PUBLICATION PROJECTS WITH ESL/EFL STUDENTS: A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

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This project by April A. Minerich is accepted in its present form.

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This paper is based on my experience teaching courses in which students created publications. I frequently teach both newsletter classes and memory book classes to students of other languages who are studying English in an intensive program. I have also taught classes in which ESL students produced student directories. I have participated in developing cookbooks. I also publish student work in certain classes that I teach.

It describes the process I use to do publication projects. I include theory to support the soundness of this idea in ESL/EFL instruction. The strategy for implementing the class is described. It then moves to a detailed breakdown of the newsletter project and the memory book project. Examples of both of these types of projects are shown. Other publication projects are briefly described and resources for further research are given.

**ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) Descriptors:**

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INTRODUCTION

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time. –T.S. Eliot

This Independent Professional Project (IPP) is a handbook for teachers to use as a guide when planning and implementing a publication project course for English as Second Language or English as a Foreign Language students. It is based on my own personal experiences in the classroom doing publication courses with groups of ESL students. The course consists of students working as a team to create a publication for eventual distribution. These publications might be a newspaper/newsletter, a memory book (i.e. a publication modeled on the traditional yearbook concept), a cookbook or a literary magazine. This handbook is intended to assist a teacher who has never tried a publication project before with her students. It offers a model for preparation and gives specific steps for implementing a variety of publication projects.

Background

An understanding of this subject and its application to teaching a language has come from my own experiences. I have been teaching English in Intensive English Programs (IEP’s) in the United States for over three years. Before that, I taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) in Southeast Asia for a total of four years in both public and private settings. Initially, I taught for two years in a government junior high school in the
province of Srisaket in northeastern Thailand. Later, I returned to Thailand and taught English in Bangkok for two more years.

My interest in project-based learning developed after being in the classroom for the first two years. I had a growing realization that I needed to expand and improve the challenges I offered in my classes. I pondered the question of how a teacher can engage everyone in the class activity. I experimented with project-based learning in different ways during those first years of teaching. I operated on the belief that projects were fun and if my students were relaxed and having fun, they would learn more English.

As the years have passed I have found ways to introduce publication projects in most of my classes. This is because I have been interested in journalism since the fifth grade when I worked on my first school newspaper. The class hammered out pages on an archaic typewriter. Then, we photocopied our masterpiece and distributed it to all the fifth and sixth grade students in the school. My personal involvement in publications continued into high school and beyond. I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree in English/Journalism, and have enjoyed short stints working in the field of writing and editing since then.

For me, working on the product and publishing my written work has always been very rewarding. That satisfying moment of seeing my by-line under a story and knowing the hours of hard work that went into the end product is the basis for my desire to involve my students in this process. I want them to share this feeling.

Rationale
Publication projects also bring students into the exciting realm of journalism, editing, layout/design and desktop publishing and more. When students work on this kind of project they practice using English without realizing it. They are caught up in the creative energy and camaraderie of the project. The activity engages the learner fully.

I’ve seen the project be successful in different contexts and with a variety of levels of students, even with students of very low level English. The project can be done in an elective course or as part of a core class as long as the project is student generated. It is important to note that this description of publication project work is focused on publication projects designed and created solely by students. The teacher or faculty member is merely an advisor or editor for the project. For me and for the project I am describing, there are little or no written contributions from the school faculty or administration. Students own the project.

Another factor, which has pushed me to involve students in creating publications and a reason I think the project is important for teachers to consider, is that these projects present the power of the printed word. Furthermore, freedom of speech can be experienced and tested. Students can analyze American values measured against their own values by writing for this project. At a more advanced level the project has the potential to encompass writing about social issues in the USA or in the student’s home country. The project opens a door allowing students to interact with their topic on a level that pushes their comprehension and involvement deeper. It may encourage students to become
more fully cognizant of their own belief system and how they will live in their host
country or in their home country.

I have also found that publication projects cater nicely to individual
learning styles. After reading a book by developmental psychologist, Howard
Gardner, entitled *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (Gardner, 1993), I
became aware of his earlier work on the subject entitled, *Frames of Mind: The
Theory of Multiple Intelligences.* (Gardner, 1983). In his books Gardner proposes
looking at intelligence differently and looking at how educational systems
encourage or inhibit individual learning. Gardner is opposed to the traditional
view of education and he encourages educators to consider the personal
strengths or abilities of each individual and to therefore offer educational
opportunities that can appeal to each student's strengths (Gardner, 1983, 1993).

It was in realizing that I needed to consider the Intelligences of my
students and give them the opportunity to exercise their different Intelligences
that project-based work firmly lodged in my mind. I was convinced that a
publication as the goal for project-based work would be extremely effective in my
ESL classes.

Publication projects in the area of journalism work well for me personally
because I can use my background in journalism. More importantly, my students
are challenged to use a wide variety of Intelligences and skills to create their own
publication.

Thus, undertaking a publication project presents stimulating challenges for
each student. The project invites the class to work on the language in a non-
traditional way while at the same time maximizing on personal strengths. In addition, because of the nature of the project, it presents many possibilities for expansion.

Overview

The initial chapter of this IPP provides supporting methodology from theories on teaching for publication projects. The second chapter offers more general ideas for developing the course, and it also gives a sample of the general planning calendar for the course. The ensuing chapters provide step-by-step suggestions for facilitating a newsletter, a memory book or student directory, a cookbook or other possible publications. The appendix that follows the paper includes examples of some of these publications that I have successfully completed with ESL students.

Project-based learning is an exciting journey in any classroom. The end product doesn’t develop overnight. It takes time, steady work and dedication from the entire team to reach the final destination. The destination is the day that the class distributes their work so that others can read and enjoy it. Like any trip, the journey has mountaintops and low valleys to be traversed, but, for me, the end point has always been a mountaintop.
CHAPTER 1

Theoretical Support for a Publication Project

*Writing to me is a voyage, an odyssey, a discovery, because I'm never certain of precisely what I will find.* -Gabriel Fielding

Publication projects provide a process through which ESL students can develop new skills and further utilize their existing English skills. Creating the publication is an exciting journey in which the “whole learner” (Stevick, 1988) can be involved. Support for project-based language study is found in theories developed by numerous teachers and educators in the ESL field.

The direct language benefits from this project-based English study are numerous, but the strongest arguments for the project are that students practice using all four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and the project inherently creates a framework for building community among the particular group of students. Beyond these reasons, it’s also really satisfying because of a visible, final product. The students end up with physical proof of her personal commitment and learning; additionally, the product is a tangible symbol of team effort. They also flex their critical thinking muscles when the project is completely finished through final stage feedback when they reflect on their own learning and the learning of others.

While project-based activities obviously benefit individual ESL learners and student groups, it is often also useful to recall the benefits that the
sponsoring school, institute or organization can incur through supporting experiential learning. The publication can easily become a marketing tool if it advertises an institute’s support of successful process-based education, the four skills competence of current or past students, and the technology skills that can be acquired through the school program. Nevertheless, returning focus to the direct language benefits of publication projects, foundational support and justification are supplied by the fields of linguistics, psychology and education.

**The Process of Experiential Learning**

One primary theory that supports the idea of publication projects to enhance student learning is the experiential learning cycle described in writings by David A. Kolb as well as other theorists who study human learning (Kolb, 1984). Kolb writes about four steps in the process of learning. In this process, a concrete experience, such as is seen with the activities in a publication project, is essential for the cycle to begin.

Kolb’s concept of the experiential learning process is depicted at both the macro and micro level by the publication project. At the macro-level, students move through the steps of experiential learning during the whole project from start to finish. They start with the concrete experience of joining a publication “staff” or class and they move through the stages of experiential learning.

Thus, learning is a process where knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Kolb discusses this process in which a learner is initially engaged physically with a concrete experience. (Kolb, 1984) In this first phase the learner jumps in with both feet and is immediately in the midst of a
here and now experience. With the publication project students start by joining the class and choosing a story topic that requires research. The ESL student in the publications course may need to brainstorm with classmates to reach a story topic she can be committed to. At the first meeting of a newsletter class, students are being respected as writers and staff members. The student is now in the figurative "newsroom" as a "cub reporter." All of these first activities constitute the first phase of the experiential learning cycle. These are all examples of concrete experiences.

The second phase of the experiential learning cycle is collecting information and making observations about the concrete experience (Kolb, 1984). With the publication project, gathering information is two-fold: as the student both gathers information for his/her story topic and observations about the experience of being a class member or staff member. Periodically students are asked to conference with the teacher to discuss their roles and how they feel it is going.

The third stage of the experiential learning process is formation of abstract concepts and generalizations. (Kolb, 1984) This third experiential stage in the publication project can happen throughout the project. Specifically, it is seen when the product is completed and distributed. At the time of distribution, the whole group comes together for discussion. During such feedback sessions, students generally evaluate and recognize what they learned from being a "reporter," as well as give feedback on the technical side and the publication's general layout quality. The teacher usually calls the meeting and facilitates the
discussion, asking members to share what they learned, what they liked or disliked about their experience, and ultimately what they might do differently next time.

This naturally leads to the fourth stage of the experiential learning process, active experimentation. (Kolb, 1984) The student involved in the publication project will test the things she learned in the future, but again, the student experiments throughout the work on the project. Students repeatedly test what they are learning during the project. As an example, depending on the context, after the group completes one publication they may start the process all over by beginning a second issue. In the process of doing the second issue a student may conduct another interview and try some new techniques with the interviewing process that they didn’t do the first time she tried an interview. The student will test out ways to make interviews successful and effective.

"The very nature of an interview makes it an excellent low-risk, high-gain activity for language learning. It is a pre-arranged conversation between two people in which, by mutual agreement, one person asks questions and the other answers them. This activity is designed, then, to provide a structured experience in which the student can practice listening, speaking, and note-taking skills..." (Jerald, 1989:70)

The circle within this circle or a microcosm of the experiential learning process in a publication project is offered through the many sub-activities. One such activity is the interview process. To begin, the student has the concrete experience of conducting the interview. This is, of course, carried out with preparation beforehand, which offers additional concrete experience. An
interview is an activity where a student goes through the four stages quite naturally.

After the interview, the student makes observations about her experience. She reads her notes or reviews her audio or videotape. She may begin to write her story using her notes and as she does, she reflects on not only the information she gained from the interview, but, also, on the way she felt during the experience. She may reflect on herself and on the person she was interviewing.

Through writing the story she will form abstract conceptualizations about her subject which will be reflected in her writing. She has gained confidence from her experience and she may form opinions about interviews in general or about how to collect information most effectively.

The final stage of the experiential learning process, active experimentation, occurs when the student tests ideas she gained from the experience. For example, the student may want to return to the interviewee a second time to clarify certain points. The student may test her learning by using language she gained through the interview process. She may begin to use a few new words or ideas. In the future, the student may test her learning through active experimentation by eagerly taking on another interview for a subsequent publication project.

Thus, the circle of the experiential learning process is complete and begins again and again with the next project or in future endeavors. Experiential learning is identifiable within parts of the publication project or identifiable by
looking at the whole process. During experiential learning as it applies to the publication project there will be movement back and forth between the stages. The student works on these elements throughout the process and reflects on this individually and in group feedback sessions.

