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# A Teacher Manual of Self-Learning Instruction

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SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING  
MAT  
INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

A TEACHER MANUAL OF SELF-LEARNING INSTRUCTION

WILLIAM C. HARSHBARGER  
June, 1972



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## INTRODUCTION FOR THE TEACHER

People have been learning foreign languages by themselves for as long as there have been foreign languages. Language courses, on the other hand, came about because they could teach students much faster and more efficiently than the students could do on their own. The disadvantage with this system was paying for the time and effort of the teacher. Eventually the idea of needing a teacher to learn a language became so widely accepted, that people (especially the teachers) began to forget the basic, though somewhat inefficient, ability of people to learn by themselves. The idea behind this course is to reestablish a balance between these two extremes; to provide maximum learning from minimum teaching.

This is essentially a course designed to teach a student how to learn English in an English speaking environment by learning in and from that environment rather than in the Classroom from a teacher. It consists of a core of fundamental English forms and structures with a minimum of vocabulary, and several areas or approaches to using that material to exploit the English speaking environment for learning purposes.

The philosophy behind this program is that a student, given a basis in English structures and phrases, and an awareness of how he can utilize an English speaking environment for his own purposes, can successfully learn English by himself, provided he has the opportunity to use that environment, and the motivation to do so.

Since the approach taken in this program is a very individualised one, it is ideally suited for use on a one-to-one basis between teacher and student. It can also be used in small class situations, but would not be very effective for use with more than 6 to 7 students, if this is the only material used. Many of the ideas and suggestions will be helpful in any ESL situation, but the concept of self-generated discovery learning is applicable only to very small numbers of students.

This course was designed for use both in non-English and English speaking countries, however use in the latter is more advantageous, since the English speaking environment and its resources can be utilized from the outset of the course. For the teachers in non-English countries, the emphasis of the course is preparing the student to utilize the English speaking community when it becomes available to him. e.g. the Japanese businessman who is being sent to New York, or the Puerto Rican who is planning to immigrate to the United States.

Since the goal of this program is to produce people capable of learning on their own, an emphasis on self learning is essential to the program itself. For this reason the material covered by the course has not been sequenced or structured, except for the very first lessons. However, even in those lessons there is a high degree of flexibility possible. The idea is to have the teacher and the student (s) explore English together through situations that the student will encounter and can use to learn English. The student should be encouraged to express or indicate his interests and needs. The teacher should also encourage his students to discover as much as they can by

them-selves--get them to use a dictionary, to ask questions of anyone who might help--show the student that he can learn a lot by himself and how to do it better. Of course the student will run into dead ends in this process of searching, and the teacher will have to guide him in another direction. This is particularly true at the beginning, but as the student progresses, he will be capable of more and more on his own.

There are a few important aspects of self-learning instruction to keep in mind. Don't try to force anything on a student, particularly perfection. If a student is understandable, no matter how heavy his accent, don't waste time on pronunciation drills to polish his speech. On the other hand, try to encourage the student to correct himself. If a student is not understandable, tell him you don't understand and ask him to repeat. Encourage him to do the same, if he doesn't understand you.

Perhaps the single most important factor on the ultimate success or failure of the program is instilling confidence in the student.

He needs two kinds of confidence. First, the confidence to approach and use people as resources. Second, the confidence that he can learn English without a teacher; a concept that is often hard for people to accept.

In regard to the first, whenever possible the teacher should assign tasks for the student that will necessitate his coming into

contact with resource people from the environment.<sup>1</sup> Send him to a bakery and have him come back with an explanation of what a baker does, what his working hours are, what his name is, etc. This type of assignment should give the student more confidence in his ability to approach people with questions or for help. If possible, let the student choose where or who he wants to go to on these assignments.

The other confidence is something that will grow naturally as long as the teacher encourages discovery learning rather than teacher oriented learning, and makes the student aware of his own learning process. Students who learn something on their own, or from another student, often attribute that learning to the teacher because they assume that only a teacher can teach them anything.

The program material has been broken down into several areas. However, none of these areas is complete by itself. The job of the teacher is to integrate all of these areas into a program that will meet the needs of his students. Since the student is not working from any materials, the teacher should periodically prepare a summary of the material that has been covered, and give it to the student for reference.

