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ABSTRACT
        Part IV of the proceedings includes five
presentations. They are: "Pitfalls in Teaching Business Language
Courses and How to Avoid Them" (Margit Resch); "Achieving Active
Student Participation in the Business Foreign Language Course" (John
Holley); "Business Language Components for Various Levels of Foreign
Language Study" (Carole A. Head); "Moving from Vocabulary Acquisition
to Functional Proficiency: Techniques and Strategies" (Hazel Cramer
and Susan Terrio); and "The Foreign Language Business Course: Varying
the Activities and Assignments" (Emily Spinelli). (MSE)

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1984 EMU CONFERENCE ON
FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR BUSINESS AND THE PROFESSIONS

PART IV:

CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES

Geoffrey M. Voght, Ed.

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PITFALLS IN TEACHING BUSINESS LANGUAGE COURSES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

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Pitfalls in Teaching Business Language Courses

and How to Avoid Them

A colleague was interrogated by her dean about the objectives of her commercial Spanish course. She took a deep breath and began to outline her goals: "I am trying to inform the students about business practices in Spain and Spanish speaking countries in Latin America. The texts are selected to this end and cover banking, management, industry and production, marketing, international finance and trade, labor relations, accounting, economic geography, transportation..." Before she could finish her list of topics, the dean expressed his bewilderment about the course content, wondering whether he was laboring under a false assumption when he thought that she was actually a language teacher. "Oh, naturally, we are also developing the four language skills: listening and reading comprehension, speaking and writing." The dean was duely impressed, but with an air of sarcasm he inquired whether she had any other ambitions. "Yes," she answered, "I do, and I hope to realize them someday. I want to throw an egg into an electric fan!"

This little anecdote, comical as it may be, is actually quite revealing. Teaching a business language course is, indeed, a complex and, at times, an overwhelming task. Our lack of training in the discipline of international business impairs our confidence as teachers. The multitude of objectives, as indicated above, is not only impossible to accomplish, but often obstructs a clear view of what is essential and, thus, frustrates our attempts to set priorities. It is not coincidental, I am sure, that the teacher listed as primary course goals a series of business topics, while development of language skills was mentioned in passing. The emphasis in our course designs, as well as in current textbooks, seems to be on the realm of business as we perceive it, rather than on pedagogically sound strategies for developing language skills.

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A typical syllabus and almost all textbooks reflect this preoccupation with information about business rather than linguistic content: both syllabus and table of contents outline a host of business topics, but rarely address themselves to grammatical items or systematic practice of certain language skills.

We certainly need to cover a broad spectrum of the prevalent business conventions of a given foreign country. Yet, we need to ask ourselves what is more important in a language classroom: the content of the material or the acquisition of language skills. The teacher who argued that she had no time for conversation because there was so much business material to cover in order to prepare the students for a certain standardized exam leading toward a business language diploma, has, in my opinion, lost sight of the most urgent objective in business language classes: mastery of the language. Actually, the texts and materials should be selected, first and foremost, on the basis of their usefulness towards this end. We are not trained and do not have the time to cover adequately all aspects of business. Therefore, it is imperative that we equip the students with the linguistic tools that will enable them to obtain on their own the information that we have to omit in the classroom and that they may eventually need. If we want students to achieve the necessary expertisé to inform themselves about specific aspects of business and to communicate in any business setting in the foreign language, we need to place emphasis on the improvement of language skills.

In the following, I will address myself to two of our tasks as language teachers: development of reading and speaking skills. If I ignore writing, it is mainly for reasons of place constraints. However, I must admit, tongue in cheek, that I consider writing of minor consequence for the international business major as he or she will probably, having climbed the corporate ladder

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to a managerial position, delegate any kind of written communication to his or
her secretary...

Particularly in business language courses, we tend to practice reading and
speaking with distinctly different materials because a theoretical text on
business concepts does not seem to lend itself to oral communication. Who would
ever convers about, say, elementary contractual rights and liablities? Such
material is, for good reasons, simply used for reading purposes, and subject
matters more conducive to oral practice are chosen for speaking. This approach
is not necessarily practical and economical within the framework of an instruc-
tional unit as it imposes giant leaps from one topic to another and does not
allow for thorough internalization and active mastery of any given subject
matter. However, there are ways and means of utilizing a reading text of any
kind for dynamic conversation, and I would like to acquaint you with some
strategies to practice both the reading and speaking skills on the basis of one
and the same text.