**Integrating the four skills**

Another foundation block of theoretical support for the publication project in the ESL classroom is that doing this project gives teachers an opportunity to integrate four skills work. Direct language benefits are gained through extensive practice and production in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Students use listening and speaking during collaborative brainstorming and while doing interviews and interacting with the teacher and class members. Even while working on a computer individually or in a lab setting, students need to communicate with one another about the work at hand or the final product in the process of getting things accomplished. Students are constantly asking and answering questions, discussing, debating or sharing ideas in a setting where they are oblivious to the formal language objectives for the class. Students actually forget they are practicing English because they are so busy with the task.

Students use a variety of reading skills to research, edit and compare their work on the product. Reading goes hand-in-hand with writing skills practice and especially process writing. In process writing a student will write in stages and at different times share her drafts with a fellow student. (See Appendix D) Process writing is a very supportive way to write because a student interacts and shares
with other students along the way. This kind of interaction between class members is what is seen in the publication project. Moreover, publication projects help students learn to view writing as the process that it is and attend to writing issues in the most constructive sequence:

"The principle underlying this approach [process approach to writing] is that as the teachers we must establish the link between students and their writing. For many teachers and students, mechanical skills (spelling, grammar, punctuation, and so on) are what writing is. Those aspects of writing are really more like the wrapping on a gift - an important part, but not the gift itself. The process approach puts editing in perspective, as only one step in the process of writing a piece and readying it for publication." (Cassidy, n.d: 12)

Publication projects give student writers real audiences to write for and, therefore, real reason to care about each stage in the writing process.

Students accomplish the physical act of writing either by pen and paper or word processor. Using pen and paper students may write interview questions, take notes during information collection, write the story and respond with comments to peer edit or self-edit. In turn, process writing can be done at the computer and students can practice composing at the computer. Whether working with pen and paper or on the computer, students are using their reading and writing skills to accomplish the task of contributing to the publication.

Investment of the Whole Learner

A third point of theoretical backing for a publication project is that the project activates the whole learner. "To summarize, 'whole learner' materials allow and encourage students to make a much fuller self-investment than other materials do (Stevick, 1998:54)." The publication project encourages a high
degree of student investment as students interact with their subject. A student chooses a topic she is interested in, researches it, and writes about it. Additionally, the group as a whole selects a name for the project and a theme in general, and the group sets guidelines under which everyone must operate. Students are responsible for completing their individual part of the larger product by a deadline that has in some cases, been set by the group. Students elect their own leadership structures (see Chapter 2). The students have ownership and responsibility over their product, and, if, for example, a student misses a deadline, there are consequences: a writer may end up not having his or her work published. The teacher acts as facilitator, editor and coach, while the intrinsically motivated students reach their own self established objectives. As Rogers states,

"Experiential learning... has a quality of personal involvement - the whole person in both his feeling and cognitive aspects being in the learning event. It is self-initiated. Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending comes from within. It is pervasive. It makes a difference in the behavior, the attitudes, perhaps even the personality of the learner. He knows whether it is meeting his needs, whether it leads toward what he wants to know, whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance he is experiencing. The locus of evaluation, we might say, resides definitely in the learner. Its essence is meaning. When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience." (Rogers, 1969:n.p.)

Thus the teacher assists the students, but they define their own end product, and it is precisely this end product that is so important. An individual will be motivated to do this project because of the pleasure derived from having something she wrote published. Students experience additional satisfaction in
working hard on a task and completing it. The finished publication and its
distribution provide a proud moment for all the ESL students in the class as
individuals and as members of the group.

**Learning in Community**

This potential for group membership introduces the fourth point of support
for publication projects from language learning theory: the importance of
community building. Whether the class calls itself a staff or a class or a team,
when students are all working together on a publication project they form a
community. Today, educators fully recognize the value of community in the
classroom and the accompanying trusting environment that encourages the
minds of the learners to grow and develop.

A well-known writer on the subject of the inner journey of learning, Parker
J. Palmer, says that real learning occurs when a student is invited into a
relationship with the teacher, with her classmates, and with the subject. Palmer
states, "We cannot learn deeply and well until a community of learning is created
in the classroom." (Palmer, 1993:89)

Palmer emphasizes that we do not really learn by memorizing facts about
a subject, but in reality because of the communal nature of reality, we "learn best
by interacting with it." (Palmer, 1993:89)

When ESL students join a publication class, they immediately become a
member of a group that will be working closely together to create a product.
They interact with the subject of their learning in class and beyond it. Through
the guidance and influence of the teacher, this team of individuals can respectfully and honestly provide feedback for one another and assist one another to accomplish a common objective. Due to the nature of the process and the common goal, a publication project automatically forms a community.

**Appealing to different learning styles**

A fifth theoretical point of support for doing publication projects with students in an ESL classroom is that the project appeals to different learning styles. "As language teachers, we know that our students learn differently." (Reid, 1998:7) The seven intelligences are: verbal/linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical/mathematical intelligence, spatial/visual intelligence, bodily/kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence. The publication project is a lengthy process involving multi-level tasks. There is an opportunity for each participating student to find a task that she does well and develop self-confidence, which will help in all learning.

In her book, *Understanding Learning Styles in the Second Language Classroom*, Joy M. Reid lists publishing (creating class newspapers or collections of writing) under linguistic intelligence in a table pinpointing various activities that utilize multiple intelligences. (Reid, 1998) Activities in the publication project that specifically could appeal to verbal or linguistic intelligence are group discussions, peer teaching, peer editing and interviewing.

All of the intelligences can actually be covered by this kind of project. Publication projects can stimulate logical/mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, and bodily/kinesthetic intelligence through activities listed
respectively: working through logical-sequential problems; designing page lay-out and incorporating graphics; and being physically involved in interviewing, computer use, and group dynamics.

Publication projects also encourage students to develop interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence is necessary for cooperating, peer teaching, group brainstorming, conflict mediation and pair work. (Reid, 1998) Intrapersonal intelligence is called into play for independent work, checklists, self-teaching, and goal setting. A publication project invites any individual to exhibit her own unique abilities. The project will hook just about any ESL student when they read a course description because there is something for everyone working on the publication, through the combined effort of multiple intelligences a complete product will emerge that the group can be proud of and share with the larger community.

This discussion on appealing to different learning styles is not complete without the role error correction plays in publication projects. Generally, students begin the class having different individual responses to error correction but they emerge believing that errors help them learn because they are simple revisions in a long writing process rather than a loss of face. The process of designing a publication has built-in steps for correction through feedback, editing and revising. Not only does the teacher provide error correction on the final writings, but, also peer editing occurs throughout the process, which is of equal importance. Some students welcome immediate correction while others may feel
embarrassment when they feel they have made a mistake. In the publication project errors are treated as learning experiences.

As an example, there are times when the class carefully deliberates a question and agrees upon a solution. Later, if that decision is contradicted or if it becomes clear that the earlier decision was incorrect, then the individual or group accepts the change and proceeds differently. Likewise, when a student writes her story, she gives it to the class copy-editor to edit or has a classmate read over the story on the computer screen to offer error correction. The editor simply tries to keep the writer from having mistakes in the final story. Students help each other to perfect their writing so that the final, official publication will be as error free as possible because the whole staff hopes to avoid embarrassment.

Thus, mistakes made during a publication project guide the learning and the teaching. If mistakes do creep into the final document, students will be all the more ready to recognize and correct or improve upon them before the next project goes into print. With the help of a teacher's positive leadership and a secure community, students adjust to this view of errors and the team works in a positive manner to complete projects.

In summary, modern language learning theory supports the publication project as a teaching tool for ESL teachers to use in core classes and elective classes. From an educator’s perspective, the benefits for student learning from this kind of project-based classroom work have been established.

Doing a publication project is like a journey. It starts with a preparation stage where the traveler makes things ready and sets expectations. During
production stage, we actually move through the challenges and obstacles of a new territory to reach our goal. In the end, the completion stage is reaching the destination. An added joy is that we have souvenirs and memories of our shared experience to relish and reflect upon. Discussing the trip with others gives us an awareness of self-growth and group accomplishment experienced along the way.
CHAPTER 2

General Course Description

“I start off but I don’t know where I’m going; I try this avenue and that avenue, that turns out to be a dead end, this is a dead end, and so on. This march takes a long time and I have to back-track often.”
–Galway Kinnell

Chapter 2 discusses considerations in two primary elements of publication projects: context and teacher’s role. Then, a typical course syllabus is given and specific chronological stages in the project are described. The stages have helped me organize myself and maintain a smooth flow for the project work. The chapters that follow, Chapter 3 and 4, are more specific and give syllabi for two different types of publications: a newsletter and a memory book.

Context

I find that the type of publication and the style of the publication will depend on the context. I begin by considering what kind of a project might interest the proposed student group and what is feasible to undertake given the context, I discuss the idea with fellow teachers and administrators at my school. When planning, ask what would students be interested in doing? Students could do a newsletter, a memory book, a cookbook, a literary magazine or other
modifications on these themes. Determining student interest is not always an easy task but no one knows the attitude of the student body better than the teachers at the school.

The decision about whether what kind of project to do ultimately rests with the teacher because she is responsible for the project, but this decision can be made by conducting an informal survey of all the students and/or faculty at the school to find out what kind of publication project appeals to them. Perhaps, after such a survey, the level of interest would be clearer and the teacher could feel a strong mandate to designate one type of publication project to undertake.

Other Considerations in the Teaching Context

Regarding the context, there have been three aspects that have effected my planning for the course: time frame in which the project will need to be accomplished; funding for the project; and the access or amount of technology available.

Time Frame

With regards to the time frame three weeks is the shortest amount of time I would allow for working with a mixed level of intermediate and advanced students doing for example, a newsletter project, from start to distribution. Such a time frame would work well in a designated newsletter elective class that met twice a week for 90 minutes. With focused work in-class for 3 hours a week and definite out of class work, three weeks can be an optimal time for this group.

On the other hand, three weeks could be too short depending on certain factors, such as the level of the students, their amount of previous writing
and/or publishing experience, or the number of hours that the class is able to meet together in a week. If the class is actually a core class and the newsletter project is a secondary aspect of the class with concentrated work on the project only being done, for example, in the last 30 minutes of class every day, then progress is slower. It will take more time, perhaps four to six weeks, to complete one newsletter.

A more realistic time frame to complete the first newsletter publication may be four to five weeks. The pace of the class is affected by how quickly students can assimilate their tasks and produce output. An entire group of beginning level students can do the project but they need more time.

Time awareness is fundamental for teachers and students when doing a newsletter. Knowing the length of the term in which the newsletter class will be taught allows deadlines to be realistically established. How many newsletters will the class complete? This question is answered by taking into consideration the school's term length and students' abilities. In my experiences, if a teacher is working under an eight-week term schedule, the class may be able to produce two newsletters. If given a sixteen-week term then the number of newsletters might vary from four to five, depending on how quickly the students improve their skills and become comfortable with the project.

Budget or Funding

Another aspect of the context that affects a publication project is the funding available for the project. I can do a publication with just a little money for paper and photocopying or I can do the project with a larger budget, which would
make special features possible, such as color printing. The budget dictated by the context affects the style and type of publication project that a class undertakes, but it doesn’t make the project impossible unless there is absolutely no money for paper. In my teaching, one way or another I manage to find resources to support students in doing publication projects.

