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Planning as an Adaptive Behavior: An Overview of My Experiences in Two Distinct ESOL Environments

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PLANNING AS AN ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR:

An Overview of My Experiences in Two Distinct ESOL Environments

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FOREWORD

At the beginning of my seven weeks of practice teaching at Hartford Public High School, I attempted to use a strictly oral approach. Because of discipline problems which seemed to be at least partially related to this approach, I began to turn to the textbook for reading and writing exercises. I found, however, that the textbook alone was inadequate in providing enough explanations and different exercises, and that the material provided was exceedingly dull. In this paper I am trying to evaluate my experience from the moment I entered the classroom with a preconceived approach based on one prior experience, through the changes that were dictated by the reality I found within the classroom, and on to ideas for improving my adaptability as a teacher.

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I practice taught for seven weeks--2 October-17 November--at Hartford Public High School in Hartford, Connecticut.

Hartford Public High School has two separate programs for Spanish speaking students. One is the MAS (More Alternatives for Students) program, designed for slow learners. The MAS students are divided into Spanish-dominant and English-dominant classes. A few subjects are taught in both English and Spanish, and there are English language and grammar classes. The students receive high school credit for all classes they take in the MAS program, but unfortunately it is designed to be only a one-year program and there is no transition period. The students move on to regular classes (taught only in English by teachers who speak only English) the following year. So the program makes a good beginning, but leads straight to dropping out of school as soon as the students are old enough to do so.

The other program, with which I was involved, is the ESL program, or English Orientation, as it is called there. This program is designed for all Spanish speaking students not in the MAS program, and all other non-English speaking students who are not able to go into regular high school classes. There are two ESL teachers and two ESL classes; but rather than having one class spend an entire day with

one teacher, they alternate, going first period to one teacher, second period to the other teacher, third period back to the original teacher, and so on for five periods. Sixth period the pattern is broken and they go to physical education classes or to study hall. Of the two classes, my master teacher, Mrs. Mary Pierce, had the absolute beginners periods one, three, and five. The other class, which she had periods two and four, was more advanced.

There was, I believe, an oral test used to determine the placement of the students in one class or the other. Although the test did separate fairly well those students who knew quite a few of the grammatical points from those who knew none at all, those who were in between seemed to be placed arbitrarily in one class or the other. This arbitrary placement was difficult on students and teachers alike, as it made the range of knowledge in each class so very wide. In spite of this, however, it was easy to see that one class was, on the whole, ahead of the other, in knowledge if not use, of grammar and vocabulary.

Because I was working with Mary Pierce and not with the other teacher, I found that I identified more with the beginning class than with the more advanced class. The beginners were with us during homeroom every morning as well as the three class periods when we taught them; the more advanced class spent only periods two and four in room 130, which was my home for those seven weeks.

After simply observing for my first day at Hartford Public High School, I spent five or ten minutes on the second day presenting a minimal pair drill at the beginning of period one, and again at the beginning of period two. During the next week I took over the first three periods entirely. I had, therefore, two hours (periods one and three) with the beginners, and one hour (period two) with the more advanced students. Periods four and five I stayed in the room watching Mary's techniques and methods and being an extra resource person for the students. Period six, Mary's free period, we discussed that day's lessons and plans for the next day.

My students were mainly Puerto Rican and Portuguese--all were either Spanish or Portuguese speakers--between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. Nearly all of them, even in the beginning class, had had some contact with English in their schools before coming to the United States, but only in reading and writing, and that apparently was strictly grammatical: conjugating regular verbs and memorizing irregular verbs, etc.

Unlike the students in the MAS program, these students received no credit for their work and motivation was low among all the students. At home, with their families and friends and neighborhood grocery stores, they all spoke their native language. At school they spent five hours a day studying English and receiving no credit. Outside of

school they did not need English. In school they studied English for no credit other than for the privilege of passing into regular classes in which they would need English.

My approach to the classes was of no particular method or technique. I intended to make oral work predominate over written by various techniques: question/answer, commands to be carried out by the students (e.g., Go to the window.), and stories to listen to followed by questions to answer.

I intended to begin by asking questions myself for the students to answer chorally and individually, and would then turn the exercise over to them to ask each other (and me, if they felt so inclined). When I felt that several students had at least a basic idea of the questions and answers I would divide the class into small groups, making sure to include in each group at least one of the quicker students, while I would move from group to group, answering questions, settling arguments, providing new information when asked, and generally making sure they were all trying, at least, to use English.

I would follow the same procedure with the commands and have the students in and out of their seats obeying them. Grammatically I would try to follow the Situational Reinforcement pattern, beginning with past tense and moving from there to the present progressive. As to the substance of the Situational Reinforcement material, I wanted to make changes, although the setting of a classroom is fairly confined: there

are doors and windows to open and close, lights to turn on and off, and the blackboard to write on and erase.

