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# Developing Awareness of Individuals in a Group Learning Context: A Self-Lesson Plan

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Developing Awareness of Individuals in a Group  
Learning Context: A Self-Lesson Plan

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for International  
Training, Brattleboro, Vermont

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This project by Leslie Turpin is accepted in its present form.

Date: May 21, 1985

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## ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the question of how teachers teach themselves to be better teachers. Central to the paper are my assumptions that long-range learning is self-directed and that the development of self-awareness is essential to growth in both learning and teaching. The paper is a case study tracing my own learning of one of my teaching objectives and is divided into three interrelated sections. The first section is a description of a model for teacher self-teaching: "the self-lesson plan." The model is a structure that teachers can use to guide themselves in the study of their own teaching objectives. The second section is a personal account of how I used the model to learn one of my own teaching objectives (developing awareness of individuals in a group learning context). This section attempts to trace my own growth and link together experiences that were instrumental in my learning of the objective. This section also includes an essay on the objective and what it has come to mean to me as a result of the process. The third section contains five techniques that can be used by teachers to develop awareness of themselves and students in the classroom. The techniques address lesson-planning time, in-class teaching time, and observation of other teachers. Central to all techniques is the idea that teachers need time, space, structure and focus to develop awareness. This idea evolves out of the preceding sections. My thoughts are greatly influenced by Gattegno, Krishnamurti, Stevick, and the experiential education which I received while at the School for International Training.

### ERIC Descriptors

LESSON PLANS CIJE:451 RIE:1,506 GC:730  
RT Planning

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CIJE:1,272 RIE:1,158 GC:310  
SN Learning by doing

SELF-ACTUALIZATION CIJE:1,246 RIE:998 GC:120  
SN The belief or process of developing the actuality of one's idealized image

TEACHER IMPROVEMENT CIJE:910 RIE:1,053 GC:310  
RT Professional Development

OBJECTIVES CIJE:1,153 RIE:2,098 GC:520  
NT Training objectives

INDEPENDENT STUDY CIJE:871 RIE:1,107 GC:310  
SN Individual study, usually self-initiated, that may be directed or assisted by instructional staff through periodic consultations  
UF Self-directed learning  
Self-teaching

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## INTRODUCTION

December 15, 1983

Dear Mark,

I've decided to make the introduction to my IPP a letter to my second reader. It seemed like a good way to provide background information for the paper itself and to fill you in on the state of my thoughts before I actually begin writing.

I just got back from Mexico and am trying to sort out how my second internship there and my work preparing for it over the summer can best be organized into a paper. Because the project ("Developing Awareness of Individuals in a Group Learning Context") focuses on the development of an idea and my development in relation to it, I thought it was important to include my initial understanding of and reasons for choosing the topic. Trying to recapture those first thoughts without having them be colored by thinking on the topic since then is problematic--if not impossible. In recalling how the idea began, I am crystallizing my thinking into something much clearer and more distinct than it was then.

Before my first internship I had written out a list of objectives to focus on and learn while I was teaching. After the two months, I looked back over my objectives trying to understand my lack of success at addressing them. At first, I attributed it to the fact that I had been so overwhelmed by teaching itself that I hadn't had the presence of mind to focus on them. But as I re-read the list, I didn't even understand what many of the objectives meant. The meaning many of them held was on such a general level that they could have provided only limited value in directing me while I was teaching. Perhaps the need to focus on clear,

manageable parts coupled with the inability to separate them from the overwhelming task of teaching in its entirety is an inevitable stage which all inexperienced teachers have to pass through.

Pat, my supervisor, suggested re-examining some of the teaching objectives that I had set for myself by creating a self-lesson plan. This was a means of structuring self-study so that I could focus on and begin to understand different teaching objectives. The format he suggested was the same as a lesson plan for teaching in the classroom with a presentation, practice, and use stage. Because "awareness of individuals in a group learning context" had emerged as a problematic area during the internship and because I thought it was central to becoming a good teacher, I began with it.

During my first internship I had relied on space outside of class to work with students individually to get a sense of where they were cognitively and affectively. To me, effective teaching required the ability to focus on and respond to individual needs and energies while in the class working with a whole group where much of a teacher's time with students is spent. In the classroom I realized that I was focused on my own presence and that I looked out at the students as part of a blur--the group.

The IPP will be a description of how my thoughts have developed from that point of realization. Because the paper focuses on my development as a teacher, Bonnie, my IPP advisor, suggested that the working title be "Developing Awareness of Individuals in a Group Learning Context."

The paper is going to include a section on the self-lesson plan and how that provided a framework for my thinking, a section on the objective and what it has come to mean to me, and a section on techniques to use in addressing the objective.

I am trying to make the paper more accessible by dividing it into sections which are somewhat autonomous and can be read independently of one another. The first section deals with a technique for self-study which I hope other teachers will be able to use or adapt to explore their own teaching objectives. I am writing the second and third sections for people who are interested in the objective itself and how I deal with it as a teacher.

When I finish, I hope I'll have some ideas for a conclusion. If you have any ideas or suggestions, let me know.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be the initials 'Mi' or a similar stylized name.



## SECTION I: THE SELF-LESSON PLAN

The self-lesson plan is modelled after one classroom lesson plan framework. It was developed by Pat Moran while he was supervising my internship in a bilingual second grade class in Holyoke, Massachusetts. During the internship, Pat worked with me to create effective classroom lesson plans that could break down the students' learning process into small, manageable and integrated steps. As I became comfortable with the lesson planning process, Pat suggested that I apply the concept to myself to teach myself different teaching objectives which I had wanted to learn while at my internship site.

Teaching objectives are the concrete goals which a teacher works on to improve her teaching. They are not statements of what she wants students to do, but rather statements of what she wants to learn to do to make her time with students more productive. When a teacher works consciously on her own objectives--defining them, understanding them, and teaching true to them--she is in the process of improving her own teaching.

To work on one's own objectives is a difficult thing. It requires self-discipline, direction and the ability to break down the learning process for oneself into sections which are manageable. The self-lesson plan is one suggestion for structuring this process. Its purpose is to provide teachers with a clear format to structure and guide self-study of different teaching objectives. The plan rests on the assumption that teachers (as learners) benefit from the same structuring and breaking down of the learning process that they recognize and provide for their students.

To me the idea was appealing for two reasons. It provided a systematic means of addressing seemingly complex and overwhelming teaching

issues and it promised the development of inner resources that would be able to direct me in future teaching situations when I could not rely on outside supervision to direct my learning.

As mentioned in the introduction, I decided to use the self-lesson plan to address the objective "developing awareness of individuals in a group learning context." In this section I will discuss (1) the lesson plan framework which served as model for the self-lesson plan, and (2) the self-lesson plan itself.

### The Lesson Plan Framework

The lesson plan framework which provided a model for the self-lesson plan is based on a paper by Pat Moran entitled "A Framework for Language Teaching" (see Appendix). The paper deals with two aspects of lesson planning: the act or process a teacher goes through in planning a lesson and the lesson plan itself. The paper leads teachers through a series of fundamental questions to ask themselves and guide them while they are preparing lessons. The questions help a teacher to articulate for herself:

"What am I teaching?"

"What do I want students to do with this material?"

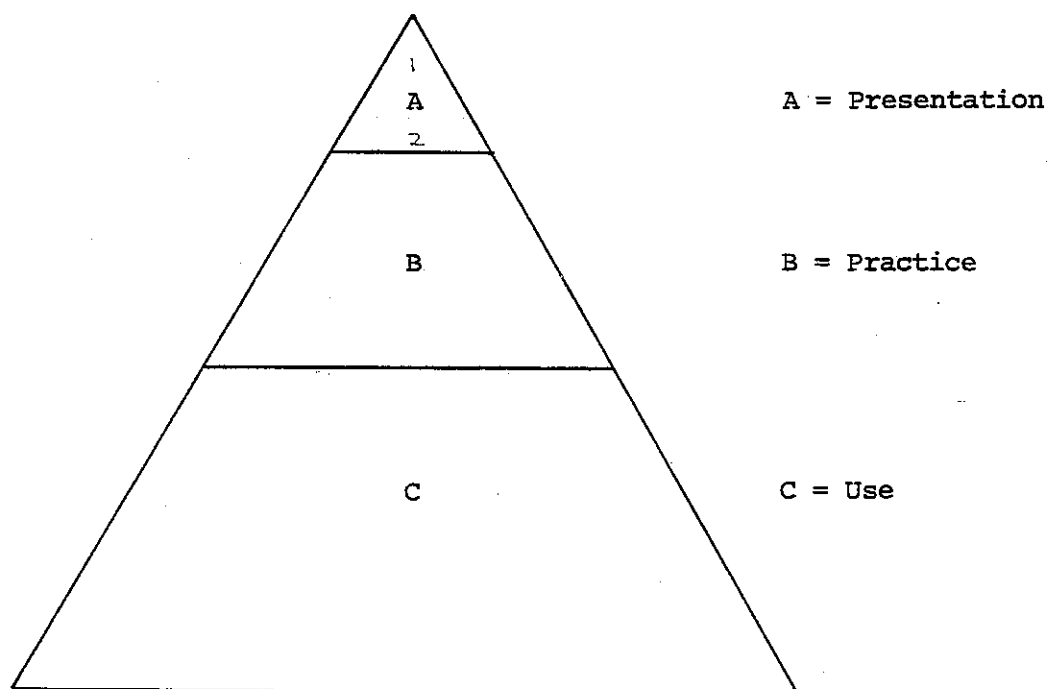
"How will I know if students have learned the material?"

"How will I prepare the students to demonstrate their learning?"<sup>1</sup>

To aid the teacher in answering the last question, the paper suggests a design or framework (the lesson plan) to use with students in order to make their work with new material clear and manageable.