At one point, the institute where I was teaching really didn’t have the money to fund the project, so I decided to fund raise for the project with students' help. Sometimes fund raising is the first step to get a publication project going. We sold t-shirts and had bake sales to raise money. In some cases, after raising the necessary budget required for paper, copying, film, film developing, and computer cartridges, the project gets underway.

As another example, one time I didn’t have a strong budget because the school had to cut back. The director really wanted the class to fly so he supported the project the best way that he could. He let us copy the newsletter free with the school's photocopier on the school's paper. The students helped raise enough money to purchase film, develop the film and to help buy one printer cartridge for the computer lab's printer.

For me, it is most efficient for the project budget to be under the direction of the school director and myself, the teacher. After I have determine the availability of supporting funds, I make the decision whether I will be solely responsible for the budget or involve students in that part of the process as well. Student leaders may be able to assist in managing the publication project's budget. Depending on the language level and confidence of the student leaders.
in the class, there are times when students are involved in budgetary decision-making, thereby giving them another opportunity to learn new things and gain experience through project based study.

In the case of a rare budgetary surplus one might consider whether the budget allows the final copy of the publication to be sent out to a printer. This means that instead of being reproduced on the school's photocopy machine the final product could actually be printed up by a professional.

Budget surpluses also raise the possibility of doing the publication in color. Printing companies can easily do color reproduction but it is expensive. Most of my classes have done black and white publications because of limited budget and not enough time to raise sufficient funds for special printing. Regardless of whether the project is done in black and white or color, the students learn a great deal through the process and have pride in their project. They don't seem to mind when the product is in black and white.

Equipment and Technology

Once I know my production budget, I focus on the availability of technology at the school and to what depth it can be utilized. Having available technology, such as computers, has been a plus for me but not a necessity. When it has been possible to have a computer lab in which the publication class works, this has been ideal, but there have been times when computer weren’t as readily available. I can do the project when the class only has access to one computer. In this instance, the computer is shared and a lot of the work is done out of class as homework. Personal computers students have at home are a
great assistance, but with conscientious time management on the available computer(s) at the school the publication can be completed.

Technology effects how the teacher will proceed initially with the project. If the school has a computer lab then the progress of the project is more rapid. This is not always the case, however, I have found that even though my students are highly computer literate, they don't have English keyboard skills. Therefore, data entry on the computer takes more time and has to be factored into the planning calendar. Specifically, I have often polled the students for their level of computer skill and typing speed in English. Such polling has helped me to determine how much of the initial class time need be spent on computer skill development and to estimate actual typing times.

Additionally, I have learned which students have strong skills and would be willing to teach other students or at the least to offer assistance. I've even had students who were strong in their English keyboarding type the final draft for a fellow student. I, too, have helped individual students type their final drafts just to give them a boost and keep the deadline.

As another note about computers, if a school has installed publishing software on the computers in the computer labs, the opportunities to expand the newsletter project grow. On the other hand, learning to use publishing programs can be time consuming. I would suggest that if both teacher and students are unfamiliar with any of the special publishing software, then a better idea is to keep computer use honed down to word processing. My familiarity as well as the students' familiarity with these types of programs
affected how smoothly the process goes and how long it takes. My experience has grown, as has the students, on publishing software. We have completed a few projects completely on the computer.

For the most part, though, my classes' final copies have been laid out on actual blank layout sheets by cut and paste method. The students have communicated on the design of each page just as they would if they had all been standing around an onscreen display of a layout.

No Computer Technology

While computers are optional in successful publication courses, I have found that I needed, at the bare minimum, to have a photocopy machine available. The photocopy machine allows reproduction of the final product for distribution.

If there isn't a computer lab available for the students then the project can go more quickly, even though, as I mentioned, the final product has a more homespun look. When student submissions are handwritten, the stories are physically placed on the layout sheets with photos and artwork. Students work together to design the pages and everything including typesetting is done by hand. As the availability of technology grows in the world in general, I feel confident in offering the steps of this project based on the assumption that teacher and students can use a computer to complete the final draft of the whole publication.

However, especially when working in developing countries, access to computers may not be available. There have been times when doing publication
projects that I have had students hand write parts of the project. The important point here is that the absence of technology hasn't negatively affected the final product. I have used what was available and had success. Even if the project has a homespun look, a publication project will be rewarding for students. The key is that the final draft be physically readable. If the context demands that students hand write their final copy of their work for the project, then the publication must merely be double-checked to insure that the readers can read the handwriting. In a situation like this adding student artwork can significantly enhance the product. Hand written products would be assembled and then reproduced on the photocopy machine for distribution to the school members just as a computer-generated final product would be.

Photography equipment

Yet another thing I always consider is the availability and type of photography equipment at my school. I don't think this equipment is mandatory to do the project, but pictures and graphic elements enhance the complete product. It's convenient when the school has a camera that the class can use because then the only additional concern is film purchase and development. The teacher can buy either color or black and white film for the students to take pictures. The decision depends on the budget and final reproduction method. Black and white photos can be produced from color film.

On the other hand, if the school doesn't provide a camera, I have found students will often volunteer use of their own cameras, digital cameras and even video-recording cameras. With a digital camera the expense is based on the print
cartridges needed for the computer printer. But many schools and/or individuals don't have digital cameras, so, when there hasn't been an available digital camera we have just used a conventional camera to shoot photos. It takes a little more time to have the conventional film developed and of course it takes funds to pay for the developing, but these aren't insurmountable challenges to the project.

Understanding and assessing all of these factors regarding the context have helped me plan and implement the class. Whenever I have done a project with students I have had to be confident about these details long before the first day of class.

**Teacher's Role**

I play many different roles during the publication project process. Even during one class meeting there are times when my role changes. On the whole, I tend to wear one of three hats: Advisor, Facilitator or Director, depending on what is most helpful for a particular group of students.

In addition, my personality and my teaching style can't help but define my role in the class. I like to have a very organized structure under which to freely operate, so this is reflected in my teaching when I set the class up initially. On the other hand, I prefer not to micromanage, so I ten to provide an activity and let students figure out the details for themselves through individual experimentation and group discovery. I encourage students to be independent and try new things; they are free to ask me questions when they get stuck. I am ready to jump in and provide support whenever I am asked for help or I see a puzzled expression.
I also try to foster an environment in the classroom that encourages self-correction and peer correction.

Thus, out of my experience and my personal approach to teaching I define the role of the teacher under three titles: Director, Facilitator and Advisor.

The Director

A publication course can be done with beginning level students, and with this kind of group I am a Director because the students need more support. Their confidence in English is usually low and they may not understand a lot of what is discussed initially in the class. As the Director, I take responsibility for choosing the project and the method of operating that is most achievable for the group of students that I am working with.

Strong leadership is necessary at the outset with a beginning level class when I may have to assist each student with brainstorming and getting started. I may need to guide the class through the development of the product, and I am closely involved in the editing phase because these students don't have the English skills yet to catch all of the grammar and spelling mistakes.

With a group at this level, I give suggestions and help more frequently in all process steps. I play the role of Director by enforcing deadlines and recognizing when students need special assistance, for example, tutorials on the computer programs or confidence building by writing interview questions together. As Director for the project, I put myself in a primary position and the class is much more teacher-centered as I lead the group through the process.

The Facilitator
I act as Facilitator in a class with intermediate level students or students with strong computer skills. When working with students, I establish accountability within the group by having students elect officers or leaders, for example, with a newsletter, the class may elect editors to take care of sections of the project: news editor, feature editor and copy editor. I still present new information and handle a lot of the logistics for the group.

Student leaders can also be used in the class through mentoring. In a class that has both advanced and beginning level, the teacher can pair beginner students with advanced students. The advanced students mentor the beginners and helps bring the beginning students along in understanding the process and completing the writing tasks. The two students work as a team with the more advanced students acting like big sisters or brothers to show the beginning student the ropes.

The system of student leadership is wide open and I usually use whatever arrangement of leadership I think is best for the group as I get to know them during the first and second class meetings. One time, I had co-editors because the two students didn't want to displace each other. In that case, the responsibility was shared and both students seemed quite comfortable with the arrangement. With the help of student leaders, the project can enjoy strong student investment and ownership. The students set the deadlines, and as Facilitator, I keep the group on track by working with the leaders.

In my role as Facilitator, I offer advice and assistance. I check with the student leaders to determine problems or to find out which individuals need help.
to complete their work. I present concepts about layout and design for the project, but I rely on the group to make the decisions about what the end product will focus on or look like. My role in the class is reduced and the class is much more student centered.

The Advisor

I act as an Advisor to an advanced class of students who have strong English skills and strong computer skills. In this situation, I help the group initially to set up the project and then release the process into the hands of the student leaders and class members. I review the steps for process writing and for editing, but it's possible for the student leaders to further define these steps for themselves. The expectations for an advanced class can be pushed to a high level and the teacher can offer feedback of a more critical nature. These students don't need as much feedback on their writing and they don't need computer tutorials. Instead, I have learned things about the computer from working with these students.

Additionally, as Advisor I act as the final filter for the end product. Just as with the role of Director or Facilitator, as Advisor, I insure that the product is accurate and consistent. No matter what role I play, I have to insure that there are no libelous statements or misinformation that could cause the school problems. However, as Advisor the teacher's role is primarily behind the scenes in a student-centered class.

Whether I am a Director, Facilitator or Advisor, I play an active role in the project's development, but I slowly withdraw my level of input as the project
evolves. I merely set up the parameters for the project and then offer the kind of steadying hand that is needed. Often, as a particular group of students completes one publication and begins another during a single term, they build on their experience and take over the project almost completely. Because of the experiential learning inherent in publication projects in the classroom, my role evolves naturally to that of Advisor.

**Course Syllabus**

**Course Overview**

What follows is an example of a general course description I have used on my course syllabus for the publication project:

In this class students participate by becoming active members of a creative team. Students will use reading, writing, listening and speaking skills to create a product. Students will develop a piece of writing or reproduce information (depending on the type of project), design the presentation of the information, and lay out the publication in preparation for reproduction. Students will use computers as much as possible. The homework for this class involves information gathering, writing, editing, collecting supportive information or graphics and doing computer work. Homework is not assigned but is set by the individual student for herself as a priority list in order to reach deadlines. The teacher or student leaders may help class members set their personal priority list.

**Course Goals**
The following is a sample list of general course goals that I use to guide in designing a publication class syllabus:

§ Improve English language skills
§ Develop brainstorming skills through practice
§ Gain skills to do self-directed study and personal time management
§ Understand the basic set-up, information flow and leadership structure
§ Work as a member of a team
§ Develop a variety of strategies for gathering information and researching information
§ Set up and carry out an effective interview to gather information
§ Understand differences among academic, journalistic, and creative writing
§ Adjust personal deadlines and needs to accommodate team needs
§ Improve typing skills and computer word-processing skills through hands-on practice
§ Learn about layout and design for a publication
§ Develop ability to objectively evaluate one’s own work and the team’s work
§ Offer constructive and supportive feedback to others about their work
Course Schedule and Tasks

A significant part of a course syllabus is the schedule or calendar and the tasks that will be completed within that schedule. For the publications class schedule I break the tasks down into six critical stages applied to the appropriate time frame. I extend or consolidate the stages as needed for a nine-week term, an eighteen-week term or even a two-week short-term seminar class.

