it may be convenient to download the form template to our local net - it can always be uploaded again when complete.

This Needs Analysis form can be as simple or as complex as we require, covering every language situation imaginable (and many unimaginable back in 2000). The one we have just downloaded comes with three sets of questions: for the student, for the teacher and in this case for the student's employers who are underwriting the

And how do the teacher and materials designer fit in with all this?

cost of his classes. By analysing these questions and posing a few more the computer gets together a fairly comprehensive profile of why the student wants to learn, which skills he requires, what expectations his employers have of him, etc. (For 'he' please read 's/he' all through if required).

The student is then required to perform a series of aptitude tests. Language learning psychologists in 2025 not only recognise that there are many different kinds of learner but have successfully isolated

strategies that are particularly suitable for these learner types and this information will also be useful in assembling the 'course'.

Now the student's current language ability needs to be assessed. Through online response to audio and video clips we can test his/her listening comprehension and discrimination. Because we have already given the computer information about his/her L1 background the computer can provide questions suitable for a speaker of River Plate Spanish (merely a question of phonetic parameters after all) which will quickly highlight any problems of phonetic discrimination and the computer's advanced VR abilities also enable it to isolate problems in the production of sounds and prosodic features which will later be taken into account when designing the course.

Reading skills, grammar and vocabulary can be evaluated by multiple matching, multiple choice and cloze tests, etc., and the teacher can assess oral communication skills and writing skills by reference to a series of standardised templates (although many claim that the computer is more reliable than the teacher nowadays for these diagnoses).

All this information on present language ability is keyboarded or dictated into our desktop terminal and uploaded to OLFETS and after the hint of a pensive hum we are asked a few more questions of a more practical nature, dealing with timetables, duration, frequencies, acceptable subject areas and those deemed unsuitable, examination requirements,

Through online response to audio and video clips we can test his/her listening comprehension and discrimination

equipment available, etc. These are quickly punched back in and we have time for a brief stretch while our server digs deep across the Matrix, trawling the relevant data bases and item banks where every bit of teaching material ever produced is stored and classified, and comes back with a healthy 'ping' asking if we want to burn out the 'course' onto CD ROM, view it on screen, store it or send it (electronically) anywhere else.

We decide to keep it on a 200 Gb Jazz side bay on our own local network, immediately accessible to our user terminals, where it is naturally kept under close watch from the OLFETS home site Matrix

New Technologies in Language Learning



The Modern Languages Department of ITÉ in association with the Applied French Association will run a series of day-long seminars for language teachers in New technologies for Language Learning. Each day's sessions will include: *How to source and exploit Web resources to promote independent language learning* and *Exploring dedicated CD-ROM's/Authoring suites for language learning*.

The first session, facilitated by representatives of the CIEL project and the University of Southampton, will combine practical application of the use of the Web for language learning with its theoretical context. The second, facilitated by Abacus Communications, will focus on modern languages CD-ROMs while Deirdre Hetherington (Language Centre, NUI, Maynooth) will demonstrate Irish language software.

A plenary feedback session at the end of each day's seminar will allow for fruitful exchange of ideas and impressions formed about the technology examined during the sessions.

For further information about the groups facilitating our seminar see their respective websites:

CIEL Project: <http://ciel.lang.soton.ac.uk>
Abacus Communications: <http://www.abacus-communications.com>

Teachers interested in becoming involved in future events of this kind can contact : Angela Rickard at ITÉ.

The Linguistics
Institute of
Ireland
31 Fitzwilliam Place
Dublin 2, Ireland
(01)
Fax: (01)

Institiúid
Teangeolaíochta
Éireann
31 Plas Mhic Liam
Baile Átha Cliath 2
676 5489
661 0004

<http://www.ite.ie/nua.htm>

which constantly monitors work done and produces regular reports. We also request OLFNETS to factor in a programmed learning option to interact with the practice material. This is a branching add-on which, on a wrong answer, gives the options of: 'another try', a grammar review or more examples. This works with reading, speaking and listening skills and handles translation impeccably - that nut has long been cracked - assessing writing is still proving problematic, however. Plus ça change, ... The programme also remembers 'errors' of all kinds for each individual user and recycles them systematically through individualised practice material and progress evaluation.