The plan consists of three stages through which the teacher and student move in any given lesson: presentation, practice and use. The presentation stage "consists of getting the meaning of the material across to the students" and "making sure that students understand the nature and purpose of the activity<sup>1</sup>--what is expected of them."<sup>2</sup> "The practice stage calls for production by the students. The material is manipulated in a controlled context to help students gain fluency and confidence...."<sup>3</sup> The use stage "involves activities in which students are called upon to choose and discriminate among language responses. The context is less controlled and provides for freer expression and involvement on the students' part."<sup>4</sup>

According to the model, the three stages exist in a pyramid (see diagram below).<sup>5</sup> The presentation stage is very small in comparison to the practice and use stages. The use stage, at the bottom, covers the most ground space. It is the foundation without which the quality and amount of learning are greatly diminished.



The Self-Lesson Plan

The purpose of the teacher's self-lesson plan is to move a teacher from the point of stating her objectives about teaching to understanding them and understanding how to implement them in her teaching. While the self-lesson plan is teacher-centered, the ultimate goal is student-centered--i.e., it is focused on a point where the teacher will understand the teaching and learning process better and will consequently be in a better position to help students.

The self-lesson plan format, like its model, is set up by Pat Moran in three stages: presentation, practice and use. The presentation and practice stages began for me at the end of the school year at SIT and extended over the summer. The use stage is based on a second internship in September and October in Tepic, Mexico.

PRESENTATION STAGE:

Asking Questions

- What does it mean to be aware of individuals in a group learning context?
- Why is this objective important? Why is it an issue for me?
- What is awareness? Who are the individuals I want to become aware of?
- What is lacking in my own teaching?
- What do I want to learn to be able to do?

Researching the Objective

- Reading on the topic by people in the field and people outside of the teaching field who address the objective from a different perspective
- Through reading and writing, attempting to broaden the definition so that it can incorporate experiences and insights that extend beyond ESL which affect teaching and can be

resources on which to draw (in my project an example of this was defining awareness in terms of daily life)

- Observing other teachers and asking what the objective means to them
- Picking a mentor and determining how he or she addresses this objective
- Visualizing oneself in the mentor's position
- Visualizing oneself in the future: How will the teaching be different from the way it is now?

#### PRACTICE STAGE

- Redefining or further defining the objective
- Observing classes regularly and visualizing oneself in the teacher role; given an observed situation, creating ways to address the objective (see technique #5)
- Developing practice lessons and techniques to address an observed situation; working with these and developing them so they can become core techniques which can be expanded and adapted for use in other situations with differing class sizes, levels and ages
- Clarifying how techniques address the objective and relate to assumptions about learning, teaching and oneself as a teacher

#### USE STAGE

##### Teaching

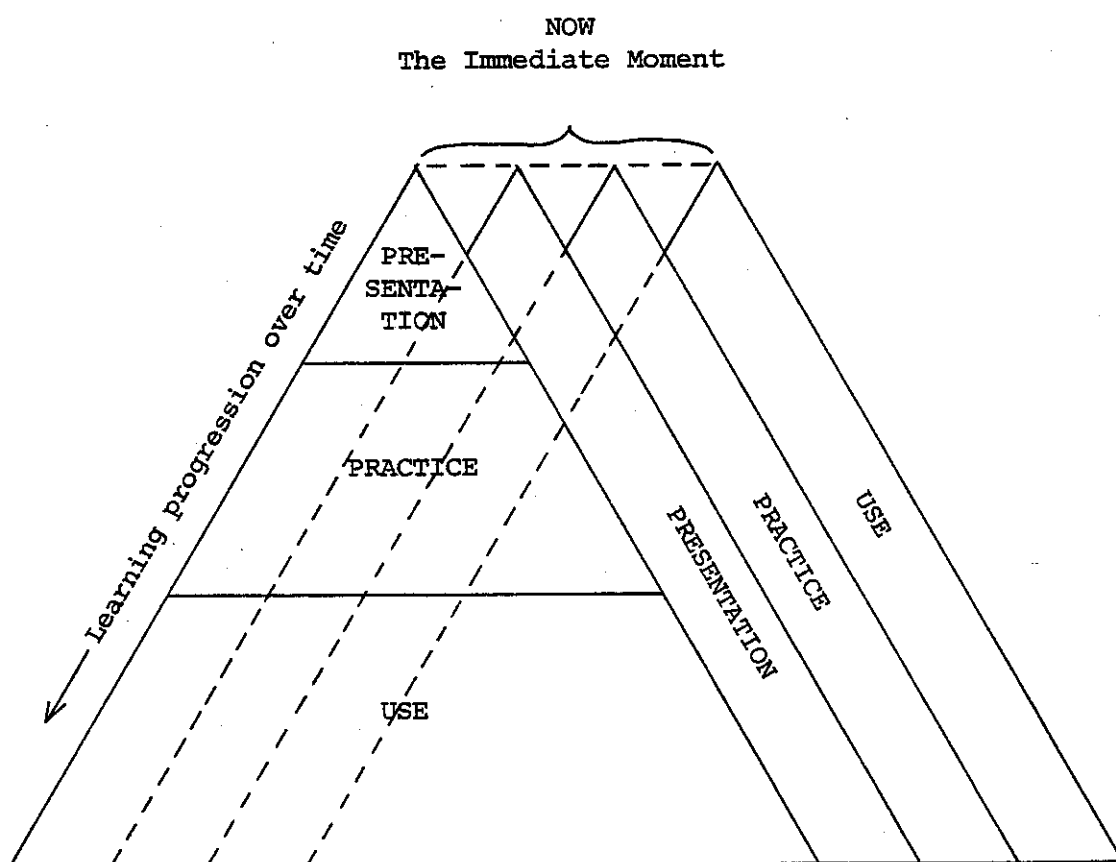
- Defining and redefining based on what is happening in the classroom
- Using the internship to test techniques developed in the practice stage and developing ones that meet the needs of the teaching context
- Creating lesson plan overlays that provide a means of working on aspects of the objective while in class (see technique #2)

##### Writing

- Articulating to oneself what one has learned

Although the self-lesson plan is laid out in three stages, I found that I could not always separate them as in the outline above. In my own thinking, development and teaching, I was constantly moving back and forth between stages, always redefining and practicing--even in this concluding stage of writing the paper.

When a teacher is presenting a lesson to students, there is always the unknown element of what students will do with the material, but the material can be arbitrarily controlled by the teacher so that learning can follow a logical progression. In the case of self-study, the teacher is dealing with unknown material. The defining stage is both the beginning and the end. The diagram I would use to describe my own learning would look something like this:



Three-dimensionally, learning both progresses downward (from presentation to practice to use) and backward. The three shaded triangles above present the immediate moment. At any point in the learning progression there are elements of presentation, practice and use occurring simultaneously.

A Note to the Reader - April 6, 1985

Although I have attempted to keep the different sections concerning the form (the self-lesson plan) and the idea (developing awareness) separate, the division is not a neat one. As the paper evolved, the sections became more interrelated and the divisions increasingly arbitrary. In some respects the essence of the paper is the connections between the self-lesson plan and the objective.

Developing awareness is going through a process. That process is as much a part of awareness as what I finally understand awareness to mean. To develop awareness I found that I need focus and structure and time. The self-lesson plan was a means of enabling awareness to develop by providing for those essential elements.

SECTION II: DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF INDIVIDUALS IN A  
GROUP LEARNING CONTEXT

The Presentation and Practice Stages

Throughout the self-lesson plan a journal was the main instrument for recording, directing and expanding my thoughts. The times I assigned to daily writing gave me space and structure to think about what I was reading and to reflect on my experiences. During the practice stage, I read and was influenced by Krishnamurti, Gattegno and Stevick. Their discussions of awareness opened and influenced my thinking.

The following is a collection of journal entries over the summer which trace my thinking through the presentation and practice stages. Many of the entries are quotes from my readings over the summer. I wrote them down because they sparked new thoughts and influenced the directions that I began to take my thinking. Many of the entries are rough ideas in their beginning stages. They are developed in later sections of the paper as my thoughts developed. For the reader I hope they will provide an example of the beginnings and developing of one person's thinking--what instances triggered thoughts and how instances and thoughts led into each other. Many of the instances have no direct bearing on ESL or teaching, but made a connection for me between day-to-day life outside of the classroom and how that life relates to the teacher self in me.

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The whole of your body must be quiet, relaxed, sensitive to see.... Song is not just the word, just the sound, it is the peculiar combination of the sound. The silence and the continuation....<sup>6</sup>

Krishnamurti



June 28

How will I translate my learning to listen into helping students become better listeners and more aware of their own learning?

What assumptions about learning and teaching make developing awareness of individuals an issue for me?

1. To learn about students' needs a teacher must listen to and observe students. She must provide herself space in the classroom in which to watch and listen.
2. A teacher should be at the place of each learner, able to stay with that student at that moment while simultaneously projecting that moment forward and backward to see where it is leading and understand where it comes from.
3. Learning is a unique process. Students will be in different places both cognitively and affectively.
4. A teacher learns about the effectiveness of her own teaching by listening to and observing students.
5. A teacher must be present in the classroom--able to translate theory into practice within the context of her teaching situation.
6. Students should be given the opportunity to create meaning in the new language so that the learning process is truly one of self-discovery.
7. Language learning can move in different directions toward different ends. How can this be achieved in the classroom?
8. Every student brings unique creative powers and experiences into the classroom which can make the learning process richer and more complete. How can a teacher tap those?

June 29

When I go running it is difficult to separate myself from the rhythm of my motion. Seeing is very immediate; I am always moving in relation to what I am seeing. I don't have the freedom to look closely at details. When I stop at the top of the hill I become aware of my surroundings and how much I miss while moving.

How does this parallel awareness in the classroom?

Seeing wholes and focusing on parts:

How do I discipline myself in the classroom to set aside time to be in this still position where I am able to see and hear what goes on around me? Given the time, how will I put myself in the frame of mind so that I will be open to see and hear?

June 30

The purpose of my project should be to become better aware of myself, of individual students and of how individuals affect the group. How do I find ways to translate my awareness of myself to help students gain self-awareness?

July 1

When I went running this morning I told myself to focus on one thing. By telling myself to look for one thing I was able to take in more than the "whole picture effect." I should keep this in mind when lesson planning. I should go into class in the frame of mind of looking for something--an answer--not just presenting material.

Gattegno: Teacher learns students, students learn language.