1. Set-up Stage

In this beginning stage, I present to the class information about writing styles, process writing steps and the flow of production for the project. This is essential for the first and/or second-class meeting. I present news writing style or prose writing style depending on the type of project and the level of the students. It is important for the students to understand the general idea of what they must do because often they will not have daily instructions from the teacher. Additionally, I discuss the role of student leaders and the class selects student leaders and understands the role the student leaders play. Deadlines are established from the first day so that students understand there is a schedule to be followed. The whole class can set the deadlines together since these dates are very important. An example of deadlines might be a deadline date for the rough draft to be submitted to a copy editor and a deadline for final draft of the whole product when it is ready for reproduction. I have found that the fewer primary deadline dates, the better so that students can focus on one or two important dates but not be overwhelmed by or feel too much pressure from a lot of deadlines.
Also during set-up, I assess the skill base of the group and guide the group towards a high or low-tech approach. Advanced students with good computer skills may be able to handle the entire design and layout of the product on the computer with such programs as PageMaker. On the other hand, students with fewer abilities on the computer may use cut and paste methods on actual layout sheets that are kept in the computer lab or classroom.

Now is also the time for the class to set the style rules for their publication that are affected by whether the students work on computers or not. The specifications for computer work must be defined: for example, what font and what font size will be used? Will the project be physically pasted up or laid out on the computer screen? And if the students do use computers to draft their stories, they must also decide whether they will manually paste up the project or lay it out on screen with publishing software. If they choose to use mock-up sheets, these can be pinned to the bulletin board in the computer lab.

It is important at this stage for me to define plagiarism for the students, and for the whole group to set limits on information they will take from the Internet and/or library resources. I usually help students develop some basic research skills by offering a whole class tutorial on what qualifies as legitimate source material. However, students have to be encouraged to make their work on the project a personal contribution based on their own ideas and words. The goal of the project is not to make a copy of what experts say on certain subjects. Limits on use of the Internet have to be clearly defined at this stage of the project or I have found that students fall back on plagiarism.
Any creative questions should be brought before the group in this initial stage as well, for example. What will the cover or front page of the publication look like? Does the group want to develop a theme for the publication? Will the pages have special borders or artwork? These questions don't have to be decided the first day of class, but the leaders have to be aware of these questions and make sure they are answered before the final layout of the project.

The final part of the Set-up Stage is task assignment. Each student in the class, including student leaders, needs to find a topic he or she will write about or find the aspect of the project to be responsible for and work on. This may demand whole group or small group brainstorming. Everyone should be invited to give ideas and contribute to making decisions about assignment. Thus every individual begins with her personal assignment and knowledge of important deadlines for the project.

A lot of the work done in this stage is whole group work by the teacher and class members in general meetings. The leaders or other internal groups may also do small group work. The skills used in this stage are listening, speaking, and writing. Depending on the length of the course term this stage could take from one to three class meetings. It is important not to hurry through this first stage because the information supplied and decisions made here set the groundwork for the whole project; the foundation necessary for students to be able to set achievable tasks for themselves and accomplish their individual assignments without confusion and errors. Teamwork can be cultivated at the very beginning in this stage.
2. Information Gathering Stage

In this stage students take action by gathering information and materials for their individual parts of the project. They may prepare for and conduct interviews. Additionally, students can research topics on the Internet or at the library. This is also the time to take photos or shoot video footage that will need to be edited. If photos are taken they must be submitted for developing in a time frame that allows the photos to be worked into page layout. The photos are re-introduced in the fifth stage, the Creative Stage.

I facilitate this stage by offering individual assistance in the form of brainstorming or tutorials on computer operation. The project group leaders begin to establish their footing as leaders and offer assistance to the internal groups as well as work on their individual assignments.

Much of the work at this stage is done individually or in pairs. The skills used in this stage are reading, writing, listening and speaking. This stage could take up two to four class meeting depending on the type of project and the level of the students. Some work for this stage can be done in class, for example, interviews can be scheduled during class meetings and the students can be given license to leave class and conduct interviews. On the other hand, not all of the work in this stage can be done during class hours: library research or picture taking may have to be assigned as homework.

3. Writing/Editing Stage
In this stage students get down to the hard work of writing or developing the materials that they have gathered. The work at this stage is largely individual and utilizes reading and writing skills (see Appendix D). Listening and speaking skills come into play when students submit their completed rough drafts to a copy editor.

This stage is more specifically described in the ensuing chapters under specific projects, but generally, after completing the first draft, students submit their work for feedback. One way to encourage student leadership is to have advanced level students in the group act as copy editors who check for grammar and spelling errors. This system emphasizes writing as a process by ensuring that each student receives peer feedback and teacher feedback on their written assignments. Students may re-draft their work three or four times. Obviously, the length of this stage will depend on the level of the students and the difficulty of the tasks they have undertaken. This is an important stage, so ample time should be scheduled, which might mean up to four class meetings. As students finish work in this stage, I direct them to continue with project tasks in the next stage. This is the point where project work has the breadth to allow students to work at their own pace and level of ability with the understanding that they must reach the deadlines that have been set.

During this stage I am available for questions or assist editing. Students work by themselves a great deal but should still feel supported by the teacher and the project team as a whole.
At some point, either at the end of the previous stage or at the beginning of this one, I call the class together for a large group workshop. During this meeting I present some basic rules governing page layout and design (see Appendix A). Students can experiment with layout concepts and understand what is aesthetically pleasing for readers.

In regards to page layout, I emphasize building a balanced page and refraining from trapping white space when we discuss page design, I help students become aware of all the elements they must collect and manipulate in the available space: title (or headline), text, photos, graphics, pictures, charts, graphs. I bring some sample books and magazines and have students discuss what pages are visually appealing and why. See Appendix A for very basic examples of these concepts. It is important to encourage the students to think about attractive layout and design, but at the same time I never want to stifle student creativity.

4. Creative Stage

This stage can easily blend with the previous because some students will be ready to move on after they have an acceptably clean draft of their work. In this stage each student further refines her work by making it ready. For the high-tech approach to a publication project, this stage means that the student enters her story on the computer and designs any additional graphic layout that goes with the story or adds photo graphics. Additionally, the student provides a title and her by-line and makes sure that her story is formatted to the style rules established by the class in stage one.
If the class is not using computers then the work in this stage is for each individual to provide her assignment and any accompanying graphics in a legible and attractive form. If the students have to hand write their publication, perhaps a few students with the clearest handwriting in English could be chosen to write the text of everyone’s story. Even if the publication is completed without use of computers, it will still need work in this stage to finish the stories and fill the page(s) in as balanced a manner as possible.

Students perform work in this stage either individually or in small groups as they give each other ideas and discuss their progress with classmates or class leaders. They use all four skills in this stage, and I offer a great deal of technical support and continue to be an advisor. As noted, often this work is combined with the work in the previous stage, so the time needed for this stage might be as little as one additional class.

5. Group Layout and Design Stage

In this stage the class must come together as a group to make the final product ready for reproduction. All of the individual work that has been done up to now needs to be integrated to make a unified and cohesive product. Whether working on the computer to layout the pages or working with actual layout sheets in the classroom, students need to make decisions about and create the cover for the product, the order of the stories, and additional pages, such as a "contents" page. Consistency to the theme, if there is a theme, needs to be checked. The class leaders may already have reached some decisions about how they want
the final product to look, but if they haven’t had time for these discussions, this is the time to finalize the whole publication, input from everyone.

Now the whole group works together using primarily listening and speaking skills. This stage may take two class meetings to accomplish. I pay special attention to insure that each student is getting an opportunity to contribute and that the group leaders are acting in a fair and responsible manner. Excitement and energy build as the class sees all of their work coming together in its final form.

6. Collation/Distribution/Feedback Stage

In this stage the layout sheets are reproduced in volume, which means that the completed pages, whether printed from the computer or produced by hand, are submitted for running out. Running out the pages can be done on a photocopy machine at the school, or if the budget allows, at a local printer’s shop. The level of class involvement in the copying depends on the context. Sometimes, the student leaders can accomplish this task during out-of-class time. In other situations this task may fall to the teacher.

Regardless of how all the final pages are copied, the whole class can assist in collating and distributing the final product. I tend to help in coordinating the distribution to the school by consulting with the program director about when he or she thinks is the most appropriate time to distribute. I then share the information with the class and collect volunteers to help. The concluding activity for the project is a feedback meeting during which students relate what worked and didn’t work during the process. They discuss
what they learned and what they could do differently or the same next time. This meeting is very important for closure, as well as for celebrating a job well done. In this stage, I also provide some feedback and I receive feedback from the students about my role. This meeting obviously involves listening and speaking skills and takes just one class meeting. At the end of the final meeting the class can begin brainstorming and planning for their next publication project. After reflecting on the experience students, may want to have a social gathering to celebrate.

One last point about scheduling should be mentioned because so much of the work on this project is done individually or in small groups in a very free mode of operation, it is necessary to maintain the team spirit and connectedness among students by having group meetings. I believe that the students should always feel supported and like they are important participants in the process. Additionally, students may need to have a group feedback session to solve a problem, or they may need to give update reports on their progress for the whole group. Deadlines can be stressed at these large group meetings and it gives the teacher a chance to better assess which students need special help to reach the deadline.
CHAPTER 3
Newsletter Course Syllabus

“Writing, like life itself, is a voyage of discovery.” –Henry Miller

Newsletters or newspaper project are common types of publication projects implemented by teachers in different settings for a variety of student levels, a wide range of subjects, and effective practice of different skills. In addition, the school benefits from having a publication that highlights itself and its students.

Some schools have an official school newspaper with a traditional name and style and a faculty member who acts as the advisor or sponsor. In other instances, the newsletter or newspaper is an integral part of the curriculum and is regularly scheduled either as a core course or elective. A publication must meet certain requirements to call itself a school newspaper and it must be governed by a body such as a school board or the school administration.

In this chapter I will describe one way to facilitate a newspaper project with ESL students in the ESL classroom. I will use the term “newsletter project” from this point on because it allows the publication to operate under broader parameters than official school newspapers operate under. The style of writing and layout can be defined by individual classes during newsletter production;
whereas administrators generally set such decisions for official school newspapers.

I developed this course by drawing upon my experience of being a staff member on school newspapers in high school and in college. Additionally, I draw from my experience teaching. I have implemented newsletter projects a number of times and have fine-tuned the approach that I take.

Overall, doing newsletter projects with ESL students has been a successful teaching tool for me. I have received positive feedback from colleagues and students about how effective the project was for learning English and how meaningful it was for students personally. I have seen groups of students bond closely and gain new levels of experience. I have delighted in seeing my students relax and enjoy the process of making a tangible product in a team environment. Many of my past students have proudly mailed the completed newsletter home to their families to show their success with English. See Appendix B for sample pages from newsletters that my students have created.

Course Syllabus - Newsletter

The information that follows details how I structure a newsletter class. The information provided is specific to my experience but could be the basis for developing the Newsletter Course in other schools and contexts. I mean the description to be especially helpful to a teacher doing the project for the first time.