I would write my own stories for them (hopefully relevant to the interests of the students), incorporating the grammatical concepts and vocabulary of the lesson, accompanied by a picture, and followed by questions which could be used for written as well as oral review.

We would work on pronunciation with minimal pair drills using the following pattern: first the words would be printed on the board in two columns, as follows:

I	II
nut	not
hug	hog
cup	cop

The students would then listen while I said all the words in column I, and then would repeat them after me one by one. We would follow the same pattern for column II. I would then say the words in pairs (nut-not, hug-hog, etc.) while the students listened and then repeated. I would then say two words, perhaps a pair (e.g., hug-hog) or perhaps just one word repeated (e.g., hog-hog) and ask the class if they sounded the same or different. After several examples of this, I would then say one word only and ask the class to tell me if the word was from column I or column II.

Both chorally and individually we would work on grammatical points by means of substitution and transformation

drills. For example, to get the feel of subject-verb agreement, I would change the subject of a given sentence and the class would change the verb to agree with the new subject, and would repeat the entire sentence:

Mrs. F.: John is going home.
Class: John is going home.
Mrs. F.: The girls.
Class: The girls are going home.

To teach prepositions, I would employ a technique I remember seeing Dr. Gattegno use during his demonstration of the Silent Way, using books (instead of rods) stacked on top of, under, next to, in front of, and behind each other. The students would repeat chorally and individually, and individual students would restack the books and ask their classmates to describe the new pattern.

If the exercises and stories were pertinent, then I felt it wouldn't be difficult even in the beginning class to inaugurate meaningful conversation as part of the prepared lesson. I could begin by asking what individuals did yesterday after school or what they were going to do tomorrow after school, and from that beginning we could develop some semblance, at least, of conversation.

Since these were my ideas before I even entered Hartford Public High School, they were necessarily based on my only previous teaching experience: two months in a small town in Mexico last winter.

For my three classes in Mexico--all beginners, or nearly so, and all voluntary students--I used Situational Reinforce-

ment, with a small amount of directed composition for the most advanced students.

Because I depended heavily on the Situational Reinforcement books, lesson planning was held at a minimum. I was fortunate in my students--they accepted anything and everything that we did and presented no demands for quick-paced, varied lessons.

Nevertheless, for my second teaching attempt I determined not to follow my previous experience but to use as many different books and as many different ideas and techniques as I could. There is much about Situational Reinforcement that I really like, however, and I did not intend to drop it altogether. Instead I decided to use it, carrying it as far as possible toward a student-oriented classroom and free conversation, but not make it the one and only focal point of the lessons.

These, then, were my plans when I went for my first day of school at Hartford Public High School on Monday, 2 October 1972.

The first Situational Reinforcement commands I gave were for the students to open and close their books. They picked up the meaning of the command immediately, and to the question: "What did he do?" they responded chorally and correctly. After a choral drill I attempted to elicit individual responses from the students. They were more inclined, however, to say nothing at all or to make a remark in Spanish which was greeted

by laughter from the rest of the class. When I pressed further for individual responses to these same questions which they had already answered chorally, I received only more remarks and laughter from the students. For variety, and hoping that activity would calm them down, I asked a student to open the door. The Spanish remarks became louder: the student was being urged to leave the room. Interpreting this behavior from the students as a test to see what reaction they could get from me and how far they could go, I calmly asked the student to close the door and sit down. I was relieved to have him obey and the room quiet down. But still, I could get no individual responses from them. I suppose the explanation for Arnaldo's returning to the room at my request is that he was more afraid to face, alone, the hall monitor than the class as a whole was afraid to face me.

I tried one day to initiate a conversation during the last few minutes of one class by asking the students to tell me about themselves: how long had they been in the United States; how long in Hartford; what did they want to study when they passed out of English Orientation; what were their ambitions? At first the room became very quiet; then students all turned to one another and began to laugh and talk among themselves in Spanish and Portuguese. Specific questions to specific individuals were answered, briefly and to the point, Nothing was volunteered.

At first this reaction on the part of the class surprised me. Before class I was usually surrounded by students wanting to know, in Spanish, about me and my family and wanting to talk about themselves. During class, however, the student-teacher relationship apparently stifled personal communication.

I'm rather proud of my stories. For the most part, I simply adapted the readings from the first book of Situational Reinforcement and put a copy of the picture on the overhead projector, but in one or two cases I really did write my own stories, even if I adapted it to fit the SR picture. I typed the story and the comprehension questions on the same page and gave a copy to each student. The picture I put on the overhead projector, but each student also had his own copy to keep with the story and questions. I read the story, pointing out the characters in the picture at the same time. The initial reading was followed by an explanation with gestures and synonyms, and then by another reading. After answering the questions orally the students wrote the answers while I moved among them to help those who needed it.