Let us first consider some aspects of reading. The literature on this
subject is abundant, but although exciting and effective strategies for
teaching and checking reading comprehension have been devised, actual classroom
instruction is still willfully inadequate. The most prevalent method continues
to be translating a text into the native tongue, in spite of the generally
accepted notion that translation has very little to do with reading, in fact,
is often an obstacle to comprehension.[1] We have all experienced the general
frustration when a student comes up with a rendition such as: "Retail: He is
the last member in the trade chain and gives his wares in small crowds to the
consumer." And when the teacher inquires about the meaning of this nonsense,
the student will respond: Well, this is what it says here. Of course, he
translated literally a text that actually said: "Retail is the last link in the

marketing chain and sells small quantities of merchandise to the consumer."[2] If the student had read the text for the purpose of comprehension rather than translation, he would surely have deciphered this sentence from the context and circumscribed its meaning in comprehensible words.

Translation, by its very nature, requires precise knowledge of the meaning of every lexical item. Reading for comprehension does not. We do not need to be familiar with every word in a text in order to be able to understand it. Let me demonstrate to you that verbs, for instance, at least in written material, are not necessarily "meaning-carrying" elements, as one reading specialist claims who likes to teach reading through "recognition of distinctive features at the syntactic level."[3] I want to prove to you that it is not necessary to know the exact meaning of a verb to grasp the meaning of the sentence, that, at least in a business text, verbs are, in fact, rather superfluous. In the following text, fill the blanks with an appropriate verb:

Merrill Lynch _____ a hefty price - and perhaps _____ a dangerous precedent - to _____ the Baldwin-United monkey off its back. The monkey in question _____ Baldwin's single-premium deferred annuity, a hot product that _____ to _____ investor's money at top speed. Nobody _____ more annuities than Merrill Lynch brokers, who _____ $30 million in commissions by _____ some 40,000 of them, at a cost to the firm's customers of about $700 million. After Baldwin _____ to _____ last year, the courts _____ the assets of its insurance units. Unable to _____ at their savings without court approval, annuity holders _____ Merrill Lynch offices and _____ lawyers all over the US. Fearful of long and costly litigation,

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Merrill Lynch's board _____ unanimously to _____

the annuities into Merrill Lynch obligations.[4]

As you can see, the correct context can be established without knowing the verb. That your choice of verb does not always coincide with the original does in no way impair the accurate comprehension of the text.

On the other hand, knowing the verb is helpful to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar nouns. Fill with nouns the blanks of text (2) dealing with the social responsibility of the management of a company:

If _____ are to survive, they must make meaningful

_____ to the _____ in which they operate. In the

United States, _____ are generally free to satisfy the

_____ of _____ by producing _____ and

_____ of their own choosing. Yet, social _____ and

_____ still serve to restrict and limit the _____

available to each _____.[5]

Again, your choice of elements may not match the original, but most likely you established a meaningful context that approximates satisfactorily the original. Exercises such as these simulate the situation of a student attempting to decipher a text in a foreign language. Many lexical elements may be unfamiliar to him, equivalent to blanks. However, more than likely, he knows many noun or verb phrases, thus, making it easier for him to fill the remaining blanks, so to speak, than it was for you who, in this case, had no noun, respectively verb clues. Actually, these exercises can be used in class, in English or in the foreign language, to prove to the students that comprehension does not require the knowledge of every single word, no matter in which language the text is written.

Of course, syntactical analysis of a sentence is a helpful tool for reading comprehension if a text segment cannot be unraveled by way of its lexic and

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through inference. And which teacher is not gratified when the student has correctly located the subject! However, since I. M. Schlesinger demonstrated, as early as 1968, that the method of decoding a sentence does not substantially assist the reading comprehension process,[6] his theory has been verified in many different studies,[7] and we may well be wasting valuable time by insisting on careful syntactical analysis.

Instead, we want to use our time for speaking; and filling the "blanks" with proper words affords ample opportunity for discussion. Different possibilities can be weighed and assessed – in the foreign language. Arguments can be formulated for or against a certain choice. And in the process of coming to terms with the terminology, we are actively working with and, thus, reinforcing the vocabulary of the text. Moreover, at the same time, we are learning to express ourselves about the subject matter.

There are many other ways of accomplishing this goal. The usual questions-about-the-text method is not one of them, regardless of whether those questions are in the foreign language or in English. Consider text (3) and the questions typically devised for reading checks and conversation exercises:

> International bankers are in a froth over Citibank's refusal to repay about $550 million of maturing US dollar deposits in its Manila branch. Attracted in part by high interest rates, the biggest depositors include Japanese and Canadian banks... Citibank says that paying them off would violate foreign exchange controls slapped on by the Philippines last fall.[8]
>
> a) Who is in a froth?
> b) What is attracting Japanese and Canadian banks?
> c) What would be the consequence of paying the depositors off?
> d) When did the Philippines slap on foreign exchange controls?