Course Objectives

§ Produce an actual newsletter publication
§ Practice the four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) to improve general skill levels in English

§ Develop strategies for gathering information and researching information

§ Plan and execute an effective interview to gather information

§ Learn the difference between prose, academic writing and writing for journalism

§ Learn the process writing steps for writing for a news publication

§ Write in English for a broad audience

§ Work as individuals, team members and whole group members on a newsletter project (Certain students may develop new or existing leadership skills.)

§ Learn aspects (such as, style, layout, design, and process steps) for producing newsletters

§ Stimulate students’ interest in the professional media and encourage student confidence to work in the professional media in the future

§ Improve computer and camera skills and, possibly, operating skills for other types of office technology

§ Practice self-correction and peer correction through feedback
Course Schedule and Tasks

The following information comes from my newsletter class syllabus under Course Schedule and Tasks and is offered as an example of one approach to the newsletter project. The minimum time required to create one newsletter when meeting three to four hours a week is four weeks. The time can be lengthened or shortened depending on the number of hours that the class is able to work on the project during a week. The description that follows is based on a context in which computers are available for the students to use.

Course calendar

To teach this class I use the six stages described in the last chapter and which can be adjusted to any time frame by lengthening or consolidating the activities.

1. Set-Up Stage

Leadership

During the first and/or second-class meeting, the leadership structure for the newsletter can be established and everyone comes to understand his/her responsibilities. Some possible leadership positions are editor-at-large, assistant editor, copy editor(s), news editor, feature editor, photographers, computer specialists, staff writers and creative specialists. Often, every member of the class will have a title and sometimes this really serves to motivate students. The number of leadership positions filled depends largely on the talents of the group and the discretion of the teacher. In some instances, having a leadership structure may not work and could be counterproductive. I leave this to the
teacher's judgment. Examples of when leadership positions might be counter-productive are if certain cultures or genders come into conflict in the class and it would be better to keep everyone on even ground, or if there are mostly low level students in the class who cannot handle leadership positions in addition to the course activities.

Leadership Job Descriptions

My general idea of job descriptions follows. Editors serve to brainstorm and push the progress of the publication along. Editors are the leaders under the guiding hand of the teacher. In my newsletter class, an editor-at-large would typically be a student who has previous publication experience or is someone whom the teacher recognizes as a fair or natural leader. Under the editor-at-large are other editors, such as a news editor and a feature editor. A news editor checks on progress of students working on news stories. A feature editor does the same for feature articles. A copy editor is very important because she checks all of the writing samples for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity. Usually a copy editor will be a student with strong grammar skills; at times, depending on the English proficiency of class members, the teacher may act as the copy editor. Photographers should be people who like to take pictures. Everyone in the class is a staff writer. Computer specialists/creative specialists might be students who can use computers well or who are artistic. In one memorable newsletter class, our creative specialist was an artist from Taiwan. The newsletters that came out of that group were especially creative, and we
always had new types of clip art to fill areas of white space. Artists can contribute special touches to enhance the look of any publication.

Set Newsletter Style Rules

Students also set the parameters of the layout, establish the newsletter’s style sheet, and discuss creative questions during the first class meeting. This means that the group must answer questions such as what size and orientation the pages will be: 8 1/2 X 11; legal size; or portrait or landscape. The group must set rules for font they will use, and what size fonts they wish to employ in stories, headlines and picture captions. Other style issues include spacing for paragraphs and whether to use one, two, three, or four columns. Creative questions such as, "What will the front page look like?" need to be discussed. Students can brainstorm ideas for the name of the newsletter and the look of the banner. (The banner is essentially the name of the publication and the way that is creatively represented; for example, we all recognize the lettering and presentation of The New York Times banner.) Students learn new vocabulary (such as: font, headline, columns) in these first class meetings by being introduced to the words and then applying the words in discussion. I reinforce my students' vocabularies by using this special project vocabulary repeatedly.

Types of Articles - News Story or Feature Story

In the first and/or second class, I give instruction on writing in the style for newspapers. Students learn about a news story and a feature story. They learn to write in journalistic style on a topic that interests them. This is one of the rare times during the class when I actually stand in front of the whole group and
present material. Generally, students learn by testing their own ideas in this class with a minimum of direct instruction from the teacher.

However, a brief presentation on journalism has served my students well. Here is a description of the two basic types of stories in the newsletter. A news story is written on a factual, timely subject and it begins with the lead. The lead is the first sentence of the article, and it answers all the reporter’s questions: who, what, when, where, why and how. A news story provides all the important information in the first paragraph and follows with information of decreasing importance. Some examples of news stories might include an article about a fellow student breaking her leg skiing or some changes in school policy that will affect all the students.

A feature story also has a lead but the lead doesn't have to contain as much information as does the lead for a news story. Feature story leads can be more creative, such as using a question to arouse reader interest or emotion. The feature article is defined much more loosely, and indeed, many of my ESL students write feature stories, at least to begin with. These stories are factual or fictional and use the standard parts of a college essay: introduction, body, and conclusion. Significant information can come later in the feature story and the ending provides necessary closure. The teacher should introduce both the news story and feature story concepts to students and provide examples to further reinforce understanding. I usually take examples from newspapers and discuss them with the class while viewing them on the overhead projector.
Many of these concepts will be new to students, so I strive to be sensitive to student feedback to determine exactly how much explanation and detail they need to clarify the information. I also decide how much instruction time should be devoted to practicing note taking and/or citing sources in a written work. Often I have simply briefly reviewed the use of reported speech versus direct speech.

Additional Style Details

This is also a good time for students to learn what a byline is. The byline is the line that says, By (Author’s Name). Through the byline, writers acknowledge responsibility for their work, as well as identify the piece as coming from their own hard work. It is important not to get bogged down at this stage. My students usually feel confused the first couple of newsletter class meetings, but I keep explanations simple and encourage them to ask questions and experiment themselves. Getting the gist of the process at this point is enough. Students learn by doing; their fears should be addressed, but they should also be encouraged by showing them what or how to do what they need to do. I do push them to test things out for themselves and to ask for help anytime from a student leader or me.

Story Assignments

After my students generally understand newsletter writing styles, they decide on their topics by brainstorming topics together. The students help each other a great deal and generally supply enough story ideas for the current subsequent
issues of the newsletter. If editors lead these discussions, I act as secretary to retain all of the good prewriting ideas. If necessary I add ideas to the brainstorm as well.

Define Process Flow for Project

After everyone or every team has a story assignment, I present the process flow for production. In other words, students need to understand what they should be doing step by step. It helps to present this information with a visual aid that is hung on the wall of the classroom for ongoing reference. I have used the following list as step-by-step directions for the students in their work on the project:

1. Get story assignment/Know deadlines
2. Gather info/research/set up interviews/do interview/take photos/gather graphics
3. Write the story
4. Peer editing (newsletter classmate) of 1st draft
5. Write 2nd draft
6. Copy editor edits story - (DEADLINE)
7. Teacher takes a look at the story
8. Enter story on computer/design layout of page with story, photos, graphics
9. Official layout and design group meeting to cut and paste up the newsletter (This could be done completely on computer)
10. Reproduce completed draft of newsletter - (DEADLINE)

11. Group meeting for feedback; brainstorm for next newsletter project

Setting Deadlines

A final point that I really emphasize to the class is the importance of meeting deadlines. For the first-time newsletter, I often need to establish these dates. Eventually, editors and/or the group can set the deadlines. I would suggest that teachers new to publication courses begin by setting two deadlines: the first is the deadline when everyone will submit stories for a copy editor to check (approximately 1 week after story assignments). The second is, the final deadline when the completed story with graphics should be laid out on the page (three to three and a half weeks after stories are assigned).

With the background information, style sheets, story assignments and deadlines in place the class members in the ready position to get started on their stories.

The teacher may also poll students for computer literacy at this point. By assessing the ability of students to work on computers, the teacher can plan training sessions or adjust the scope of the project accordingly.

1. Information Gathering Stage

In this stage student writers begin their individual work of gathering information through interviews and research. They may need individualized
instruction on writing interview questions or researching material, and I respond according to their needs.

At this point, I observe ongoing feedback from the class members and help wherever I can while allowing students to work in a very freestyle. It's important for the teacher to remember that such an unstructured study environment is quite foreign to many students. They may not be accustomed to being set free by a teacher to accomplish a task themselves. There may be both a very high cultural and language barrier for the students to leap over.

I have observed my students being stuck or discouraged at this stage. I have seen confusion and nervous tension. In these cases, I offer my assistance and try to alleviate the student's stress. Sometimes I try to do things that remind everyone that we are supposed to be having fun, encouraging him or her to play music during class or to take a break and drink a soft drink together. I feel that it is vital for the teacher to check in individually with each student writer on a day-to-day basis to make sure that no one becomes lost in the unstructured environment.

As the instructor, it's my responsibility to recognize the needs of each individual. Some student writers may not need very much help. Other writers will need help even though they don't ask for it. Naturally, at this point, I ask questions to help students decide what is important about their topics and what direction stories should take. I don't dictate any student's course of action but instead prompt the individual writer's creativity.
Therefore, the teacher must be fully present to observe what happens as the group breaks apart to begin individual tasks. At times, a student writer will have her story idea but is simply unsure of how to proceed or who to interview. This may be an opportunity for student leaders to provide ideas.

If students want to do an interview to gather information, they may need help to contact the interviewee and set the appointment because of their limited English. The teacher or student leaders can facilitate this type of situation.

Students should always prepare for an interview by preparing questions beforehand. It is important to note that not all of this work can be done during class time; therefore, homework is necessary. The interview may have to be scheduled during non-class time as well. While I encourage students to take tape recorders to interviews, I always caution them to actively take notes during the interview: sometimes the tape recording doesn't work.

If student writers need to do additional research for their stories, they may need to visit the library during class or spend time searching on the Internet. Such research will undoubtedly require after class time as well. Both the teacher and copy editors have to watch for plagiarism. I wish that I could say that plagiarism hasn't occurred in my ESL classes. But in all honesty, I have had to struggle against plagiarism with nearly every publication I've done with students. Students must simply be encouraged to give the information in their own words when they write about their topic.

Plagiarism is practiced by inexperienced writers either unintentionally (they truly don't understand the differences between quoting and paraphrasing or
they come from cultures that have different expectations about how to give appropriate credit for ideas) or it is a consequence of distrusting their own ability. They know they can’t use the language as well as the sources they consult, and it is very difficult to emphasize one’s own seemingly inadequate voice and subordinate seemingly more authoritative voices. It is simpler to repeat what someone else has written well.

Downloading information directly off the Internet and reprinting it in a school newsletter is not the goal of the class, students learn about this through trial and error. If I run into ongoing plagiarism while looking at the stories in progress, I call an all staff meeting. In this meeting the basic steps of notetaking can be reinforced or reviewed. At times, I have had the whole staff brainstorm why plagiarism negatively affects their learning. The Internet is probably the most popular arena for students doing research currently, but the teacher can support using the library and developing library skills. In any case, if students use the Internet sources must be cited like any source.

