English Language Learning Magazine

CONTACT

August 2021

How to manage expectations in online classes: Guidelines and requirements **PLUS** Teaching the pronunciation of consonants to students **AND MORE...**

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Weins, B. Sunflower field [Image]. Retrieved from https://pixabay.com/photos/sunflower-field-landscape-scene-730446/

Calendar of Events

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November 6: Qatar University International (Virtual) Conference on English Language Teaching

November 18: Building Channels of Communication beyond the ELT Classroom

Access **TESL Ontario's** webinars here.

Editor's Note

Welcome to another issue of *Contact*. This summer we have more articles from presenters and researchers from the November 2020 TESL Ontario Conference.

Since the Spring issue, *Contact* has been working with many writers from many places. With a myriad of topics, we have cultivated some stimulating articles, which include ideas like online teaching and learning. Sometimes I personally ask myself if we need more articles on online teaching—because maybe, just maybe, teachers, administration, and students will soon be back in the classroom full time. Realistically though, pandemic or not, online instruction is here to stay—we know how to do it, we have research on it, and it provides opportunity for some. Whether we like online teaching or are used to it yet, is another question. Articles from this issue (and future ones) will help everyone continue adjusting to virtual teaching.

Coincidentally, this issue starts with Fatemah Hasiri's work on managing expectations in online classrooms. Then Mike Tiittanen reviews teaching consonant pronunciation. Orestes Vega explores the role of grammar in ESL and EFL contexts. Additionally, Eman Ghanem explains her work on individualized program plans for literacy learners. Munjeera Jefford shares insightful research on decolonizing English language learning. Finally, Sara Cordeiro Alexandre teaches us how to run student-centred games in the classroom. The range for August 2021 is vast. I hope you enjoy the articles and can somehow incorporate the ideas into your work.

On another note, I have a request. Issue after issue, I search for cover ideas; I look for artwork and photographs that can be on the cover of our online magazine. While I try to find local Canadian artists and photographers, it is not always easy with creative licences. It would be great to promote the artistic work and hobbies of our readers, friends, families, and community. If you would like something you have created or taken on the cover of *Contact*, or if you know someone that may like their work on the cover, get in touch with me. Send me an email with some possible images, and perhaps one of them will land the cover of an upcoming issue. Images should be portrait mode with a high resolution.

Enjoy whatever is left of summer and thank you for reading. Take care.

Nicola Carozza
editor@teslontario.org

CONTACT

Contact is published three times a year (March, August, and November) by TESL Ontario. March is our conference issue. It is published for the members of TESL Ontario and is available free online to anyone.

Contact welcomes articles of general interest to association members, including announcements, reports, articles, and calls for papers.

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TESL Ontario

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49th Annual TESL Ontario Conference

Online registration is open until October 31. Click here to register.

A sneak peak at some of the 2021 Sessions…

- Assessing Digital RWTs that exist outside the CLB
- Avenue.ca ePortfolio and Course Management Tools
- Canva for Teachers
- CCPLAR: Taking into Account Both Credits and Competencies
- Checklist for Career Planning using the Competency Framework
- Classy All-in-One Cover Sheets for Beautiful E-Binders
- Creating Communities of Inquiry in Online EAP courses
- Creating Effective Rubrics & Other Assessment Tools for PBLA
- Cultural Intelligence in a Multicultural Setting
- Developing Second Language Learners' Literacy Through Tasks
- Don't Just Follow The Textbook! Write Your Own!
- E-portfolios for PBLA
- Examining Students' Perceptions of Flipped Learning in EAP
- Experimenting with Digital Pedagogy: Learning from Trail-and-Error
- Exploring corrective feedback through teacher education
- How can racism be discussed in the classroom? Lessons learned
- Inclusive Online Course Design: Lessons from a Pandemic
- Negotiated Decisions About Assessments in PBLA
- PBLA as the mandatory protocol: Years later...
- Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA): Shifting Perspectives
- Professional Ethics: a Call for Change
- Strategies for Implementing Peer Feedback

- Supporting Immigrant Women's Integration in the Digital World!
- Teaching Grammar in the ESL Classroom: TESOL Education and Teacher Development
- Techno-affective Barriers in Interactive Business English Courses
- The PBLA Tutela Checklist Resource Demonstration
- Using Emotional-struggles to Support Teacher Learning and Development

Return of the Research Symposium!

TESL Ontario's Research Symposium returns this November with a focused look on the future by exploring new and innovative research in English language education. The Research Symposium provides practitioners, researchers, and administrators networking and learning opportunities to better serve post-pandemic students in language education, while also advancing research areas that are relevant to future-focused practice.

Participants will be introduced to three areas of cutting edge research relevant to members of TESL Ontario with opportunities to discuss and consider applications to their own organizational contexts. This year we will explore Plurilingualism, Fanfiction, and the role of AI and algorithms in language teaching and learning.

Career Booster Forum

The Career Booster Forum provides an excellent opportunity for new adult ESL teachers to find out about employer expectations; learn how to incorporate newly acquired and sought-after skills into their resume, and explore best practices for interviews.
The 2021 Career Booster Forum presenters are:

- James Papple, the Interim Associate Director of York University's English Language Institute;
- Tania Connell, the Adult ESL Manager of York Catholic District School Board; and
- Carmen Valero, the Co-founder and Dean of Canadian College of Educators, the Vice Board Chair for Career Colleges Ontario, and Director for the National Association of Career Colleges in Canada.

Career Fair

The Career Fair is a unique opportunity for employers and ESL teachers to meet and discuss potential job opportunities. Also, employers will be able to share their company's culture and hiring practices, and trade hiring strategies with other employers. Registration is free, but virtual career fair booth spaces are limited. We urge you to register for a space before September 30.

Supplier Spotlight Packages – *Only 3 Spots Left!*

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- One full conference registration (valued at $195) and one additional booth staff registration

Book now here.

TESL Ontario 2021 Virtual Conference
Program-at-a-Glance

		Wednesday, November 3		Thursday, November 4		Friday, November 5		
9:00					Keynote 9:00AM-10:00AM			Concurrent Sessions 9:00AM-10:00AM
9:30							PANEL DISCUSSION (9:30AM-11:30AM)	
10:00	SUPPLIER SHOWCASE (10:00AM-4:00PM)		SUPPLIER SHOWCASE (10:00AM-4:00PM)		Supplier Spotlight 10:00AM-11:00AM	SUPPLIER SHOWCASE (10:00AM-4:00PM)		
10:30				RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM (11:00AM-1:30PM)	Concurrent Sessions & Career Booster Forum 11:00AM-12:00PM			Concurrent Sessions 10:30AM-11:30AM
11:00								
11:30								
12:00								Keynote 12:00PM-1:00PM
12:30					Concurrent Sessions 12:30PM-1:30PM			
1:00								Supplier Spotlight 1:00PM-2:00PM
1:30		Concurrent Sessions 1:30PM-2:30PM						
2:00				CAREER FAIR (2:00PM-4:30PM)	Concurrent Sessions 2:00PM-3:00PM		JOINT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS' MEETING (2:00PM-4:00PM)	Concurrent Sessions 2:00PM-3:00PM
2:30								
3:00		Concurrent Sessions 3:00PM-4:00PM						
3:30					Concurrent Sessions 3:30PM-4:30PM			Concurrent Sessions 3:30PM-4:30PM
4:00								
4:30								
5:00					Concurrent Sessions 5:00PM-6:00PM			
5:30								
6:00		Annual General Meeting 6:00PM-7:00PM (Members Only)						
6:30								
7:00		Welcome & Awards 7:15PM-8:00PM						
7:30								
8:00								
8:30								

Back

How to manage expectations in online classes: Guidelines and requirements

By Fatemah Hasiri, York University, Canada

Abstract

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become incumbent upon teachers to transfer courses to an online environment. However, because of the abrupt transition, many in-service teachers might feel poorly prepared for this change of modality, and therefore need to have a better grasp of the expectations and requirements of an online class. This paper attempts to (1) present certain challenges students and teachers may encounter in an online environment as opposed to face-to-face classes, (2) provide relevant guidelines as well as strategies informed by the findings of previous research studies to address the issues, and (3) present a reflection checklist.

Introduction

Before the strike of the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning was considered optional, mainly for self-motivated and independent language learners. However, due to the migration of classes to an online setting after the lockdown, it has become an incumbent obligation for language teachers in different areas of education (e.g., ESL teachers, college instructors, etc.) to conduct online classes, which seems to have become a challenge for some of them. One such challenge could be due to the lack of information about the nuances of an online class, which include (1) identifying the requirements of an online class—that is the

essential considerations of specific features of online classes—and (2) determining students' expectations. These issues should not be overlooked as they are necessary to better support students in their learning (Luck & Rossi, 2015).

Failing to determine the online class requirements and the students' expectations may lead to students' anxiety and confusion, and thereof, student attrition from an online course (Luck & Rossi, 2015). Ignoring these elements may also prevent teachers from effectively adopting online language teaching design and delivery (Jin et al., 2009), an area of in-service teacher education which has not received enough attention. Therefore, this paper attempts to shed light on what needs to be considered in online teaching and provide practical guidelines along with strategies to help teachers to know how to accommodate to students' needs and the requirements of an online class. To achieve these aims, in the first section, the online challenges posed in three main areas of (1) course planning and preparation, (2) course delivery, and (3) course assessment will be presented, all of which will be followed by guidelines and a set of listed strategies and standards. Then, a checklist of important, yet not exhaustive, questions will be presented, serving as an efficient list for teachers to save time by checking them off so that they can provide a more enriched platform for learning.

1. Course planning and preparation

In this section, first the challenges students may face in an online environment, as opposed to face-to-face environments, will be discussed. Then, a few guidelines will be presented, followed by listed strategies for teachers to be mindful of before starting an online course.

In face-to-face classes, daily interaction is an integral part of teaching given that both teachers and students tend to get to know each other's goals and expectations through face-to-face communication. However, in online classes, due to the lack of sufficient interaction, teachers may not provide enough instructions on the requirements of the online course, making students confused about what is expected of them (Muldrow, 2014). In a study led by Jaggars et al. (2013), after interviewing teachers and students, it was found that while teachers expected students to be more resourceful and self-motivated, students had remarkably different expectations in that they looked for some scaffolding from their teachers to help and guide them to improve their skills. They found that this mismatch in expectations led to students' frustration. To prevent the confusion, teachers should set aside a proportionate amount of time to introduce course expectations and objectives to students through documentation and with more clarity (Gudea, 2008). If all the considerations are described in detail, students' confusions about the requirements and objectives of the online course can be minimized (Thormann & Fidalgo, 2014). In doing so, (a) some samples for assignments can be posted (Gilbert & Dabbagh, 2005); (b) the requirements can be posted in the form of instructions before each session; (c) a course calendar can be created for tracking assignment submissions; (d) sample work from

previous students can be posted; and (e) instructional tabs can be used for detailed instructions on every assignment (Armstrong, 2011). The organization of the material is also important. If resources are posted, they should be titled properly and sorted from the most recent to the least recent; otherwise, it may be confusing for the inexperienced online students to find them.

It is not only the expectations that need to be explicitly discussed. Given that some novice learners require familiarization with learning management systems, platforms, and virtual resources, teachers should facilitate a smooth transition to these platforms in order to prevent anxiety (Gilmore & Lyons, 2012). A useful method to avoid confusion is to provide an in-depth orientation which encompasses comprehensive information about the intended tools (Scagnoli, 2001). In doing so, teachers can introduce and familiarize students with the online platform (e.g., Zoom) and the intended Language Management System (e.g., Moodle). This can be done by (a) providing instructional videos, (b) giving students the chance to navigate the platform in a group to be able to seek help, (c) providing information and support in various delivery formats: both synchronously (e.g., one-on-one video conferences) and asynchronously (e.g., emails), and (d) inviting the alumni for sharing their online experience. This thorough orientation may increase students' preparedness to begin the program (Gilmore & Lyons, 2012).

2. Course Delivery

Some novice teachers may not be familiar with how to exploit different resources to teach the content, engage students, and facilitate their interaction in online classes. In this regard, students' engagement and interaction are amongst the most important methods which should not be neglected when it comes to delivering information in online platforms. The two methods are discussed here.