The student will start building a file of material that he has discovered or learned, and ideally gain a sense of accomplishment from it.

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<sup>1</sup> see: "English for Foreign Students Goes Out on the Streets" Ruth Blackburn, TESOL Quarterly vol. 5, no. 3, Sept. 1971 p. 251

Finally, this is an experimental approach to teaching English, and because of the high emphasis on individualized learning, a great deal of work is left up to the teacher. I have tried to suggest various ways to approach the integration of ideas and materials presented here, however, the possibilities for new approaches and new ideas are infinite. I do suggest that the books listed in the reference bibliography be read by the teacher. The teacher's manual, and books 1-4 of the SR Orientation in American English series, are especially recommended for any teacher who is not already familiar with them.

### OPERATIONS AND ROLE PLAY SITUATIONS

"An operation drills the class in the use and vocabulary involved in a particular piece of equipment or in a common procedure."<sup>1</sup> Operations are very closely related to role plays, the main difference being that operations tend to involve more physical manipulation than role playing, and little or no interaction with another person. For example, going to a restaurant involves interaction with a waiter or waitress at least, and therefore is a role playing situation, something that could be acted out between two people, whereas using a vending machine or driving a car involves only one person and some equipment and are clearly operational.

Operations and role play situations serve two major purposes. First, as a vehicle for introducing new grammatical structures and, second, to give the student an operational tool that he can use to function more easily in an English speaking environment.

The situations listed here were selected because they will bring the student in contact with people, and at the same time provide a variety of linguistic forms and vocabulary. They will also enable the student to perform actions necessary to everyday life in the U.S.

SHOPPING

HOSPITAL

RESTAURANT

DOCTOR

POST OFFICE

DENTIST

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<sup>1</sup> EIL Instructors Handbook, Guy R. MacMillin, Ed. School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont 1972.

BANK

TELEPHONE

GAS STATION

LAUNDROMAT

BARBER SHOP/HAIR DRESSER

VENDING MACHINE

TRAIN STATION

RENTING AN APARTMENT

AIRPORT

MOVIES

GUSTOMS

(An excellent source of further situations can be found in SR Orientation in American English, Books 1-4) 1

HOTEL

MAP READING

This list is in no way complete. Many situations can be found to meet the individual needs and interests of each student. The form of each situation is also flexible. Shopping, for example, might center around dresses or power saws, depending again on the interests of the student.

Some situations can be done more than once. A restaurant situation could be based on a cafeteria one day and a more formal restaurant another day.

Other areas of the course should be brought into these situations, such as descriptive vocabulary, self testing, helpful phrases. After an operation or situation has been gone through, application of that situation in terms of environmental manipulation should be pointed out. When a student knows how to use a telephone, he should be told how he can use that skill to his advantage as a language learner.

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Hall, Sandra Costinett; SR Orientation in American English Institute of Modern Languages, Inc., Washington, D.C. 1971

## SELF-TESTING

This area has two aspects: one is to develop a sense of self-criticism or awareness on the part of the student, who should be constantly trying to discover his own errors. The second aspect is to enable resource people from the environment to help the student learn by being made aware of his uncertainties when they may have over-judged his ability to understand what they are saying.

Self-testing can be accomplished by the student by measuring what he thinks he knows to be correct against a reference person. For example, when the student receives information from a resource person he can check his comprehension by asking: "Did you say...?", and repeat the information given. The resource person will then indicate whether or not the student did in fact understand the information. In other words he is grading the "test" and giving the score for the student.

The student can also be more direct in his approach, if he feels that he does not understand what was said, or that he is not being understood.

EXAMPLES: What did you say?

Would you repeat that please?

Is my pronunciation right?

How do you spell (write) that?

What does ..... mean?

Do you understand me?

Was that right?

Please correct me when I am wrong.

Generally the student should be direct when he doesn't understand what has been said and ask to have it repeated. Then, if he still has difficulty, he should try to repeat it himself. This will indicate to the other person where the difficulty lies, and allow him to correct it.