2. Writing/Editing Stage

After the student writer has gathered her information, it’s time to write the story (see Appendix D). Students should be following the project flow chart to stay on track. I am available to answer any questions or help solve any problems that come up for the student at this time. The student leaders also assist. Classmates provide support and assistance in this stage where process writing spontaneously occurs by editing each other’s first drafts. In this way students
discuss their work with one another and develop a draft for the copy editor to check over.

Eventually the second draft is submitted to the copy editor who corrects spelling errors, grammar problems and style errors. The story is now moving through the procedural steps that were outlined in the initial class meetings. Finally, the story reaches a stage of completion in its final draft form.

I have found that it is important for me to read the student's story before it is considered ready for the Creative Stage. This is a final filter for the student writer's story. It has been important for me to read the final draft to protect both myself, the school and other students at the school. I have never had a student willfully libel someone else in a story, but some stories have inappropriate usages or offensive language. I have had to ask a student to re-write a part of a story because it was inaccurate or impolite.

3. Creative Stage

At this point in the process, I call a group meeting to give instructions on how to create a balanced and attractive layout (see Appendix A). Again, I present the information by offering examples. I encourage students to experiment. While there are no absolute rules about layout students should refrain from trapping white space and they should try to balance each page with text and pictures so that it looks attractive to the eye. Students easily assimilate these concepts and then creatively design their text and graphics.

This stage involves a student writer designing how her story will look either by using a computer or creating the presentation by hand. The student's
piece of writing includes photos or graphics arranged in an attractive way alongside the text, formatted according to the style established by the class. Photo editors or creative specialists will be especially busy as they assist student writers in organizing and/or obtaining necessary photos and making sure that film rolls are developed. As always I am available during this stage to offer support. I work with creative specialists and the editorial staff to accomplish these technical tasks. Getting film processed and paying for the processing form the project budget has fallen into my realm of responsibility as the teacher.

The Creative Stage is an ideal time for the student leaders to finalize decisions on the front-page banner and other overall design issues. However, I usually have to remind the student leaders about these details and I offer suggestions if they need help.

5. Group Layout and Design Stage

Often my classes accomplish this stage’s tasks in a single class meeting or in part of a class. It is a time for whole group work and cooperation to prepare the final copy (draft).

Everyone comes to this meeting with completed stories and graphics printed out. I direct the students to put their heads together on each page to achieve unity and coherence. This stage is necessary because not every student writer’s story will complete one page; therefore multiple stories may need to appear on one page. This stage requires students to apply the things they have learned about attractive layout, eliminating white space and making
balanced pages. In such cases, I suggest the students that one story should complement another.

Another thing to consider at this time is the order of the pages and the editors or student leaders can take responsibility for this. News stories generally come in the beginning part of a newspaper and feature stories come later but this is not a requirement for newsletters.

By the end of this meeting, the newsletter is finally at a point where the whole product can be looked at as one unit and decisions can be made about what works best and where. The entire class can be involved in designing the pages of the newsletter and further computer or creative expertise from certain students may be called upon. As the teacher I usually continue to operate on the group’s fringe helping with last, minute changes and ensuring that students are not getting bogged down in their discussions.

Now students can actually cut and paste the finished product together on white layout sheets or they can pull all the stories together on the computer screen with a program like PageMaker or Microsoft Publisher: when cutting and pasting on layout sheets, each printed or handwritten story is manipulated on the waiting blank page. If publishing software is being used, the stories will be manipulated on the screen. At this point, I have observed that student leaders are standing around a table with scissors and glue or in front of the computer and other class members are standing around at their shoulders discussing what they think should be done.

6. Collation/Distribution/Feedback Stage
This final stage can go quickly. This is the stage where the layout sheets are reproduced in volume, collated by members of the class, and distributed to readers.

Most classes will probably use the school photocopy machine as the least expensive reproduction alternative. I usually work with a few students from the class in our free time to finish this task. Often class members will volunteer to do the copy job. Then, unless we have been fortunate enough to use a copier that collates documents for us, a few students organize the pages in piles on a long table for collating and stapling (if applicable to the page dimensions that were used). Savvy teachers oversee this work.

If the newsletter budget allows the pages to be sent out to a publisher, then the actual layout sheets can be sent or the newsletter can be sent on diskette. Usually a publishing company will collate as part of the price. The teacher must make sure that the final copy is delivered to the publishing place and picked up again, and the teacher works with the publishing company to iron out any details.

Whether the class performs the work of this last stage or the newsletter is sent out, when it is finally reproduced and collated, it's time to distribute it. The newsletter is distributed to the school population according to procedures outlined by the school director and/or teacher. Students from the class can be involved in distribution, as well, if it is feasible. I tend to let the student writers be very involved in the distribution stage because they are so proud of their work and they have a strong sense of ownership of the final product.
After distribution, I use the next class meeting for a feedback meeting. This is the time for closure and reflection. This meeting focuses on discussing things that did and didn't work in the process. Students share what they learned and what can be improved for next time. I tend to lead this meeting but student leaders could also preside over the meeting. I take note of the suggestions for improving future newsletters, and I document the comments about each student’s learning through being a part of the newsletter project.

Finally, this meeting is also a celebration of the students’ hard work. It's enjoyable to end on a festive note with a cake or pizza party or some other special event. The school director and other teachers may want to participate in the celebration and should feel welcome to offer constructive feedback and suggestions.

The last component I include in the feedback meeting is planning for the next publication project. If the class intends to do another newsletter, then this final meeting provides the opportunity to gear up and start planning. Depending on the group’s experience, this could be a time to restructure the student leaders or name new students leaders altogether. This is also a good time for a whole group brainstorm for story ideas which may help student writers take on a new challenges with their next story assignment.

This gearing up should not consume the final meeting but merely be some new business that is addressed. The brainstorm session, for example, could be handled in fifteen to twenty minute’s time. It’s essential to keep the focus of the final feedback meeting on the learning that was accomplished with the recently
completed product. For me, this final meeting has started out in a serious mood with students really pinpointing their learning from the project and sharing that learning. Students talk frankly to one another about things that worked and didn’t work. Then, students think about the future project (if there will be one). Usually, however, I try to end the meeting on a very lighthearted and celebratory note.

In my classes students participate by becoming active members of a creative team to produce a newsletter publication. They use reading, writing, listening and speaking skills to create a newsletter. They develop a piece of writing, design the presentation of the story, and lay out all the parts of the publication in preparation for reproduction. They use computers as much as possible. The homework for the class involves information gathering, writing, editing, collecting supportive information or graphics, and doing computer work. Homework is not assigned but is set by individual students in a priority list in order to reach deadlines. Student leaders, with my help and the help of class members, periodically check in with each writer to insure everyone is making progress. It is the successful combination of these elements that leads to the creation of a newsletter.
“The language leads, and we continue to follow where it leads.” -- Wright Morris

The previous chapter centers on the newsletter project and this chapter introduces a second publication project for ESL students: the memory book, a concept which is modeled on the traditional school yearbook. This chapter will discuss the process I go through when I facilitate a memory book
project with my ESL students. See Appendix C for sample pages from a memory book.

Memory book projects are not typically done in English language programs, but when I have spoken to other ESL teachers about this kind of project they have expressed interest. In my experience the project has been successful and fun, and of course, it offers the opportunity to practice the four skills while creating a concrete product.

During my senior year of high school, I was the editor for my school yearbook. This was a very rewarding project for me personally, and I learned how yearbooks document a special time in the lives of a school population and become a useful reference for recalling the faces and names of people with whom we have gone to school or spent time.

When I began teaching ESL, it was natural to transfer the yearbook concept into a context where language learners can create a similar product to give tribute to a special time in their lives when they studied English in the United States. Memory books also work well for recording names, addresses and information about friends who come from all parts of the world. This enables my students to stay in contact with one another even after they graduate from the language institute or return to their home countries.

Budgets may be more important to a memory book project than to a newsletter project. Although in high school I sold advertising space in the yearbook to pay for the special cover design, color printing and color photos, I haven't tried this approach with the ESL students' memory book. I judge it too
time consuming and challenging for ESL students to both attempt this kind of advertising sales and complete the project.

Instead, I engage my students in small-scale fund raising for the memory book project to alleviate some of the financial burden on the school's budget. One time, we sold t-shirts to raise money for the project beforehand, and then we charged $2 for the book when it was completed. Students and faculty paid for their book, which is another aspect of the high school yearbook project. Fund raising projects are many and varied, but when doing fund raising with ESL students it is important to attempt fund raising activities that can be successfully managed by non-native speakers.

The project has succeeded best for me in a context of longer school terms, such as sixteen or eighteen-weeks. Although I have also tried the project during an eight-week term with advanced students, it took a great deal of commitment to get all the work accomplished. Fortunately, I worked with a very computer savvy group of students from Finland. However, regardless of the term length the project operates under, it's important that students are able to obtain a copy of the memory book before they leave to return home or complete their studies in the language program. In order for the students who work on the project and for the students who appear in the book to enjoy the publication, it should be completed at least a week before term’s end.

When I do a memory book project with ESL students, typically, I combine the roles of the Director and the Advisor. As Director, I structure the class in a tight framework to begin with and I spend a lot of time explaining the
process and defining work responsibilities. I direct the students on what they need to do because I have know they may not have experience with this type of publication.

Once I have students very comfortable with the publication process and have prompted them to complete certain preparatory steps, I become the Advisor taking a back seat in the class and letting the students work. I am available for questions and I step in as Director if I feel a situation warrants it, but by gradually altering my position to that of the Advisor the students seem to become more creative and take more complete ownership of the project.

Course Syllabus - Memory Book

The information that follows is how I structure a memory book class. It is specific to my experience, but could provide ideas for developing the course in other contexts. I anticipate the chronological steps will be most helpful for a teacher who does the project for the first time.

Course Objectives

§ Produce a student-generated book for a broad audience

§ Practice the four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) in English and process writing in English through the production of a memory book

§ Improve interviewing skills and/or information gathering skills

§ Learn aspects the concept of a memory book
§ Share ideas and work as team members on a project
§ Learn aspects of layout and design for a publication that is modeled after the traditional yearbook
§ Improve computer skills, camera skills and, possibly, operating skills for other types of office technology
§ Practice self-correction and peer correction

Course Schedule and Tasks

The following information is taken from the memory book course syllabus and describes the stages of work and what is done at each stage to complete a memory book project.

Course calendar

Although newsletters and memory books are both publication projects and there are similarities in their stages of production, different stages are required to complete a memory book, with memory books the stages are consolidated. Although students gather information to write about school life for a memory book, the pieces of student writing are shorter and there are more non-writing tasks for memory books. Therefore, in the Individual Work Stage, students gather information and materials they may need; write or edit a minimal amount; and work creatively on their assignment in non-writing tasks. Thus, the Information Gathering Stage, Writing/Editing Stage and the Creative Stage in the newsletter project become the Individual Work Stage in the memory book project.
1. **Set-Up Stage**

The memory book project creates a meaningful photographic/written work that represents all the students in a given student body and their faculty through pictures, descriptive writing and art. A memory book celebrates both the group and the individuals that comprise the student body during a particular term by recording faces and activities that will bring memories for the participants in future years.

In the first class I present the memory book concept and give examples. This is important because, although students will not lack creativity, they may lack the ability to envision how to put all their ideas together to produce a single object like a book that encompasses a broad set of people and activities.