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Even if you did not know the language, you would probably be able to pick out the subject after which the first question inquires. And most of the other questions can easily be answered without really comprehending the text. Therefore, this method is not adequate to generate or check comprehension. Neither does it inspire conversation. As soon as those questions are answered, probably by mindlessly reiterating the text verbatim, communication is terminated.

Let us consider some alternatives to practicing reading and speaking simultaneously. Take the following text:

Decision making is important in all managment activities. In fact, the management functions could not be performed if _____ _____. As a process, decision making refers to the selection of one action from a number of alternatives available for solving a problem. In this sense,

_____

_____

are μ3β examples of decision making.

The decision making process is composed of four basic steps:

1)_____

2)_____

3)analyzing alternatives in terms of their preceived consequences

4)_____ 9

In groups, the students are to read the text and help each other decipher its meaning. No English is allowed. There are several ways to fill the blanks. The actual text pieces can be listed, in scrambled fashion, on the bottom of the page and the students have to locate the proper one for each blank:

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a) and determining retail prices
b) determining alternatives
c) if decisions were not made
d) hiring new employes
e) selecting a course of action
f) adding a new product to existing lines
g) defining the problem

Each choice requires a verbal justification, for instance: "Hiring a new employee is an example of decision making. The manager must decide which one of the applicants to employ." Or: "In order to be able to make a decision, you first have to define the problem. Defining the problem is the first step."

An alternative, which does not provide the missing parts and is, therefore, more apt to elicit lively conversation, is a group discussion in which the students are to speculate on the ideas omitted and generate statements that would adequately complete the sentence and round off the context. This presupposes some knowledge about the subject matter or simply common sense, depending on the nature of the text. The group members will propose and, subsequently defend, their ideas for filling the blanks and discuss which suggestions best fit the context. After extensive group work, the different proposals can be assessed by the entire class, giving opportunity for review and reinforcement of the material. The suggestions that approximate the original should receive special laudations.

For both exercises, the reading passage has to be thoroughly understood or else the task of filling the blanks to produce sensical statements cannot be accomplished. In my experience, the students find this aprroach to reading challenging and they really labor to comprehend the text, which is not always the case with more conventional methods where the students are inclined to simply ignore what they do not understand, and where they can get away with it. With this technique, it is imperative that they understand the text. Moreover, to arrive at a consensus in the face of various possibilites, the group members

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will have to engage in a meaningful verbal exchange which often times proceeds to heated but fruitful arguments, even over short and modest texts such as the one above. Such discussions are infinitely more interesting and productive in terms of developing oral facilities than answering dead-end questions about the text. Furthermore, since this approach requires active contemplation of the subject matter and creative solutions to each given problem, students tend to learn the concepts better and commit the material to long-term memory.

Another interesting method to inspire thorough reading and subsequent conversation is the Humpty-Dumpty method. Divide a text into several components and scramble them up. The students' task is to reproduce the original by rearranging the given parts. Put the following text segments in a logical sequence or, in nursery rhyme words, put them back together again:

1) Such concerns have sent the Dow Jones industrial average plummeting 110 points in the past month.

2) Said Walter Heller, who was chief economic adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson:

3) First the recovery took off far more powerfully than nearly all experts had expected.

4) At a meeting last week in Manhattan, the members of TIME's Board of Economists foresaw continued growth this year,

5) From the start, the rebound from the grinding 1981-82 recession has been filled with sharp suprises.

6) "The expansion won't peter out, but will peter down."

7) Now the prospect of further giant federal deficits is raising fears that the upturn may abruptly end.

8) but predicted that the recovery's pace would slow.[10]

Almost total comprehension is a prerequisite to reproduce the original. Each time a sequential order is established, the students have to provide a justification. In the process of rearranging the segments, ample opportunity is given for extensive discussions about the material, both conceptual and syntactical — if sentences were broken up.

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Such methods demand close reading and careful selection of texts on the part
of the teacher, because not all texts lend themselves to such exercises. The
Humpty-Dumpty method only works with a text that is logically structured, which
is, unfortunately, not always the case with business texts, especially articles
in newspapers and magazines. Filling-in blanks requires well written materials
that address themselves to the point, develop it clearly and do not take off on
a tangent, so that speculation about the omitted materials can focus on the
problem at hand.

While devising such exercises takes time, the results are well worth the
effort. But there are other strategies that do not require elaborate prepa-
rations, yet, force the students to try to understand the text.[11] For
instance, a text can be handed out that is not divided into paragraphs. The
task, then, is to analyze the logic of the text and structure it visually in
such a way as to reflect its internal organization. These paragraphs could be
given appropriate headings that are either provided by you, scrambled-up
fashion, or have to be devised by the students themselves.