And so on. The above outline is skimpy enough but it will serve to give the idea. And 2025 is probably a long guess for this. Except for Voice Recognition software - not generally available at present in a useable way - all the technology exists now on a smaller scale - the only difference is in the speed and volume of data transmission and the development of efficient user-friendly interfaces. Oh, yes, and a Net that doesn't act quite so precariously and capriciously !

It is easy to forget just how tight the exponential curve of white heat technology really is. My first computer (Spectrum 1982) had 32K RAM, all volatile. I replaced it in 1984 with the original Apple Mac, with 128K RAM and a 400K disk drive; Apple could have given it more but could not conceive of anyone needing more memory. I type this today (2000) on a Macintosh G3/375 with 128 Megabytes of RAM and an 8 Gigabyte Hard Disk, linked up to a local network with countless peripheral storage devices and other exotica. I have had it for less than a year and it is long obsolete, discontinued by its manufacturers. There is absolutely no reason to believe that the curve will not continue to tighten on itself.

In fact at home or in the school the move within a few years will probably - if it is not already - be away from computers that have vast storage capabil-

ities. More likely, as the Internet becomes less unpredictable and precarious - and it will - all we shall need is a reasonably small keyboard box and a Net interface hooked up through a modem. A simple cable will connect this to various periphera (high resolution TV monitors, Jazz or ZIP transportable units, a mouse or joystick, a printer, a scanner, a feelie control unit, etc.) but all our software and unlimited storage will be where we can't do any harm to it, safe in cyberspace.

We may not even need to download software or files in the conventional sense, but will use the net as one big hard disk (and just how big is perhaps hard to imagine today). Future Systems (like Apple's much vaunted but non-appearing Copland) will be developed with twin or multi parallel processing units. Imagine the power of millions of CPUs scattered around cyberspace, sharing out the work in the most rational way possible.

And how do the teacher and the course writer fit in with all this ? With regard to teachers, let's remember one

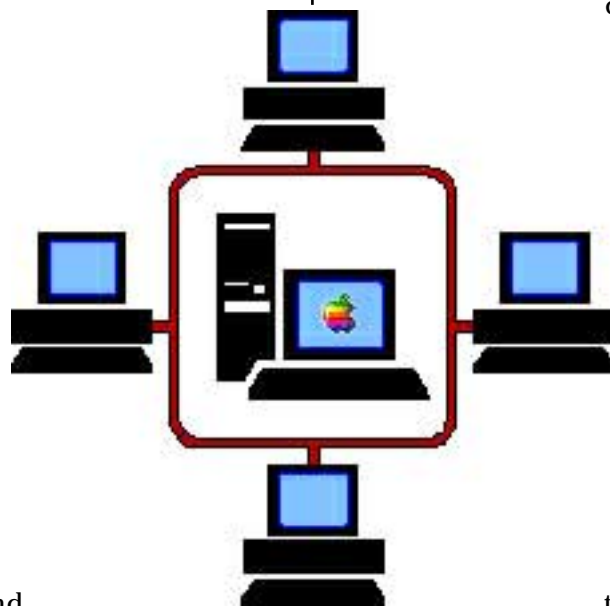
thing: computers and other multimedia devices in 2031 will still be unable to see that puzzled look on the student's face. Or will they ? As for course writers, someone has to produce all that material. The difference will be more with regard to what is written. Writers may not be producing 'courses' as such, rather they may produce modules to precise specifications, and possibly they will be working closer to technology than they can at present imagine.

Me, I'm unlikely to be around.

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Martin Eayrs is a freelance consultant working in computer and Internet related aspects of English language teaching and provides marketing services relating to Latin American ELT.

He is also the Editor of *ELT News & Views*, a publication for teachers of English in South America. He can be contacted at me@eltnewsandviews.com or via the web at <http://www.eltnewsandviews.com>