**Budget**

The budget usually decides what type of cover the memory book will have. Having a hard cover and color printing may be unrealistic for ESL programs which often operate on a limited budget and whose students may not be willing to pay more than a few token dollars for the memory book. The teacher for this project will know how to proceed on budget issues because she is appraised of the school's financial situation.

The memory books that I have successfully completed with my ESL students have had a light card stock paper cover and were bound with plastic snake binders threaded through a punched back cover. This looks nicer than merely stapling the pages together and was inexpensive because the school already had the binding machine available for teacher's to use. At the same
time, with those memory books we weren't able to afford color printing; admittedly, our focus wasn't on fund raising and the school budget was very tight for extra curricular projects. Obviously, with a larger budget or a more dedicated effort to fund raising the project could be as elaborate or colorful as financial resources allow.

Technology

Successful memory book production requires nothing more than computers, cameras and a photocopier. The book can be both reproduced on the school photocopy machine and collated by the students or printed/collated by a local print shop depending on the budget at the time. The binding of the book can be quite inexpensive.

Access to a computer lab has been really helpful to my students, but the project could also be undertaken with two or three computers: if a lab is not available. I still think the project is feasible without computers the publication would have the more homespun look but it could also be very personal and warm. It is possible to create this type of publication with only photos, handwritten submissions, artwork and other artistic elements.

At times we also have used a scanner but it is not a required piece of equipment. When available, scanners can improve the appearance of the memory book and touch up photos that don't turn out so well. Digital cameras can save on costs of film and film development, but I have never worked at a school that owned a digital camera for students to use. There have been
instances when individual students used their own digital cameras to help us with
the project.

Simply stated the project is a worthwhile endeavor in any context and merely has to be adjusted to accommodate the available equipment.

Leadership

Whether to choose students leaders is up to the discretion of the teacher. Having a leadership structure helps me a lot in my teaching when I do this project, but being a student leader should not be an assignment that causes stress. Sometimes the memory book is such a new concept for all of the students that there really aren't any class members who feel comfortable taking additional responsibility or a special job title. This is completely acceptable and the teacher can provide leadership. In such cases, the teacher might occasionally ask certain capable students to take a leadership role in some short-term job.

Leadership Job Descriptions

Editors serve to help brainstorm and push the publication’s progress along; editors are the leaders under the guiding hand of the teacher. Both teachers and editors often spend a lot of time assisting each student with his or her individual tasks. Editors, too, have their own aspects of the project to work on but they also help the teacher check that their classmates are staying busy and that no one gets lost in the process.

It is not easy to find students who have previous experience working on memory books, so I have generally nominated students for the editor positions who I
thought were leaders and who had a good rapport with other students. Assistant editors help the editor and share responsibility with the editor. Sometimes I will nominate editor(s) and assistant editor(s) and sometimes I will just let the group decide on the positions either through a vote or process of elimination. Usually, leadership positions for this kind of project end up going to students who really want the positions. If a person declines a nomination for a leadership position that is perfectly acceptable.

A copy editor is very important because she checks all of the writing samples for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity. Usually a copy editor will be a student with strong grammar skills. At times, depending on the English proficiency of class members, the teacher may act as the copy editor.

Photographers should be people who like to take pictures. Photographers will not only be shooting student life photos but they may also shoot group photos in class groupings. They may also shoot individual student mug shots if the memory book staff so chooses.

Everyone in the class is a photographer and staff writer. The students themselves (with some guidance from editors and the teacher) can decide what they want to write about or how they might become involved in the photography side of the project. For example, if the group decides to devote a few pages to depicting an all-school ski trip, one member of the memory book team can write about the day she spent skiing with her schoolmates. Another student can provide photos of the event. Once word gets out that a class is preparing a memory book, often even school members who aren't on the memory book staff
willingly supply photos of memorable activities. In this way stories and picture layouts begin to come together.

Each student in the class is also a computer specialist or creative specialist. Student who can use computers well or who are artistic may naturally gravitate towards accepting responsibilities in this area. Indeed, each member of the class can learn and develop their skills in these areas to assist in laying out the pages.

Set Memory Book Style Rules

After students understand more about what a memory book is and they choose the leadership structure, they must also set style rules for the memory book. This is similar to the newsletter project when in the initial stage of the project students decide on the paper size, font sizes, type styles, margin setting, and picture caption style (See Chapter 3 page 46). Some of these questions are further answered as the group gets their feet wet working on the project. I have found that the question of cover design is important and usually calls for mulling over to reach one design acceptable to everyone.

Define Process Flow for Project

Listing chronological steps for the students helps them stay on track and meet deadlines. These are the process steps presented:

1. Students make decisions about what aspect of the book they will work on or get ideas from classmates or the teacher.
2. Students gather information or complete tasks. This may entail interviewing to write a descriptive piece or writing a submission from personal experiences, like the example of the student who went on the all-school ski trip and then wrote about her experience. If students are working on photography then they will take photos or make arrangements to begin shooting mug shots or group photos.

3. Students give drafts of any writing to a classmate for peer editing. Students doing photography make sure the film will be developed in a timely manner (the teacher may help here). The film should be developed on an ongoing basis and appropriate pictures chosen. Knowing the pictorial subjects and deciding on sizing allows layout work to begin.

4. After peer editing students make changes and submit their written work to the copy editor or the teacher. The copy editor or teacher checks the written work for grammar, usage and spelling mistakes and notes the errors.
5. After students receive feedback they write second drafts.

6. The teacher must read all written work at this time to insure accuracy.

7. Students enter written work on the computer and design layout of pages with photos and/or graphics. Students ask for suggestions from classmates, editors and the teacher.

8. When layout on certain sections or pages is completed, the group participates in a group design meeting to paste-up the completed copy of the memory book in preparation for reproducing the original final draft. (This could be done completely on computer)

9. Class members or the teacher reproduce the completed draft of the memory book on the school photocopy machine. The book is then collated and bound according to the plan. It is possible that the memory book is now sent out to a printer to be printed, collated and bound.

10. The memory book class distributes the memory book to the student body according to the plan.
11. The teacher holds a final group meeting for feedback and celebration.

Setting Deadlines

In the first or second-class meeting it is crucial that the teacher establish necessary deadlines. I have learned through experience that when the class is not fully aware of specific deadlines, completing the book becomes stressful because some students will not have their parts of the book ready by the final deadline.

I usually set the final deadline for having the book ready for reproduction on the last Monday or Tuesday of the final week of classes in the term. The teacher and class members don't want to be running around crazy at the last minute to complete the book or run into unexpected problems with the printer. By the way, experience has taught me to treat printers with great respect. It is usually necessary to make an appointment to drop the book off, and since a printer is a professional businessman and has his own time schedule, it is disastrous to be late for this appointment.

So, at this early date, the teacher and/or the leadership of the memory book staff need to communicate deadlines clearly to everyone. Some important deadline dates that I have used have been: (1) deadline for written work to be edited (by the copy editor and teacher) and typed or written out in legible hand; (2) deadline for all photos to have been taken and developed; (3) final deadline for having the complete mock-up of the book ready for reproduction, that is photocopying or printing by a printer; and (4) deadline for distributing the memory
book to the school population. Since the end of term is very busy for students and teachers setting the deadline for distributing the memory book to the student body is important. I usually plan to distribute the memory book a couple of days before the last day of classes in the term, for example, on Wednesday of the last week.

Setting a Theme

During the first and/or second-class meeting the group can brainstorm a theme for the book. The theme could be expressed by a symbol, a picture, a graphic design, a color scheme, a special cover design or special borders on the pages. Once the whole group decides the theme of the memory book, they may also choose their writing topics and areas of responsibility. They can decide whether there will be only class group photos or individual mug shots of each student in the school.

As a final note about the Set-up Stage, the teacher needs to make sure that every student has a task that she understands and that she leaves the second class meeting knowing where she will begin her work. Sometimes a student struggles to land a subject she wants to write about. When I have needed to assist the group’s brainstorming for assignment ideas, I have checked the school calendar. Often, there are planned school events and holiday celebrations that could be chronicled in the book. Some of these celebrations provide a perfect opportunity for students to reflect on new experiences with American culture. There may also be great photo opportunities that show members of the student body participating in cultural events or activities.
In this stage students begin their individual work on the memory book project. Often I help students with their game plan and help them take their first steps because I am often the person who understands the memory book concept most clearly. This may mean that I help the photography students coordinate a date with the school director for taking group photos.

The most common writing styles for memory books are narratives, descriptions and summaries. Mid-level and high level ESL students have a good understanding of these writing styles. Early in this stage the teacher briefly reviews these styles and assesses the students’ competence. If necessary the teacher provides further instruction on these styles.

During this stage, some students may work with partners, and often the students need my help to figure out how to approach a task. I often brainstorm with the photography students about how they will accomplish taking photos and laying them out on the pages. I maintain vigilant contact with class leaders to determine any areas of concern or confusion. I encourage and check-in with individual students every time the class meets.

Often students have to work outside of class to complete their writing and photography tasks. If a student is writing a story about a holiday or a school activity, for example, the student must use her own time to participate in the activity. There may be times when students can access computers more easily outside of class, so completing homework is an important commitment to the memory book project.
So, this second individual work stage may take a few weeks as the memory book class members get assignments and begin to work on them. Indeed this is probably the longest stage of the project for my students. It is the time when the most significant work of the project is carried out.

3. Group Layout and Design Stage

The third stage of the memory book project is the Group Layout and Design Stage, during which the students put together all the pieces of their puzzle. This stage is usually begun about three-quarters of the way through the term after students have finished the rough drafts of their assignments and are ready for the next step.

Edit Work and Collect Usable Photos

At this time, the copy editor and/or the teacher edit written work and revisions are made. Photographs are mostly accumulated and/or shot by this time. (By "accumulated," I mean photos that were borrowed from members of the student body or faculty, for example, photos taken at school events during the term.) I have had some instances when we had to insert certain photos of holiday celebrations or school events into the layout at the last moment. This is possible as long as it is planned for. It is vital for me to make sure that the film is developed or the digital images are saved to disk and ready to place in the layout. For film development I usually have to take the film out and pick it up in order to pay out from the school or project budget.

Group Brainstorm on Editing Decisions
My students spend a week or more brainstorming, discussing and deciding how they want everything to look and where they want the different pieces to be placed. They also help each other complete finishing touches on the pages, such as the front cover design; contents page; staff page; titles for sections, pages or stories; page numbers; captions for pictures; by-lines for written submissions. (A by-line is the author's name given under the title of the story or composition, that is, By Mohammed Bousofa)

Computer Use

My students have produced memory books completely on the computer including inserting digital photos on screen. This is certainly an option for creating the book but requires the necessary computer software and students who know how to use it or who can learn how quickly. More often, my students have created memory books using blank master layout sheets. In this case they produce their individual texts or layouts on the computer, print them out and then cut and paste the writing and pictures on the layout page.

Regardless of the level of technology used at this stage, the book must come together. I always take great interest in watching students work during this stage: they see what they envisioned come to life on the layout sheets.

I would caution against allowing too little time for the final mock up to come together in this stage. Students usually must do most of this work during class time because they rely on the group dynamic to get ideas and make decisions. Therefore, it is really important for the class to feel unhurried and free enough for creativity to flow. This stage ends with a copy ready draft of the
memory book ready to be reproduced, usually in the early part of the second to
the last week of the term.