The minimal pair drills were also successful (in the more advanced class though not with the beginners, who were bored by it), and after the advanced students became familiar with the exercise as I originally outlined it, I added minimal sentences (e.g., He gave me a HUG/HOG.) which, after making sure they understood them thoroughly, I had them

write on the board.

I don't believe any of the students had done any substitution or transformation drills previously, but they caught onto the technique quickly and we did many drills in this manner.

By the beginning of the third week, my original intentions were undergoing major revisions. My original approach could best be characterized as student-oriented, with myself in the background for resource. I soon found that this was impossible and that my lessons had to be teacher-oriented in order to keep English the focal point of classroom activities.

But it was not only necessary to keep the exercises teacher-oriented. I also discovered that I had to keep the entire class together, as in responses they could give chorally. Not only would they not listen to one another or learn from each other's mistakes, but the moment one student was asked to respond individually was the signal to the rest of the class that they could occupy themselves in other ways.

In three instances only I was able to move to the background and let the class carry on, and all three were possible only with the more advanced class.

The first of these was a version of the game of Twenty Questions, which I initiated by thinking of one of the students while they asked questions regarding the clothing of the student until they were able to guess who the student

was. There was no limit to the number of questions asked, but all questions had to be answered by either "yes" or "no." After the students asked me questions a couple of times, I turned the game completely over to them, and they were quite enthusiastic about it.

To give the students composition exercises I cut Henry (an almost entirely non-verbal comic strip) comic strips out of the newspaper and asked them to write a story around the actions of the characters. After doing one all together while I wrote on the overhead projector, I then divided them into groups with each group getting a different strip to work on together while I moved from group to group. Other times I had them all work on the same strip individually. The result was the same. While I was working with one group or individual, the others would turn to each other with their questions, and any question that no student could answer was then referred to me. I was always hoping that I could turn the entire exercise over to the class from the very beginning and have one of the students write on the overhead projector the story that the class wrote as a whole, but none of the students were ever willing to try that.

When I tried a peanut butter sandwich operation I was once more able to move somewhat to the background. After going through it a couple of times with words and gestures, I let a few of the students make the sandwiches according to my directions. I then made more sandwiches according to

their directions, and insisted that their directions be precise (e.g., I spread peanut butter on the back of my hand when they didn't tell me to spread it on the bread). Then they took over completely, one student making the sandwich while another gave the directions. Finally, I put some key words on the board and had them write out the directions which I then collected, read aloud, and followed: precisely where they were precise, and with variations where they were not.

Except for those three exercises with the more advanced class, then, I kept all lessons teacher-oriented and avoided asking for actions--i.e., open the door; go to the window--of individuals.

I also dropped my idea of following the grammatical outline of Situational Reinforcement and instead began to structure my lessons around the textbook which the students already had: English This Way, prepared by English Language Services, Inc. For several reasons this was a very important step. For one thing, it built on what they had already had prior to my entering their classroom, and they were already familiar with its methods and presentations. It also gave them a sense of security and of visible achievement to be able to see that today they had done pages 49 and 50 and were therefore two pages ahead of yesterday.

With the books in their hands, therefore, proving that they were indeed learning something and making some progress,

they were more willing to do oral exercises and to do things that were not in the book.

I found that use of the textbook made discipline, formerly the worst of my problems, much easier to handle. Before, with the emphasis on oral work, the classroom atmosphere had been one of playtime or funtime; and while I wanted English class to be enjoyable for the students, I wasn't prepared to allow English class to become a period of everyone doing what he wanted to--in Spanish and Portuguese and the international language of paper wads! When I started using the book, I also changed the emphasis from strictly oral to equal emphasis on oral and written work. Written work, like progress through the book, was visible achievement and "real" learning, and as such was more acceptable to the students and more worthy of their attention.

From the book I led them through conversations and repetition drills, and gave them some written exercises. From other books, which I borrowed from Mary's library, I adapted exercises and drills (and, occasionally, entire lessons) which I gave them orally or to be written, or a combination of both when I did the exercise with them on the overhead projector and they wrote their own copies at the same time.

I found that the textbook was well-adapted for high school students and I made extensive use of it. At the same time, however, I found that I needed quite a bit of supple-

mentary material to use along with the exercises and drills in the textbook.

I often found that for some concepts there weren't enough written exercises presented, or that there were two or three different exercises which were all exactly alike. In the latter case the students either became bored by the repetition before they learned the concept or the drill became mechanical and they didn't know why they made the changes, even if they did so correctly. Other times, even the introductory exercises for a concept were too difficult for the class. In any case, I often found myself looking for new and different exercises and explanations in other books. Most new exercises, though, I found that I had to write myself, based on what I knew about the students and their learning difficulties and on what I knew they had already had in terms of both prior grammatical points and vocabulary.