2.1 Students' engagement

Low levels of engagement may lead to boredom and possibly students' loss of interest and focus. As students expect an entertaining and engaging learning environment, teachers should create a friendly atmosphere that can make students feel motivated and energized (Gudea, 2008). To this end, teachers can (a) play external video and audio resources, (b) invite guest speakers, (c) create spontaneous visuals (e.g., pictographs, visual notes, etc.) (Walny et al., 2011), and (d) ask students to post pictures related to the content on social platforms (e.g., Instagram) and give comments. In addition, for retaining students' attention and keeping them engaged, it is helpful to (a) encourage online role playing (Klemm, 1998), (b) introduce ice-breaker activities (brainstorming), (c) use gamification elements (e.g., Kahoot) (Tsay et al., 2018), and (d) put them in breakout rooms and encourage them to do group projects together.

2.2 Students' interaction

Students' interaction with each other and connection to teachers are among the most important reasons why students opt for face-to-face courses (Brace-Govan & Clulow, 2000). Therefore, in order to establish the personal and spatial connections similar to that of on-campus classes, teachers should facilitate learners' exchange of ideas in a more collaborative and interactive environment (Roepnack, 2020). In other words, they should depart from teacher-centered lectures to student-centered activities. A good strategy is for teachers to (a) provide group assignments, in which members of a group can bond and share responsibilities for more productive learning (Thormann & Fidalgo, 2014), (b) encourage synchronous discussions on forums, which facilitate social presence (Schwier & Balber, 2002), and (c) facilitate asynchronous interactions, which provide a suitable ground for students to engage with the material and peers (Roepnack, 2020). For facilitating teacher-student interactions, teachers should (a) provide online office hours for one-on-one meetings and (b) try to be present and responsive when students need assistance (King & McSporran, 2002). This way, they can ascertain that students are keeping pace with others when it comes to learning. Creating authentic online discussions, either synchronously or asynchronously, can spark ongoing and engaging debates, contributing to collaborative critical thinking (Roepnack, 2020). However, conducting them is not easy and requires a special set of skills that are different from the ones expected in the traditional face-to-face classroom (Rose, 2013). Therefore, drawing on previous studies, I will present a few guidelines in terms of expectations and requirements of effective discussion forums.

2.2.1 Expectations around discussion forums

Be a model. As only few students might be familiar with the discussion forums, teachers are expected to first model interaction and critical thinking to inspire conversations and then acknowledge volunteers' contribution to encourage participation and fuel a lively discussion (Roepnack, 2020).

Incorporate students' opinions when choosing the discussion topic. As students' learning needs and interests in various topics vary, teachers should be mindful of individual choices (Mupinga et al., 2006) and create polls and questionnaires to negotiate the topics of the discussion forum (King & McSporran, 2002).

Encourage contribution. Since sometimes only a handful of students may participate in the discussions, teachers should promote their interest and engagement by asking a few thought-provoking questions (Roepnack, 2020). They can also introduce prompts before the class to give some time for students to reflect on them.

Avoid divergence. Sometimes, some topics are so controversial that they may lead to on-going conversations (Gudea, 2008). Therefore, teachers should make provisions and follow a planned course module to slow down the interaction and keep the discussions focused.

Assign roles to students. In order to engage students, teachers can assign the role of "moderator" to students (Thormann & Fidalgo, 2014) as it reinforces student responsibility and promotes group collaboration and cohesiveness (Xie et al., 2014).

Provide timely and constructive feedback. During or after students' participation, teachers can provide feedback involving students' strengths and weaknesses along with recommendations on how they can improve their skills (Thormann & Fidalgo, 2014). Also, teachers can have students provide comments on each other's work as it improves their critical thinking (DiGiovanni & Nagaswami, 2001).

Enhance organization. For more effective online interactions among students, teachers should remind students of basic requirements such as writing within the word limits and before the deadline, writing clearly and concisely, following the rules of netiquette, and developing ideas sufficiently (Gudea, 2008).

Close the session effectively. At the end of the discussion, teachers are recommended to wrap it up by highlighting the main ideas in an organized manner (Thormann & Fidalgo, 2014). In doing so, providing a summary of the students' posts (Roepnack, 2020), making mention of future needs, and asking a question for more reflection may be helpful.

3. Course assessment

Compared to face-to-face classes, teachers are not able to monitor individual students in an online environment due to technological constraints. This lack of control may trigger students' (especially the least motivated ones) temptation to resort to academic integrity issues, such as plagiarism. In this case, the grades may not quite reflect their real intellectual property (Gudea, 2008).

To address the above-mentioned issues, teachers can assign different score scales to multiple activities such as written assignments, online discussions, online presentations, formative and interactive quizzes, etc. (Kearn, 2012). In addition, to avoid plagiarism, teachers can divide the assignment into two or three stages (e.g., outline, first draft, final draft). They can also ask students to submit their work through online plagiarism detectors such as Turnitin. Furthermore, to prevent students from hiring ghostwriters, teachers can have students present in class the outline of their papers and the resources they have used, and once they finish their work, students can be asked to write a reflection on the process of writing, describing the challenges and the gains. Finally, to avoid students delegating the test to someone else, teachers can give oral exams and interviews (Kearn, 2012).

Teachers should also be mindful of evaluating students' work. Therefore, it is important to provide a clearly defined rubric which specifies the target performance criteria and the expectations and objectives of the assignment during the first few sessions so that students can use them as guidelines (Kearn, 2012). Also, instead of being the sole grader of all the assignments, teachers can ask students to both evaluate themselves and assess their peers, albeit after the needed scaffolding (Vrasida and McIsaac, 2001). The former may encourage students to reflect on their weaknesses and strengths and enhance their autonomy; the latter may help learners to internalize the goals and requirements better by reading each other's work as a sample (White & Wright, 2015).

A check list of relevant questions

If teachers know how they can manage the expectations based on the temperament of the online environment, they may be able to better facilitate their learners' journey in online learning and help them succeed in a sufficient learning environment (Gudea, 2008). In order to assist them organize their thoughts and review some pointers, Appendix A (below) presents a checklist summarizing the issues raised in this paper, which can function as a reflective tool for teachers engaged in online instruction.

Conclusion and implications

Teachers need to go beyond merely learning about online tools and approaches as they need to be armed with some information about online class requirements and students' expectations to be able to adjust their course planning and delivery accordingly. In this paper, I have attempted to first present the most common issues both students and teachers are likely to encounter in online classrooms, provide certain guidelines and strategies to address them, and finally, develop a checklist based on the previous studies to address the concerns raised in an online environment in terms of requirements and expectations in the hope that it can be useful for in-service novice teachers as well as the experienced who have just started teaching online. As teachers, the goal is to facilitate a smooth transition for students and provide a safe and engaging environment for them, and this paper can be a good start to stimulate teachers' reflection for better professional development.

Appendix A: A checklist of requirements to manage expectations

The checklist can be accessed here.

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Fatemeh Hasiri is currently a PhD student at York University. She has an MA in Linguistics and an MA in Applied Linguistics. She has over 15 years of experience teaching English and is specialized in designing and producing instructional materials for standardized tests, mainly IELTS and CELPIP.

Teaching the pronunciation of consonsants to ESL students

By Mike Tiittanen, Toronto District School Board, Canada

Abstract

In this article, an experienced ESL pronunciation teacher explains the typical pronunciation problems many ESL students have with selected consonants. The author explains how these consonants are pronounced, and there are video links to demonstrate the pronunciation of these consonants. In addition, for each of the selected consonants within the article, the author gives practical suggestions as to how these consonants may be taught within the context of task-based and communicative lessons. This is important as such meaningful activities allow the students to apply their pronunciation of these consonants within classroom situations that mimic real life. The demonstrations of the pronunciation of the target consonants and the classroom practice activities are applicable for ESL lessons conducted on an online video-based synchronous platform, as well as for in-class ESL lessons.

Introduction

Many second language teachers now believe that a purely communicative teaching approach with an *exclusive* focus on meaning is not the ideal teaching method (Doughty & Williams, 1998). Such an approach will deprive ESL students of the explicit feedback of the correctness of their language they sometimes need. Thus, it appears that some room should be made for form-focussed instruction in order to be able to teach students when their language forms are incorrect (Doughty & Williams, 1998). This appears to be particularly relevant for pronunciation as some pronunciation mistakes may: a) lead to non-understanding

or misunderstanding on the part of the listener; and b) require more effort on the part of the listener to try to understand what the speaker intended (Thomson, 2018).

In fact, the functional communicative purpose of phonemes, that is speech sounds, is to distinguish the meanings of words from one another (Rogers, 1991). For example, the following words are distinguished only by their first consonant phoneme: pin, bin, fin, VIN, thin, tin, din, etc. However, they all mean different things. An English learner who lacks the ability to receptively and/or productively distinguish the phonemes of a language (i.e. English) from one another, will sooner or later, face difficulty in understanding the intended message in English or being understood by English speakers.

Thus, there appears to be a good case for occasionally teaching and practicing the pronunciation of phonemes, including some typically problematic consonant sounds, within a communicative and/or task-based ESL teaching framework. In order to teach the articulation of these consonants, however, ESL teachers should undeniably know how these consonants are produced and what problems ESL learners often have with these sounds. In addition, it is often a good idea for longer, focussed practice exercises with these consonants to be meaningful (as opposed to purely metalinguistic) and to be related to real life language tasks. Such meaningful, real-life tasks are, at the very least, more interesting to learners given the centrality of meaning in human communication. Moreover, there is second language education research which indicates that L2 teaching is usually most effective when the classroom activities are meaningful with some opportunity for form-focussed feedback (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Lightbown & Spada, 1990).

Such form-focussed instruction is necessary in order for ESL students to improve their pronunciation. There is a substantial amount of research which indicates that ESL learners often improve their pronunciation, including their consonants, by getting specialized pronunciation training (Derwing et al., 1998; Saito & Lyster, 2012; Thomson & Derwing, 2015). It is reasonable to assume that even in more general ESL classes, students may benefit from some focus on pronunciation correction of their consonants.

The following sections explain the articulation of consonant sounds which are often difficult for some ESL learners. These sections also give some teaching tips. The diagonal slashes, "/ /", are the symbolic notations often used in phonetics for speech sounds, while the angled brackets, "< >", are the symbols sometimes used for letters or combinations of letters.

/p/, /t/, and /k/

These consonants are usually aspirated at the beginning of a word in English. This means that there is a small puff of air associated with their articulation. In some languages, these consonants lack aspiration, and

ESL learners speaking such languages may pronounce these sounds without the puff of air that is made by English speakers. To demonstrate this puff of air, an ESL teacher may take a piece of bathroom tissue and place this in front of their mouth. The teacher should then pronounce words with these sounds, such as "Peter", "tea", and "cake". For a video explanation and demonstration of these aspirated consonants, refer to the following YouTube videos:

- P sound
- T sound
- K sound

If students do not have a piece of bathroom tissue, they may practice the pronunciation of these sounds by blowing on their palm.

As I write this article, we are currently in the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic. So, such a demonstration and such practice may perhaps not be advisable in the classroom until such a time as the pandemic subsides. Nevertheless, these activities could easily be done in an online video-based synchronous platform. In fact, one advantage of using video for teaching the articulation of sounds is that it allows the teacher to show close-ups of their mouth when demonstrating the pronunciation of sounds. Such close-ups may not be socially appropriate, even in a pandemic-free teaching environment.

If a student pronounces /p/, /t/, and /k/ without a puff of air, this will usually not cause any communication problems, as the context will generally make the L2 learner's intention clear. However, one situation in which their intention may not be clear is when they need to spell a word, such as a person's name or a place name. In particular, if a student spells out a foreign name with a /p/, /t/, or /k/ without aspiration, it will be very difficult for the English listener to understand the speaker's intention as the English listener may not be familiar with the foreign name. For example, my last name is "Tiittanen", which is of Finnish origin. If I were to spell out the name using unaspirated /t/ sounds for the letters (which is how it is pronounced in Finnish), the English listener would probably be confused as to whether I meant the letter <t> or the letter <d>. This is because aspiration is one important phonetic cue that helps English listeners to distinguish /t/ from /d/.

A useful focussed listening practice activity is the following. The teacher can make up a list of people's full names that begin with /p/, /t/, and /k/ (e.g. **P**aul **T**ucker, **C**arla **T**yndale, etc.). It may be advisable for the teacher to introduce the last names to the students, as well as less frequently used first names, prior to doing such a listening task. After such a brief introduction of names, the teacher can then spell out the names on the list and the students can write them down as a listening dictation activity. Such an activity is, in fact, a real-life task for things such as making appointments. To emphasize how important aspiration is

for understanding the pronunciation of letters, in this activity, the teacher can occasionally mispronounce the target sounds without aspiration, and then point out how this makes it more difficult for the students in class. As a follow-up activity, the teacher could hand out two different lists of names with the target sounds, and students could work in pairs. One student would spell out the names, and the other student would write them down (and then they would switch roles). For more practice, perhaps on another day, students could be asked to write down a list of people's names in their first language that have /p/, /t/, and /k/ sounds, and they could spell the names out to a partner who would write the names down. Such an activity could be easily integrated into a task-based topic, such as leaving a phone message or making a medical appointment.