International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language

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*to help out at the forthcoming IATEFL Conference in the
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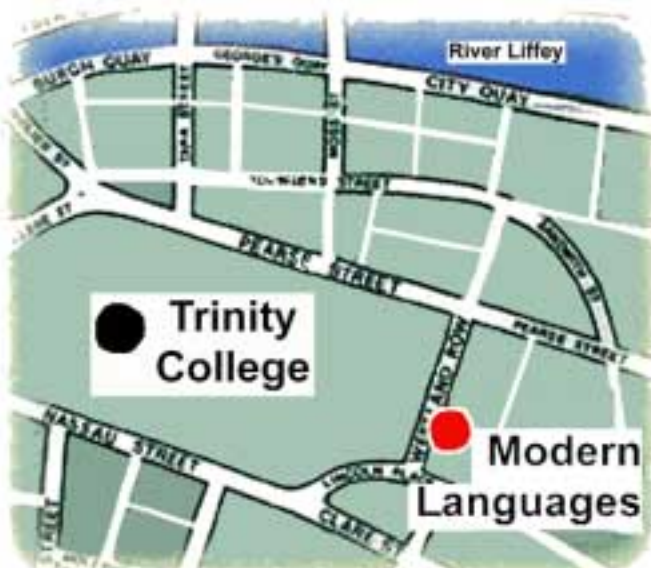
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IATEFL Conference Update

Alison Medland, the IATEFL Conference Organiser, has the latest news

HAPPY NEW YEAR - and what better way to start it than by registering for the IATEFL 2000 Conference! The registration fee is STG£113 (for FELT/IATEFL members) and STG£145 (non-members).

Monday 27th March

The week begins with a choice of five pre-conference events (PCEs) on Monday for delegates who wish to concentrate on a particular topic:

- Critical Awareness Through Film. The Interface of Literature, Cultural Studies and Media
- Researching Language and Language Use
- Testing, Evaluation and Assessment in Teacher Training
- Affective Learning

The Computers SIG will be running a virtual PCE. Virtual ELT will run over the six weeks preceding the conference.

To register for a PCE (STG£45 for members; STG£55 for non-members), simply complete the section on the Conference/PCE Registration Form. Places may be limited - don't miss out, register and pay today.

Monday Evening

Delegates who collect their badge and conference materials on Monday afternoon (registration desks open 1600hrs-2000hrs) are invited to a Wine Reception at 8 o'clock in Buck Mulligans in the Burlington Hotel. Entry is by badge only so, if you're in Dublin on Monday, register in the afternoon and join us at the Reception - we hope to provide a free drink on arrival.

Tuesday 28th March - Friday 31st March

The conference will run from Tuesday morning until Friday afternoon, consisting of plenary sessions, talks, workshops, panel discussions, SIG Open Forums - over 300 sessions. At the same time, enjoy the Poster Presentations and visit the ELT Resources Exhibition.

Tuesday Evening (sponsored by Pitman Qualifications) Come along to IATEFL's Irish Evening at 8 o'clock in the Burlington Hotel. Irish music and dancing for all to enjoy - a chance for old friends to meet and newcomers to mingle - don't feel left out, come and have fun.

Wednesday 29th & Thursday 30th March

We are arranging various opportunities for delegates on

these two evenings. Days and times are to be confirmed. Join Luke Prodromou for "The Poetry of ELT", an evening of poetry about language teaching. Come along and listen to or read poems on topics related to language teaching and education - tragical, comical, historical, satirical, or simply 'linguistical'. A relaxing, lyrical look at the profession.

Come and enjoy Storytelling by Míceal Ross from the Dublin Storytellers. He will entertain you as he relates Irish folklore, myths & legends. Mario Rinvoluceri wants you to "laugh your stress away". Join him at his joke exchange evening with a panel of people who tell good jokes. The serious aim of the evening would be to arm people with plenty of jokes and also to offer a few activities that nearly always provoke laughter in groups. Other talks by great storytellers may be arranged so keep your eyes on Conference Preview and the Conference Programme.

Why not visit an attraction one evening? Thanks to Dublin Tourism and the venues themselves, evening tours have been arranged at special reduced rates to The James Joyce Museum (IR£4.95) and The Shaw Birthplace (IR£3.45). Tickets are available from Dublin Tourism. Contact them on Tel.: 01-872 2077, Fax: 01-605 7749 or on: enterprises@dublintourism.ie (Quote "IATEFL"). Numbers must be known for coaches to be arranged and availability is limited. We suggest you book your tickets in advance of the conference.

There are further reductions when buying combined tickets with the Dublin Writers' Museum (tickets only IR£2.25). The museum closes at 5pm daily but is open Monday and weekends.