Because the exercises from the book as well as those I wrote or adapted were composed mainly of isolated sentences using the concept under study at the moment, I tried to make extensive use of my little stories. The main point of the stories was to use English in a meaningful way and to show how the concept was used other than in a specific drill. I found that while the students seemed to understand the sentences in the drills, when they had the same sentences in a story, they no longer understood them. Also, many of them

were unable to connect the questions back to the story, even with both the story and the questions printed on the paper in front of them.

The things I felt were most difficult--whether because the concept was a difficult one or because the exercise was complicated--I did from the overhead projector first, so that everyone could do it together, and afterwards gave them similar exercises to do individually. There were still many mistakes on the individual papers and not everyone was paying attention to the exercise while it was being done on the overhead projector, but I always felt that they did pay more attention to that than to a strictly oral exercise. Besides, not everyone participated in the oral responses while nearly everyone did fill out his own copy of the exercise done on the overhead projector.

The above-mentioned exercises comprised the main part of our lessons. I found that I was having to spend a lot of time planning and writing exercises, as well as having to type them up specially for the overhead projector and to make copies for the students. This was the main difference between my teaching in Mexico and that in Hartford: the time and effort that went into the planning in the latter case in order to have varied lessons, and also in order to have enough different exercises to pull a quick switch in case the students rejected something I had planned.

After two very different teaching experiences, I'm looking forward to my next experience, both with ideas I have gained from the past and with new ideas that have grown from old ones.

One thing I have learned is that the classroom techniques a teacher uses don't depend entirely on the teacher and the teacher's personality, but also on the background of the class and the personality of the class as a whole. My students in Mexico not only tolerated but wanted a great deal of oral work, while my Hartford students only tolerated a small amount of it and preferred written work.

There were many differences between the classes which might account for this. For one thing, the Mexicans were all in class voluntarily while the Hartford students were not. My Mexican classes were much smaller than my Hartford classes. The age range was much greater in Mexico: in one class the youngest student was ten; the oldest, thirty-five. In Mexico, I had my own classes; in Hartford, I taught in someone else's classroom. In Mexico, I saw my students in social situations outside of the classroom while in Hartford we had a much stricter teacher-pupil relationship.

Besides these obvious differences, there are many more subtle differences between any two classes. I know from talking to Mary that what one class enjoyed, the class the following year might not tolerate, although they would seem to be of similar backgrounds and ages.

I know there will be differences in some techniques, such as how much work is done on the blackboard. In Hartford, I was fortunate in having the overhead projector and, also, in having a class that would pay attention to it (Mary said she has had classes that went to sleep if she used the overhead projector!), because this eliminated having to turn my back on the class and stretch to write on the board, and I found it easier to write neatly on the overhead projector than on the blackboard.

I feel that the differences between my classes in Mexico and those in Hartford are partly responsible for the problems I encountered in Hartford. After my Mexican experience I had more confidence in my ability to handle a classroom, but I was nevertheless ill-prepared in that I was relying too heavily on only one method. I was not prepared to meet the class as a unique situation, a classroom of individuals, but was more inclined to generalize from my one previous experience and insist on treating the Hartford students to a playback of a Mexican classroom.

I had many ideas when I entered the Hartford class, some which I had used in Mexico and some which I had not, but the general pattern and emphasis were still the same. After I got into the teaching, of course, I was forced to make the changes outlined above, and this, I believe, was the start of my growth as a teacher.

As I got more into the teaching at Hartford Public High School, the changes came naturally as I struggled to adapt myself and my teaching to the students and to the reality of the situation. Looking back over the experience as a whole, I can now see that the most important thing I learned was the uniqueness of each individual class and teaching situation and the need for adaptability.

To reach this general goal of adaptability, I have been researching specific techniques to give myself a wider range of varied activities to offer my future students. One aspect I'm interested in developing now is composition, because I've spent so much time in the past working with oral techniques.

At Hartford Public High School I had one class write compositions based on Henry comic strips, which are non-verbal. The students' instructions were simply to tell what happened in each of the four frames. I tried to have them ask several questions first, relating to what was happening, so that they would then be sure to incorporate all their ideas into the paragraph, but they seemed to find that much more difficult than simply writing a sentence about each picture. When I wrote the questions for them they tended to simply answer the questions, rather than write a cohesive paragraph. In fact, some of them never did write a paragraph at all but instead listed four numbered sentences.

I believe that writing is a very important part of the curriculum in the ESL classroom. In the case of my students at Hartford Public High School, not only did they need English to be able to understand, and to be understood by, their future teachers in regular high school classes, but they also needed to be able to write their assignments, papers, and compositions in every regular high school (and college, for some of them) class that they may take.

There is a pertinent article in the TESOL Quarterly, Volume 6, Number 1: "Teaching Writing in the ESOL Classroom: Techniques of Controlled Composition," by Christina Bratt Paulston. She describes several different techniques which are quite fascinating, even when just reading descriptions of them. I'm really interested in trying out some of them soon.