/z/ versus /s/

A common problem for some ESL learners is the pronunciation of the /z/ sound if their first language does not have this sound. Learners who have problems with the /z/ sound will typically substitute an /s/ sound. Thus, for example, they may pronounce "zoo" like "Sue". Such mistakes will not usually cause communication problems, so this issue does not need to be emphasized when teaching pronunciation. Nevertheless, the substitution of /s/ for /z/ may occasionally cause confusion for semantically related words, with (of course) distinct meanings. For example, within the course of a lesson on application forms, a student who has written down "Ms." (i.e. /miz/) on her application form may mistakenly pronounce "Ms." as /mis/. In situations such as these, it may be appropriate to explain the difference in pronunciation between /z/ and /s/. In addition, some ESL students may want to be able to pronounce words with a /z/ sound (like "zoo") the way English speakers say such words.

In such cases, an ESL teacher should explain to their students that the difference between /z/ and /s/ is that /z/ has vocal cord vibration, while /s/ does not. Teachers can model how to feel this vibration by gently placing their palm over the middle part of their throat and contrasting words with /z/ with nearly identical words with /s/ (e.g. zoo/sue, sip/zip, fussy/fuzzy, etc.). It is also advisable to demonstrate other sounds that have this distinction in voicing such as /f/ and /v/ (fan/van), /ʃ/ (**sh**oe), and /ʒ/ (mea**s**ure). For a video demonstration of how to pronounce /z/, click here.

For focussed practice with the /z/ sound, an ESL teacher can make up a questionnaire with a list of questions containing "is it" in all of the questions. In the word "is", the letter <s> is pronounced as the sound /z/. Such questions could be integrated into a unit on housing, in which a tenant asks questions about the neighbourhood about an apartment for rent (e.g. "Is it close to shopping?"; "Is it close to the subway?" etc.).

/θ/ (voiceless <th> sound)

The /θ/ is articulated by placing the tongue between the teeth and then blowing air between the tongue and the teeth. It is voiceless, which means there is no vocal cord vibration, and the tongue should only protrude out of the mouth slightly. To watch a video explaining how /θ/ is pronounced, click here.

To introduce this sound to my students, I find it useful to model the placement of the tongue between the teeth using a diagram. Then I give the students examples of common words that begin with /θ/ such as "thanks", "think", and "thin". Then I have the students look at their mouths on the video app on their cell phone, so they can see if their tongues are in the correct place. Common mistakes for students to make are:

a) the substitution of /t/ or /s/ for /θ/ (i.e. "tanks" or "sanks" for "thanks"); b) not blowing enough air out; and c) not holding their tongues in place between their teeth firmly enough.

Useful task-based practice for the /θ/ sound is with the use of numbers such as "three", "thirteen", "thirty", "thousand" etc. in a price-based listening activity. For such an activity, students could work in pairs. They would be given prices with the /θ/ sound. Student A would read a price to their partner (e.g. three hundred and thirteen). Student B would listen and write down the number. Then students could switch roles, using a different list of numbers.

/ð/ (voiced <th> sound)

The /ð/ sound is identical to the /θ/ sound except that /ð/ is voiced (there is vocal cord vibration) and unlike /θ/, /ð/ does not have much air flow escaping from the mouth. Because of the similarity of the /θ/ sound to the /ð/ sound, they can be explained and demonstrated in similar ways (i.e. a diagram and video apps on students' phones). I suggest using other voiced sounds such as /z/ and /v/ to help point out the voicing of the /ð/ sound. Students should lightly place their palms over their throats to feel the vibration. The teacher can use common examples of words with the /ð/ sound such as "the", "this", and "mother". It is useful to point out the common mistakes that students make with this sound such as substituting /d/ or /z/ for /ð/ (i.e. "diss" or "ziss" for "this"). For a video explanation of this consonant sound, click here.

There are a number of task-based and communicative activities that can be done to practice the production of the /ð/ sound. For example, for theme of housing, one could make up a list of questions that a tenant could ask about an apartment for rent beginning with "is there" (e.g. "Is there a balcony?"; "Is there a laundry room?"). Students could use these questions to ask about their own, real homes, or some made-up apartment ads with abbreviations. One could make up a geography board game that requires students to

try to answer questions about Canadian geography. It would be easy to elicit "the" (which begins with a /ð/ sound) for such questions given the prevalence of "the" in English (e.g. "What is the capital of Manitoba?"). Also, "the" is obligatory for rivers (e.g. the St. Lawrence River), oceans (e.g. the Arctic Ocean), mountain chains (e.g. the Rocky Mountains), etc.

/w/

Some learners may substitute a /v/-like sound from their native language (a labiodental approximant) for the /w/ sound. This sound substitution will rarely cause any communication problems, so it may not be necessary to spend a lot of time on this sound. Nevertheless, English listeners tend to categorize the /v/-like sound some ESL learners make as an English /v/ rather than as a /w/. Thus, it is possible that out of context, the mispronunciation of /w/ will cause problems for English listeners. For example, some English-speaking people may not understand who the ESL speaker means if they say, "I like the author Wayne /veyn?/ Willis /villis?/".

To teach the /w/ consonant, an English teacher should inform their students that, unlike a /v/ sound in English or a non-English /v/-like labiodental approximant, the /w/ sound has only lip-rounding. The upper teeth do not make any light contact with the lower lip—which is how some learners may mispronounce the /w/ sound. For a video explanation of this sound, click here.

In case you want to do some more focussed speaking practice with the /w/ sound using a communicative or task-based activity, it would be easy to do this. Many question words (i.e. where, why, what, when, what time) begin with the /w/ sound. You could make up some questions on a given topic such as hobbies and routines (e.g. What do you like to do on the weekend? How often do you work out?), and then give students feedback on their pronunciation of the /w/ sound and other aspects of their pronunciation.

/l/ versus /ɹ/ = <r> (and other problems with /ɹ/)

A few students may not have the /l/ and /ɹ/ (e.g. led/red) distinction in their native language. Such students will most likely have problems distinguishing these sounds in both their listening and speaking. They may also feel frustrated with their problems distinguishing /l/ and /ɹ/. If there are any such students in your class, it may be worthwhile to spend at least a little time on this sound distinction as an ESL learner who makes such mistakes will sometimes be misunderstood by English speakers and will possibly misunderstand English speakers. The /l/ versus /ɹ/ sound contrast is an important one in English as there are many minimal pairs for /ɹ/ and /l/ (e.g. light/right, lamb/ram, rust/lust). For a video explanation of the /ɹ/ sound and some mistakes ESL learners make with this sound, click here.

As I explain in the above video link, there are several smaller problems with /ɹ/ that your students may have. They are not nearly as serious as the /l/ versus /ɹ/ contrast, but you may wish to briefly practice these with your students. A task-based activity for practicing the /l/ and /ɹ/ sound is the following. Make up a menu consisting of food and drink items that have the /l/ and /ɹ/ sounds (e.g. lobster, lamb, wrap, roasted chicken, etc.). A role-play between a restaurant server and a customer may be useful for lower level students who need to practice the language typically used in such situations. Higher level students could do the same activity, but the focus for them could be not only the language used in such situations, and the /l/ and /ɹ/ sounds, but the use of higher intonation by the server in order to appear to be professionally polite.

Conclusion

In order to teach effectively, it is not enough for ESL teachers to just model the correct pronunciation of consonants and then ask the students to just mimic them. ESL teachers should know how to explain how the target consonants are pronounced, show them how they are pronounced, and use effective practice teaching techniques for them. For teachers who want more focussed practice with the target consonants, there are meaningful activities they can create, which they can integrate into their communicative and task-based ESL lessons.

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The role of grammar in ESL and EFL courses

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Abstract

The teaching of grammar has been a controversial issue in second and foreign languages. On the one side, one can find those who oppose teaching grammar in language courses, and on the other side, one can also find many language teachers and applied linguists who favor teaching grammar in the same said courses. This paper deals with some issues related to the teaching of grammar, how teachers should teach, and when is the best time to introduce it in second and foreign language courses. While many language courses focus on grammatical forms, other courses, such as those adhering to the communicative language teaching approach, try to exclude the explicit treatment of form from the syllabi. It is known that native speakers of any language acquire their native language without grammar explanations; consequently, one can assume that this can work as well with second-language (L2) learners. Although many opponents of the teaching of grammar in second and foreign language courses continue to object with considerable reasons, this paper aims to prove that second language learners can benefit from both the explicit and implicit teaching of grammar in language courses.

Introduction

The main purpose of this article is to assess some approaches to grammar instruction in foreign and second language classrooms. The author argues about some topics concerning the teaching of grammar, such as the

role of grammar in language classrooms and the natural acquisition of grammar. The author also delves into the teaching of grammar inductively and deductively, teaching functional grammar and teaching grammar in context. These are some of the most relevant concerns for linguists and language teachers when deciding about how and when to teach grammar in a language course. The key question that the author is addressing in this article is the role that grammar still plays in second and foreign language classrooms. Firstly, it is relevant to mention that in the USA, the teaching of English grammar in the English Language Arts courses has been almost excluded from the school curriculum (Kolln & Hancock, 2005); in contrast, the ESOL and EAP courses offered in American state colleges advocate the integration of grammar as a critical part of the curriculum. However, when one analyzes if grammar is to be taught explicitly in ESL and EFL courses, one still encounters those who oppose and others who embrace this approach. Subsequently, it is also known to those in the field of second and foreign language teaching that many approaches and methods are designed for language learners to acquire the grammatical rules without any explicit explanations, whereas others are more form-focused.

The role of grammar in language learning

One of the key issues in L2 learning and teaching is the role that grammar plays in learning second and foreign languages. According to Steven Krashen (2013), grammar should not be taught explicitly in second language classrooms. Krashen believes in the input hypothesis; this hypothesis affirms that L2 learners acquire language competence by the exposure that they have in the target language and not by teaching explicit grammar. He also states that learners will acquire the language if they are exposed to language that is comprehensible and used in a meaningful way (as cited in Taylor, 1986). Paradoxically, although Krashen does not advocate the teaching of grammar explicitly, he suggests that grammar should be left for homework through story-telling and reading, and it should be taught only in high school and to adult learners (Krashen, 2013).

Furthermore, he recommends that grammar should be taught only in mini-lessons, and simple rules should be taught just to please the curiosity of L2 learners and to fill in gaps that they may not have acquired in the process of acquisition. He further argues that one cannot expect that learned-grammar rules will be acquired in the classrooms. Like Krashen, Nassaji and Fotos (2004) also argue that there are many claims made about the teaching of grammar based on the hypothesis of Universal Grammar (UG) and its application to second language learning. They argue that many linguists claim that if UG is accessible to second and foreign language learners, then learning grammar in an L2 will be like learning an L1 grammar, meaning that the teaching of formal grammar will not be necessary in the process of acquiring the L2. In this case, both Nassaji and Fotos agree with Krashen's theory.

Krashen (1981) points out the difference between the terms acquisition and learning, and he posits that grammar should be acquired through natural exposure to it and not learned in a formal context. He uses a model called "the monitor" to explain the performance of adults speaking a foreign language, in which they evaluate their speeches and results. The ideal teaching of grammar will be the one in which a process of creative construction that is stimulated by contextualized exercises occurs, so learners can learn grammar in context. The hypothesis that this process maintains is that when grammatical rules and corrections are presented, the phenomenon of monitoring will be effective.

Should grammar lessons be form-focused?

The term *form* is not only a linguistic term; it is also a philosophical term that denotes a philosophical category as opposed to that of content and refers to the external expression of language. In philosophy, grammar has always been treated as the structure or organization of language. From the linguistic point of view, the form is the vehicle in the language used to express meaning. As meaning could be defined as the content of a form, the connection between the philosophical and the linguistic term is evident.

According to the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (2013), the form is defined as the means by which an element of language is expressed in speech or writing. Also, David Crystal (1995), in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, defines the term as the outward appearance or structure of language; as opposed to its function, meaning, or social use, as well as the variations in which a linguistic unit can appear. The role of form in L2 teaching and learning is not new; many strategies have been implemented to teach form in language classrooms, and this has been a controversial debate among linguists and language teachers for decades.