Kirkegaard: "Instruction begins when you, the teacher, learn from the learner, put yourself in his place so that you may understand what he understands and in the way he understands it."<sup>7</sup>

The atmosphere to strive for in class: interdependence, dialogue, equality. To be aware of students as my teachers will help me to be more questioning and present in the classroom. When I focus on something I focus inward. I need to balance that with looking outward. Seeing how students respond and learn.

July 8

Awareness requires seeing change.

Can awareness be learned or only awakened? (Gattegno)

July 11

Observing Kathleen: She is aware when she needs to stop and take stock of the situation. She allows herself the space to consider where she is going next. She realizes when she is not reaching a student and recognizes that repeating herself doesn't help--she looks for a different strategy.

July 12

Proust: "Before seeing Chardin's picture, I never realized how much beauty there was around me in my parents' home, in the half-cleared table, the lifted corner of the tablecloth, a knife beside the oyster shell."<sup>8</sup>

July 17

Gattegno's workshop:

Every moment is an experiment.

Know yourself. The better you know yourself, the better able you are to understand what others tell you.

You are in your own bag (self) 24 hours a day.

"In the move to understand another person a close contact with such dynamics on oneself can serve us as an entry into why and what the other person does, can or cannot do."<sup>9</sup>

#### July 18

Virtual and actual experiences: By observing classes and going through the visualization process (see technique #5) am I experiencing a virtual experience--a game of seeing myself in someone else's actions? Creating a virtual world will enable me to step into the actual world of my second internship and be able to act in it.

#### July 19

Observing an English class: I go into class with specific things that I want to observe. Often my attention becomes focused on something else instead which I hadn't envisioned. I can only come planned around what I bring. The class brings its own energy. This is something to realize in teaching and in the lesson planning process.

#### August 3

Stevick, Teaching and Learning Languages: Helping students gain personal competence on deeper levels through

- gaining command of learning techniques (techniques for memorizing vocabulary, etc.)
- knowing which techniques work effectively for oneself

- knowing how to create and modify techniques to fit needs
- knowing how one reacts to frustration, difficulty, and other emotions which affect learning.<sup>10</sup>

How can I help students gain personal competence on these different levels?

#### August 4

Reading as a virtual activity: Reading becomes a virtual activity. While reading about teaching I am aware of projecting myself or visualizing myself in a teaching context. Reading has a new meaning. This visualization extends to everything--deciding what materials I take to teach in Mexico is dependent on the virtual experience I am going through now.

#### August 5

Mark's questions and comments arrive:

1. How does a teacher's awareness of individuals relate to his awareness of himself? of his needs? Is an offshoot of your thesis the possibility that real teaching is the process by which individuals in the group become aware of each other and in so doing aware of themselves?

Gattegno says (I think) that one can only know oneself. By knowing what I require to be aware, I at least have a point of reference from which to project outward and see if what exists for me is true for other people.

Perhaps students need to see wholes and be aware of parts of the

language--to see that there is some whole that they are working on which extends beyond the small part that has been isolated for them to work on. Perhaps students need time and space to listen and observe without having to divide their energies by performing. Perhaps if students enter the situation with something to focus on, they will have a more questioning attitude. For them to see beyond themselves and gain awareness of others, perhaps they need the same security that I do. The group as a whole will carry each of its members only to the extent that it is aware of them and their needs within the group. In order for the group to be a learning tool, students need an awareness of what the group requires from them and what each student needs from it.

2. What sort of structures could be built into a program to facilitate the teacher's awareness of individuals? (Individual and group feedback, informal meetings, games?)

I hope to use feedback (formal and informal) as the main means of becoming aware of students (see technique #3). Another means of contact is through dialogue journals or writing letters to students to keep in contact with individuals.

Games provide a space for me to step outside of the picture and watch student performance. They are especially useful because students will be using the language in a freer context. They will be focused on the activity rather than on their language production.

August 8

At times I wonder if my weakness in teaching is more a lack of ability to speak to individual needs than to recognize them (facility vs.

awareness). There have been times when I've been aware of students' needs but lacked the tools to address them.

Ideas that seem to keep resurfacing:

- awareness with facility
- seeing wholes with seeing parts
- space to focus
- awareness of self leading to awareness of others

#### August 10

Awareness of individuals is one aspect of the larger question of being present in the classroom--being able to translate theory into the classroom universe.

Being aware of one's students is what enables a teacher to be present.

What I am preparing for is not any real situation. I am visualizing myself in an ideal situation. Will this visualization help me to adjust to the real situation or make me more overwhelmed by it?

#### August 11

Talk with Bonnie: In observation so far I've focused mainly on how Lisa planned space in her lesson to be aware of students, and how her choice of techniques and activities demonstrated that she was or wasn't aware. What I need to focus on is how she responds to each student in the classroom--how she departs from her plan to be present to what is happening. Bonnie's suggestions:

Does she ask someone to do it again?

Does she stay with one student? Why? Why not?

Does she restructure an activity in the middle to meet immediate needs?

Does she leave one person alone? Why?

Does she use eye contact?

What does her tone of voice convey?

What are the students doing?

Is one student persisting with something? Why?

Is the teacher aware of what the students need to be able to do?

Is the teacher forcing awareness?

Is the teacher alive to her own needs?

Is the teacher picking up on feedback signals?

#### August 17

Gattegno: "Seeing the students in our classroom as persons endowed with a will that permits actions and generates by itself changes, we shall immediately be closer to them--closer to understanding each as a person and closer to helping each increase his experience and understanding of it."<sup>11</sup>

Gattegno: "To understand others as they are is not sufficient to become a true teacher for them. One also has to know how to look on their present activities so as to expand their consciousness of the world and of themselves."<sup>12</sup>

How do I teach from my sense of truth?

How does knowing become knowledge?

How do I economize in my teaching?

#### August 22

Gattegno: "Awareness is wider than knowledge but of the same kind. Awareness can vanish without leaving its track, but for knowledge to exist



a track must be left behind. Awareness is the sign that the knower in oneself is involved in the thing to be known. Without awareness there is no way of holding the thing to be known so that it makes its impact."<sup>13</sup>

I generally think that good writing will provide answers. If I can isolate the main point, I'll be able to go back and find a logical argument that will lead me to an answer within the reading. Gattegno works on the reader as a learner, focusing on knowing (the process) rather than on knowledge (the body of information). Knowledge isn't here; it's the result of the process that reading stimulates.

---

The journal entries above are beginning, tentative questions and answers to the objective posed in the presentation and practice stages. During those stages I had hoped to gain a clearer understanding of the objective so that I could act on it in the use stage. While I wanted to define and refine my ideas about awareness of individuals in the group, I found that much of the awareness I was developing during this time was of myself. The work I was doing--journal writing and visualization/observation--was introspective by nature. This initial emphasis on looking inward and developing self-awareness emerged as the basis of awareness of others. Other ideas which surfaced during these stages were: the necessity of attending to the whole situation while simultaneously focusing on and attending to isolated parts; the necessity of having both space to see and a structure in which to act; and the necessity of balancing introspection with looking outward to meet the needs of students.

### The Use Stage

During the use stage I did little reading on the objective. It was a time during the self-lesson plan when I focused on internalization of thoughts and my presence in the classroom. While I hoped to act more aware during this time and feel aware generally, I found that my attempt to be present in the classroom caused me to be aware of things on a different level than I had anticipated. In the classroom I found myself thinking on the level of specific instances that I was seeing and experiencing. While I was teaching I was not yet able to expand those instances to see how they fit in with the general ideas of awareness that I was beginning to wrestle with.

Now, during the writing stage, I am going back to those instances which have made an impression on me, hoping that by looking at them again I will be better able to see what they mean and how they fit into my beliefs about awareness. This section on the use stage is composed of a few specific instances taken from my second internship. It is a collection of moments which made impressions on me then, but which I am only now beginning to examine, synthesize and internalize. While this retrospective awareness is beneficial, I also realize that to become an effective teacher I must learn to utilize this process while I'm teaching, so that I can change my actions to meet whatever awareness I am gaining.

The material for the use stage is taken from a two-month teaching internship in Tepic, Mexico. Classes were taught in the local tourist office. Each class met for one hour, three times a week. Attendance was fluid. Each class contained a core group of students who attended regularly. Others came sporadically. There was no formal enrollment, and

often students dropped in for a few days or started midway through the program. Within each class there was a fairly broad range of English competence. Although classes were divided into beginning, intermediate and advanced levels, often students who belonged in more or less advanced classes came instead to ones which accommodated their work schedules.

What I learned during this stage was learned through ongoing and structured feedback (technique #3). Feedback is the tool through which a teacher becomes aware of herself and the students, and through which students become aware of their own learning and that of others in the class. A teacher's awareness is indicated by the extent to which she can accurately perceive (1) the feedback students give her about her teaching and its conscious or unconscious effects on the class, (2) the feedback students are giving about their own learning and their membership in the group learning process, and (3) the kind of feedback the teacher is giving to students. Students' awareness is indicated by the extent to which they can (1) interpret feedback that teachers give about their performance, (2) provide accurate feedback about their own learning, and (3) provide and perceive feedback of the group. The attempt to understand and reflect on feedback is crucial to becoming aware. For both teachers and students the central key to becoming aware is the accurate processing of feedback signals.

In the section on techniques I will discuss ongoing and structured feedback in detail. In this section I will limit the discussion to moments when I was receiving or giving feedback and where I am now in interpreting their meaning.

Instance 1: Motivation and the Awareness of What I am Working on with Students

One evening the homestay family asked if I would teach them English. Seated around the kitchen table with a box of rods and a few pictures, a class developed which was as close to effective teaching as I had come. Effectiveness I isolated as (1) a feeling of being in control but not controlling, (2) a relaxing environment conducive and supportive of learning and risk-taking, (3) an ability of students to listen to and learn from each other, (4) an ability of students to listen for differences in their production and mine, and to pick up on my feedback for correction, (5) the ability and eagerness of students to generate new directions to expand what we were working on, and (6) student enjoyment and involvement. I found that I could very easily and quickly step into the background while keeping a pulse on the learning as it took place. Once out of the controlling position, I could observe each student closely and see where the lesson could lead and how it could progress most effectively.