- Shaw Birthplace & Dublin Writers' Museum for IR£4.95.
- James Joyce Museum & Dublin Writers' Museum for IR£6.45.
- Shaw Birthplace, James Joyce Museum & Dublin Writers' Museum for IR£9.35.

An international rugby match will be held in Dublin on Friday 31 March. Accommodation will be in short supply so we advise you to reserve accommodation as early as possible.

Condensed from IATEFL Issues, December 1999 - January 2000

The Documented Curriculum Framework Requirement: Some Thoughts

by Ciarán McCarthy

ACELS, the Advisory Council for English Language Schools, last year substantially revised its Schedule, Regulations and Required Standards for English language schools to accompany the New Model Inspection Scheme which is currently being introduced. The word *curriculum* appeared for the first time in "The Regulations Governing the Recognition of Schools" under the requirement for a documented curriculum framework. The new model for inspection and evaluation is strongly school-centred and so, schools were invited to submit documentation to allow inspectors to evaluate each school and its programs on the basis of its particular situation. It quickly became clear that there was confusion among schools regarding the difference between curriculum and syllabus, and some even expressed the belief that a curriculum was not appropriate to English Language Teaching!

...some even expressed the belief that a curriculum was not appropriate to English Language Teaching!

A series of workshops was organised by ACELS to broaden perspectives in the area of curriculum and to aid each school in producing its own documented curriculum framework, thereby allowing each organisation to assume a greater degree of responsibility in the design, implementation and especially the evaluation of its own programs - essentially, to move towards being a learning organisation.

The Impoverished History of Curriculum in ELT

The broad scope of educational curricula has been largely neglected in the history of ELT. So called 'curriculum designers' in ELT traditionally worked in three specialised areas - syllabus design, methodology and testing. As a result, much of the literature on English language teaching deals with teaching methods or with the design and use of instructional materials - mostly based on applied linguistic theories, to the exclusion of more general educational theory. If students weren't learning it was assumed to be the fault of the method, the materials, or the teacher, given a student-centred approach. Yet, the success of a language program involves far more than the act of teach-

ing. As in any successful educational program, many levels of planning, development, implementation and evaluation are necessarily involved. Goals and objectives as well as syllabuses for programs have to be developed and instructional materials chosen or designed. Flexible instructional strategies have to be determined, student tests designed, teachers selected, trained and supported, and course assessments and suitable administrative procedures put in place. But, how often does all this really happen in ELT?

Role of the Documented Curriculum Framework

Widdowson (1984: 26) states that the syllabus is "simply a framework within which activities can be carried out: a teaching device to facilitate learning". Allen (1984: 61) describes the curriculum as "a very general concept" which involves consideration of all aspects of a "philosophical, social and educational program". Curriculum development processes in language teaching comprise, among other things, needs analysis, goal setting, syllabus design, methodology, testing and program evaluation. (Richards 1990).

Once a program is in operation, academic and administrative procedures are needed to enable that program to be monitored and its effects on learners and learning evaluated and improved. In order to plan for, and support, effective English language teaching, a comprehensive overview is needed of the nature and process of language program development and this must surely be embodied in the documented curriculum framework.

It is not a specification of what should be taught, but rather a guide for how to set up a program for each student...

Management of curriculum change is what I am talking about. And in this phrase we see that curriculum must surely be a process; one hopes that improvement is the result of this process through systematic evaluation - the documented curriculum framework ought not be a document that is dusted-off periodically for the purposes of ACELS inspection, but rather should be a living expression of the dynamism of a school - the documented curriculum framework, in a learning organisation, should be "a process, not a product. It is not a specification of what should be taught, but rather a guide for how to set up a program for each student" that meets certain criteria - "it helps set realistic objectives for each course, it can be adapted to a variety of needs and program lengths, it

makes wide use of the initiative and creativity of the instructors, and it provides them with a set of guidelines that they can draw on, with little advance notice, to develop their course.” (Hull 1996: 200).

The Key Role of Evaluation

The curriculum is often portrayed as having three major aspects - design, implementation and evaluation. Richards *et al.* (1985) broadly defines evaluation as “the systematic gathering of information for purposes of making decisions” and this can also be seen as a control function of management - a sort of macro-needs-analysis. Popham (1975: *passim*) characterises evaluation in terms of a systematic and formal assessment of the worth of educational phenomena, however when compared to the definition of Richards *et al.*, it is clear that this characterisation is too restrictive for a documented curriculum framework that must be flexible enough to cover many diverse types of language program offered by an ELT institution. Worthen & Sanders (1973: 19) provides us with a broader perspective on evaluation:

“Evaluation is the determination of the worth of a thing. It includes obtaining information for use in judging the worth of a program, product, procedure or object, or the potential utility of alternative approaches designed to attain specific objectives.”