It is a fact that the form-focus approach shifted from the translation method to the current method. In the past, the translation method was used to teach form, making grammatical analysis of the rules of the target language, and later focusing on translating sentences and texts from one language into another. Therefore, the importance of memorization of vocabulary and syntax was paramount. The translation method focuses more on reading and writing instead of speaking and listening; consequently, it is not considered a method where students will reach communicative competence, but they will learn about the form of the target language. In this method, learners are considered good language learners when they develop skills to do accurate translation from one language into the other language.

Too much focus on meaning and avoiding the teaching of grammar is not enough to achieve competence in the target language (Long, 1998). To support this theory, Long states that grammar should not be taught in a discrete way, or in isolated grammatical features, but rather teaching the grammar in context. The

form-focus approach is the most traditional method that language teachers have used to teach grammar; however, this does not mean that it is the most effective one. One of the problems that grammar courses have when the teachers focus too much on form is that they do not consider learners' needs and learning styles. Another problem that form-focus lessons present is that even when delivered by the highly qualified teachers, learners can find the lessons boring and tedious, and it will reduce the learners' motivation in learning the target language.

Furthermore, according to Long (1991), form-focus is more of a structural approach in language teaching because the pedagogy that language teachers were using was to isolate the grammatical elements and de-contextualize them. This approach involves drawing learners' attention to linguistic features that arise naturally, and if grammar is introduced in a meaningful context where learners can practice communication, then the approach can be considered an effective way for L2 learners to acquire grammar. However, the question language teachers should be asking is how much form focused the grammar lesson should be, and if explicit grammar explanations should be completely excluded from language courses. Brown (2000) suggests that some grammar rules must be beneficial to adult learners in a communicative language course. He further prescribes some strategies for teaching grammar such as making brief explanations and not going too deep into language terminologies. He also advises not to spend time in explaining exceptions of rules, but to use charts and visuals to support the explanations.

Nevertheless, this works better when teaching adults; however, one can question if these strategies can be used in other contexts, such as classes made of adolescents or even students who are native speakers of English (Brown, 2000). Even though Brown suggests using these strategies to teach adult learners, they can also be useful for teaching other learners. Adolescents can also benefit from these explanations, since they do not know the rules of the language and will run the risk of making mistakes if they never learn the rules. The reality is that every language has a grammar, and every grammar has grammatical structures, which are the forms and functions used to express meaning. Therefore, learning structures suggest learning how they are formed, in addition to learning the meaning, and its functions. According to Dekeyser, in Doughty and Williams (1998), language learners must practice the structures in a meaningful way because language teachers who just focus their lessons on drilling forms, and do not provide chances to practice the language communicatively, will deprive the language learners of practicing the language structures communicatively.

Moreover, Basturkmen et al. (2004) argue that focus on form is a feature of communicative language teaching (CLT); therefore, the form should not be completely excluded from courses that focus on the CLT approach. However, many schools that follow the CLT approach have been forbidding their teachers to teach form-focused lessons, and others have even gone as far as to exclude the teaching of grammar in their programs.

Likewise, if schools and language programs follow the opponents of the teaching of grammar, then it should be fair to ask why linguists and language teachers are so concerned about writing so many books and articles about the pedagogies, approaches, and methods of teaching it. The reality is that grammar should not be excluded from the field of second, foreign, and first language learning. The question that teachers should be asking themselves is how to teach the grammar for each specific course since not all courses have the same purpose. It is common sense that language learners who are being trained to work in a tourist industry to serve and interact with tourists in countries where English is not the first language do not need a sophisticated grammar as learners who are enrolled in American, Canadian, and British colleges and universities. Consequently, the setting and the purpose of learning the target language will influence the approach that must be chosen to teach grammar.

A clear example is research that was conducted in Canada with native English-speaking learners who were taking French in immersion courses. The results proved that these learners were able to communicate their thoughts in French at some level, yet their vocabulary and grammar did not show good proficiency in the target language. These learners were receiving grammar lessons in French, and the lessons were not being taught in context, so the approach used was more of a rote and drilling learning (Swain, 1985).

Swain (1985, pp. 65–69) argues that a factor that might have caused the poor grammar proficiency of these learners is the little amount of time they spent in the output of the utterances. Moreover, a study conducted in Toronto, Canada at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), shows that the output language learners do in practicing the target structure also affects how well they acquire the language. She states that the output helps learners to notice the utterances in the target language; based on the theory of what has been noticed, the structure can be acquire. Therefore, what has been observed can be reported, and the process in perceiving must be conscious. On the other hand, Doughty and Williams (1998) do not agree with this theory, stating that perceiving can be just to notice a hole in the language; nonetheless, Swain points out that noticing a hole can trigger the stimulus for observing a gap. This theory can be applied if learners are learning gerunds and present continuous in English because both structures have the "-ing" form. The learner may get confused in differentiating them at some point, but at least, he or she will notice that both the gerund and the present continuous are formed with the (-ing) morpheme. Swain further claims that what the language learner may be doing in the output process is experimenting which form might fit in the speech that he or she is trying to convey, and feedback may not come from an instructor in the process of doing it. As a result, this can be perceived as a self-interaction with the target language, experimenting with new utterances.

Swan (1997) considers that learners' L1 plays an important role in L2 vocabulary learning and use; as a result, he proposes that the L1 can support, fail to support, or slow someone who is learning or using the

vocabulary of an L2. For example, in the case of Spanish learners learning French or Italian as an L2 in immersion classes, the form-focus approach may not be needed much because Spanish, French, and Italian come from Latin; therefore, the grammatical and morphological similarities in these languages will be bigger compared to English. Thus, few differences in form between L1 and L2 will stick out and confuse the L2 learner, requiring the assistance of a Form-Focus Approach. Yet, one should not assume that the result of form-focus courses in English L2 courses will be the same in the case of other languages as L1 that does not have so many similarities with English.

Yet, there is no doubt that based on the research that has been conducted on the role of focus-on-form-approach (FonF) to language teaching, one can arrive at the conclusion that L2 learners will benefit from form-focused instructions if this is combined with other approaches, so the teaching process becomes more eclectic. Of course, one cannot assume that all learners will neither need the same type of instruction, nor the same amount of focus on form. It will depend on the type of learners and goals of the course. Learners that are being trained to become foreign language teachers will need more instruction of focus-on-form than regular EFL learners. Much substantial research shows that well-delivered and well-practiced form-focused lessons can improve the proficiency of language learners. For example, Lightbown and Spada (1990) claim that language learners need to focus on form to overcome incorrect language structures that they may not acquire properly. Moreover, Long (1998) also points out that FonF instruction can increase the students' levels of language proficiency; however, he clearly states that language teachers must leave behind the old method of rote practice and focus more on grammar lessons with a communicative approach and not on overcorrection of errors that can cause frustration and anxiety in the learners. Of course, this does not mean that teachers must skip correcting errors that interfere with the communication and the message the learner tries to convey.

Can language learners benefit from grammar lessons?

Even though the researched-based evidence mentioned above gives enough reasons to include grammar in language courses, these might not be substantial reasons for those who oppose this approach. A clear example can be observed in several reasons that Weaver (1996) gives on the reason teachers continue to teach grammar. Weaver states that teachers assume that teaching grammar will improve learners' writing skills and that this assumption is based on articles they read, which are based on a behaviorist approach to learning, and this is also based on the idea that practice makes perfect. She also points out that these teachers believe that formal grammar teaching is effective if applied to writing; however, she refutes this idea, stating that these people have no idea that great writers have little understanding of a conscious grammar as a system. Weaver further gives other reasons why these teachers might be teaching grammar,

such as fear of the school administration, and they also expect great outcome from the grammar they teach. She also implies that learners can apply good grammar without having to learn the parts of speech.

Furthermore, Weaver argues why teachers must replace the explicit teaching of grammar. Firstly, she mentions that grammar must be limited for those who enjoy taking this class for the pleasure of learning about the language. Secondly, she suggests minimizing the use of grammar terminology and examples and focusing more on teaching grammar in context. She recommends engaging second language learners in using the language the best they can and letting them know that language interaction will be more effective in learning the language than learning grammar rules. To support her claim, she cites a statement that Noguchi (1991) made on the teaching of grammar, where he mentions that less grammar is better since teachers should allow learners to discover language own their own. According to Noguchi, less grammar instruction will also mean more time to develop writing skills.

Weaver (1996) also supports her position based on research that was conducted on 300 college essays. They studied the most frequent errors students made in writing, and she points out that writing instructors did not mark all the errors students made, and the purpose was to avoid inhibiting them from writing. Ironically, this study shows that the most frequently marked errors in these papers were not the most critical errors students made. Therefore, can one assume that English composition instructors in the USA are doing a good job or giving learners proper corrective feedback? In addition, Weaver speaks about errors marked by teachers, but she does not mention that today thousands of teachers across the USA are using turnitin.com, software that detects many grammatical and other mechanical errors too. Accordingly, a good way for students to have a good command of the grammar can be to start teaching grammar in middle and high school and not wait until students arrive in college. If these problems are tackled in middle and high school, students will enter college more prepared and show less grammatical errors in their writing.

Nonetheless, if one looks closely at Weaver (1996) and Noguchi's (1991) philosophy on the role that grammar plays in the teaching of English, one can also see that they do not point out the benefits that grammar has for developing speaking proficiency. Besides, contrary to what Noguchi states, that learners should spend more time on writing and less time doing grammar, the author takes a different position based on his experience of teaching eight years of college writing in the state of Florida, USA. In the colleges the author has taught, he found that both native speakers and ESL learners encounter problems in using the indefinite pronouns in English. These learners have completed grade twelve in American high schools and are still struggling with indefinite pronouns in their writing. So, should a teacher hope that these learners will acquire the pronouns in the long run or is it better to teach them explicitly, and have learners practice the pronouns in sentences and in context, so they can have sufficient exposure in the language and learn to use them correctly? One of

the problems that these learners face with the indefinite pronouns is that they fail to notice that indefinite pronouns are always singular; consequently, many learners made errors when using subject-verb agreement in sentences.

The errors become more frequent when they use the indefinite pronouns: each, some, neither, and every. The errors increased when the indefinite pronouns are used with non-countable nouns. The following are some sentences that could be problemtatic: “Some of the food is good”; “neither Betty nor Janet is here today”; “each of us has a car”; “each of the partners is responsible” “some of the grain was ruined in the flood”; and “neither of these choices appears good to me”. These are just a few sentences where ESL learners make errors when trying to make agreement with indefinite pronouns. Therefore, can ESL teachers assume that learners will acquire these indefinite pronouns and be able to use them properly in their writings without any explicit explanation and enough practice? The author also keeps track of these errors, since many of these courses were taught using turnitin.com, software that keeps students’ work indefinitely.

Of course, indefinite pronouns are not the only problems ESL and EFL learners face. Murcia and Freeman (1999) also point out other errors that these types of learners make when trying to make subject-verb agreement. They give examples where learners omit the -s in 3rd person, such as “they goes to the movie”; “Pete can sings salsa”; and “he don’t know”. They point out that the cause of these errors is phonological factors, since many learners can produce these utterances properly when they write. However, they omit them in speaking, and this is the result of a phonological transfer from their first language. In French, for example, the final -s does not as frequently as it does in English, and learners will transfer this element from their L1 into English.

Furthermore, Savage et al. (2010) highlight the importance of ESL/EFL learners to know grammar when they plan to attend college or university in an English-speaking country. They address that these learners will benefit in understanding the meaning of grammatical structures when they listen to lectures and for reading and writing academic articles. Once learners learn to correct themselves, this will help them to lead to self-sufficiency and be able to edit their own papers without having to depend on others. Grammar is the structural foundation and the ability human have to express themselves. According to Crystal (2004), the more aware one is of how grammar works, the more one can monitor the way one speaks and uses the language in a meaningful way, and the more grammar one knows, the more one can understand and differentiate how others use the different dialects and varieties of a given language.