In comparison, I thought back over the classes that I had taught in school that morning. I was feeling frustrated by what appeared to be a lack of student involvement and commitment to the class. It seemed that certain students were inaccessible to me and that class was inaccessible to them. With the family as a point of reference of what I was aiming for, I wondered how I could create an atmosphere in the class which would foster openness and enthusiasm and in which self-directed learning would take place.

I tried to resolve the problem by doing what I had been doing previously--more persistently. Because motivation seemed to be the problem,

I focused my attention on it. I began planning lessons with the purpose of engaging and entertaining everyone. Having figured out an activity, I would fit language learning into the activity almost as an afterthought. The extent to which I downplayed learning for the sake of creating fun, meant that I often sidestepped learning altogether.

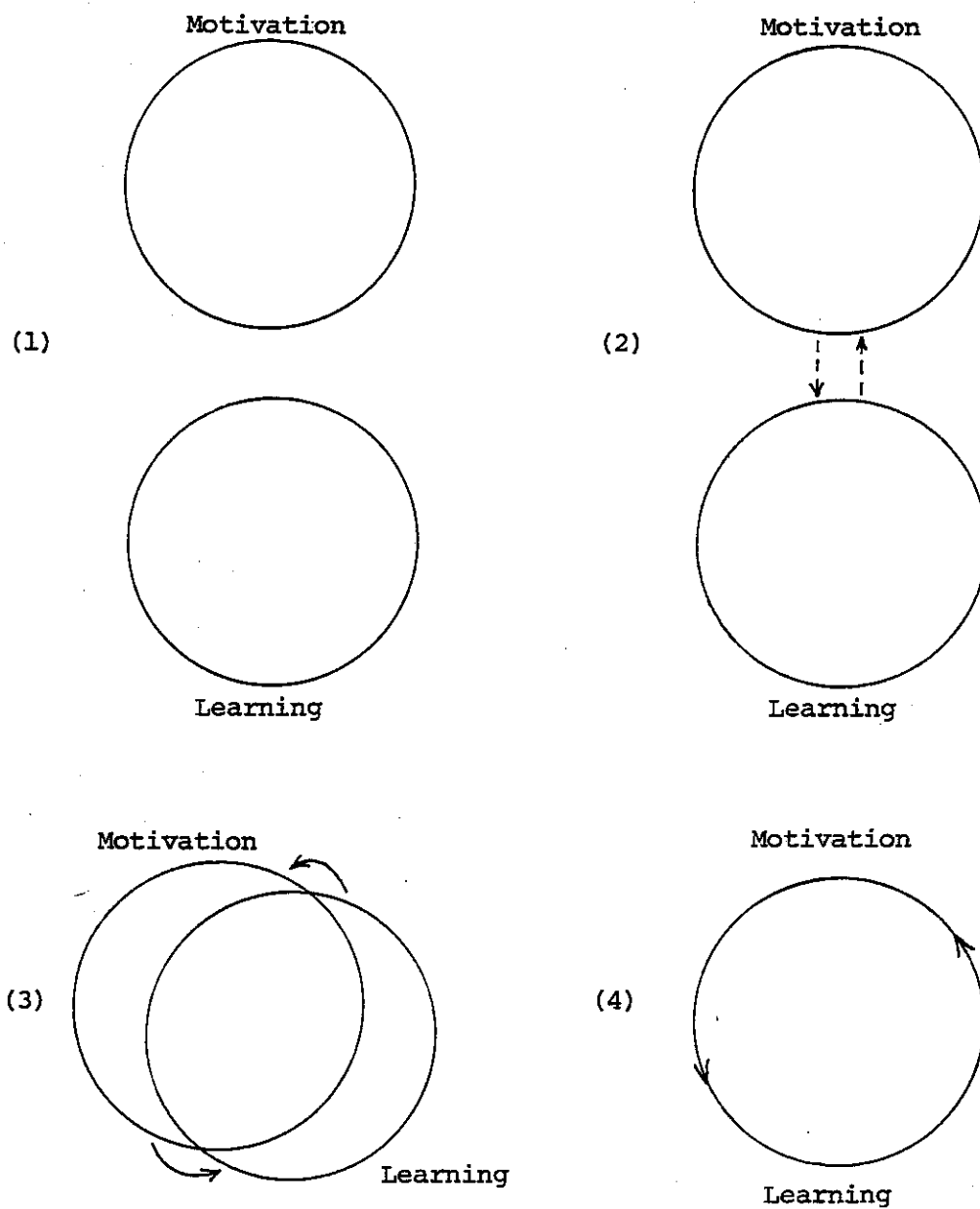
Reflection: In language learning, motivation is the means of working with the affective side of students so that they will engage in a cognitive process--language learning. When a teacher deals with motivation as a separate entity, as an end in itself and not a means to achieve learning, it is hard to build student trust in the purpose of an activity. In dealing with motivation, there are times when learning can come quite effectively from the flow of an activity; but if all language learning takes place beginning with the teacher's concern for the activity, the economy and effectiveness of language learning are, it seems, greatly diminished. Motivation is perhaps better achieved if one tries to motivate through language learning rather than motivating to learn a language.

Although I had encountered this problem in my teaching before Mexico and I knew that a teacher needed a sense of purpose through which to motivate students, I seemed unable to act on it here. My insecurities as a teacher and my need for the class to be enjoyable seemed to override my awareness that my teaching would be undirected and shallow if I continued on the track of motivating to instead of motivating through. Motivating through, however, requires that a teacher feel secure with the subject matter and sure that what she is teaching is engaging enough to capture student interest without being disguised. When a teacher disguises learning she often loses sight of it altogether and simultaneously sends

subtle signs to her students that learning has to be made fun, that by nature it isn't.

Ideally, learning and motivation should occur simultaneously, playing off of and enhancing each other:

Ineffective/uneconomical  $\longrightarrow$  Effective/economical



Instance 2: The Role of Learning Student Names in Becoming Aware

In Mexico I learned very few of my students' names. Classes were large, attendance was irregular, and it seemed too time-consuming. Though I didn't learn names, I felt a sense of guilt for not having done so. Awareness of students seemed somehow contingent on being able to label them. Though I knew very few names, there were a number of students in each class whose names I did know. It was those students whom I felt I was most aware of. During the internship I thought that my awareness of those students was a result of knowing their names and I felt guilty for not having made an equal effort to get to know and become equally aware of everyone.

Reflection: Learning student names has always seemed to be the first step in becoming aware of individuals in a classroom. It creates a security and shows students that their teacher is taking an interest in them. While it is valuable for these reasons, I have also quite subconsciously equated learning names with learning the energies, abilities and personalities that lie under a name (by learning José's name, I have a clue in determining who José is). As I look back over the internship and think about the students I taught, I realize two things. First, though I remember no names now, I have very clear impressions of students (some whose names I knew and some whose names I never learned). I can distinguish them in my mind by their appearance, tone of voice, mannerisms, personality. Not knowing names perhaps forced me to make a more complete mental picture of students than referring to them by name would have. Learning the name of a student is helpful only in a very superficial awareness. It is only a key to what lies underneath, if the teacher has some

experience with the personality attached to the label. No meaning is triggered if there is no familiarity with what it represents.

Second, I began to question how I learned the names of the students that I did know. The names I knew happened to be of students who were the most outspoken, had unusual and intriguing characteristics, or had problematic personalities. I realized that I knew them not because I had learned their names, but rather that I had picked up on their names as a result of my interest in or dealings with them. The effort to learn names then develops when a teacher tries to give the illusion of knowing all of her students equally. For students this effort is crucial. For that reason, name learning is important. What I needed, however, was to separate this need which addresses the affective needs of students (and myself) from a false idea that by learning names one is becoming aware of students on a deep level.

#### Instance 3: Awareness of the Group as an Individual Energy

In my journal account of my internship I noticed several entries after classes:

"sort of listless class today"

"high energy"

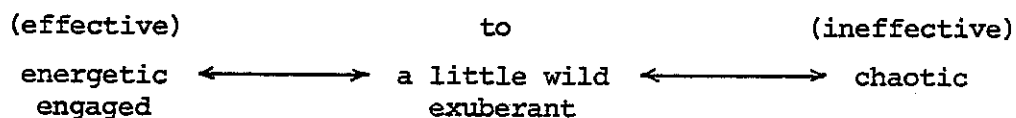
"a bit on the chaotic side"

Each group had its own spirit and energy which was very easy to recognize. The spirit was both a general mood that persisted in each class throughout the internship and a daily mood which fluctuated. The two morning classes existed on a continuum from

(effective)		to		(ineffective)
serious	←→	low energy	←→	bored ←→ lethargic
engaged				



The classes always seemed to stay in that range moving from degrees of ineffectiveness to effectiveness and vice versa. In contrast, the three afternoon and evening classes tended to exist on a totally different continuum:



Reflection: What was my role in shaping that energy? To what extent did I influence the energy that was there? Why was it that the serious side of students seemed to surface in the morning classes?

I realized that I tend to go into a classroom with the intention of creating a mood--I want class to be fun generally, although I think that there is a place for seriousness. When I am in class, I feel that I fall into whatever energy exists already. If people seem low-energy, I become low-energy and perpetuate that. I have also found that I don't seem to work as effectively in serious classes, and somehow through my tone of voice, mannerisms, etc., I move the serious classes along the continuum to low energy and a lethargic state. I explain "fun" things to do in a voice that conveys a lack of faith that they will work. It is interesting that during the internship the two morning classes dissolved while the afternoon classes seemed to improve and become more challenging.

In order to create a more constructive group energy, I have isolated three things to work on in my own teaching:

- 1) recognizing the energy that is there and working with it--  
through it--without avoiding it
- 2) realizing that I have a role in creating a mood at the  
beginning of the class that will set a learning atmosphere  
(soft music, exercises, a song, a picture, a minute of silence)

- 3) allowing for the serious side of students by choosing and creating activities which will engage students on a serious level

Instance 4: Awareness and the Role of Pair and Small Group Work in the Classroom

During the internship I used small group work and pairing for two reasons: I wanted to give students a chance to use the language and have more contact with it; I wanted a technique which would enable me to step out of the classroom process and observe and listen to students' specific and individual learning needs. During this time I was able both to focus on individual students and to see how effectively small group and pair work engaged students, maintained their interest, and challenged them.