I have already tried a version of one of the techniques which Mrs. Paulston describes, the conversion paragraph, but it is a version which she does not like. When in Mexico, I gave my most advanced class some composition exercises from Lois Robinson's Guided Writing and Free Writing: A Text in Composition for English as a Second Language. These exercises consisted of a model paragraph of yes/no questions, and directions to the student to rewrite the selection as a paragraph of affirmative (or negative) sentences.

I wrote the following as an example of this type of conversion exercise:

> Is Hartford Public High School a large school? Does it have students who speak several different languages? Do the students come from Puerto Rico, Portugal, and other countries?

The student's paragraph of affirmative sentences would be as follows:

> Hartford Public High School is a large school. It has students who speak several different languages. The students come from Puerto Rico, Portugal, and other countries.

With a similar paragraph the students might be asked to use only negative sentences.

Mrs. Paulston's objection to this type of exercise is that both the model and the student's final paragraph employ unnatural (though not ungrammatical) language patterns. I completely agree with the objection as it is something I felt very keenly when I was assigning these exercises in Mexico, and that is why I was so interested to find her article in the TESOL Quarterly.

This technique of providing a model for the students to adapt can be used effectively, however, in different ways. Mrs. Paulston cites several examples which she considers to be excellent.

The substitution conversion calls for a model paragraph (or just a sentence) in good, natural English. In the instructions the student is asked to change a key word or phrase and then to make all other changes which are necessary to keep the paragraph from becoming nonsense, but at the same time to use the same grammatical structures that are

used in the model paragraph. The model may be made up by the teacher, or it could be taken from any example of good and interesting English.

The following paragraph from "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" by Ernest Hemingway could be used for a model.

> Mrs. Macomber looked at Wilson quickly. She was an extremely handsome and well-kept woman of the beauty and social position which had, five years before, commanded five thousand dollars as the price of endorsing, with photographs, a beauty product which she had never used. She had been married to Francis Macomber for eleven years.*

If the instructions call for the change of "Mrs. Macomber" to "Mr. Macomber" in the first sentence, the student's paragraph might read as follows:

> Mr. Macomber looked at Wilson quickly. He was an extremely handsome and well-kept man of the style and social position which had, five years before, commanded five thousand dollars as the price of endorsing, with photographs, a shaving lotion which he had never used. He had been married to Frances Macomber for eleven years.

As in the substitution conversion, the transformation conversion calls for a model paragraph in good English with natural language patterns. The transformation which the student performs in rewriting the paragraph might be to change active voice to passive voice, to change direct to

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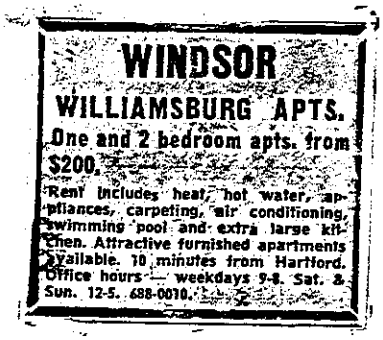
*Ernest Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," The American Tradition in Literature, Vol. II, ed. Sculley Bradley, Richmond Croom Beatty, and E. Hudson Long, 3rd ed. (New York, 1967), p. 1456.

indirect discourse, to change affirmative statements to the negative, or other grammatical changes similar to the above.

A composition exercise which Mrs. Paulston cites, less controlled than the above, might have a model paragraph describing something in the United States or in Hartford. The students would then be instructed to write their own paragraphs about something in their own country. For example, the model paragraph might describe a typical, three-bedroom house in the United States and the students' instructions would be to describe the house or apartment where they had lived before moving to the United States.

Before I came across the TESOL Quarterly article, I was already considering the following ideas.

Newspaper advertisements could be used in a highly effective manner as composition exercises. For example, the students could be asked to rewrite an ad for an apartment for rent in paragraph form. This ad for Williamsburg Apartments in Windsor could be rewritten as follows:



There are one- and two-bedroom apartments available at the Williamsburg Apartments for $200 or more. The rent includes the heat, hot water, appliances, carpeting, air conditioning, a swimming pool, and an extra large kitchen. The apartments are furnished attractively.

The Williamsburg Apartments are located in Windsor, just ten minutes away from Hartford. For more information, call 688-0010, weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., or Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5:00 p.m.

The following want ad could be rewritten in the same manner, or the students could be asked to write a letter applying for the job and giving their qualifications and citing previous experience (which could be fictional).

The students could then exchange letters and, as the director of personnel, could reply and ask for an interview with the applicant. The exercise could then be carried a step further and become conversational, as the students take turns interviewing one another.

The preceding exercises can be graded from the very difficult to the very easy and can therefore be used with

classes ranging from advanced to beginning. An intriguing idea for promoting interest among the younger, slower, or very beginning students is to have them cutting out words from magazines or newspapers.