Moreover, when teaching grammar, Ellis (2006) makes a distinction between intensive and extensive grammar teaching. For him, intensive grammar teaching is to teach grammar for a continuous period. This may consist of a lesson or some mini-lessons, which can take several days or weeks, concerning a single

grammatical structure or several of them. On the other hand, extensive grammar teaching refers to an instruction concerning a more variety of structures in a short period of time. In this case, the attention that each structure will receive will be minimal. Ellis suggests that when teaching grammar, teachers should leave space for both, extensive and intensive grammar practice, so learners can have the chance to practice the grammatical structure in a communicative context as well. However, this will depend on the focus of the course and the needs that learners have in learning the target grammar. Today, many grammar courses are embedded with writing courses, yet many schools continue to teach grammar as a separate course, and language learners spend more time doing just grammar.

Conclusion

Finally, since language is considered the main vehicle for social interaction among humans, and it serves as different types of communication, such as formal, informal, oral, and written, the teaching of grammar can also be applied in the classroom, depending on the type of course that has been designed to teach the target language. Moreover, since there is a difference in how humans learn a second language from their first language, this factor must also be considered when designing a grammar course. Nassaji and Fotos (2004) explain the need for grammar instruction, suggesting that learners must also have opportunities to learn, develop, and use instructed grammar. This grammatical knowledge will allow language learners to function better in the target language and be more proficient in it. In addition, it will help language learners to develop self-confidence in speaking with native speakers of the target language.

It is a reality that language learners do not need to become grammarians nor learn all the grammatical terminologies in the target language to gain proficiency in it. While there are claims "that the study of grammar does not have a role in a language program" (Krashen, 1995, p. 57), based on the evidence that this article provides, the author proves that the competence and performance of grammar in any language helps the language learner to have a better understanding of how the language he or she speaks and writes works. At the same time, the learner will be more aware of using the language in different social contexts and for different purposes.

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Individualized program plans for adult ESL literacy learners

By Eman Ghanem, Edmonton Catholic Separate School District, Canada

Abstract

Adult ESL literacy teachers are often perplexed when instructing pre-, non-, and semi-literate adult ESL learners due to their L1 literacy level, age, and possibly traumatic experiences. Classroom instruction and assessment should be carefully planned and strategically implemented because of the underlying financial and social ties connecting literacy to socio-economic status. How might instructional practices be modified to better meet the needs of adult L2 emergent readers? This paper examines the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) tier 3 plans in adult English learning in an L2 context. For twelve weeks, several evidence-based reading diagnostics assessments were administered to help develop individualized program plans for a group of emergent readers. A comprehensive list of reading strategies and materials were used to teach letter names, grapheme-phoneme correspondence, encoding, decoding, and sight words. Participant response was examined to inform modifications to strategies and materials. Based on participant response and post-assessment gains in literacy skills, individualized program plans (IPPs) to teaching L2 literacy may be effective with adults who have limited prior formal education in their country of origin.

Background

Have you ever considered consulting K-12 reading and writing acquisition research to find possible solutions and tools to support Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) learners? If

not, you are missing invaluable resources that can change your instructional plans and classroom teaching. To illustrate, Vinogradov (2013) encouraged LESLLA teachers to explore early literacy learning experiences in K-12 classrooms to enhance their own literacy practices. Second, Johnson (2018) found that LESLLA teachers can benefit from using a multisensory, systematic, and direct approach to reading similar to those used with L1 children with dyslexia. The researcher used Orton-Gillingham multisensory strategies and materials to teach letter names, grapheme-phoneme correspondence, encoding, decoding, and sight words to a small group of LESLLA learners for six weeks. Johnson (2018) found that modifications to strategies and materials that were developed for native English-speaking children were needed to meet LESLLA students' learning strengths and areas of growth. Finally, Ghanem (2020) adapted Wren's (2000) reading framework originally developed for K-12 learners to meet LESLLA learners' needs. The researcher suggested the use of the RTI approach to introduce evidence-based intervention and assessment tools to support students who deviate from the literacy level profile of ability. She also developed a list of Diagnostic Reading Assessments (DRA) referencing K-12 literature and ATLAS[1], Hamline University, where numerous diagnostic tools have been developed for LESLLA teachers' use with their students.

A new approach to address LESLLA learners' needs

This paper represents a group of adult ESL literacy learners enrolled in CLB 3L (i.e., Canadian Language Benchmarks, level 3 in the literacy stream). Although all students have been enrolled in the same program (i.e., Foundation CLB 2L) for about two years during which they progressed through different milestones, it was noticed that they vary as far as their decoding skills and text comprehension. The first assessment tool recommended for administration is the Native Language Literacy Assessment (NLLA) (King & Bigelow, 2016) to check L1 literacy levels before embarking on other reading assessments. While NLLA results showed three students (Student M, Student A, Student F) with 0 years of education, two of those students were fluent readers/writers in their respective L1s and only one of those three students (Student F) had no literacy experience in L1.

(i) Protocol sheets choices, scoring and results: QRI-6 Word List and Reading by Analogy Test

Qualitative Reading Inventory-6 Word List (Leslie & Caldwell, 2017) was chosen to identify the independent, instructional, and frustration levels for the learners to determine the suitable reading comprehension materials and exercises that meet the learners' needs and adds (+1) level to the learning experiences to meet Krashen's (1982) i+1 principle where "i" is the learner's interlanguage and "**+1**" is the next stage of

1 ATLAS is an affiliate of Hamline University that provides accessible resources and professional development opportunities to enhance adult education. It can be accessed at: https://atlasabe.org/

language acquisition. The Reading by Analogy Test (Leslie & Caldwell, 2017) was also administered to check the learners' ability to decode by analogy.

Results for Student M: This student scored at an independent level on pre-primer 1 and 2/3, at an instructional level at premier-first grade, and at frustration level at second grade. In addition, their scores on the Reading by Analogy test ranged between 15-18. These results suggest that the learner's decoding skills allow them to read at premier-first grade level of vocabulary. These results also suggest administering oral and silent reading of narrative and expository texts to determine the level of passages to be chosen for the next step to maintain (i+1) level of instruction.

Results for Student A: This student scored at the independent level on pre-primer 1 and 2/3 as well as at premier-first grade, at an instructional level at second grade, and at frustration level at third grade. In addition, the student's score on Reading by Analogy Test was 14. These results suggest that the student's decoding skills allow them to read at premier-second grade level of vocabulary, and if/when it leaps to third grade, it hits the frustration level. These results also suggest administering oral and silent reading of narrative and expository texts to determine the level of passages to be chosen for the next step to maintain (i+1) level of instruction.

Results for Student F: This student scored at an independent level on pre-primer 1 and at frustration level at premier 2/3. In addition, the student's scores on Reading by Analogy was (9-8). These results suggest that the student's decoding skills allow them to read at pre-premier 1 grade level of vocabulary and if/when it jumps to pre-primer 2/3 grade, it hits the frustration level. These results highlight the unique reading levels and needs for this student in comparison to the those of Students M and A.

(ii) Instructional plans

Reflecting on the holistic and analytic needs of the students is an essential step in developing instructional plans (Farrell, 2015). The protocol sheets' results indicate that Student M's instructional level is premier-first grade, Student A's instructional level is second grade while Student F's instructional level is aimed towards pre-primer 2/3 level. Instructional plans were developed to engage Student F in phonemic awareness (segmentation and isolation), learning one-syllable words, using logographic, and practising reading aloud; Student M and Student A engaged in reading appropriate level passages and using semantic mapping or KWL to relate their background knowledge to help process reading texts.

(iii) Implementation of an IPP to address LESLLA learners' needs

The gathered data indicated that a few students needed Individualized Program Plans (IPPs). Response to Intervention (RTI) is an educational approach that focuses on providing quality instruction and intervention and using student learning in response to that instruction to make instructional and important educational decisions (Batsche et al., 2005). When RTI is used by educators to help students who are struggling with a skill or lesson, every teacher will use interventions. While data showed few students to need IPPs, for the purposes of this paper, a single case study approach (Stake, 1995) is used to illustrate the development and implementation processes:

1. What is the student's attitude towards themselves as a reader, reading, and school before the diagnostic assessments were administered?

Student F, a pseudonym, is a 55-year-old Somali speaker. She has been enrolled in the ESL literacy program for two years during which she attended foundational literacy classes and started CLB 3L in September 2019. General classroom observation indicates that student F is a struggling reader and a dependent learner. For example, Student F refers to Somali-speaking classmates to understand classroom instructions and navigate worksheets. When Student F submits her work to be reviewed by the teacher, she often says, "please help me, reading … very hard." While research suggested different tools to assess students' attitudes towards reading (McKenna & Stahl, 2015, p. 240), preference was given to semi-structured interviews to accommodate the student's reading ability of questionnaires, interests' inventories, classroom observations, etc. The interview questions included:

- Do you like to read? Why/why not?
- Are you a good reader? Why do you think so?
- What makes someone a good reader?
- If you were going to read a book (i.e., pattern books), what would you do first?
- What do you do when you come to a word you do not know?
- What do you do when you do not understand what you have read? Maybe wait for the teacher to explain?
- Tell me about the best story or book you have ever read.

Classroom observations and anecdotal notes were taken during everyday instructional activities and intervention instruction to observe the student's reactions and learning behaviors.

2. What are the student's diagnostic assessment tools administered? What are the results of the administered diagnostic assessment tools? In other words, what were the major reading problems identified?

A. Native Language Literacy Assessment (NLLA) (King & Bigelow, 2016) was administered to determine the student's reading/writing ability in Somali and Arabic since the student is a fluent speaker of both languages and lived in Somalia and Saudi Arabia for 50 years before coming to Canada. Checking and confirming L1 literacy levels, or lack thereof, before embarking on other reading assessments is an important step.

B. Using the Cognitive Model to Reading Comprehension (McKenna & Stahl, 2015, p. 8) indicates focusing on Pathway#1 which is "automatic word recognition". Therefore, these assessment tools were administered:

- **Checklist for Concepts of Print (Form 4.1) and Book Handling Knowledge Guidelines (Form 4.2)**

  Student F had developed most of the print concepts measured by this test. When asked which page tells the story, Student F pointed to the picture. She was able to identify a word or the end of the story. Student F needed direct instruction on the concept of words and continued exposure to print.

- **Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-6): Word identification lists**

  The word identification section of the QRI-6 consists of word lists, with 20 words in each word list except for the pre-primer 1 which contains 17 words. The word lists begin with a pre-primer readability level and end with a junior high readability level. As a starting point, I began by administering a graded word list by using the QRI-6 tests designed for pre-primers (1-3). The reason I administered the tests of these levels was that I did not know Student F's actual literacy level and wanted to look into word recognition ability by using several tests. I started by administering pre-primer 1 and discovered that she was reading at an independent level (17/17 = 100%). However, Student F was completely frustrated when pre-primer 2/3 was administered list (13/20 = 65%).

- **Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-6): Oral reading**

  The oral reading section of QRI-6 consists of both narrative and expository passages ranging in readability levels from pre-primer, primer, and first-grade passages through junior high level. Scores are derived from the number of total miscues as well as the student's ability to answer comprehension questions. Some comprehension questions have answers that can be found directly in the text, and some have answers that require the student to infer information from the text. I administered pre-primer 1 narrative text, *I Can*, to assess Student F's oral reading. Student F could partially answer the concept questions and she read it with a lot of miscues (9 miscues out of 37 words) such as the constant substitution of "me" for "him" implying that Student F was focused on

making meaning of the text by checking the photo of the young boy. In addition, she could not retell the story or answer any comprehension questions and explained that she already had forgotten what the story was about.

- **Running record**

Running records (Clay, 1993) are designed to capture what learners know and understand about the reading process. As they capture learners' thinking, running records provide an opportunity to analyze what happened and plan appropriate instruction. I decided on administering this tool to identify the type of cues that Student F was using while reading: meaning, structural or visual cues so I could identify the instructional reading level of the materials to use while working with her since QRI-6 word lists and oral reading passage deemed at a frustration level for her. In addition, Student F read the text slowly; it took her almost 13 minutes to read 151 words. Student F attempted to break down the words and took long pauses while reading the text. The reading record sheet shows that Student F tried to use meaning and visual cues; nonetheless, she mostly used the visual ones, such as her use of "car" instead of "care" and "tired" instead of "tried". While Student F was not able to respond to comprehension questions or retell the story, she read the book with 90% accuracy rate.