Texts that contain a wealth of statistics, dealing, for instance, with
economic growth, can easily be illustrated with corresponding graphs – most
classes love such activities. Though by their very nature non-verbal, such
activities are by no means frivolous, because in order to produce such charts,
thorough understanding of the text is necessary.

And all the while, the students, working in groups, have to explain the
reasons for their way of manipulating the text and communicate about every
step of their current activity. Thus, they are forced to use the vocabulary
actively and they tend to absorb the material, even if they are only modestly
motivated and prone to learning by way of osmosis rather than diligent and
active acquisition,

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Such strategies may have found and will continue to find their way into the classroom. First and foremost, however, they should be employed by the authors of textbooks (that we so direly need), authors who seem to steadfastly cling to the notion that reading and speaking (and for that matter, writing) are separate activities to be conducted separately with distinctly different materials. Let us hope that these authors will begin to create or emulate didactically more innovative teaching stratagems and discontinue the stifling practice of providing a text with the usual series of demeaning and uninspiring who-done-it-when-where-how-why-and-to-whom questions.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ralph W. Ewton, "Reading vs. Translation," German Quarterly, 42, Jan. 1969, pp. 126-127.

2. Harald Walter Braun, "Functional Skills for German in Business and Economy: A Curricular Guide and Materials for the Teaching of Business German," Diss. Stonybrook 1980, p. 227: "Der Einzelhandel: Er ist das letzte Glied in der Handelskette und gibt die Waren in kleinen Mengen...an die Verbraucher ab."

3. Bruce A. Beatie, "Developing Reading Skills in German: An Unorthodox Approach," ed. Helm Faber and Manfred Heid, Lesen in der Fremdsprache (Munich, 1981), p. 22f.

4. "Birk's Bailout," Fortune, 20 February 1984, p. 6:

"Merrill Lynch is paying a hefty price – and perhaps setting a dangerous precedent – to get the Baldwin-United monkey off its back. The monkey in question is Baldwin's single-premium deferred annuity, a hot product that promised to compound investors' money at top speed. Nobody peddled more annuities than Merrill Lynch brokers, who collected $30 million in commissions by selling some 40,000 of them, at a cost to the firm's customers of about 700 million. After Baldwin began to topple last year, the courts froze the assets of its insurance units. Unable to get at their savings without court approval, annuity holders have picketed Merrill Lynch offices and lined up lawyers all over the US. Fearful of long and costly litigations, Merrill Lynch's board voted unanimously to convert the annuities into Merrill Lynch obligations."

5. Trewart and Newport, Management: Functions and Behavior (Dallas, 1977), p. 8:

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"If organizations are to survive, they must make meaningful contributions to the society in which they operate. In the United States, business enterprises are generally free to satisfy the needs of society by producing goods and services of their own choosing. Yet, the social values and norms still serve to restrict and limit the alternatives available to each organization."

6 I. M. Schlesinger, Sentence Structure and the Reading Process (The Hague, 1968).

7 Kenneth Goodman; "Decoding — from Code to What?," Journal of Reading, 14 (1971), 455-462.

David LaBerge, Basic Processes in Reading: Perception and Comprehension (New York, 1977).

8 "Chiller in Manila," Fortune, 20 February 1984, p. 7.

9 Trewart and Newport, op. cit., 50:

"Decision making is important in all management activities. In fact, the management functions could not be performed if decisions were not made. As a process, decision making refers to the selection of one action from a number of alternatives available for solving a problem. In this sense, hiring new employees, adding a new product to existing lines, and determining retail prices are examples of decision making.
The decision making process is composed of four basic steps: (1) defining the problem; (2) determining the alternatives; (3) analyzing alternatives in terms of their perceived consequences; and (4) selecting a course of action."

10 "Still Sighting Favorable Signs," Time, 27 February 1984, p. 72.
Correct sequence: 5-3-7-1-4-8-2-6.

11 Rosemarie Buhlmann, "Das Lesen von Fachtexten," Lesen in der Fremdsprache, ibid., 55-124, offers a wealth of suggestions regarding reading check mechanisms for scientific texts.

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ACHIEVING ACTIVE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE BUSINESS FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSE

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Foreign language teachers who find themselves faced with

the responsibility for developing a so-called "business" course

in a foreign language share a set of well-known task-related

problems. Whether such teachers come to this responsibility

of their own accord or have it thrust upon them by senior,

members of the department who give their blessings but little

else to the project has no bearing on the scope or magnitude

of the problems that lie ahead. For in almost every case

the teachers who undertake to design and offer a business

foreign language course are themselves trained humanists, i.e.

ones who are at home in the subtleties of textual criticism

in the literary journals they read and possibly contribute to,

but who also feel somewhat uncomfortable with terms like

"Dow Jones" and "export subvention." But it is a very small

source of comfort indeed to suspect that we are all subject

to the same feelings of uneasiness. Misery may love company,

but it is a short-lived diversion at best when the company

merely serves to remind us of the problem. This paper will

examine some of the causes of our shared uneasiness and offer

workable, practical suggestions for dealing with them.