Reflection: Recognizing that pair and small group work seemed to create positive and effective learning for both students and myself, I began to wonder why this was so. Work that I observed in small groups tended to be very humorous and more creative than what was done in the larger class. Shy students showed an increased willingness to take risks with the language. Given a little room in which to work, students showed a capacity for finding fun in the language. This enabled me to step out of the initiating role and observe students as they actually used the language.

The effectiveness of small group and pair work is, I believe, partly due to its believability. Discussions in any language generally take place in small groups between friends where communication is very real, where people are in close proximity, and artificial mechanisms of "calling on" people do not exist. Small group work was the closest way of

approximating a real language situation in the classroom. Student willingness to work was, perhaps, a result of the believability of the situation combined with the lower risk involved. The increased involvement of all the students meant that discipline problems resulting from student boredom dissolved.

Small group and pair work also provided me with a learning environment which could not be easily obtained in the large group. During these activities I had:

- time to collect my thoughts and make decisions about what to do next
- time to reflect on what had just happened in the classroom
- time during which I could focus on particular learning problems or individuals (this could be planned on before class and be built into a lesson)

While students were engaged in meaningful activities, I found that I could simultaneously use the time provided me to learn what was happening to students.

#### Instance 5: Awareness of What Makes a Lesson Work

In oneself lies the whole world, and if you know how to look and learn, then the door is there and the key is in your hand. Nobody on earth can give you either that door or the key to open it except yourself.

Krishnamurti

The first evening of my internship I planned a lesson for the adult advanced conversation class involving a modified Community Language Learning discussion centered around a picture. When I walked into class I became overwhelmingly aware of how I had miscalculated the energies of

the students and the class mood. Because I had envisioned the class with such detail, I could not picture the lesson working in the situation I was confronted with. Having convinced myself that my planned lesson wouldn't work, I tried to think of something else on the spur of the moment. As I glanced down at my notebook, my eyes fell on a quote by Krishnamurti that I'd copied down for the next morning class's dictation. Remembering what I had read by Stevick about techniques for active listening and teacher readings,<sup>14</sup> I started to "wing it" through the lesson.

The Procedure:

- 1) I read the quote twice at normal speed and told students not to worry about meaning but rather to relax and listen to the flow of words, my voice, the pauses.
- 2) I read the quote pausing at the end of each phrase and asked students to think about each chunk of meaning.
- 3) I read the quote slowly, asking students to stop me if they heard a word that they didn't understand. (If no one could define the word, I defined it.)
- 4) I asked students to write down the quote as they remembered it.
- 5) Students reconstructed the quote together on the board.
- 6) Together they corrected and changed it, asking me to repeat certain lines.
- 7) A volunteer paraphrased the idea of the quote.
- 8) We discussed the meaning of the quote, recounting personal experiences students had which influenced the truth it held for them.
- 9) Human Computer (technique #4): I circulated behind students and they said/read words and phrases they wanted me to repeat for them.

Reflection: Though I had done little preparation for the class, it went smoothly and in fact so effectively that the procedure became my core technique for working with the conversation group. What was it about the lesson that made it work? Why was it that something which I hadn't planned seemed to fit their needs and interests so well? In an attempt to determine the factors which made the lesson work, I isolated three things: my "reading" of the students, the appropriateness of the material, and the procedure followed.

Though I didn't know the students, the fact that I aborted my original plan meant that I was perceiving signals from my students and making very spontaneous judgments about their interests and expectations of the class. Because it happened quickly, I did not realize it consciously. In discussions with other teachers, I found that often a teacher's most effective classes were ones that were "winged." A winged lesson which works effectively is, perhaps, not just luck, but the result of a teacher spontaneously and perceptively seeing and acting on feedback signals the class is sending to her.

The quote itself had three elements which seemed to make it appropriate: the idea, the language, and the length. The quote engaged students intellectually and personally. Because it called on each person to think about himself or herself in relation to its meaning, it provided a point of entry for everyone. Those students who were not challenged by the difficulty of the language seemed challenged by the content of what they were reading. The language of the quote was poetic and seemed to appeal to the students' aesthetic sense. There was imagery, but the vocabulary was not overly complex, so students could enjoy the imagery

without becoming lost in deciphering meaning on the word level. And finally, the quote was short. This enabled me to read it several times, which in turn enabled students to work with it as a whole more easily when they were trying to understand it.

The key component to the lesson seemed to be the process. It seemed open enough to allow for students to engage in a variety of ways on different levels. Though I felt a lesson should teach specific students, the lesson helped me to see that I should also focus on allowing for students to work in a way that matches their own self-awareness and by doing that I am teaching them most effectively. There are three aspects of the lesson procedure which stand out as most important:

- 1) People began by listening without the threat of having to produce.

- 2) Each person had an individual sense of challenge while trying to understand the quote, and while doing the dictation. At the same time, the activity put an emphasis on working together and seeing each other as learning resources.

- 3) The procedure divided the class into very clear segments when different skills were emphasized: listening, writing, reading, conversation, and pronunciation. At each point it was recognizable to students which skill was being worked on. Each skill was tied to a meaningful context (the quote) and students gained the satisfaction of having mastered the quote in a variety of ways.

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During the use stage I found that I was not as ready to be aware of individuals as I had anticipated. What occurred during this stage was the

development of a more general awareness of myself and the class, based on specific experiences. This broader consideration of awareness seemed to be a prerequisite to my understanding of the deeper, more focused awareness that I had hoped for.

The following essay draws together my thoughts on awareness of individuals as they took shape after this stage. In addition, the essay attempts to focus my thoughts once again on the original objective and articulate my understanding of it.

Essay: What Is Awareness of Individuals?

Awareness, it seems, is the state in which a person can take in the whole while simultaneously focusing on elements or parts of the whole. To do this one must be able to have a feel for what that wholeness is--a distance to see the whole picture--but also a closeness to be able to focus on the parts which contribute to it. In the classroom, awareness is, then, the ability to see and hear the whole group, the whole student, the whole language, while simultaneously seeing and hearing the members of the group, the cognitive and affective parts of each student, and the particular grammar point or pronunciation problem the student is working on.

To be aware, I find that I require two things: space and focus. Without the space to see, it is difficult to obtain the distance to see the whole picture and separate myself from what is being observed. In order to make sense of what I see, to take it in, I need focus. Without focus there is very little depth of understanding. In the classroom this means giving myself time in class when no output is necessary, when as the teacher I don't need to concentrate on my own presence and can attend instead to what is happening in and around me. This is something that not

only I need, but that students need to develop their own self-awareness.

When I began this project, my goal was awareness. I thought that by becoming aware I would also be able to act differently and more effectively, in a way that reflected my new awareness. Acting on one's awareness is, I now realize, a whole extended process--facility. Facility is the skill a teacher develops to use the awarenesses she has gained. Awareness can be of something (a problem or aspect of the class or oneself), it can be of what one wants to accomplish, it can be of how one wants to get there. But it is not the action of getting there. Facility is the action based on the awareness that one has developed. One can act on an awareness without being aware of the awareness. Perhaps that is acting on intuition.

Once it is clear that learning is an internal, purposeful activity under the control of the learner, one's efforts towards enhancing that activity become unavoidably saturated with a concern for knowing as clearly as possible and at every moment how the learning is (or is not) taking place. One's capacity for constructive intervention is directly dependent on one's clarity of perception into the shifting currents of inner movements of the learner. The instrument for that perception is one's self, as that self is attendant to the effects on oneself of the inputs generated by what the learner is doing.<sup>15</sup>

Ted Swartz

As I understand this statement, awareness comes through self-awareness. Through knowing oneself, one has a point of reference from which to see and understand others. In attempting to become aware of myself, I understand that even self-awareness is a task beyond my means. As I become aware on superficial levels, I am always conscious of deeper levels of understanding which I haven't begun to consider. The awareness of the deeper levels helps me to see that on whatever level I am aware,



my awareness is superficial and simplifying. If I am so far from becoming truly aware of myself, I must be careful to recognize the potential inaccuracy of my perceptions of my students (all and each of them) who are in a constant state of change.

When I focus on becoming aware of myself it is because I hope that through better understanding myself or part of myself I will be able to get a better sense of the whole picture of learning. Without attempting to know myself, I have no point of reference from which to interpret feedback signals that students send.

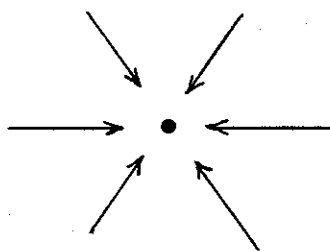
Implicit in my original objective--"awareness of individuals"--was the idea that through my awareness I would begin to teach to individual students and their needs. My internship, with its large classes and sporadic attendance, forced me to reconsider my goals and shift my emphasis from learning specific students to learning universal needs and trying to address them in a way that would allow for the seemingly infinite possibilities that make up a learner or group of learners. Though the internship forced me to work in a way that would address that specific teaching context, I realized that even in smaller, regular classes allowing for individual possibilities would enable me to work more expansively with awarenesses that I do have than teaching to would allow. Recognizing individual possibilities would free me to act even when I lack awareness or know that my awareness is inaccurate and simplifying.

This has led me to realize that though a teacher should continue efforts to become aware of individuals and teach to them as much as possible, she must be aware that unless she sees the subtle shifts and changes in her students as they occur, she will always be teaching to what her students were yesterday at the end of class. A more expansive

approach is to allow for students to be individuals as they exist at that moment, and help them to become better aware of what they are experiencing at that moment and more in touch with the subtle shifts in themselves. The way to approach this (as the quote at the beginning of the essay suggests) is for a teacher to become aware of the subtle shifts in herself. Before I can trust my perception of others, I must better trust my perception of myself.