Self-testing is an important aspect of the program since it will ultimately determine the quality of the student's English, and will also increase the speed of the learning process. Try to encourage self-evaluation and testing by the student. This is best done by example. If the student says something that you don't understand, ask him, "What did you say?" or "Will you please write that?", and encourage him to do the same with you. You can test his acceptance of this idea by occasionally saying something a little faster than usual and see if he questions it.

## DESCRIPTIVE VOCABULARY

Being able to describe things is a vital tool to language learning. With the following core of descriptive vocabulary the student should be able to describe almost anything.

### BASIC ADJECTIVES WITH THEIR COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE FORMS:

big.....	small	bigger, biggest	smaller, smallest
long.....	short	longer, longest	shorter, shortest
long.....	light	heavier, heaviest	lighter, lightest
good.....	bad	better, best	worse, worst

### DIRECTIONAL VOCABULARY:

right

left

straight

up

down

### OTHER:

Colors: green, red, blue, etc.

Numbers: one, two, three, etc.

Time vocabulary: o'clock, am, pm, half past, a quarter to, etc.

This vocabulary can be incorporated into other areas as lexical material learned along with structural forms. (see beginning lessons)

## QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

This is a short list of questions that are commonly asked of foreign students. Consequently the student should be made aware of them. They will help him in communicating basic information about himself, and also provide models of some questions forms. They can be easily worked into ritual dialogues. (see beginning lessons)

What's your name?

Where are you from?

Why did you come here?

What did you do in ....?

Where do you live?

What do you do?

Do you understand?

How old are you?

Can I help you?

Beyond this point the teacher will have to supply appropriate questions for individual students. e.g. Are you married? What school do you go to? etc.

## HELPFUL PHRASES

This is a list of phrases that might prove helpful to the student as he tries to communicate with limited language.

Speak slower please.	Would you please repeat that?
Excuse me.	What is the opposite of ...?
Thank you.	Can you understand me?
Thanks a lot.	What is a kind of ...?
No thanks.	I (don't) understand.
It's all right.	I need .....
Sorry I can't.	I want .....
You're welcome.	I like (to)...
Ok	Can you (please) help me?
What does <sup>this</sup> ( <sub>it</sub> ) cost?	Can you tell me?
What's ( <sup>this</sup> <sub>it</sub> ) used for?	What's it called.
What's ( <sup>this</sup> <sub>it</sub> ) made of?	Hi.
Where can I get it?	Goodbye.

The technique used in the SR ORIENTATION IN AMERICAN ENGLISH SERIES for teaching verb tense, is excellent for adaptation here since it combines the tense patterns with question forms that are important learning tools. This technique consists of a command, action response, question and oral response.

e.g.

teacher: Open your book.	Open your book slowly.
student: (opens book)	(starts opening book)
teacher: What did you do?	What are you doing?
student: I opened my book.	I'm opening my book.

This is first taught by repetition, next the teacher goes through the entire sequence, then the teacher either gives the command to the student or vice versa with a switching back and forth of roles. This is probably the quickest and easiest way to introduce this technique. However, since this situation is only "real" in the classroom, it should be taken a step further to allow the student to use it on his own. This can be done by dropping the initial command and shifting the question to the initiator of the action.

e.g. student: (opens book slowly) What am I doing?

teacher: You're opening your book.

The teacher can demonstrate this initially, then encourage the student to perform actions and question the teacher or any English speaker to discover what the action is called. Obviously this can be done in other tenses. (What did I do? What was I doing?)

When this technique is directed at second and third person forms, the pattern changes again to simple question and response e.g. What is he doing? He is eating. What are you doing? I am sitting. The action is still the stimulus, but not initiated by the student.

With these adaptations the student can now utilize this technique away from the classroom.

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANIPULATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

These are resource areas that the student should be made aware of. The more important or useful ones can be worked into operations and role play situations to enable the student to use them as quickly as possible.

### MEDIA:

Any television program provides plenty of listening comprehension practice while providing an entertainment factor to keep interest levels high. It also has the advantage that it does not require the help of any one else. Some areas of special interest to the student are: special education channels with early morning English programs, children's programs such as "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company" have short language lessons. News shows provide a format of short features that often have illustrations to help the viewer; sports events provide good interest and a repetitive vocabulary, though fairly idiomatic; soap operas provide lots of slow, breathy dialogues.