My topic is the achieving of active student participation

in the business-foreign language course, and so one might

well ask at this point why this paper is starting off by

addressing teacher insecurity. What does that have to do with

getting students involved? In fact, it has everything to do

with getting students involved. The atmosphere in the classroom will either make our goal of student involvement possible, or it will preclude it. And a most important ingredient of the classroom atmosphere is the self-confidence of the teacher. Anyone who has ever entered the classroom with forebodings of doom knows from first-hand experience the meaning of "a self-fulfilling prophecy." Let us then consider the three major contributors to insecurity for the teacher of the business foreign language course and then look at a simple, realistic design for a course that will replace insecurity with confidence and fear with fun.

What, then, are the fears that can erode confidence and preclude the creation and control of a classroom atmosphere that promotes the learning process? If we recall the first impressions we had when perusing the materials available for the business foreign language course, we may also remember that "sinking feeling" that went along with those impressions. Not only was the vocabulary new, the concepts were, and to some extent will probably remain, nothing short of alien. None of those nice philosophical terms appropriate to a discussion of Don Quixote or Faust will do here. For all their beauty, they are simply out of place and must be left behind. Our next impression could be compared to the awe Abraham felt when contemplating the night sky. The depth and breadth of the field encompassed by the innocuous little

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word "business" in its adjectival or substantive uses is just
.overwhelming. The final impression and third contributor to
teacher insecurity grows out of the first two. If we feel
alienated by the subject matter and overwhelmed by its vastness,
we will certainly begin to dread the moment we must stand
before a group of students who believe they have every right
to expect us to know it all. How can we be creative and
stimulating in the classroom under these circumstances? Will
this course give new dimension to the terms "dry" and
"pedantic"? After all, just how exciting is, for example,the
business section of the newspaper to the average citizen?
Even Dan Rather has more sense that to jeopardize the popularity
of the evening news by giving more than a nod to the daily
stock market report. Newness, vastness and dryness, the
triple threat guaranteed to give sweaty palms to even the
most experienced of teachers. How can we neophites in the
area of foreign languages for business and the professions
avoid getting in over our heads, floundering, and failing in
our efforts to provide a college-level educational experience?
The answer is not necessarily simple, but the answer that will
be suggested here is workable and fun, and, what it more,
anyone can use it successfully.

The key to success in this course is, not surprisingly,
the same as for any other course. The objectives of the
course must be realistic, realizable, and clear. Although

this course is not conceived of as being a beginning-level

foreign language course (in fact, the students should have

had two to three years of the foreign language at the college

level), it is a beginning business foreign language course,

and the assumption should be that the students are as new to

the field as they would be to the study of Golden Age Spanish

literature. No one familiar with the field of Spanish

literature would expect an undergraduate course in the Golden

Age to do any more than provide the students with an

introduction, a "leg up," as it were, into the field. The

objectives would be to make the students aware of the period

through first-hand involvement with some of its representative

works. The hope would be that the students would gain

respect for an important cultural achievement and become

familiar with some of its significant ideas and their expression

in literature. The objectives would be realistic, given the

time alloted and the previous preparation of the students.

They would be considered realizable, perhaps even modest, but

no less worthwhile for that, given the richness and scope of

the field in question. These practical objectives should be

clear in the mind of the teacher, and they should be made

clear to the students as well.

The professional humanist knows well enough how to go

about planning the objectives of a genre or period course in

literature, and we may, indeed ought to apply the same

criteria in our planning of a business foreign language course.
Such a course can, in all honesty, be no more than an
introduction to the language and concepts informing an
important dimension of contemporary culture, namely the world
of commerce. Given the scope of this field, this is indeed
a modest proposal, but it is also an honest and useful one
and clearly analogous to the time-honored approach to
humanistic studies. Planning a business foreign language
course with this in mind goes a long way toward taking the
edge off the uneasiness stemming from the newness and vastness
of the field as a whole. A course with appropriately modest
objectives is easier to plan and to prepare for. We are
really launching our students, and ourselves as well, although
we may not wish to publish the latter fact too widely, on a
new adventure in learning. Some students will make a lot of
this opportunity; some will make less, and others, nothing at
all. But that is certainly nothing new to professional
educators.