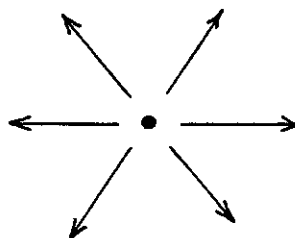
Teaching to individuals is restrictive by nature because one teaches to what one knows. Perhaps teaching to is equivalent to focusing on parts. This by itself leaves a teacher who has little awareness with a very small amount to work on. Allowing for is, perhaps, seeing wholes and providing space in which to work. It is expansive in that it lets teachers work in a way that addresses the whole student or the whole group before the teacher fully understands what that wholeness is:

Focusing on parts.....teaching to what one knows from a  
variety of approaches



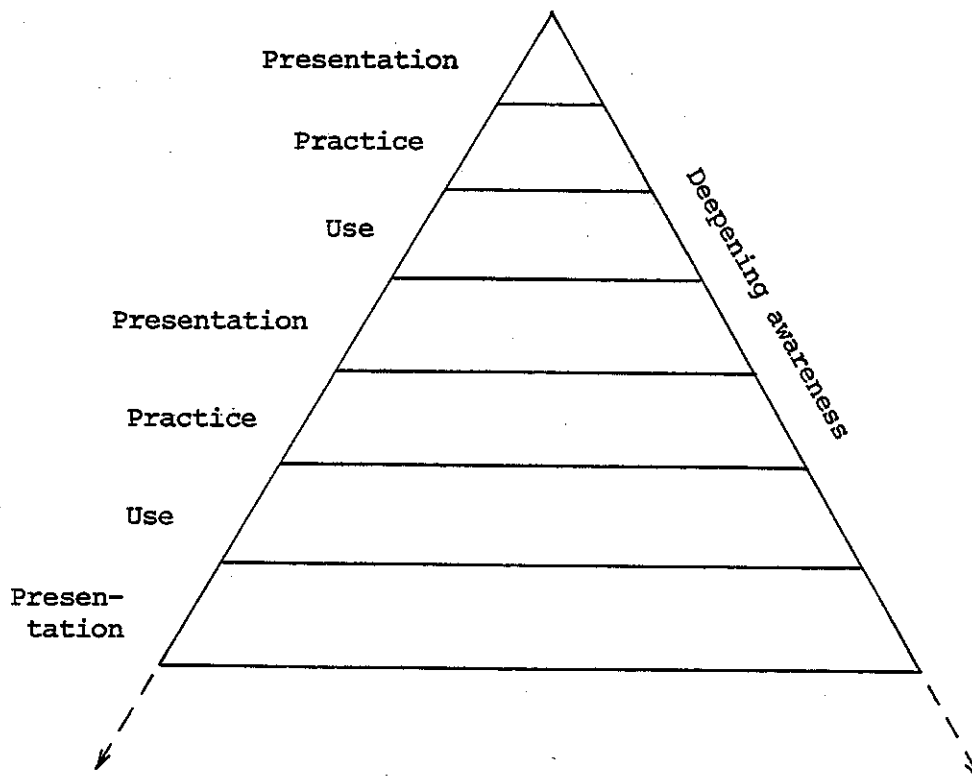
● = what one knows

Seeing the whole.....allowing for possibilities, teaching  
from what one knows



Good teaching is perhaps balancing the two and increasing one's skill at doing both.

The issues that I am thinking about now are the same as those I was first considering at the outset of the project. So I wonder what has changed as a result of all this. The ideas are becoming more meaningful as I reflect on and examine my teaching experiences and attempt to understand them more clearly. The fact that I am coming back to the same ideas and conclusions is, perhaps, an indication that I had more awareness than I thought. The process has been partly one of awakening awareness or becoming aware of the awareness (as Gattegno says). As I look back over the original paradigm in the self-lesson plan, I would redraw it to reflect the depth of understanding which occurs through the process:



### SECTION III: TECHNIQUES

Awareness is required in order to proceed in any activity that leads to facility. For the teacher it is awareness of that awareness which is needed, otherwise there is no chance of doing the right thing knowingly.

Gattegno

This final section discusses five techniques which I used to develop awareness in the ESL classroom. The techniques are not original, but they present my way of modifying techniques to address my own awareness development. Teaching and Learning Languages by Stevick has been the source of much of my thought in this section. In his book, Stevick discusses the development of students' personal competence. This competence, as Stevick defines it, exists on a number of levels.

On the first level, personal competence includes knowing and being able to use a range of techniques for a given learning activity. At the second level, "each student can become aware of just how her mind functions in a given technique, and of which techniques are most effective for her.... This second level of competence thus leads to an ability to make for oneself a series of independent choices about how to work."<sup>16</sup>

On the third level, "students may become aware of how they go about adopting a new technique or modifying an old one."<sup>17</sup> On the fourth level, a student is able to recognize and work through affective blocks to learning.

In Stevick's discussion of personal competence, he deals with the development of the student's competence and the teacher's role in helping the student with that development. As I see it, there is a parallel process that the teacher must go through. A teacher must develop her own

personal competence by becoming aware of and able to use teaching and learning techniques. She must become aware of their effectiveness and be able to modify them to meet her specific learning or teaching goals.

Each of the following techniques is one which I have modified to address my learning objective of developing awareness. Central to all of them is the idea of creating a structured space through which to stand back, take stock of the situation, and focus on the next step. The first two techniques deal with outside-of-class lesson planning time, the third and fourth deal with in-class teacher-student time, and the fifth deals with in-class observation. Each technique is discussed in terms of procedure and purpose in developing awareness.

#### Technique 1: The Lesson Planning Process

##### PROCEDURE:

Whatever individual process a teacher goes through in formulating a design for the upcoming class (for an example of one process, see "A Language Teaching Framework" in the Appendix).

##### PURPOSE IN DEVELOPING AWARENESS:

1. It provides the teacher with a structure with which to revisualize students as they were in the previous class and predict how they might respond to different learning options in the upcoming class.
2. It provides a structured space for the teacher to (a) examine herself as a teacher and further her awareness of her own presence in the classroom, and (b) realistically consider how she will respond to different means of presentation, practice and use.
3. It provides a structured space for the teacher to do a "dry run" in

her mind and envision what she wants to accomplish in the lesson.

4. It forces a teacher to make choices about what to teach and how to approach it. If a teacher makes these choices consciously, she is developing an awareness of what her students need and she will be in a position to see if she has made the right choices when she is in class.

#### Technique 2: The Lesson Plan Overlay

##### PROCEDURE:

The lesson plan overlay is an added dimension to the regular lesson planning process a teacher does before each class. While developing the lesson plan to use with students, the teacher asks questions of herself, deciding what she wants to learn in the class and building space into the lesson plan for that learning to take place. The lesson plan overlay is a means of working on a teaching objective on a day-to-day basis. It divides the lesson planning process into two parallel processes: student learning and teacher learning.

##### Student Learning: The Lesson Plan

(for an example, see "A Language Teaching Framework" in the Appendix)

##### Before Class:

What is the material to be learned?

What will students do with the material?

How will students work with the material?

How will I prepare students to use the material?

How will students demonstrate their learning? How will I evaluate their learning?

##### After Class:

What happened?

How did students work with the material?

Did the lesson work? Why or why not?

Were my expectations of student learning appropriate?

What next?

Teacher Learning: The Lesson Plan Overlay

Before Class:

What do I want to work on in my own teaching within the given lesson plan? (Example: Presenting new material to students-- becoming aware of student nonverbal feedback about their involvement in the lesson during the presentation stage)

Why am I working on this?

Can this be made more specific?

When/how will I provide space in class to work on this objective?

(Example: While presenting material will I be able to focus on students? When will I pause to take notice of them? Does the lesson plan enable me to be in that position?)

How will I know if I have learned this objective? (Example: How will I know that I am accurately perceiving feedback? Will I be able to focus on all of the students? How will I know if my learning is of the whole class "in general" or of specific students?)

After Class:

What happened?

Did I learn what I had planned? Why? Why not?

What did I learn?

What next?

PURPOSE IN DEVELOPING AWARENESS:

To move a teacher toward more effective teaching and use of class time by preparing her to use the class as space to work on learning students and/or herself (objective X represents anything in her teaching that a teacher wants to focus on: receiving feedback, awareness of a pronunciation point, group dynamics, etc.). By breaking down the objective into small segments, a teacher can work at mastering the objective from day to day. The overlay is similar to what a teacher does for students by breaking down the language learning process into manageable chunks which can be focused on, practiced and learned daily.

Technique 3: Using Feedback

One can become a skillful user of feedback as a technique in one's teaching by consciously disciplining oneself not to demand and not to expect, but to attend to what is presented, with care and an active sensitivity.

Shakti Gattegno

Feedback is a system of communication in the classroom. It exists in two forms--ongoing and structured. While both forms enable the development of awareness of oneself and others, they do so in different ways.

ONGOING FEEDBACK PROCEDURE:

Ongoing feedback exists all the time. To "use" it as a technique is to somehow open oneself to the messages sent through people's faces, gestures, words and actions, and to realize that the teacher is also sending feedback through her words, actions, etc. Ongoing feedback is a two-way system which offers clues to people's thoughts, feelings and control over the subject matter at all times. To "use" ongoing feedback one must:



- 1) become conscious of its existence,
- 2) watch and listen to students in order to understand what their feedback signals mean,
- 3) help students become aware of themselves as message senders who can actively give precise feedback about their learning by asking questions, by making choices of how to work and what to work on, etc., and
- 4) watch and listen to one's own feedback signals to students (examples of these range from conscious hand gestures for error correction to unconscious eye contact, choice of whom one calls on, how one responds to student answers, etc.).

The extent to which a teacher is aware of what feedback she sends to students and how she sends it, enables her to change her actions to be more effective and increasingly consistent (such as with feedback gestures for error correction). Consistency on the teacher's part will, over time, enable students to use the teacher's signals to become aware of and be able to change their own performance.

#### STRUCTURED FEEDBACK PROCEDURE:

Structured feedback is an organized space in which teachers call upon students to reveal (usually orally or in writing, sometimes through a drawing or action) what is going on inside. A teacher can give feedback through a grade, the way she corrects a paper, as well as in feedback sessions or conferences with students. A feedback session is structured in different ways according to teacher and student needs, but by nature it provides a structure for students, the teacher, and the whole class to look consciously at what is happening to themselves and each other either cognitively, affectively, or both.