Learning from television will be enhanced if the student is given some guidelines to take rather than just watching and hoping to learn something. One approach that could be taken is selective viewing for specific structures. The student could look at a program trying to pick out all the "what" questions that he hears. Along with this he could work on note taking skills by taking notes of the structures he is practicing or new vocabulary that he can look up later. Some programs are rerun within a short period of time allowing the student

to go back and check his notes. Repetition abounds in the area of commercials on TV. They are brief and often have short dialogues. These dialogues could be memorized, with the television providing the model for pronunciation and intonation.

If television is available to the student during the course, the teacher could assign tasks for the student to do such as reporting on a program, giving names of the characters, short summary of the plot, or the comparison of lists of a structure that several students have compiled from the same program.

Radio is a difficult media for non-native speakers. However, in some areas there are special foreign language programs that provide community service announcements listing agencies and organizations designed to help immigrants and foreign visitors, sometimes with free ESL classes.

The telephone is a tremendous tool for a language student to use, because it allows the student to come into contact with so many areas of the environment. Good suggestions for practice on the phone are information gathering assignments such as calling a train station to find out when the student could go to X city, how much it would cost, how long it would take, etc. This can be done with bus stations, airports, and other areas of the environment. (see ORGANIZATIONS) In addition it can be used by itself for practice. A student could dial the number for the time over and over again. This can also be done for the weather, pollution index, dial-a-prayer, and in some

areas if you call the Audubon Society you can get a recording of what birds have been seen in the area recently. The telephone book itself is a wealth of information and a good reading resource.

Newspapers, magazines, books and the printed media can be utilized from the outset of the program and continued forever. Even beginning students can quickly read the dates of a newspaper, and with the help of a dictionary read simple advertisements, sections with a constant vocabulary such as the weather or the sports page, and gradually begin to read articles. There is also a high level of interest in keeping up with current news, perhaps about the students home country.

To encourage a student to utilize this area of the environment, have him take a newspaper or magazine and isolate as much as he can that he is familiar with or can guess at. The guessing from a cognate or contextual point of view is particularly valuable to encourage. Then, with the help of a dictionary have him find out as much more as he can. Finally, have him try to put all of this together and ask questions. It is important to have the student demonstrate to himself how much he knows and can find out by himself. In other words, to build his confidence in himself as a language learner. The biggest problem he will face is discouragement.

Movie listings can be used for practice in reading times, and advertisements can be used in operations involving money and shopping. If the student will be looking for work, go over the classified section of the newspaper explaining abbreviations.

There is one other area of printed media that isn't commonly incorporated into language courses, but which might prove valuable, and that is packaging. Have students read labels, cereal boxes, shampoo bottles, coffee cans, etc. The possibilities are enormous.

#### ORGANIZATIONS:

There are several types of organizations common to almost all communities that provide good learning resources.

The public library is a good source for magazines, newspapers, and often special graded language materials in English. Most libraries will get special books on request. It is also a good quiet place to study. There should be enough material in any library to stimulate any student to read.

Local schools and universities may have special night courses in BSL, or at least be willing to loan out any materials that they have. There also might be some teachers or students interested in helping someone learn English.

Religious organizations often have local community centers that could provide valuable resources and contacts.

In addition to these there are various local organizations which vary from community to community. Organizations which might have ESL programs or provide information are: Model Cities programs, Job Training centers, YWCA, YMCA, Adult Basic Education programs, Migrant Education centers, Community centers and employment bureaus.

It will be useful to tie in questions asking for directions and the use of the telephone book at this point so that the student can easily get in touch with these organizations.

A specific approach to some of these organizations is to have the student go to local businesses and solicit information. For example, the student could go to the electric company and explain that he is learning English and that he would like to know how he could go about getting electricity for a house, how much it cost, how often the meter was read, etc. This can be done as well with the telephone company, etc.

#### WHERE TO FIND PEOPLE TO TALK TO:

As were already mentioned, schools, community organizations and businesses are good places to meet and talk to people. In addition, there are several places which are not likely to provide ESL programs, but might provide an excellent resource of people to talk to and to help the student.