4. Collation/Distribution/Feedback Stage

This is the stage in which the finalized layout sheets are reproduced in
volume, collated and bound usually at the end of the second to the last week of
the term or in the beginning of the final week of the term. The reproduction can
be done on the school photocopy machine or by an outside printer. Teachers
can expect to collaborate with any out-of-school printing companies to iron out
any details. Further details about collation and distribution can be found in
Chapter 2 on page 39.

When the memory book is finally reproduced, collated and bound, it's time
to distribute it to the school population according to procedures outlined by the
school director and/or the class teacher. Students from the class can be involved
in distribution, as well, if it is feasible. I tend to let the student writers be very
involved in distribution because they are so proud of their work and they have a
strong sense of ownership of the final product.

I usually try to schedule distribution of the memory book to the student
body before our final class meeting, so that the memory book staff can convene
after distribution for a feedback meeting and celebration. However, I have also
had students distribute the memory books as part of a graduation ceremony on
the last day of the term. In these cases, I get a chance to speak. I introduce the
staff members and thank certain students who really put in extra time and effort
on the project. I also thank people who weren't members of the class but who helped us reach our goal.

Another idea for distributing the memory book to the whole student body is to have an autograph party with food and drinks and music. This could be called the End-of-Term Bash or Graduation Party. During the party students receive their memory book and they can ask their schoolmates to sign their book and/or write a personal message in the book.

If the class does not host an autograph party, a feedback meeting should be scheduled. This closure is important for the project and it allows us to look closely at the students' learning through this process. This meeting focuses on discussing things that did and didn't work in the process. Students share what they learned. I tend to lead this meeting but student leaders can also preside over the meeting. I take note of comments and document what students say about the experience. We conclude our meeting by celebrating our hard work with a party, going out to dinner together or with any other kind of fun group activity.

This memory book project has really brought me a sense of accomplishment as the teacher. I feel that we provide a service for the school, and we help record special people and events for a lifetime. Students are also very proud of their product and the school body as a whole appreciates the book a great deal particularly when the memory books have provided names, native country addresses, email addresses and phone numbers next to individual student photos.
I think this project is very meaningful to students beyond being merely a tool for language study. I wish more teachers would try it.

CHAPTER 5
Other Types of Publication Projects
Writing is like exploring... as an explorer makes maps of the country he has explored, so a writer’s works are maps of the country he has explored.” –Lawrence Osgood

In this chapter I want to describe briefly some other possible publication projects appropriate for ESL students. I offer this chapter merely as a catalyst because I have not been able to try all of these projects in my own teaching.

Therefore, the information here is based on my visions of the projects, discussions in person with other ESL teachers who may have tried the projects, email communication on this topic with colleagues living in the USA and abroad,
and discussions with other teachers at TESOL conferences. Many of my fellow teachers have creative ideas for possible publication projects but not enough opportunity to them. Eventually, there will be an opportunity for each of us to work on these publications with a group of students.

The descriptions that follow are short summaries of project ideas, and the final part of this chapter offers resources from the Internet on doing newsletter publication projects with ESL students.

**Cookbook**

The cookbook idea is popular with teachers. This project involves students in an English class or social club contributing recipes in English to create a book to share with the student body. The cookbook could also be a fundraiser itself if the students want to sell their product to the school population and extended community. One teacher I know did the project very easily with beginning students who developed an international cookbook with recipes from their home countries.

I would approach this project as I do the memory book and work on one cookbook over an entire term. The cookbook lends itself to establishing a theme and using colorful artwork or computer graphics to enhance the text on the pages. Food and culture are almost synonymous, so this project would be an opportunity for students to explore and share culture while practicing English skills.

**Student Directory**
A student directory is similar to a memory book, except that its purpose is to catalogue the people attending the school or institute. It relies more heavily on individual mug shots of all the students in the school. It may not have personal narratives, graphics or artwork; rather, the directory lists a student's name and address next to her picture and possibly a short written contribution.

When I did a student directory with my students, we surveyed all the students in the institute. We asked them to give their addresses in the USA and in their own countries and to give a favorite inspirational quote, to describe their future goals or describe how they felt about their experience of studying English in the USA. We then placed each student's information and photo into the book alphabetically, and in the final few pages we included group photos from each level. We also designated a page for pictures and information of the school's staff and faculty.

Student directories are best completed over one full term and are good projects for a class of mixed levels. It helps to have some capable student photographers on the staff. However, this type of publication project may not provide students as much writing practice. A newsletter or memory book gets the students who work on it to practice all four skills more effectively.

**Literary Magazine**

I recommend this publication project for advanced students or university level students. The project involves showcasing creative writing and artwork from the student body of a school or institute. Of course, students in the publication class could also be contributors to the magazine. In order to gather
short stories, poems, artwork and photography from the student body, the publication staff might begin work on their magazine after an all-school art show or poetry reading. To motivate the student body to provide submissions, the literary magazine staff could also sponsor a literature and art contest with prizes.

Existing literary magazines provide excellent examples of using the conventions of the medium and can serve to inspire students. I would suggest refraining from undertaking this project unless you have good photographers on board because artwork from the art show would have to be photographed in order to be featured in the literary magazine. In addition, it would be necessary to have staff members who were very proficient using computers.

I think this publication project is very exciting, but it is also one of the most challenging publication projects for a teacher and her ESL students to undertake.

**Video Memory Book**

A video memory book requires the use of a video camera and possibly equipment to splice tapes, so the availability of equipment definitely affects whether this project can be attempted or not. I feel that the class that does the project could be structured similarly to the memory book class, but there are differences when working with this type of medium. The student’s on the staff would be attempting to capture the events of the school and faces of the student body on video for the same reasons as a memory book project, yet they would be required to have a minimum skill set to operate the equipment to accomplish the goal.
Other things to consider are that the project might require advanced students or even university level students to accomplish. The project might also require a much smaller size of class depending on how many video recorders are available to use for the project. It might require two or three video cameras.

As another suggestion, this project might be a good project for an English club to undertake. If a club undertook the project they would need to work on it over an extended period of time, such as a 9 week or 18 week term, similar to the memory book publication project.

I have not tried this project yet because I have not had students with skills using video equipment nor have I had the equipment needed at the school. Other teachers I have talked with incorporated using the video camera in different ways in their classes. Some ESL teachers have their students create movies or do dramatic productions in English. Obviously, this kind of project focuses a great deal on the productive skill of speaking but the other three skills would be used when creating such a project. Showing the video production to the entire student body or making copies of the tape for the student body would fulfill publishing it.

**Publishing classroom work**

Many teachers publish classroom to good success. It is inexpensive and can be done on a weekly basis in a writing class with any level of students. The project requires more work from the teacher who copies and collates because there isn’t a designated "staff." The submissions are usually hand written but they can also be typed if the teacher requires it.
Essentially, class members go through process writing steps to develop a piece of writing. After each student's piece of writing reaches final draft stage, the teacher gathers all the writing from the individuals, reproduces it, and publishes it to share with the entire class during a "reading day," for example, in the Friday class meeting.

This kind of project usually doesn't have photos, graphics or artwork but it could. Publishing classroom work provides an opportunity for whole group feedback and discussion on the writing. The focus of this kind of publication is on giving class members a chance to read their classmates best work and share ideas.

Internet Resources

The following list is a number of resources on the Internet that might be helpful to other teachers. Most of these web sites discuss doing newsletters:

Web sites

Dave's ESL Café
http://www.dave's.esl.cafe.net

Nancy Becher and Sherrye Dee Garrett's "Creating a Classroom Newspaper":
http://www.calgaryherald.com/education/cacnintro.html

Apple's "Getting to Know Your World":

NETPressence's "Crayon":
http://crayon.net

BBC's "In the News":
http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/ithenews

Young People's Press Online:
http://www.ypp.net

Online Newspapers

www.highwired/net

Creating a Class Newspaper from the AskERIC Lesson Plant site:
On-line newspaper by Harlem teenagers assisted by professional journalists:

http://www.harlemlive.org

Conclusion

I am sure there are many more ideas for publication projects with ESL students than I have heard of, or accessed on the web. I hope, however, that the projects presented here will spark ideas for others. I have been observing over the last few years a growing interest in the ESL community in doing publication projects, especially as computer-aided language learning increases. More and more teachers are figuring out alternative ways to incorporate computer use into language learning. I have been challenged by this need, myself, and publication projects have been one way I have found to use computers effectively in ESL instruction.

CONCLUSION

"You go in with a certain fear and trembling. You know one thing. You know you will not be the same person when this voyage is over. But you don’t know what’s
The idea of publication project based study has been very powerful for me in my work. It gives me the opportunity to provide a creative framework in which students practice their skills. In essence, these projects provide a change from other standard forms of classroom instruction and learning, and it is due to my strong conviction that these projects are very powerful teaching tools that I have wanted to share the idea.

These projects are so useful because they retain the interest of the students for in-depth work on language and tasks related to language study. The students are involved in a focused activity that they share to accomplish a relevant goal together. While the students are deeply involved in the work, the teacher is free to move among them offering correction, suggestions and feedback. These projects provide a perfect setting for experiential learning and increasing the tools students have for learning.

In this handbook, I have sought to demonstrate that project based learning, such as these publication projects, is supported by language theory and encourages students to go through the process of experiential learning: use all four skills, be engaged fully as learners, learn in community and work in their own learning style. I have also given a general description of how to incorporate these projects in teaching with meaningful examples from my own experience. I followed up the general description with a more specific description of both the newsletter project and the memory book publication project and included my own
syllabi and course descriptions for each. Finally, I gave some ideas for other types of publication projects that are possible for ESL students.

In conclusion, after gathering up my ideas and presenting them as my IPP I have been able to reflect more deeply on my teaching and increase my understanding. By mapping a publication project process and offering it to others, I hope to encourage more educators to embark on this particular journey of experiential learning with their students. Project based learning through publication projects is practical and fun, and I am convinced it is a powerful teaching tool.

APPENDIX A

Sample Page Layout
Appendix A shows options in page design contrasting a “balanced” and “unbalanced” page layout. In addition an example of “trapped white space” within layout is provided.

A “balanced page” is preferred in most cases and is constructed to follow advertising norms for attractive page design. On a balanced page there is variety in the placement of text, boxed text, story headlines, graphics and any other elements. The rule of thumb is that graphics and text should be placed in ways that invite the reader’s eyes into the page. The primary concern is that the page is aesthetically pleasing. As for “trapped white space,” it should be avoided because it detracts from the easy flow of the readers gaze over the page.
Appendix B provides samples of pages from newsletters completed by ESL students. These newsletter pages exhibit different stylistic approaches taken by ESL newsletter classes to the layout and design of the newsletter pages. Format can vary dramatically from group to group.
Appendix C contains pages from an ESL institute memory book. This merely shows one example of a Memory Book. This type of project is open to creativity and follows the vision of the group working on the project.
APPENDIX D

Sample-Student Process Writing Work

Appendix D provides an example of student process writing. This sample is from a student who conducted an interview to gather information. The student then wrote a news story that appeared in a newsletter.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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