#### PURPOSE IN DEVELOPING AWARENESS:

The extent to which teachers and students can accurately send and receive both ongoing and structured feedback indicates how aware they are of what is going on in and around them. The extent to which students and teachers can use that feedback to learn about themselves and others increases their awareness--the more accurate the feedback becomes and the more accurately it is perceived, the more aware teachers and students will become. Feedback and awareness are a near-Catch 22 situation: using feedback creates an awareness, but using feedback also requires an awareness of what that feedback means. The two, with time, can work together to propel each other forward--a teacher can use feedback to gain an awareness of how students are responding to the material and the presentation; this helps the teacher gain an awareness of what, when and how her teaching is working most effectively.

For a teacher to be aware of students through feedback, it is essential that she work with them to develop an awareness of themselves. As students develop self-awareness of how they give and use feedback in their own learning, they will become increasingly able to provide the teacher with more accurate feedback of themselves. More important, development of their own awareness will also lead to their learning independence. Structured feedback, for example, forces the speaker to articulate for himself or herself what is happening inside. This articulation process forces the development of self-awareness in students.

Structured feedback, when used in group learning contexts, provides members of the group with a chance to develop awareness of other learners. This develops a "group awareness"--a chance for the group to see the extent to which it carries all of its members. Once this group awareness

is created, members of the group may use their growing, ongoing feedback skills and awareness to keep a pulse on all of the members on a continual basis.

Both ongoing and structured feedback provide the teacher with a chance to assess the effectiveness of her teaching. Each one provides an opportunity to confirm, question, and further understand the information that is learned through the other. Working together, the two forms help each other become increasingly accurate.

Technique 4: The Human Computer (based on the Human Computer developed by CL-CLL)<sup>19</sup>

Whereas the other techniques discussed are abstract and lesson plan-oriented, the Human Computer is an example of a concrete technique which is used commonly in the ESL classroom. I have chosen it to discuss because I think it a good core technique. Its purpose is to work on student pronunciation in a student-centered, student-controlled environment. It works with students and teacher in a way which enables a number of awarenesses to develop.

PROCEDURE:

1. Students are generally seated in a circle or semi-circle with the teacher circulating outside the circle behind the students.
2. The material to be worked on is student-generated or selected. It can be focused on a particular picture, group of sounds, dialogue, etc.
3. Students determine individually what they want to work on from the material in front of them.
4. Students take turns volunteering to work on the material out loud by

raising their hand and then saying a sound, word, phrase, etc., from the text in front of them.

5. The teacher moves behind the student and repeats what has been said in a natural or "native-like" manner.
6. The student chooses whether to continue working out loud by either (a) repeating what she or he said and causing the action to repeat itself, or (b) choosing a new phrase and starting a new action (the teacher repeats whatever the student says). By falling silent, the student stops the process and enables another student to practice with a different piece of the language.
7. The process continues until the time limit set at the beginning is reached.

#### PURPOSE IN DEVELOPING AWARENESS:

##### For Students:

1. Because students choose which words or sounds they are going to work on, and decide how much work they want or need on that particular sound, the teacher (and student.) is able to get a sense of the varying cognitive needs identified by different members of the group.
2. Because students control the action, the Human Computer provides students with a means of becoming aware of their role as group members. Success of the technique depends on student willingness to share time and create an atmosphere in which everyone feels comfortable.
3. It provides a structure through which students can develop an awareness of what they need to work on. Simultaneously it enables them to choose how they work on it.
4. It provides students with a structure through which to develop

critical listening skills and an awareness of sound differences between their own production, the teacher's and that of other members of the group.

5. It provides students with space to become aware of what is happening around them, and take stock of their own learning by letting them control the extent, nature and timing of their involvement in the activity. This enables students to make the choice of working on listening skills instead of speech.

For Teachers:

1. It enables the teacher to work on her own listening skills--hearing the subtle differences in her speech and that of her students.
2. It provides the teacher with a space to observe students and work on becoming aware of them. Because the teacher doesn't have to generate new speech, initiate student involvement, or correct, she is in a better position to focus her energies on the immediate moment and hearing her students.
3. It provides the teacher with a space to take stock of her own needs and regroup her thoughts.

The Human Computer structures time so that both students and teachers can work on self-awareness and awareness of others. The qualities mentioned are not unique to it, but are ones which are useful to consider when choosing techniques with the purpose of developing awareness.

#### Technique 5: Visualization/Observation

Observation of other teachers takes many forms and can be done for a variety of reasons. When a teacher observes a class and visualizes herself

teaching in that observed situation, she is able to enter into a real teaching context without having to act in it. In a sense, visualization provides the observer with a format through which to practice how she wants to address a given objective. Through this process the observer becomes better able to understand the objective as it exists in a real teaching context. She can then begin to consider concrete means of dealing with it in her own teaching.

**PROCEDURE:**

The teacher observes an ESL class with the purpose of focusing on a given teaching objective. The procedure has three major stages: observing what is happening, envisioning oneself in the teacher role, and projecting oneself into a teaching situation based on what one observes. Possible questions to ask oneself in each of these stages are listed below.

**Stage 1: Observing What is Happening**

What is the teacher doing?

Is she addressing the objective?

Is she aware of the objective?

What obstacles prevent her from addressing the objective?

What techniques enable her to address the objective?

What are the students doing?

Are they communicating their learning needs? How?

What feedback are students sending the teacher relating to  
this objective?

What is the objective in this context?

How is it manifested?

## Stage 2: Envisioning Oneself in the Teacher Role

What would I be doing?

How would I feel in this situation?

How would I make students feel?

What would the students be doing?

What would an effective class look like in which the objective is being met?

## Stage 3: Projecting Oneself into the Teaching Situation

What obstacles would I be dealing with?

What techniques would be effective in dealing with this objective?

What behavior would be required of me and of students to make the situation effective in addressing the objective?

### PURPOSE IN DEVELOPING AWARENESS:

To provide the observer (teacher) with a structure for "practicing" a teaching objective. Through observation and visualization the observer can:

- 1) picture herself addressing the objective,
- 2) create a visual goal of what she is trying for based on what she is seeing,
- 3) isolate and define the objective as it manifests itself in a class,
- 4) reflect on her own presence in the class using the observed teacher as a point of comparison,
- 5) expand her ability to address the objective by observing how other teachers deal with it in their teaching, and

- 6) refine her understanding of the objective in light of what she observes.
- 

Running throughout this paper are a number of other awareness development techniques. Because they are described in other sections, I have not included them above. However, in an attempt to pull my thoughts together and emphasize how I do see those other techniques fitting into the context of this situation, I will briefly mention them again:

1. The Self-Lesson Plan (Section I) is a technique for providing teachers with a structured space to focus on, define, practice, and learn a specific teaching goal or objective.
2. The Journal (Section II) provides teachers and students with a format for reflecting on what is happening and for expanding their thoughts. If the journal is focused on a specific objective, writing it can help to structure the learning process.
3. Small Group and Pair Work (Section II) provides a space that the teacher can plan into a lesson in which to observe individuals and address specific learning needs.
4. Awareness of What Makes a Lesson Work (Section II) is one example of how teachers can address individuals in the classroom by planning lessons which allow for individual student needs. The lesson provides teachers with a space to observe different students interacting with the language while simultaneously allowing for students to control their interaction with the language.



The goal towards which all of these techniques work is providing lessons which allow students to learn according to their individual needs while simultaneously becoming more aware of what those learning needs are.

CONCLUSION

January 17, 1985

Dear Mark,

As I complete the first rough draft, I find myself trying to resolve questions and doubts so that I can come to a neat ending.

There are still unanswered questions, and as I re-read my thoughts along the way, I see contradictions in different places that I still need to work out for myself. In other places my ideas seem so obvious to me now that I have a hard time believing that it took me this year and a half to articulate them. Perhaps this is what Gattegno means by the "common sense" of learning.

By way of conclusion, I thought I would make a list of new assumptions about learning and teaching that evolved as a result of this whole process. These assumptions revolve around my growing awareness of the classroom as a place of learners--student learners and teacher learners. All of my thoughts right now seem to be crystallizing around this idea. Back to Gattegno--teachers learn students, students learn language.

The process of seeing myself as my own teacher follows and builds on the teacher training that I received at SIT. Though I recognized the value of developing teacher self-awareness while I was a student there, it has only been through this last year and a half of being my own teacher and student that I have come to see how necessary the development of teacher self-awareness is to any teacher training program. In order to learn students, a teacher needs an awareness of what she needs for that learning to take place.

The following assumptions attempt to tie together my thoughts now as I try to connect my learning as a teacher with student learning in the classroom.

1. Once a teacher recognizes herself as a learner, she should allow herself the same learning atmosphere she provides and recognizes as necessary for her students. The more clearly she is able to recognize her own needs as a learner, the more in touch with student needs she will become.
2. Teachers and students, though having different classroom functions, require many of the same learning tools. In order to learn effectively, they both should be allowed space to observe and reflect on their learning, focus and structure to direct their learning, and opportunity to sense the whole of whatever they are working on, while specific aspects are isolated for them to work on.
3. Lesson plans provide a structure for both teachers and students to learn in the classroom.
4. Teachers and students will both enhance and enrich their learning by working to develop "personal competence" on deeper and deeper levels. It is through this development that they become able to direct and control their own learning.
5. Being a learner is a state of mind. For both teachers and students, being a learner is dependent on seeing oneself as one.
6. Effective learning occurs when the learner develops increased self-awareness and uses that self-awareness as a point of reference from which to understand oneself and others.

7. Being open to and accurately perceiving feedback are crucial to becoming aware. For both teachers and students the development of self-awareness and awareness of others depend on the ability to use feedback. Correspondingly, the ability to use feedback signals--to give and receive them perceptively--requires self-awareness. Any attempts to develop one require the willingness to develop the other.
8. One can never become truly aware of another person. This can have a stagnating or freeing effect in the classroom. If a teacher accepts this, she is free to work from what she does know, allowing for what she doesn't know. One can increase awareness of others by increasing self-awareness and helping others to gain self-awareness. The more self-aware students become, the more able they will be to communicate that awareness to their teacher and help her gain an awareness of and ability to teach to them.