Old folks homes have an endless supply of interesting, intelligent, and very bored people who would love a chance to talk to and help someone learn English. Some hospitals have homes like this connected with them.

Train and bus stations are always full of people coming and going with time on their hands as they wait. There are also plenty of people in those stations who aren't going or coming from anywhere,

who perhaps are lonely and might welcome the chance to talk to someone from another country. On the other hand they might not, so watch your wallet.

In nice weather, parks are a great place to just sit and talk, and there are alot of people doing just that.

Laundromats are also good places to find people to talk to.

## BEGINNING CORE LESSONS

Following the idea of discovery learning, the following lessons are presented as a starting point for work with completely non-English speaking students. This is more important with small group classes than it is with a one-to-one situation. This will provide a common core of English which should be sufficient enough to allow the students to begin on operations, role playing and the integration of the rest of the material.

The lesson material has been broken into two areas. The first area is the material that is introduced by the teacher. The second area is material that should be covered, but which is possible for the student to discover on his own. For example, in starting with the question form "What is this?" and the appropriate response "This is a..." or "It's a...", and then allowing the student to use this freely to ask about objects in the room, the student will eventually ask about an object that is inappropriate for that question. i.e., he may point to an object across the room and ask "What is this?" to which the teacher would respond, "That is a ..." Then some work on the difference between the use of "this and that" would follow. In this way the student will gain more of a sense of having discovered this form than if the teacher had introduced it directly.

These lessons are designed to introduce a number of question forms at the very outset to enable the student to explore English in a variety of ways rather than being limited to one or two forms.

LESSON 1

TEACHER INTRODUCED

What is this?                    an  
                                  This is a...  
                                  an  
                                  It's a.....  
What color is it?    It's...  
What's it look like?  
How big is it? It's (a) big (small)..  
Where is it?    It's (on the table).  
Is this a...? Yes, it is.

"DISCOVERED"

What is that?  
What are these (those)?  
It's (possessive pronoun)...  
Colors  
Other two word verbs  
Comparisons and Superlatives  
Prepositions  
                                  an  
No, it isn't.    It's a...

LESSON 2

student: What is this?  
teacher: It's a (newspaper).  
teacher: Open the (newspaper).  
student: (opens newspaper)  
teacher: What did you do?  
student: I opened the (newspaper).

Other tenses; present progres-  
                                  sive going to  
                                  future.

Personal pronouns

READING OPERATIONS:

shopping, eds, money  
dates, etc.

LESSON 3

student: What is this?  
teacher: It's a cigarette.  
teacher: Do you want a cigarette?  
teacher: What else do you want?  
student: I want....

want, need, like, have

In addition to this material, helpful phrases should be introduced in the form of ritual dialogues.<sup>1</sup> These are short, verbal interactions between the teacher and student(s) that are used repeatedly in the class so that they take on a ritual aspect.

EXAMPLES:

1. Good afternoon (morning). How are you?

Fine thanks. And you?

2. My names's .... What's yours?

.....

Pleased to meet you.

3. teacher: That's all for today.

student(s): What did you say?

teacher: I said, "That's all for today."

student(s): See you next time.

teacher: OK

4. (s special introduction monologue)

student: Excuse me, my name is ..... and I'm trying to learn English.

Could you spare a few minutes? Would you please explain...

---

1.

This phrase was first coined by Alexander Lipson of Harvard University.

The following schematic charts of English syntax and linguistic structure are based on the first index in Language and life in the USA, by Doty and Ross (see reference bibliography). They are meant to be used by the teacher as a means of plotting the material that has been "discovered" in the course, and "planning" in the sense of being aware of what material has not been covered and utilizing opportunities to introduce it.

The first chart is a diagram of the basic sentence forms of the English language with a number assigned to each in the order that they are presented in the book. The second chart is a grid with the sentence patterns listed (by number) along the top, and a list of linguistic elements down the side. An attempt has been made to provide a general order of introduction for the sentence structures, so that in general the chart will be filled in from left to right as the course progresses. It is not intended that the entire chart be covered during the course. The amount that is covered will vary from situation to situation.