- **Informal phonetic inventory/survey**

Informal phonics survey is a criterion-referenced measure to assess the student's knowledge of letters and sounds in isolation and in words. The QRI-6 Word Analysis Test indicated that Student F knew beginning and ending sounds but had considerable difficulty with consonant blends, vowel digraphs, vowel diphthongs, and silent /e/ words. Student F knew most consonant sounds except /v/ which she pronounced as /f/. She did quite well on the consonant digraphs but found consonant blends to be challenging: "drink" for "brick", "silk" for "slick". Vowels seems to be an area of improvement for Student F since she could not read most short vowel words, vowel digraphs, diphthongs, r-controlled vowels. This table of results illustrates her scores highlighted in yellow:

Subtest	Total Possible	Mastery	Review	Systematic Instruction
Consonant Sounds	22	18-22	14-17	0-13
Consonant Digraphs	3	3	2	0-1
Consonant Blends in Short-Vowel Words	12	10-12	7-9	0-6
Short Vowels in CVC Words	10	8-10	6-7	0-5
The Rule of Silent e	4	3-4	2	0-1
Vowel Digraphs	10	8-10	6-7	0-5
Diphthongs	6	5-6	4	0-3
r-controlled Vowels and –al	6	5-6	4	0-3
Total	73	59-73	44-58	0-43

- **Spelling**

Student F was given a list of words to copy to complete a note and was asked to write the note by imitating the provided example. The second task was used to evaluate Student F's level of invented spelling. According to Morris and Nelson (1992), the developmental sequence in invented spelling starts with the pre-phonemic stage (writing that does not reflect sound in words) to an early phonemic stage (using an initial constant to represent a word), to a letter-name stage (using letter names to represent sounds and often omitting vowels), and finally to a transitional stage (spelling reflects all phonemic features). Some examples of Student F are shown below:

Pre-Phonemic (na), Early Phonemic (lla), Letter-Name (No), Transitional Stage (my, bekse), Correct (sick, today)

The analysis of Student F's spellings showed that most of her words ranged between early phonemic and correct spelling. Her writing commonly featured the use of consonants to represent initial sounds; sometimes final sounds were represented too, but the spellings were incomplete. Her writing showed her discovery that letters in print represent sound in spoken words and indicated the beginning of the ability to segment phonemes.

In summary, based on the six diagnostic reading measures explained above, Student F's test scores fell within a range of limited proficiency with reading in English. Student F's comprehension and word recognition were found to be at a frustration level when she was tested using primer 2/3 assessment tools. Therefore, the student was placed at an instructional reading level in both word recognition and was introduced to pre-primer 2 reading materials for instruction as well as given more difficult materials as she progresses.

(3) What are the recommended reading intervention strategies to enhance student's literacy growth?

There are a few strategies that are recommended for Student F in addition to the core classroom instruction as per the Minnesota Reading Association and Department of Education recommendations (2011):

A. Interest and self concept:

Developing a positive orientation toward reading about a relevant topic is expected to motivate Student F to build her reading stamina and her self-perception as a reader. This included conducting classroom observations during which information about student F's likes and dislikes were collected, interest inventories which are a list of topics used to identify the ones individual students find appealing. As it has been noted that Student F's main reading challenges are due to her beginner decoding skills, as she often says "reading … very hard", two strategies were used to improve her self concept as a reader: 1) Reading aloud to Student F to relieve her from the cognitive load of decoding while acquainting herself with books of her interest; 2) Developing and using materials of appropriate difficulty level, whether printed or digital:

- **Printed books,** such as *Photostories*,which places limited demands on her beginner decoding skills;
- **Digital books** that provide Canadian relevant content, *Story Books Canada* (choose Canada from the menu on the left of the page);
- Digital books that provide L1 support to facilitate meaning and enhance self-concept

B. Phonemic awareness (PA):

Phonemic awareness and word analysis help learners become familiar with how the English language writing system works—an essential step in learning to read. Students with good phonemic awareness know how to manipulate the individual sounds (i.e., phonemes) of spoken English. To illustrate, Student F knew that the spoken word car is made up of three sounds: /c/-/a/-/r/ and could distinguish each sound based on place and manner of articulation. The National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) summarizes phonemic awareness tasks: phoneme identity, isolation, categorization, blending, segmentation, and deletion (pp. 2–10). Two digital resources were used to enhance PA to introduce English phonemes in terms of description and place, and manner of articulation, e.g., *University of Iowa's Sound of Speech* and *IXL* to practice. In addition, *Reading Rockets* was used for working with phonics instruction, oddity tasks, stretch sounding, invented spelling, tongue twisters, adding sounds, deletion tasks, and onset rhymes practice.

C. Vocabulary expansion:

Teaching vocabulary is very important to comprehend meaning conveyed in the text. Teaching vocabulary can be done via explicit instruction, such as prefixes and suffixes; implicit instruction through the exposure

of new reading materials to practice learning the meaning of new words; multimedia methods by going beyond the text experience, e.g., semantic mapping, where visual representations are used to illustrate the relationships among new and known word meanings; capacity methods, by allowing students to practice extensively to increase their vocabulary capacity through making reading automatic; and association methods where students learn to draw connections between what they do know and words they encounter that they do not know; "happy" and "glad" are examples. Repetition, multiple contexts, and active engagement take place routinely. In addition, Student F read word by word rather than in phrases/chunks. She also faced a few challenges with word meanings, and a lack of vocabulary knowledge caused comprehension questions to be missed. Hence, sight words were practiced to enhance Student F's vocabulary while using the *Reading Rockets* website for these strategies: Concept Sort, List-Group-Label, Semantic Feature Analysis, and Semantic Gradients.

D. Fluency:

Reading fluency is not "fast reading", but it is a "reasonably accurate reading, at an appropriate rate, with suitable expression, that leads to accurate and deep comprehension and motivation to read" (International Literacy Association, 2018, p. 2). Reading fluency is based on accuracy (reasonably accurate that is not below 95%), rate (appropriate rate level is at 50th percentile), and expression (a suitable expression that includes pitch, tone, volume, emphasis, rhythm in speech or oral reading, and the skillful reader's ability to chunk words together into appropriate phrases). Possible ways to assess reading fluency are what Jones et al. (2010) call Qualitative Fluency Assessment (p. 47) after 60 seconds of read-aloud or using Google's Fluent Reader App which records students reading of a text after it is analyzed in class. Jones et al. (2010) recommend that "nonfluent" and "struggling" readers "don't offer insight the way a more elaborated description of a students' oral reading might" (p. 46) thus making running records more informative, which was administered in Student F's case. At this point, focusing on improving Student F's fluency took the form of combining phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, and vocabulary so Student F could start focusing on the meaning of what she read. The following strategies via *Reading Rockets* were used as well: Partner Reading, Choral Reading, and Shared Reading.

E. Reading comprehension (RC):

Comprehension refers to a learner's understanding of what they are reading. Strategies to enhance RC can be timed-based on the progression of the task:

Before-reading strategies allow students to activate and build prior knowledge as modeled by the teacher, set a reading purpose by examining text title, preview text by using pictures, analyse text structure, ask

general questions to enhance predictions about the text, and develop a plan for reading the text. During-reading strategies promote active thinking to make meaning from text, maintain engagement and monitor comprehension, make connections between parts of the text, and support the purpose for reading while critically thinking about it. After-reading strategies require students to check for understanding of the main idea of the text, re-tell the sequence of events, integrate new information and prior knowledge, identify the author's argument, answer literal and inference meaning of the text, synthesize new information and transfer learning. Sample texts are at sentence level to enhance sentence meaning and structure as well as female characters that Student F could identify with:

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iv) Results and conclusion

The proposed IPP was implemented for 12 weeks and led to improving Student F's reading level to be instructional pre-primer 2/3 when administering QRI-6 word lists and instructional pre-primer 1 when administering QRI-6 oral reading passages. The improvement in Student F's reading level from frustration to instructional level is a testimony to the student's hard work and the careful planning of individualised instruction. The International Literacy Association (ILA) has recommended that for students to acquire these fundamental reading skills by the end of the third grade, they need: 1) training in phonemic awareness, phonics, reading accuracy, and fluency; and 2) teachers/reading specialists/literacy coaches must familiarize themselves with state-of-the-art research, such as turning around the focus from skill training to the student themselves to identifying each student's reader identity, fluency, and comprehension levels, hence developing reading plans to guide the teacher while supporting the student (2018). While Student F acquired the essential literacy skills in a LESLLA class where innovative teaching and learning strategies were implemented and proved successful in improving her reading level, her literacy journey resembles that of third graders because, as Vinogradov (2014) argues, "perhaps adult learning theory and how children learn are not so different after all" (p. 163) since humans want to understand the world, develop control over their lives, and become self-directed learners.

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Possibilities in decolonizing English language learning

By Munjeera Jefford, York University, Canada

Abstract

Racism in education has a long 500-year history with colonial roots that situates knowledge production as a Western prerogative. Colonizers intentionally created an educational system based on Eurocentric epistemologies that promoted White supremacy. Pieterse & Parekh (1995) argue that in the 20th century, capitalism and industrialization enabled global oppression and resurgent nationalism which undermined social justice initiatives. Over the last thirty years in Canada, despite increasingly diverse students, inclusive curricula, and equity policies from elementary schools to universities, the teacher and administrator workforce has remained racially homogenous. Learning English has become an intrinsic part of a global post-colonial legacy in which many continue to perceive the ideal educator to be White males. Currently, microaggressions among ESL teachers and exclusion in decision making reflect ongoing racism. Deconstructing colonial education and critiquing the reproduction of systemic racism against Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) is necessary to advocate for decolonizing English language learning.

Introduction

Prior to colonization, centers of higher learning in Africa were established in Morocco, as early as the 9th century and later in what is now Mali and Egypt in the 16th century. However, Western style schools eventually usurped local African communities as knowledge producers (Anabila, 2017). The original intent

in providing basic literacy and math skills to non-White subjects, was to serve colonial interests that would enhance labor exploitation (Altbach, 1971; Falola, 2018). Grants obtained from colonial powers were more regular than church tithes and provided stable funding. In fact, colonizers made a "selfish calculation… that training Africans for positions that Europeans could occupy was in effect creating a revolution that would destroy the system" (Falola, 2018, p. 551) that supports White supremacy. As a rationalization for colonization, African cultures were demonized to the West (Falola, 2018). Educational institutions constructed under colonialism offered substandard education that ensured the colonized learned enough to comply with their imperial dominators but not enough knowledge to lead to insurrection (Altbach, 1971; Falola, 2018; Pieterse & Parekh, 1995). Students who aspired to post-secondary education, were forced to attend universities in Europe (Falola, 2018). Established in 1943, higher learning centers in Africa were actually called "colonial universities" (Falola, 2018, p. 605). Educational institutions continue to reproduce systemic racism utilizing a pedagogy of oppression (Freire, 1970) created by colonizers.

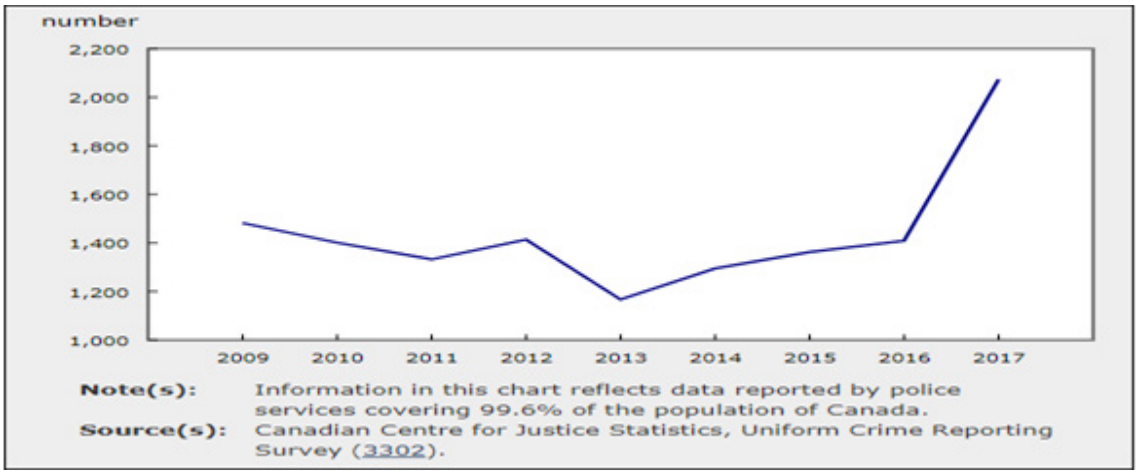
Today, there are many postcolonial epistemologies: critical pedagogy, democratic schooling, equity pedagogy, multi-cultural, anti-racist and social justice education, such as the Jesuits' liberation theology, critical Frankfurt School tradition, and Critical Race Theory (Swalwell, 2013). But distinguishing between knowledge and understanding is essential because learning about racism may not necessarily lead to empathy (Swalwell, 2013). In fact, when confronted with systemic racism, people may go through various emotional reactions (Henry et al., 2017) such as the commonly known Kubler-Ross stages of grief: 1) Denial - "I don't see color. I just see the person."; 2) Anger - "I am not racist! You are because you are dividing us by color."; 3) Bargaining - "All people are racist. If I went to your country, people would discriminate against me." "White people are now being judged."; 4) Sadness - "I thought we were better than this."; 5) Acceptance - "I need to do something to help." False equivalencies are another attempt to deflect and deny racism in Canada. There can be the perception that Canadians are less racist than Americans. An assertion that persists even though Americans have elected a Black president, twice, and a Black South Asian female Vice-President. Teaching about residential schools, mass graves and the indifferent treatment towards missing and murdered Indigenous women can help deconstruct Canadian exceptionalism. Given the current cruel practice of law enforcement taking Indigenous men from public roads at night and dropping them off in isolated areas in the frozen north, known as "Starlight Tours," there has never been a more important time for abolishing colonial legacies.