So much for easing the mind with regard to the threats
of newness and vastness. What of the final threat in the
triad, the grim brother of the first two who may yet survive
the passing of his kin? What can be done about the dryness
that is seeminly inherent in the subject matter? Do not we
ourselves stifle a yawn when the topic turns to the technicalities
of the business world when we have no vested interests there?

What can we do to infuse the undeniably abstract and the

seemingly remote with a sense of excitement and immediacy?

These questions point us toward the main topic of this paper,

the active involvement and participation of the students in

the business foreign language course.

Up to this point I have dealt with the matter of setting

objectives in the theoretical sense as a means of addressing

the concerns we face when we must plan a new course for which

we have had little or no formal preparation. At this point

the objectives will be translated into terms more directly

applicable to the conduct of the course itself. Keeping in

mind that the objectives are themselves suggested by the three

major concerns, newness, vastness, and, for want of a better

word, dryness of the subject matter, we may now turn our

attention to the practical matters of course design. The

course materials we select and edit should provide through

their degree of sophistication an appropriate or realistic

entry level for the students into the field. What we will

actually require of the students in terms of the materials to

be mastered must, of course, be realizable and useful. But

most importantly, the classroom experience itself must

encourage the students to view the material as more than just

an accumulation of facts and vocabulary to be learned. It is

a good idea to start right off on the first day by impressing

the students' with the usefullness and broader implications of

the new vocabulary and concepts they will be learning. The model presented here involves the new vocabulary related to the idea of competition. As you will see, I have special reasons for beginning with this concept.

Competition is a very basic principle of the market place. This is even true for industries in planned or controlled economies as soon as they enter the world market. While explaining this to my students, using the target language, I write such terms on the board as competition, competitors, market place, free market economy, socially responsible economy, and planned economy. These terms, like everything else spoken, written or printed in this course, are in the target language only. Most of these terms will consitute new vocabulary for the students. Not only that, the concepts these terms denote will often be unfamiliar, or at least unclear. I tell my students that they must keep notebooks in which they record important new words and concepts. The terms listed above are to go on page one. While the students are busy complying with this first request from their teacher, I initiate an informal discussion with the objective of placing these new terms in a human, flesh-and-blood context. New vocabulary in this course should never be left just in the form of a list for memorization. Nothing will kill the course quicker than the heaping up of abstract terminology that the students never have the chance to "get their teeth into."

This is an appropriate time for a little philosophical
discussion of competition. The students who have been silently
questioning the value of this course for their liberal arts
majors--foreign language majors, for example, who need the
three hours to graduate--will perk up at this. You can point
out, for example, that competition can be good or bad, depending
on how it is used and what its effects are. Competition can
be destructive when the powerful use it to drive the less
powerful from the market place. It can be creative when it
is the incentive for improvements in quality or efficiency.
Almost everyone can identify with these ideas. Maybe not in
terms of commerce, but what about in terms of competition for
medical school admission, graduate fellowships, or course
grades in general? Here we touch a nerve--competition for
course grades. There may be some uneasy shifting in the seats,
the shuffling of feet on the floor. But what about competition
that is much less threatening because it cannot impact in a
punitive way on those engaged in it? Something like informal
sports competition or parlor games. Competition as recreation.
Everyone can identify with that too. What makes it fun and
re-creative? Everyone is involved and included. Everyone
participates and makes a contribution. If the competiion
involves a team effort, then the total team effort is the sum
of the contributions of its members. The participant experiences
the joy of being an appreciated part of the whole. Points

like these can be made in varying degrees of monolog and

dialog, depending on the class, how comfortable the students

feel with their teacher and their colleagues at this point in

the course, and so on. But one way or another I will make

these points with my students, not only because they give

life to otherwise abstract terminology, but also because they

serve as a nice introduction to an important feature of the

methodology this course model uses to insure full, active

student participation. This feature of the methodology is

based on competition that is creative, not destructive, a

competition that is nonthreatening in that it does not involve

grade-related evaluations. Of course, one cannot just say

that a method is nonthreatening and presume to speak for

every student. Some students may well feel threatened by this

method, in which case one should make the effort to find out

where they feel threatened and to reassure them on those points.

As far as actual course grades are concerned, they are derived

from the usual quizzes, tests, and examinations, much as for

any other course.

Let us now consider how this course and its class meetings

will be structured. It should be noted that the course model

described below is based on a meeting schedule of twice a

week with one hour and fifteen minutes per meeting. The

diagram shown here gives a visual overview of the course

procedure. Each student should have a copy. The better

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informed the students are about procedures, the better they

can cooperate in making them work. At the end of each class

meeting the students receive their assignments (1) for the

next meeting. Ideally, the assignments would involve taped

recordings which would be available in the language laboratory

(2), but this would depend on the nature of the materials used

in the course. The laboratory exercises, if available, would

be followed by (3) the study of the assigned material at home.