This definition less restrictive in that it still allows for the notion of the “worth” of a program - both in terms of educational provision and in terms of the management functions that support it - while allowing us to judge the “potential utility of alternative approaches”.

However, it is by no means axiomatic that the goal of evaluation is to “to attain specific objectives”. I believe that we must not only allow for a goal-oriented approach to the processes of program evaluation in the particular, but we must also regard the whole documented curriculum framework as a process - a means of modifying and refining, on an on-going basis, the programs being implemented. A 6-month Cambridge examination course is very different to a 1-week one-to-one intensive business English course - Brown (1989: 223) broaches the problem of the evaluation of an ELT curriculum having to be all thing to all people in the definition:

“Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants’ attitudes within the context of the particular institution involved.”

And so, the rationale behind the introduction of the documented curriculum framework comes in to perspective as curriculum evaluation is now also defined, along with the new model inspection/recognition scheme, as being school-centred and participant-driven. Further, evaluation can be seen as a tool for promoting

I must express my fear that the ‘self-evaluation’ by schools will largely be carried out by school directors, rather than, as I feel is appropriate for a learning organisation, by a ‘team of stakeholders’ representing all the different areas of interest in ELT - teachers, students, clients, receptionists, marketing staff, accommodation officers, host-families, social-program staff and so on...

“improvement” from within a school - complementing the self-evaluation that will be introduced next year as part of the new model inspection/evaluation scheme. Here, I must express my fear that the ‘self-evaluation’ by schools will largely be carried out by school directors, rather than, as I feel is appropriate for a learning organisation, by a ‘team of stakeholders’ representing all the different areas of interest in ELT - teachers, students, clients, receptionists, marketing staff, accommodation officers, host-families, social-program staff and so on..

Varied Approaches to Evaluation

It is not my intention to try to compile the infinite ways and means of evaluating a course and the curriculum that it is inextricably linked to - this area of concern is well beyond the constraints of this paper. As the requirement for the documented curriculum framework is not prescriptive, I imagine that the approaches used in schools will be many and varied, some better than others, some well thought out, others less so. Evaluations may be, among other things, formative or summative, qualitative or quantitative or even all of the above. Whichever methodology,



or combination of methodologies, is used will largely depend on the type of program, the circumstances of each institution and its philosophical approach to evaluation. Key to the individual success of the documented curriculum framework for each ELT institution will be its formulation of philosophy of course evaluation. One thing is certain though - you can never have enough information available to you - from all areas of school life, using whatever methodologies that might be practical and helpful in order to make the inevitable process of change as beneficial as possible for all those involved. The Action Research paradigm seems to be an especially useful mode of investigation in professional improvement both for the practitioner and for the institution as a whole.

A Cautious Conclusion

ELT is one of the newer areas of education and training, and one of the fastest moving. The aim of this paper has been to probe some of the challenges faced by the ELT industry in Ireland, brought about by the introduction of the ACELS requirement for a Documented Curriculum Framework. As the industry has matured over the last five to ten years, some of the more important principles have been devalued in the market driven world we work in. Management and administration are functions that should serve the academic life of a school - not the other way round, as is so common in the university sector. Unfortunately, it is not uncom-

mon for the marketing department of a school to re-design and manipulate (perhaps, even destroy) language programs to make them as easily managed and as profitable as possible while leaving them with only a thin veneer of quality in order to appease the educational conscience of the marketplace.

The documented curriculum framework, if it is to have any value as an evaluative and developmental tool to safeguard the future of Irish EFL, must be generated from a bottom-up perspective giving ownership of the curriculum process to all stakeholders. To allow the documented curriculum framework to be a document that is glibly produced, rather than a process which continues, can only lead to a poor quality educational product, dissatisfied students and disillusioned teachers.

I would like to leave the last word to Hull (1996: 193) whose words express better than my own, the ideal behind a documented curriculum framework...