In the very beginning, the student might be simply looking for one-word captions for pictures, such as:

This could be followed by phrases, then sentences, and the exercise could be continued until the student is "writing" an entire paragraph with words cut out of magazines.

From Mexico to Hartford I have grown and changed as a teacher in many ways. From very limited lesson planning in Mexico I've gone to quite extensive planning in Hartford. As yet, however, my planning has depended on the two types of classrooms I'm familiar with: the voluntary students in Mexico and the students in Hartford who had to be in class.

My goal now is to develop a repertoire extensive enough that I can enter any classroom and know that I am prepared to be responsive to the students' needs.

With my past experiences in mind and the new ideas which I have been gathering at every opportunity, I am eagerly anticipating the next step towards attaining my goal: another experience in the ESL classroom.

Appendix A

The following is an example of a one-hour lesson drawn entirely from English This Way, Unit Six, pages 52-59.

I. Repeat orally.

Teacher: Is that man an engineer?

Class: Is that man an engineer?

Teacher: No, he's not.

Class: No, he's not.

Teacher: Is Miss Vance a nurse?

Class: Is Miss Vance a nurse?

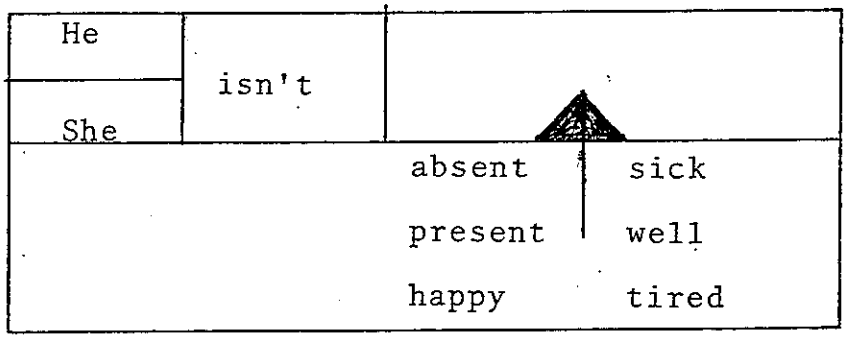
Teacher: No, she's not.

Class: No, she's not.

Teacher: She's a secretary.

Class: She's a secretary.

II. Grammar on overhead projector. This is also oral repetition.



Teacher: He isn't absent.

Class: He isn't absent.

Teacher: She isn't well.

Class: She isn't well.

This is also a substitution drill:

Teacher: He isn't absent.

Class: He isn't absent.

Teacher: She.

Class: She isn't absent.

Teacher: Well.

Class: She isn't well.

III. Conversation.

Fred: Hello, Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Good evening.
Are you one of my students?

Fred: Yes, I am.

Mr. Grant: What's your name?

Fred: My name is Fred Johnson.

Mr. Grant: Are you in the morning class?

Fred: No, sir. I'm in the afternoon class.

Mr. Grant: Oh, yes. How are you?

Fred: Fine, thanks.

Mr. Grant: Well, see you later, Fred.

Fred: Yes, sir. Good-bye.

I began by saying each line, and the students repeated it after me. After a couple of times through the whole conversation this way, I would say Fred's lines while the class as a whole said Mr. Grant's lines. Then we would switch and I would say Mr. Grant's lines and the students would say Fred's. I then tried to divide the class in half, with half the room

reading Fred and the other half reading Mr. Grant. Unfortunately, only half the students, all sitting on the same side of the room, were willing to do this. Next, I picked two volunteers from the class to read alone. This was usually successful: many of the students enjoyed the distinction of reading alone, and to my surprise, a good part of the class was willing to listen. Usually, three or four pairs of students would take turns at reading individually.

IV. Writing practice.

Change these sentences to sentences with not.

Example: He's a student. He's not a student.

1. It's a piece of paper.
2. He's a dentist.
3. It's Sunday.
4. You're a soldier.
5. They're watches.

Change these sentences with not to affirmative sentences.

Example: He isn't a student. He's a student.

1. He isn't a lawyer.
2. She isn't a cook.
3. They aren't words.
4. I'm not on time.
5. You're not late.

I would go over the example with them on the board. Each student would have a book with the sentences and a sheet of paper for his new sentences. I would then walk among them,

ready to answer questions and give individual help to any of the students who needed it. I would usually give them fifteen to twenty sentences, and not more than two different exercises. The writing practice would take about the last twenty minutes of the class period.

Appendix B

Attached are three examples of the stories I presented to the class. The pictures are from Situational Reinforcement, Book I, with the stories and questions adapted to meet the needs of my beginning students. All three stories illustrate and contrast be+ing and the going to future. When I joined the class, the students were already familiar with the be+ing concept. Teaching the going to future was my first major assignment with the beginning class.