More will be said about the exact nature of the assignments

later. Basically, two meetings with assignments are needed

to deal with the core of material for a given topic or unit.

These topics may themselves be part of a larger theme or focus

that may require perhaps a month or more to treat. I feel,

however, that in an introductory business foreign language

course there should be several of these themes or focuses to

give the course breadth and to guard against over-speicalization.

The approaches to the assignments will vary, depending on

whether it is the first or second meeting dealing with the

material. The TUESDAY block (4) in the diagram refers to the

first meeting treating the core material; THURSDAY refers to

the second. In the first five minutes of the class period

the projects are assigned for group work. On the second day

in each case a short vocabulary quiz is given, so additional

time must be set aside for that purpose. The next stage of

the diagram (5) indicates that the students are broken up into

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the appropriate number of groups. It is these groups that
provide the basis for the competitions explained below. The
groups spend thirty to thirty-five minutes working by themselves
in the target language to prepare the day's project. The
group leaders, who must be carefully-chosen, mature, responsible
students, see to it that everyone has the chance to join in
the project discussions and to make a contribution. During
the next block of time (6) the assigned material is treated
in various ways, some of them involving group competition and
the awarding of points. The details for this procedure will
follow. At the end of the class the assignment (7) in
preparation for the next meeting is given.

At his point we must turn our attention to the nature of
the materials the students are working with, the designs of
the projects treated in the group sessions, and the methods
for structuring and controlling the procedures for dealing
with the project responses. I prefer that the material
introducing new vocabulary and concepts be in dialog form
since it is the form that most naturally lends itself to taped
reproduction and contributes an atmosphere of the immediate
and even the dramatic to the material. I tell my students to
go to the laboratory and to imagine that they are actually
listening in on a conversation of about five minutes in length
between, say, a personnel director and a job applicant, or a
marketing consultant and a production manager, or an engineer

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and a field service representative, or whatever the case may

be. Notice, I said "listening in." They are not to use the

written form of the text at this point. After playing the tape

a sufficient number of times so that they have the feeling

that they know pretty well what the dialog was all about, the

students are to take a little self-check quiz consisting of

multiple-choice questions. They have the key to this quiz so

that they can check their answers and get some immediate

indication as to how well they understood the material. The

students must be impressed with the importance of this stage

of the learning process. They are developing a facility for

following conversation in their new field of business, and

the tape recordings present them with a nearly life-like

experience, just as if they were in the foreign country. After

taking this self-check quiz, the students should read through

the text while listening to the tape. The final stage in

preparation for the coming class meeting is to learn by heart

a shortened form of the five-minute dialog consisting of no

more than fourteen to fifteen sentences. These sentences

should contain the key vocabulary words for this assignment.

The TUESDAY model assignment consists then of four procedures.

The students "listen in" on a realistic business conversation

and, with the artificial advantage of replay, try to understand

as much as they can. The self-check quiz gives them an idea

of how well the have followed the dialog. The following-up

reading of the dialog text helps the student to see where the

comprehension problems lie. The learning of the dialog short

form gives the students a manageable number of new words in

context as well as a synopsis of the dialog text. The objectives

for this assignment are (1) to enhance the students' aural

comprehension, (2) to introduce new vocabulary and concepts,

and (3) to learn a selected number of these new words as active

vocabulary. These objectives are realistic, realizable, and

clear.

Now we come to the projects that the groups work with

during the thriry minutes or so of the class period set aside

for that purpose. During the first class meeting dealing

with a given topic assignment (TUESDAY model), you may, for

example, tell the groups that their project is to reproduce

orally with no notes the condensed form of the dialog assigned

as memorization work for that meeting. I usually allow twenty

minutes practice time for this project. Each group has the

chance to perform twice before their classmates. The first

time, they may decide who will speak first and whether the

speaking roles will then proceed clockwise or counter clockwise

from that person. The second time, I decide. This means, in

the latter case, that everyone has to know the whole dialog.

The object is to make as few mistakes as possible. If a

student "draws a blank" and cannot say anything when his or

her turn comes up, I do not count that as a mistake as long

as someone else in the group can pick up the lines; however ,
no student may speak twice in a row. This procedure takes
some of the pressure off the individual participants and
contributes to the atmosphere of team effort, cooperation and
mutual help among the group members. Even the strongest
students will forget their lines from time to time, and the
weakest will have their chance to shine. The group with the
fewest mistakes receives the most competition points in this
exercise. This is just one example of the game-like contests
that will take place during the class meetings. The points
are recorded in a visible way, such as on a wall chart, and
prizes are awarded at midterm and at semester's end.