As I finish this paper, I come back to my original questions ready to start a new presentation stage and a new cycle of learning. Many of the questions I am asking are the same. What has changed is, perhaps, that I have a greater awareness of what the questions mean.

The end,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Li'.

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Patrick Moran, "A Framework for Language Teaching" (1981), pp. 1-2.
- <sup>2</sup>Moran, p. 3.
- <sup>3</sup>Moran, p. 3.
- <sup>4</sup>Moran, p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup>Moran, p. 3.
- <sup>6</sup>Jiddu Krishnamurti, On Education (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 176, 133.
- <sup>7</sup>Soren Kirkegaard, in Existential Encounters for Teachers, ed. Maxine Greene (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 98.
- <sup>8</sup>Marcel Proust, in The Many Ways of Seeing, by Janet Gaylord Moore (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1968), p. 64.
- <sup>9</sup>Caleb Gattegno, "On Solving Problems," Educational Solutions Newsletter, Vol. XI, No. 2 (1981), p. 9.
- <sup>10</sup>Earl Stevick, Teaching and Learning Languages (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 18-20.
- <sup>11</sup>Caleb Gattegno, What We Owe Children: The Subordination of Teaching to Learning (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstry, 1970), p. 53.
- <sup>12</sup>Caleb Gattegno, What We Owe Children, p. 53.
- <sup>13</sup>Caleb Gattegno, A Number of Meanings of Knowledge (Educational Solutions reprint, undated), p. 4.
- <sup>14</sup>Stevick, pp. 74-76.
- <sup>15</sup>Ted Swartz, in "On Feedback," Educational Solutions Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 4 (1978), p. 4.
- <sup>16</sup>Stevick, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup>Stevick, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup>Shakti Gattegno, in "On Feedback," p. 12.

<sup>19</sup>The Human Computer was first introduced to me at a Community Language Learning workshop at the School for International Training in the fall of 1982.

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APPENDIX

"A Framework for Language Teaching"

by  
Patrick Moran

## A Framework for Language Teaching

The framework that I describe below is a personal guide that I use in my own teaching and in analyzing the teaching of others. It contains nothing new or revolutionary. In fact, the framework is based on a series of fundamental questions that all teachers must face.

This framework is designed to help a teacher define his purpose in the classroom--in as clear and as precise a manner as possible. If this purpose is not clearly articulated, a teacher is less likely and often at a loss to identify what is working, what is not, and why. As a means to define this purpose, I have found it necessary to return to four fundamental questions. Specific answers to these questions lead to a clear definition of purpose and the framework for carrying it out.

These questions are listed below. I also provide an indication of how these questions can be answered. The framework that is derived from these answers is then explained along with an example of how it can be used.

### 1. WHAT am I teaching?

Answers to this question need to be quite specific, and at the very least, include: a) linguistic items, b) cultural points, c) language skills.

Linguistic items are vocabulary words, grammar points, sounds, intonation patterns, word order, etc. In spelling out these items, detail is important. In the case of a verb tense, your answer needs to address mood (active or passive); interrogative, affirmative, or negative sentence patterns; first, second or third persons; singular or plural; contractions; long- or short-answer forms; and so on.

Cultural points also need to be delineated. Are the points informational? Do they relate to values? Which ones? Is it cultural awareness? What kinds of awarenesses? Are they socio-linguistic points?

Language skills obviously include listening, speaking, reading or writing. Which ones are students to use?

Another answer to this question could consist of the learning process itself, where you are working on helping students become aware of themselves as learners and of the tools they have at their disposal as learners.

Still another answer might be self-awareness, where you are helping students become conscious of the values they hold, of the way in which they relate to others and to themselves.

The two latter answers depend on your own approach to teaching, but I feel that all language teachers must deal with the others: linguistic items, cultural points and language skills.

### 2. WHAT do I want students TO DO with this material?

Having defined the material, your answer to this second question constitutes your statement of purpose. Essentially, this calls for a definition of learning on your part. By

using and emphasizing the word DO, I am suggesting that learning is related to action of some sort and also that this learning is, to a great extent, visible.

This action can translate into many forms: students' speaking, listening, writing, reading or even performing an action--carrying out a command, acting something out or drawing a picture. It is important, however, that the action be a demonstration of students' learning. Clearly, it is the students who are engaged in action, not the teacher.

Your answer to this question needs to be as detailed as possible, since it is the culmination of your work in the classroom. Often your answer to this question is, in fact, a description of your final activity in class.

### 3. HOW WILL I KNOW if the students have learned the material?

As the answer to the previous question suggests, you ought to be able to observe your students in action and verify if they have learned the material or not.

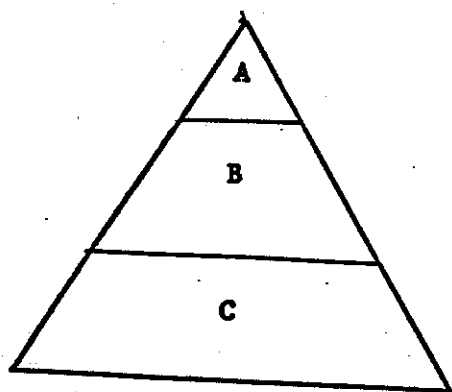
For this to occur, at least two things are necessary: a) you need to be an observer, the students need to be acting; b) students need an activity that requires them to choose or discriminate among a number of possible responses. This activity is important, since it requires that students do more than simply repeat after you, or nod their heads in response to a question.

Answering these three questions is the first stage in preparing to enter the classroom; namely, setting the general boundaries of what is to happen in class. Simply put, it means stating what students are going to learn, what this learning will look like and how you will know if they've learned it or not. The next question then leads into the mechanics of putting together the lesson plan following the framework.

### 4. HOW WILL I PREPARE THE STUDENTS to demonstrate their learning?

In assembling the various activities and procedures of your plan, you are pointing toward the activity you have defined in answer to what you want students to do with the material, the activity in which they demonstrate their learning. Therefore, all preceding activities, techniques, materials and teaching aids need to be chosen and designed with this final "learning activity" in mind.

The pyramid below represents the framework I use as a guide in designing learning activities. It can be used in putting together an entire lesson plan or any activity within a lesson. The divisions within the pyramid represent the three essential stages within a learning activity.



A. Presentation Stage

B. Practice Stage

C. Use Stage

The Presentation Stage consists of getting the meaning of the material across to the students. Usually this does not call for any production on the part of the students but some indication that they have understood. There are many established techniques for conveying meaning; among them, explanation in the target language, definition, demonstration, objects, visual aids, etc. A second feature of this stage is making sure that students understand the nature and purpose of the activity--what is expected of them.

The Practice Stage calls for production by the students. The material is manipulated in a controlled context to help students gain fluency and confidence. At its simplest, this means repetition or copying. At a more complex level, it could take the form of a question-answer exercise, where students are restricted to a particular topic or certain vocabulary items.

The Use Stage involves activities in which students are called upon to choose and discriminate among language responses. The context is less controlled and provides for freer expression and involvement on the students' part. This is the "learning activity" that you have previously defined. Examples of such activities include role plays, student spiels, personal reactions, discussions or games.

The size of each section of the pyramid represents the amount of time that should be allotted to each stage. As you can see, the majority of time in a learning activity is devoted to the Practice and Use stages; the Presentation stage takes up very little time in comparison. The emphasis is obviously on the students' production and use of language, since the teacher becomes more of an observer as the lesson moves through the sequence of stages. Dissecting a 45-minute lesson following this framework would result roughly in 5 minutes for Presentation, 15 minutes for Practice and 25 minutes for Use. In reality, such a division of time is not always possible; however, the pyramid principle is still relevant--in terms of emphasizing Use over the other stages.

The following example indicates how the questions can be answered and then applied to the pyramid framework to result in a lesson plan. The mythical class would consist of beginning-level ESL students from a number of different countries. The class period lasts one hour.

1. What am I teaching?

Vocabulary: mother, father, son daughter, brother, sister, wife, husband, relationship, between

Grammar Points: possessive adjectives: my, your, his, her; possession with 's; verb to be: present tense, 3rd person singular; sentence patterns: affirmative (e.g. John is Mary's father), interrogative with what (e.g. What is the relationship between John and Mary?), who (e.g. Who is Mary's son?); personal pronouns: he, she

Cultural Points: comparison of family units from various cultures

Language Skills: speaking, listening

2. What do I want students to do with this material?

- a. Each student will give a 3-minute spiel describing his family to the rest of the class.
- b. Students will ask and answer questions about their families based on drawings of their family trees. This will take place in groups of three.
- c. Students will make observations about differences among their families based on spiels and drawings.

3. How will I know if students have learned the material?

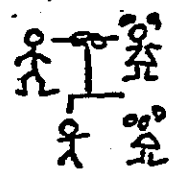
- a. By circulating among students as they work in small groups to listen to them as they ask and answer questions.
- b. By listening to students as they deliver their spiels.
- c. By listening to students as they make observations about the differences among their families.

4. How will I prepare the students to demonstrate their learning?

a. Presentation

10  
minutes

Drawing of family tree on blackboard.  
Teacher elicits/explains that this represents a family. Teacher elicits/assigns names to each family member. Teacher explains relationships between various family members.



b. Practice

20  
minutes

- Teacher points to two family members; students produce the sentence pattern: (John) is (Mary)'s (son).
- Teacher repeats above procedure; students produce the same sentence pattern with possessive adjectives.
- Teacher introduces the question: What is the relationship between (John) and (Mary)?; students produce answer.
- Teacher has students produce the question and directs them to ask and answer one another

c. Presentation/Practice

10 minutes

- Teacher produces drawing of his family tree and explains to the class, using the possessive adjective my
- Teacher directs students to ask him questions about his family, supplying your.

d. Use

20  
minutes

- Students draw pictures of their family trees
- In groups of three, students ask each other questions about their families
- Each student gives a 3-minute spiel about his family
- Teacher posts drawings of family trees and asks students to make observations about differences or similarities.

Although the above description is sketchy, it does give an idea of how the principles of the framework can be applied to a language lesson.

*Pat Moran*