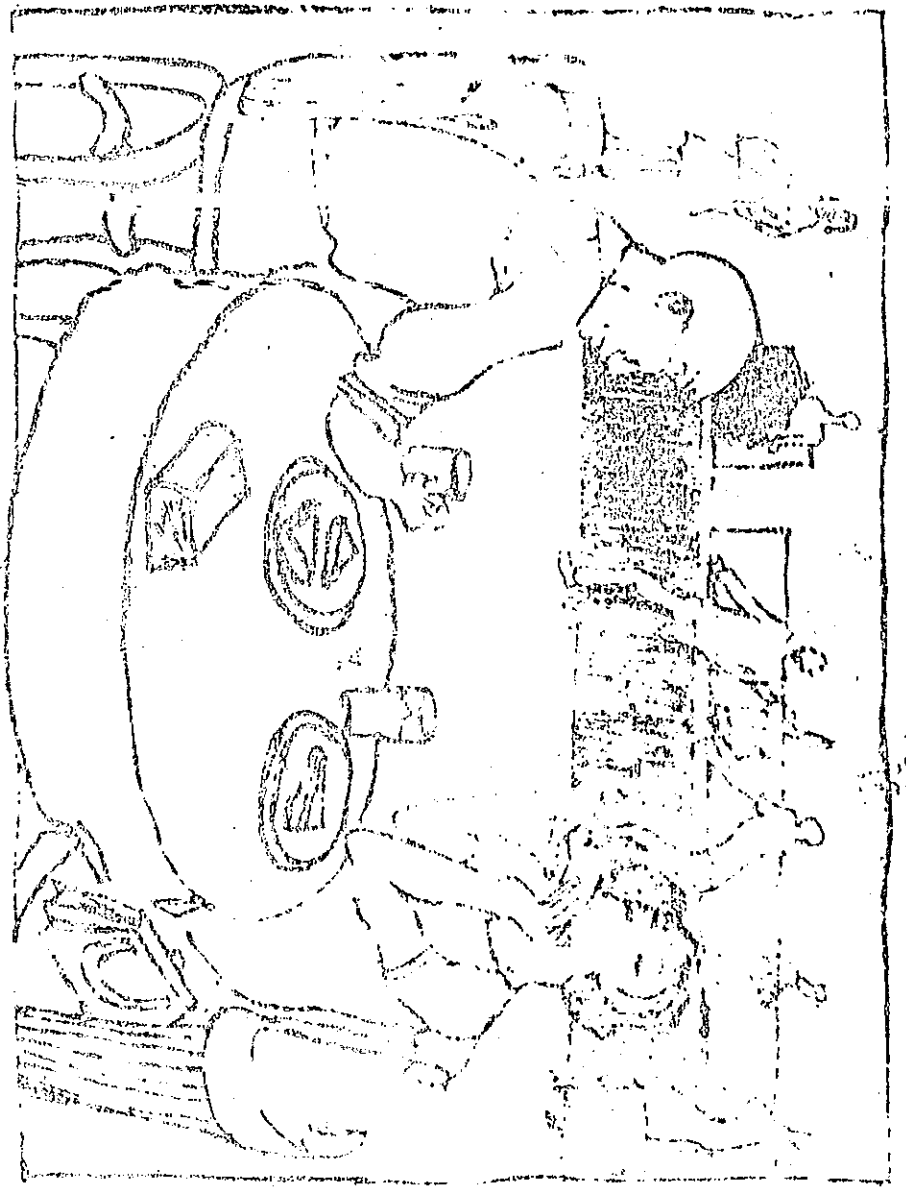
It's a cloudy day. It's going to rain. It's 2:30. The class is over. The students are going to go home.

The teacher's briefcase is on the desk. The teacher is putting his books in his briefcase. Susan is holding her umbrella. She's going to walk home. Fred is putting on his boots. He is going to walk home with Susan.

Dick is putting on his coat. He's going to drive home. Pat is going to go with him.

QUESTIONS

1. Is it a sunny day?
2. Is it going to snow?
3. What's it going to do?
4. What time is it?
5. What are the students going to do?
6. What's on the desk?
7. What's the teacher doing?
8. What's Susan holding?
9. What's she going to do?
10. Is Fred putting on his boots?
11. What's he going to do?
12. Is Dick putting on his boots?
13. Is he going to drive home?
14. Is Pat going to go with him?