However, many educators assume that the West was built on meritocracy rather than the genocide of Native communities, racial exploitation, and capitalist patriarchy creating barriers for equity. There are reservations about associating with stigmatized groups, disdain for racial accommodation and belief in self-determination (Eisenberg, 2013). Economic contexts also influence attitudes towards immigrants

increasing "xenophobic violence against migrants and refugees in times of austerity" (Henry et al., 2017, p. 9). While equity programs and offices have proliferated in number over the last two decades, senior university administrators across Canada have grossly underrepresented racialized staff, specifically women of color in a climate of neo-liberalism which may be as low as 2% of faculty (Henry et al., 2017). Abella (1985) as cited in Henry et al. (2017), argues "the issue is about removing barriers to their equal participation, which will not occur without enforceable and systemic intervention" (p. 11). James and Chapman-Nyaho (2017) found that "Canadian universities' commitment to equity and diversity has decreased and diversity hiring has, at best, stalled" (p. 85). The wheels of equity grind extremely slowly.

Rather, through Canadian systems, such as the immigration policy, settler colonialism is perpetuated (Jefford, 2018). Immigrants to Canada have always struggled to survive among increasingly hostile environments in public spaces, education, and employment. Back in the mid-1990s, a new type of affluent skilled worker began arriving in Canada (immigration.ca, 2019). A few years before 1997, Hong Kong businessmen and their families immigrated to Canada under the Business Class as Britain's lease over Hong Kong was ending. Concerns over financial stability once Hong Kong went back to China was the primary factor in precipitating the large influx into Canada. It was the first time in Canadian history that incoming immigrants were more affluent than Canadian born Canadians (Gzowski, 1990). Hong Kong immigrants kept the Canadian economy afloat during the 90s recession, often buying houses and cars in cash. Among the earliest immigrants from Hong Kong was Li Ka-shing, who bought out the Vancouver and Toronto waterfront railway lands and developed them into prime real estate over the next few decades. As of January 2021, Mr. Ka-shing stands as the 30th richest person in the world (Jacob & Rogers, 2019). Even though not every Hong Kong immigrant was affluent, the income gap between Asian newcomers and Canadian born Canadians created feelings of resentment (Gzowski, 1990). In areas such as Vancouver, housing prices were driven up by the newcomers, making homeownership difficult for domestic buyers. Today, China ranks as having the second highest number of millionaires (Ponciano, 2020) and billionaires (Tognini, 2021) in the world. In 2016, China was also one of the highest numbers of sending countries to Canada for international students who overall brought 15.5 billion in spending dollars and created over 165 000 jobs (Government of Canada, 2018). Unfortunately hate crimes in Vancouver increased by 717% against the Chinese community during COVID (Zussman, R., 2021, Feb. 18) as anti-Asian racism rises.

Even places of worship are no longer exempt from hate crimes. On September 12, 2020, a fifty-eight-year-old Muslim worshipper was murdered just outside a Rexdale mosque. Video evidence shows a man creeping up and fatally stabbing the volunteer custodian, Mohamed-Aslim Zafis in the back. Since 2016, hate crimes in Canada have spiked due to increasing nationalist xenophobia.



(Slack, 2018)

Many service provider organizations for newcomers such as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) and neighborhood HUBS funded by the United Way and various government agencies, offer settlement services with anti-racist policies, grounded in Critical Race Theory and anti-oppressive framework. Workshops on empowering immigrants in employment, leadership opportunities in their communities and public places to speak in their mother tongues are some of the services offered. In contrast, English language education, as the *lingua franca*, continues to function as a means of assimilation, rather than integration for newcomers today. Shortly after the last residential school closed in the late twentieth century (de Costa, 2017), ESL classes expanded. Bill C-24, a Harper government initiative, requires citizenship applicants between the ages of 14 - 65 to have "adequate knowledge of one of the official languages of Canada," (Bill C-24: Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, 2014) echoing residential school requirements. ESL program delivery remains dismayingly focused on the technical, rather than social justice aspects of language learning. A societal paradigm shift fostering a more racially democratic society is required where educators prioritize eliminating systemic oppression.

Systemic racism in education

The post-colonial legacy impacts all education systems in terms of institutional, social, and professional oppression. Even though the James and Chapman-Nyaho (2017) study was conducted in the Canadian university context, there are parallels and potential applications for ESL program delivery. Participants in the James and Chapman-Nyaho (2017) study consisted of forty-five females and forty-four males, racialized and Indigenous professors, working in small, mid-, and large-sized universities, in all disciplines in various contracts to tenured faculty. 5 major themes emerged:

1) Culture of Whiteness - Maintains color blindness, institutional inertia, and tokenism.

2) Hiring friends - Racialized women are not offered tenure and passed over.

3) Systemic Inequity - Equity policies do not address resistance to diversify because there is no accountability for implementation.

4) Good intentions - While initially the scales may tip in favor of some diverse candidates, once they were hired, many felt ambivalent about how they were perceived by White colleagues who were not shy about pointing out they were inclusion hires.

5) Color kills careers professionally and personally - Where racialized faculty attempted to create change in the department through taking leadership positions, White faculty undermined their authority.

Further, racialized women tend to be clustered in the most precarious jobs at universities (Henry et al., 2017) and other educational contexts. Education management continues under the shadow of an oppressive post-colonial legacy of keeping racialized educators in their subordinate place while reproducing White supremacy.

Decolonizing institutions and management

For these reasons, immigrant education managers have an important role in leading decolonization efforts. Britzman and Pitt (2004) discuss how trauma can be used to inform pedagogy based on difficult knowledge. While decolonization refers to the literal, political and metaphorical processes of intellectual criticism, Western neocolonialism perpetuates stereotypes of the South and East, therefore "decolonizing the imagination is the relationship between power and culture, domination and the imaginary" (Pieterse & Parekh, 1995, p. 4). Consequently, decolonizing initiatives in education have sought to encourage racial and cultural identity exploration, foster a desire to return to a dignified pre-colonial existence and escape Western hegemony (Fanon, 1968). Linking history and pedagogy can result in developing significance through symbols to challenge the "cultural dynamics of ignorance and forgetting as a defense against knowledge" (Britzman & Pitt, 2004, p. 356), essential to developing a new disruptive pedagogy. Given the number of human rights violations and genocides around the world, difficult knowledge is one that must be a part of inclusive education where new knowledge can clash with existing assumptions creating anxiety and even pedagogical meltdowns (Britzman & Pitt, 2004). Di Angelo (2011) describes spurious reactions of White fragility where some claimed they felt physically ill when discussing racism and White privilege. Stewart (2014), a Canadian professor who is Black, notes he always felt like a visitor due to his skin color while White Europeans are seen as members. Discussions on colonial impacts on learning can result in trauma on both sides. On the colonized side, there may be great internalized oppression resulting in learned helplessness while pro-assimilation educators can resist relinquishing White privilege and Eurocentric hegemony.

Systemic change should be a priority because changing structures is much easier than changing people (Fullan, 2000). In February 2020, Durham Region came under fire for their Black History Month Scavenger Hunt activities which included dancing to reggae and talking to a person who is Black (Westoll, 2021). Trivializing the Black experience demonstrates it is vital to include diverse voices when planning events, creating policies, and disciplining infractions. A major step would be the inclusion of racialized supervisors in ESL service provider organizations. As more diverse management teams lead in language learning, hopefully their input will be received with respect. Committees should be diverse, representing demographics of most ESL learners which tend to be racialized women. Through working with diverse staff, teachers who are White and middle class, can learn to improve their "cultural competence" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, as cited in Haque & Morgan, 2009, p. 272) and develop strategies to implement "identity pedagogies" (Haque and Morgan, 2009, p. 282). Unfortunately, equity detractors can often resort to calculated condescension, racist double standards, and outright sabotage in meetings to silence diverse voices. As a result, racialized staff in predominantly White institutions can be easily othered and marginalized by bullying from ESL administrative assistants, custodians, teachers, and managers. Even when diversity is not welcome at the decision-making table (Ibrahim, n.d.), BIPOC teachers should seek management roles. Representation matters.

Stewart (2014) offers some supportive advice for racialized educators that can resist internalizing oppression leading to learned helplessness. Create an anti-racist support group. Be aware of privileges offered to others. Ask questions. Don't accept being wrong or perceived as too sensitive. Allow for a margin of error. An important further action should be to take a census of staff in educational institutions. While American educators have a long history of keeping race-based data, Canadian institutions have lagged. Census data can reveal a need to bridge the divide among the powerful White male decision makers in reproducing privilege. Returning to the practice of involving communities in schools (Arabila, 2017) and hiring BIPOC helps diverse students see themselves reflected in school personnel and demonstrates power sharing (Jefford, 2014). Oddly enough, even though the public school system requires principals to have taught various grade ranges in their respective elementary and high school streams, there are minimal expectations of classroom experience for ESL supervisors and managers. Neoliberal ideologies, Whiteness and re-masculinization dominate in hiring practices "that largely restrict hiring to individuals' capacity to fit in, to be liked, and/or to not cause 'discomfort' for those already inside the institutions…Therefore, efforts to have a diverse population of faculty members is more about image. It means bringing in individuals who 'look different' into institutions 'to add colour' while keeping Whiteness in place" (James & Chapman-Nyaho, 2017, p. 90). Recently, Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA) curricular changes have required supervisors to have a working familiarity with curriculum implementation, causing management

to tacitly reveal their lack of knowledge through voluntary retirements and the necessity of hiring leads.

Decolonizing the teacher workforce

Sharing narratives about faculty experiences can be an effective strategy in dealing with racism (Stewart, 2014) at all levels of education. Haque and Morgan (2009) engage in dialogue reflecting on a national desire for global cosmopolitanism, instrumental need for English language learning and the "racialized imaginary of English speakers" (p. 271) situated by gender and race. When newcomer demographics shifted thirty years ago, ESL classes expanded in the late 1990s to accommodate the influx of immigrants into Canada. ESL instructor demographics, as a teacher workforce consisted mainly of White Canadian born female baby boomers who tended to be homemakers or Ontario Certified Teachers. Yet, (Ladson-Billings, 2001 as cited in Haque and Morgan, 2009), notes most White, middle-class teachers, "have never experienced being a visible or political minority, and they are often unaware of how race, class, and gender have influenced their circumstances or perspectives" (p. 272). The prevailing belief was that if you could speak English, you could teach it. However, "in order to develop 'cultural competence…white teachers need to learn about their own identities and privileges in order to deal with the kinds of systemic barriers that their minority students face" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, as cited in Haque & Morgan, 2009, p. 272). Currently, there are very few discussions in ESL classrooms and curricula on how to deal with individual and systemic racism. Students can avoid creating discomfort for White teachers by putting on a disingenuous face that life in Canada is happy and safe despite hate crime evidence to the contrary. Students are not receiving support in dealing with racism in Canada through ESL program delivery, highlighting the importance of hiring diverse social justice educators. Like educators in colonial universities, ESL teachers are trained to pass on just enough language skills to serve Canadian settler colonial agendas based on national labor needs.