"...the best of all possible worlds: enough structure to provide quality control and consistency in program delivery for the institution, support for the people responsible for delivering the programs, room for creativity and initiative in that delivery, and flexibility to meet the changing needs of the client base."

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Ciarán McCarthy is an EFL teacher and also General Manager of the *Salesian English Language Centre* in Celbridge, Co.Kildare. He is charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating the documented curriculum framework process there. A Linguistics graduate of UCD, he completed an M.Phil. in Applied Linguistics at Trinity College in 1996. He is currently reading part-time for an M.Sc. in Education & Training Management in DCU.

The FELT Conundrum

J u s t f o r F u n . . .

Jim has recently become very interested in action-research. A friend of his has been doing some research about the extent to which dreams can be used to foretell the future. He persuaded his five colleagues (Adrian, Bertie, Charlie, Duggie and Ernie) to help him in his inquiries. They liked the idea of being in the forefront of anything new and their beds seemed a nice cosy place for action research. They met a year ago, and made predictions about their jobs now. Their predictions were as follows:

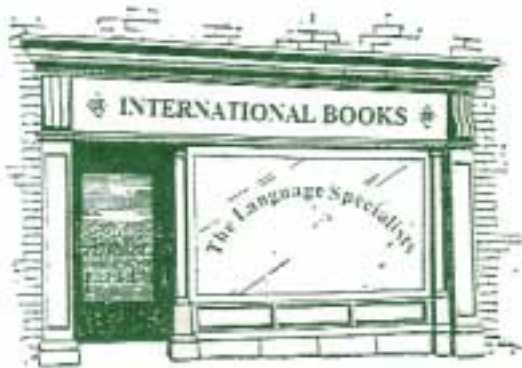
- (i) Adrian: Ernie will not be the Director of Studies.
- (ii) Bertie: Duggie will not be the Director.
- (iii) Charlie: Adrian will not be the Welfare Officer.
- (iv) Duggie: Ernie will be the Director.
- (v) Ernie: Bertie's prediction will be true.

Their jobs now are those of Director, Welfare Officer, Customer Services Manager, Director of Studies and Teacher. Jim was most interested in this. "But," he wondered, "how many of these predictions were correct and who made them?"

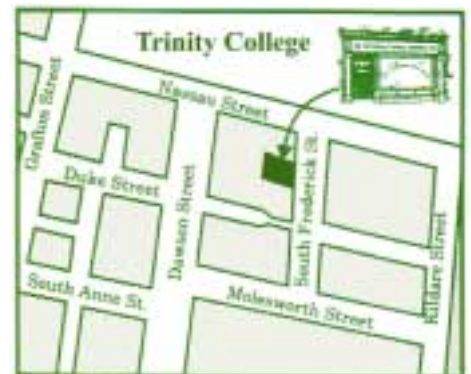
In fact only two of the predictions were correct and they were made by the people who became the Welfare Officer and the Teacher.

Q: Who does what job now?

Solution on Page 23



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A Joke or A Photocopiable Activity?

The inventive/reckless among you might like to try this one on your students... while quite amusing, unlike most of the jokes that have appeared in past FELT Newsletters, this passage contains no direct reference to cars and so should present a good test of the top-down reading comprehension skills. Why not try it out and write a report for the next FELT Newsletter - submission details on page 23. Go on - do it!

A man is in bed when there is a rat-a-tat-tat on the door. He rolls over and looks at his clock, and it's half past three in the morning. "I'm not getting out of bed at this time", he thinks, and rolls over. Then, a louder knock follows.

"Aren't you going to answer that?" says his wife. So, he drags himself out of bed and goes downstairs. He opens the door and there is a man standing at the door. It doesn't take the home-owner long to realise the man is drunk.

"Hi there," slurs the stranger. "Can you give me a push?"

"No, get lost! It's half past three! I was in bed!" screams the man as he slams the door. He goes back up to bed and tells his wife what happened.

She remarks, "Dave, that wasn't very nice of you. Remember that night we broke down in the pouring

rain on the way to pick the kids up from the baby sitter and you had to knock on that man's house to get us started again? What would have happened if he'd told us to get lost?"

"But the guy was drunk," says the husband. "It doesn't matter," explains the wife. "He needs our help and it would be nice to help him".