The chart is filled in by checking off what linguistic elements have been introduced in what sentence structures. For example, if the first sentence taught is "What is this?", a present tense verb and a demonstrative pronoun have been introduced in an interrogative sentence pattern (#9), and those two blocks would be checked.

BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS

		IN- TRANSITIVE  1.	DIR.  A.	INDIR.  B.	OBJ. COMP.  C.	LINKING  3.	IT IS A.	THERE ARE B.
		TRANSITIVE 2.					BE 4.	
NEGATIVE		5.					6.	
QUESTION		7.					8.	
I N T E R R O G A T I V E S	WHERE WHEN WHY HOW	9.						
	WHOM WHAT	10.						
	WHO WHAT	11.						
	NEGATIVE	12.					13.	

TAG QUESTIONS	AFFIRMATIVE  14.	NEGATIVE  15.
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[illegible]

## FOREWORD TO THE STUDENT

The purpose of this course is to help you learn how to learn English by yourself while you are in the United States. It will provide you with a basis of English structures, and the knowledge of where and how to expand that knowledge on your own.

This course does not contain a fixed amount of material, it will be structured to a large degree on the basis of your own particular needs and interests. Therefore, it is important to understand that the teacher will not teach or give you anything in the way that normal courses do. You must provide the interest and desire to learn, explore and discover as much as possible about the English language. Your teacher will be your helper and guide as you learn, and soon you will be able to continue learning without a teacher. How much you learn, and how fast you learn it will depend on how much time you have, and how much work you are willing to put into it.

The course will consist of some basic structures and vocabulary, but mostly you will learn how to operate in a variety of situations that you may encounter living in an English speaking community: how to use a telephone, go shopping or use the Post Office. You will also learn how to use each of these situations in order to learn more English from them, by yourself.

There is no text or workbook for the student in this course. However, the teacher will give you summaries of all the material that you cover. You can put these summaries together as your own reference book.

## AL ESTUDIANTE

El propósito de este curso es entrenar a Ud. para que aprenda inglés por si mismo durante su permanencia en los Estados Unidos. Es te curso le proporcionará una base de las estructuras del inglés e in formación de donde y como puede Ud. ampliar sus conocimientos.

El presente curso no está compuesto de una cantidad específica de material, sino que está organizado casi totalmente en base a sus propias necesidades e intereses. Por lo tanto, es importante que Ud. entienda que el maestro no enseñará o presentará nada en la misma for ma que los cursos normales y corrientes lo hacen. Está de su parte poner todo su interés y deseo por aprender, investigar y descubrir tanto como sea posible acerca del idioma inglés. El maestro le brindará su ayuda y orientación en el transcurso de su aprendizaje, y en un corto período de tiempo Ud. estará en capacidad de continuar su aprendizaje sin la ayuda directa de un maestro. La rapidez y la magnitud de su aprendizaje dependerá del tiempo que Ud. disponga y de su dedicación.

El curso contiene algunas estructuras y vocabulario básicos, sin embargo, Ud. aprenderá más que todo como desenvolverse en una variedad de situaciones que Ud. encontrará cuando viva en una comunidad angloparlante; por ejemplo: como utilizar el teléfono, salir de compras o hacer uso de los servicios de correos. Por otra parte, Ud. también aprenderá a utilizar todas y cada una de estas situaciones para aumentar sus conocimientos del Inglés.

Este curso no va acompañado por libro de texto ni por cuaderno de ejercicios. De todas maneras, el maestro le dará resúmenes de mate rial estudiado. Ud. puede coleccionar estos resúmenes y tener así su propio libro de referencia.

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Harper and Row, Publishers  
49 E. 33rd st., New York, N.Y.  
1968

Good reference sections  
on articulatory phonetics,  
concise grammar, and  
writing forms.

PRONUNCIATION CONTRASTS IN ENGLISH

Don L.F. Nilsen, Allen Pace Nilsen  
Simon and Schuster, Inc.  
Education Division  
1 W. 39th st., New York, N.Y.  
1971

Excellent as a source of  
minimal pair drills and  
other work on pronuncia-  
tion.

SR ORIENTATION IN AMERICAN ENGLISH SERIES

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Institute of Modern Languages, Inc.  
1212 st. N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
1971

Good source of operations  
and role play situations.

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