Further, racialized female ESL teachers, as a postcolonial legacy, may not receive the same deferential courtesy associated with professional educators. Rivers and Ross (2013) note that managers, staff, and students are aware of the challenges faced by teachers of color in immigrant education. There is a preference for the ideal ESL teacher to be a straight male with blond hair and blue eyes (Haque & Morgan, 2009; Rivers and Ross, 2013). Despite an increasing racially diverse teacher workforce with international experience, there are still very few ESL educators who are Black. There are also social barriers in acceptance as a non-White person despite first language fluency (Ibrahim, n.d.) and qualifications that are equal to or greater than White male counterparts. Haque & Morgan (2009) observed that racialized female teachers were under pressure to demonstrate competence and professionalism as opposed to building egalitarian rapport with ESL students. In Canada, English language learning occurs in the context of a fictitious multiculturalism, classroom disrespect and suspicion when non-White teachers challenge Eurocentric texts and practices

(Haque & Morgan, 2009). The prevailing ideology supports White supremacy as the ideal people, lifestyle and knowledge producers and views non-White cultures and educators with a pejorative lens (Jefford, 2014).

Decolonizing texts

Altbach (1971) explains that neocolonialism is not direct control as in the past, but rather an indirect retaining of domination through planned policies and texts, specifically in education. Teachers with Western biases continue to promote White supremacy by utilizing colonial textbooks, curricula, and administration patterns. Even Ethiopia and Liberia, which were not colonized in the traditional sense, have come under Western influence through foreign aid resulting in reproducing neocolonialism (Altbach, 1971). In this way, education makes it possible to disadvantage BIPOC people and maintain global Eurocentric hegemony. Post-colonialism has been touted, but "white-supremacist culture wants to claim the entire agency of capitalism" (Spivak, 1995, p. 183). Nonetheless, postcolonial sensibilities must be developed that can develop complex and fluid transnational identities (Pieterse & Parekh, 1995; Szanton Blance et al., 1995). Rather than perpetuating the reproduction of East/West colonization, a syncretic approach rooted in forging a global perspective with local connections may be a superior alternative in constructing a postcolonial identity (Pieterse & Parekh, 1995). Subverting colonialism requires acknowledging that not only were intellectuals in formerly colonized countries drained of all content and form, but their philosophies and beliefs were distorted. For these reasons, ESL instructors should use contemporary materials that reflect the racial identities of the learners in a positive light, to deconstruct colonial stereotypes.

Reading texts that glorify a White settler Canada and situate the colonizer as heroic subjects, can cause racialized students and staff to internalize the colonial voice, reproduce racism and become complicit (de Beauvoir, 2011) in their own oppression. Discourse on imperialism situates the West as the Subject and continues to relegate non-Europeans as the shadowy Other whose knowledge is continually subjugated, disqualified, and ignored by imperialistic legacies (Bhabha, 1995; Spivak, 1983). Mukherjee (1986) offers an example of how students can ignore the racial, social, and political contexts when given classroom materials with the dominant voice that enables the belief that human beings face similar dilemmas, leading to internalizing the very ideas that oppress them. Christian (1987) discusses the notion that "there has been takeover in the literary world by Western philosophers from the old literary elite…(who have) the power to be published and thereby determine the ideas which are deemed valuable, some of our most daring, and potentially radical critics (and by *our* I mean black, women, third world) have been influenced, even coopted, into speaking a language and defining their discussion in terms alien to and opposed to our needs and orientation" (p. 457). Spivak (1983) also notes that male hegemony can create silence on categories of

race, class and gender as subsumed into one category. ESL classes appear diverse while suppressing racially conscious voices with a dearth of representative texts.

Subverting colonial assumptions must challenge established knowledge, authority, and power based on White supremacy. Eurocentrism is now becoming an increasingly identified and acknowledged site of privilege (Swalwell, 2013). The conscious subaltern voice can be seen as a counter narrative to the dominant colonial groups (Spivak, 1983). There is a tacit expectation that epistemologies produced by Western/ Northern academics are assumed to be universally relevant and applicable, while Eastern/Southern epistemologies are limited by race and geography (Falola, 2018; Said 1978). However, the complexity of post-colonialism requires praxis in transnational literacy willing to hear different voices other than the traditional White European male (Spivak, 1995). Literary criticisms and philosophies should include "intersection of language, class, race, and gender in literature" (Christian, 1987, p. 458). Indeed, using English literature texts that are from one racial origin enables students who are White and middle class to bask in smug superiority while multicultural students may relate superficially to the text, if at all (Spivak, 1983). Including authentic immigrant narratives, cultural traditions and national histories can create a classroom climate of equity and respect that resists colorblind multicultural constructs. There should be greater expectations for all involved in immigrant education to learn about positive contributions to global knowledge from formerly colonized countries.

Conclusion

Working in conjunction with the ideologies and policies of newcomer immigrant centers who effectively engage with ethnic enclaves to inform their practices, it may be possible to move away from the oppressive Euro-centric legacies of the past, move towards a post-colonial paradigm and ultimately decolonize Canadian education. In a climate of ongoing culture wars, notions of civic responsibility should be expanded to include elements of global citizenship. In other words, anti-racist best practices should not remain at the shallow level of festival multiculturalism, eating samosas and drinking chai lattés. There are currently some social justice programs in terms of Holocaust Education and increasing efforts at Indigenizing curricula. But without diverse leadership, ESL programs can be seen as echoing tragedies in Canadian history when hegemonic decisions were made without ever consulting Native communities, resulting in linguistic, cultural, and racial genocide. Similarly, at the Berlin Conference (1884 – 1885) European colonizers divided Africa without any Africans at the table (McClintock, 1995). ESL service providers need to take lessons from history, learn from their immigrant settlement services counterparts and reject reproducing oppressive colonial practices. Diverse materials, inclusive curricula, and racial heterogeneity that represents local communities in all decision-making processes are the most essential aspects of anti-

oppressive management. Decolonizing education remains one of the most important tasks for educators in the 21st century.

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Student-centred games and activities

By Sara Cordeiro Alexandre, Sheridan College, Canada

Introduction

Are you interested in games in the classroom? Do you like video games but do not know how to make it happen? This article aims to use creative problem solving to help you come up with interactive games for your students that incorporate the skills and systems in your lesson plans. All this can be achieved with some creativity, gumption, and some PowerPoint tips and tricks. You will gain new skills from an old tool to reinvent your tech skills without learning how to code. When you are ready to play, start the game, and enter player one!

PowerPoint is much more than your elementary school presentation nightmare—it is all the fun of a game without all the frustration. Through PowerPoint, you can create unique and engaging games to help teach or enforce any skills and systems. While the pandemic has changed the way we teach, it does not have to ruin your students' engagement and ability to learn. With a little creativity and ingenuity, you can create your own PowerPoint games.

Opportunity for video games

I have always been a big kid; I come from the Gameboy generation, so video games have always been an interest of mine. As an ESL instructor, my goal is to teach while allowing students to have fun learning in the classroom. With the emergence of the novel Coronavirus, we have had to reinvent the classroom and the way we teach. Moving to an online space has become an opportunity to introduce video games in the classroom, and while many people are either married to traditional PowerPoint use or find it old and outdated, I am here to show you what PowerPoint can do. Undoubtedly, depending on the level of detail you add, this can be a time-consuming process, but once you have created a game, you will always have it for future classes, thereby reducing prep time for future classes.

Clarifying

First, choose your player—what kind of game do you want to create and how can it be played? Those are some big questions, and I rely on creative problem solving (clarify, ideate, develop, and implement) to help me. The first step of creative problem solving is to clarify; at this stage, I am trying to come up with a concept and 'how might I create a game' to teach a particular concept (Miller et al., 2001). When deciding what to create, I have to think about my lesson aims and objectives, the skills and systems I am teaching, and the theme or context.

Ideation

After clarifying, it is time to ideate, which relies on divergence and convergence. This technique can be a challenge, and I rely on divergence for this stage. I open up a Google Jamboard and start typing as many ideas as possible. Google Jamboard is a resource that provides a board and virtual 'sticky notes' where one can write ideas and place them on the board. A Jamboard is a great resource for brainstorming and mapping out ideas. I strive for quantity, not quality, and aim for innovative crazy and novel ideas. Although similar to brainstorming there is a difference. When brainstorming you have the topic in mind and your brain is automatically trained to think about ideas related only to that topic. Through this method you are clearing your mind and not judging your ideas; this offers more opportunity for creative and novel ideas to form. This method may sound like a strange concept, but if you clear your mind and write down whatever comes to mind, you will be surprised to see what happens even if it has nothing to do with anything. I start with a theme and aims. For example, a murder mystery pronunciation lesson. Once I have that in mind, I let the ideas flow and keep writing anything that comes to mind, like Clue, which makes me then think of red, Miss Scarlet, room, clue, fingerprints, computer, voice-activated, code name, secret, spy. This string of nonsensical words seems a bit intense, but I quite literally just wrote down whatever popped into my head, and I build on that. You can repeat this process to come up with any sort of game that encompasses any aspect of an ESL lesson. For example, to create a game for essay writing through the context of 'risks' I think of mountain climbing, which then makes me think of roller coasters and theme parks. With these ideas in mind, I might come up with a carnival or amusement park themed escape room, where in order to escape the funhouse students must correctly answer questions about essays or essay models. The goal of this stage is to develop as many ideas as possible before moving on to the convergence stage.

The convergence stage means taking all your ideas and reeling them in with judgement. Therefore, looking back on my previous words, I can take clue, fingerprints, voice-activated, code name, and spy. These are the words that have to do with the context of murder mystery and make me think of a clue-style murder mystery with some sort of coding system. Since my lesson is on pronunciation, I can use the phonemes as a code that

they must select in the right order to find clues and solve the mystery. For example, each question must be answered with a phoneme, and once they have all the correct answers, they become a code that allows the student to win the game. In the end, I came to an idea that I can turn into a game. Now that I have my concept, I need to take this theory and develop it into a functioning game.

You can cover essay writing, listening, speaking, grammar, reading, and functions. For example, a game that introduces an essay model where the student can click on each section of the essay to get an explanation or where the student must put a paragraph in the right order. There is also a great deal of flexibility when it comes to application in the classroom. You can use a game to introduce a grammar topic, or even spark discussions. You can have all the instructions in audio format to have students practice listening and pronunciation in a group. Students become engaged when they are learning through play and introducing a game that produces a high level of engagement provides the teacher with wonderful learning moments. Rich and spontaneous language arises when students are having fun together.

Develop

To bring my creations to life, I rely on a few PowerPoint tools to manipulate in different ways. To have the PowerPoint function the way I want it to, I depend mainly on hyperlinks and buttons. For example, if I have an image of a fingerprint that I want my students to click which will lead them to another slide, I do the following:

- Find an image to use (ex. on Google);
- Right-click the image and select 'insert' then 'Action' or 'Action Settings';
- Click 'Hyperlink to' and select 'Slide' (select slide that button leads to);
- Click on 'Illustrations' and then 'Icons' (select button options already available in PowerPoint)

Since the lesson I would like to teach is on pronunciation, I want to include a recording of the instructions to the game for my students to listen to. This can be done by clicking 'Insert', 'Media' and then 'Audio'.

I can then record myself giving instructions. The default sound icon can be boring and difficult to see, so I change it. I make sure I have an image or icon saved in my files to swap with the default icon to change the icon. I can then click on the sound icon (click 'Change Image' and then select the picture I would like to use). To add to the challenge and make sure your students are going through the game in the correct order, you can hide your slides, insuring that to play you must click the right buttons and move a certain way. To do this, you simply need to go to the sidebar on the left and click the slide you want to hide and click 'Hide Slide'. To undo this function, repeat the process and click 'Hide Slide' again.

Tips, tricks and implementation

After hours of crafting these games, I have come up with some tips and tricks to help you have a smoother time creating your own. First, I recommend that any images you do not want to have a function should be linked to the slide in which it belongs. As previously mentioned, PowerPoint slides are designed to move to the next slide when you click anywhere on the current slide during your presentation. To avoid this and make sure the students press the right button to move to the next part of the game, right-click the image or object that you do not want to move, click 'Action Settings', then go to 'Hyperlink', and select 'Slide'. You will want to choose the slide you are currently working on, and when you do, clicking on that image will not move your slide.

Another trick is copying and pasting already linked buttons or images. If you have a button that you have linked to a homepage and want to include it on more than one slide, by copying the already linked button, when you paste it onto another slide, it will bring that slide to the homepage as well. My next piece of advice is to take your time: It may take a while to complete, but it will be a unique game that you will reuse for future lessons. Be creative and play it yourself; taking the time to play it will allow you to make sure your game functions correctly. Once your game has been developed, it is ready to implement in your classes virtually or in person. Remember, anyone can be creative, and with practice, you can learn and create your games.

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