So, the husband gets out of bed again, gets dressed, and goes downstairs. He opens the door but he can't see the stranger anywhere in the dark, so he shouts, "Hey, do you still want a push?"

He hears a voice cry out, "Yes, please."

"Where are you?" shouts the home-owner.

The stranger calls back, "I'm over here, on your swing".

The Donkey...

- What do you call a donkey with one leg?
- A wonky
- What do you call a donkey with one leg and one eye?
- A winky wonky
- What do you call a donkey with one leg and one eye makin' love?
- A bonky winky wonky
- What do you call a donkey with one leg and one eye makin' love while breaking wind?
- A stinky bonky winky wonky
- What do you call a donkey with one leg and one eye makin' love while breaking wind, wearing blue suede shoes?
- A honky tonky stinky bonky winky wonky
- What do you call a donkey with one leg and one eye makin' love while breaking wind, wearing blue suede shoes and playing piano?
- A plinky plonky honky tonky stinky bonky winky wonky

Adam & Eve

Whenever you see kids are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to God's kids. After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And the first thing said to them was: "Don't". "Don't what?", Adam replied. "Don't eat the forbidden fruit." God said. "Forbidden fruit? We got forbidden fruit? Hey, Eve...we got Forbidden Fruit!" "No way!" "Yes WAY!"

"Don't eat that fruit!" said God. "Why?" "Because I'm your Creator and I said so!" said God, wondering why he hadn't stopped after making the elephants. A few minutes later God saw the kids having an apple break and was angry. "Didn't I tell you not to eat that fruit?" God asked. "Uh huh," Adam replied. "Then why did you?" "I dunno," Eve answered. "She started it!" Adam said. "Did Not!" "DID so!" "DID NOT!!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus the pattern was set and it has never changed.

But there is a reassurance in this story. If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give them wisdom and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself. If God had trouble handling children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?

Solution to the FELT Conundrum on Page 21

If assumption (iv) is true, then E becomes Director; therefore (ii) is true (if E is Director, then D is not Director) and (i) is true (if E is Director, then E is not DoS).

But we are told that only two predictions are true - therefore (iv) could not be true, thus E did not become Director. (A diagram will help - the fact that E is not Director has been put in for you. The reader is advised to fill in the rest as we go along using ticks and crosses).

Consider prediction (v): if true, then (ii) is true, thus D is not Director. And all other predictions must be false (for only two predictions are true) thus, (iii) must be false, and A would be Welfare Officer.

But we are told that the Welfare Officer made one of the true predictions, therefore our assumption is wrong. . . assumption (v) is not true and B's prediction is not true, therefore D becomes Director.

Thus predictions (ii), (iv) and (v) are false. Therefore predictions (i) and (iii) are true. Thusly, from prediction (i), E is not DoS, and from prediction (iii) A is not Welfare Officer.

A and C (who made correct predictions) are between them Welfare Officer and Teacher. But we know that A did not become Welfare Officer, thus C became Welfare Officer and A became Teacher. By elimination, B became DoS, and E became Customer Services Manager.

	Director	Welfare Officer	Cust. Service	DoS	Teacher
A					
B					
C					
D					
E	X				

*Adrian became Teacher
 Bertie became Director of Studies
 Charlie became Welfare Officer
 Duggie became Director
 Emie became Customer Services Manager*

Submission Guidelines & How to Contact FELT

Submissions for the Newsletter are always welcome and usually badly needed. So, if you're ready, willing and able..

* By E-mail to: feltireland@hotmail.com

* By Post to: FELT Ireland,
 c/o 102 Meadow Park, Churchtown,
 Dublin 14, Ireland.

We accept the following, among numerous other things, for our newsletter: theoretical articles, practical reports, jokes, brain-teasers, news, opinions, letters to the Editor, class-plans, cartoons, advertisements, questions, answers, book-reviews, reports on life teaching abroad, amusing stories about your students or trainees and so on... you get the picture.

Please do not send e-mail submissions as Microsoft Word Documents (.doc) as they may carry macro-viruses; the Text-Only (.txt) format is the safest. If you are

using Word, press F12 and select 'Text-Only' as the file type. All Macintosh formats are fine too! Nonetheless, use your virus checker...

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Invitations will be going out in March. If you haven't received one in the past, we may not have your contact details, so please let us know and we will be sure to send you an invitation.