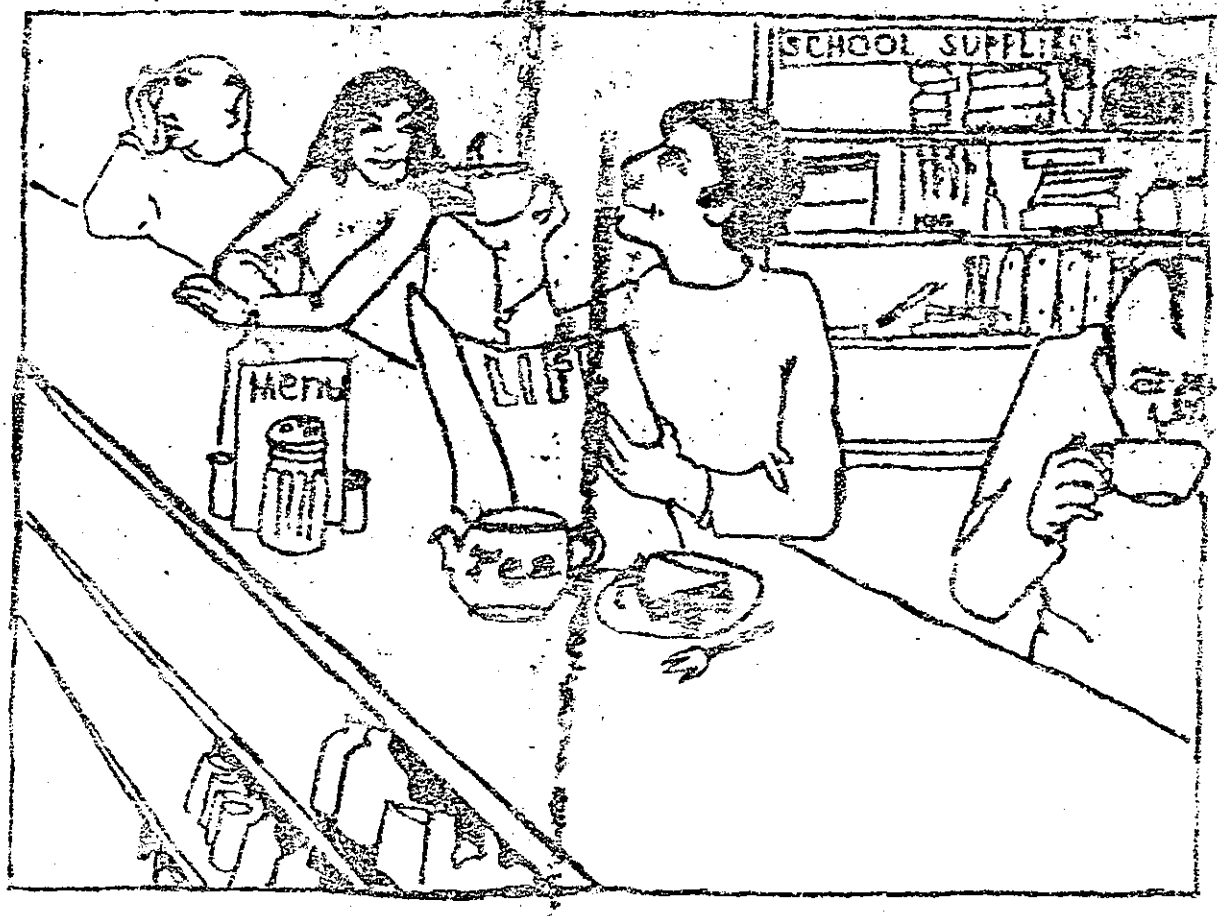


Mary and Fred are in the cafeteria. They are sitting at a table. Mary's pocketbook is on a chair. Fred's book is on the table.

It's time for lunch now. Mary is eating a sandwich and drinking milk. Mr. Brown is eating a sandwich but he isn't drinking milk. He is drinking coffee.

The bell is going to ring soon. After lunch Mary and Fred are going to go to class.

1. Where are Mary and Fred?
2. Are they sitting at a table?
3. Where is Mary's pocketbook?
4. Where is Fred's book?
5. What is Mary eating?
6. Is she drinking coffee?
7. Is Fred eating a sandwich?
8. What is he drinking?
9. Is the bell going to ring soon?
10. What are Mary and Fred going to do after lunch?


SCHOOL SUPPLIES
Menu
Tea

Name _____ Date _____

Joe is in the drugstore. He is sitting at the counter drinking tea and reading a magazine. He has a piece of pie too. He is in the drugstore because he is going to buy a new notebook.

Linda is sitting at the counter too. She is waiting for the waitress. She is going to eat a hamburger and drink a Coke. She is going to buy some pencils and a notebook.

Linda and Joe are going to study after they eat. Tomorrow they have a test in Spanish. They are doing very well in school because they are good students. They study hard.

1. Why is Joe in the drugstore?
2. Where is he sitting?
3. What is he doing?
4. Is he drinking coffee?
5. Is he reading a magazine?
6. Why is he in the drugstore?
7. What is he going to buy?
8. Where is Linda sitting?
9. What is she going to eat?
10. Is she going to drink a Coke?
11. When are Linda and Joe going to study?
12. Do they have a test in arithmetic?