Another type of group project that can be used in the
TUESDAY model is a fill-in-the-blank exercise. Give the
students a ditto of ten sentences or so taken from the long
dialog text from which you have deleted key words or even
parts of words. This should involve some new vocabulary, but
prepositions, conjunctions and other familiar words can present
a surprising challenge. The students work together in their
groups and decide how to fill in the blanks best. When you
read the complete version to the class so that the groups can
mark and total their mistakes, this can be one of the liveliest
correcting and learning experiences imaginable. Students will
groan, cheer, laugh, and generally enjoy themselves as they
share communally in the "ecstasy of victory and the agony of

defeat." Once again there is no grade pressure associated
with the exercise, just bonus points for the ongoing competition.

Both of the exercises described above will generate some
class discussion about terms and constructions easily overlooked
when they are just so many words on the page of a textbook.
The material begins to come alive when used in a way that
demands understanding of its context. Although it does not
appear that such exercises would be very time consuming, you
you will find yourself wishing you had one and a half hours
instead of an hour and fifteen minutes. And what is even
better, the students will too.

The assignment for the second meeting (THURSDAY model)
should include a thorough study of the longer written dialog.
The students should learn the meaning of all new vocabulary
in context and make notes on any concepts that are difficult
for them. The short quiz that will be taken at the beginning
of the period will include active vocabulary, i.e. English to
target language, from the short dialog learned for the previous
assignment as well as passive vocabulary, i.e. target language
to English, from the long dialog text. This quiz should not
take over five minutes of class time. Immediately following
the quiz there should be an in-depth discussion of the longer
dialog text. I always let the students ask the first questions.
This, like all procedures in the course, should be done in the
target language. Once the students have run out of questions,

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I give a presentation of what I consider to be the important

new concepts contained in the reading. For this I use the

chalk board and an overhead projector. Simple transparencies

with hand lettering--not typed--and some sketches or free-hand

drawings are an infallible way of getting the students'

attention. Let them see your drawing talents or lack of same.

Share a little vulnerability with your students; the almost

inevitable humor that results from your efforts always helps

the class atmosphere. The drawing in the following illustration

is used to explain a rather complicated subcontracting situation

in which a manufacturing company in Frankfurt becomes involved

with a subcontractor in Spain in the production of an item

for a customer in Argentina. More than one shipping port is

to be used, and the HERMES, an export credit insurance company,

also has a role to play. A simple diagram like this one helps

the students to visualize the whole procedure.

The next illustration represents the kind of drawing

that can be used to stimulate discussion based on the text.

Here the sequence deals with an on-the-job accident resulting

in injury to an employee. The incident must be investigated

by the DBG, that decides that the company, EE, is at fault

because the worker had been asked to put in too much overtime.

The company will have to assume responsibility for the

disability, etc. The drawings can, of course, be much more

primitive than these. Stick figures will do just as well to

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get the point across or provide a visual context for discussion.

Once you have dealt with the students' questions and made whatever presentations you had planned for the second meeting (THURSDAY model), the class should break up into its groups. They may have the project on this day to make a transparency themselves. For example, they may be asked to design a flow chart showing how different departments within a business deal with a particular matter if that happens to have been explicitly treated in the material at hand. Or they may be asked to show how a large company is set up administratively by drawing a diagram of the company hierarchy. Each group receives a blank transparency and a marking pen. The groups will then discuss the project and make many sketches on scratch paper before the design is committed to film. The results are then projected on the screen so the class as a whole can see the handiwork of the various groups and discuss the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the designs.

Although the project described above does not lend itself to the competition concept, you can still use the last fifteen minutes of the meeting for a "quickie" competition exercise by distributing Xerox copies of a short newspaper article, probably from the business section, dealing with a topic appropriate to the students' background at that point. The groups then answer as well as they can the true-false and/or multiple-choice questions you have made up and passed out with

the article. You can check these answers in the last minute
before the bell.

The number of possible variations on the group project
models described above is virtually limitless. Video tapes,
movie films, and audio tapes offer some very attractive
possibilities. You may have the students view and/or listen
to recorded materials that have something to do with trade,
industry, small businesses, shopping, etc. The segments
treated should not be more than five minutes in length. The
groups then answer a set of questions ranging in level of
difficulty from those that can be answered by the casual
observer to those that require careful observation and
thoughtful response. The groups discuss and agree upon their
responses, which they commit to writing. The groups will mark
their mistakes in the discussion that follows in the plenary
session. This can lead to some very interesting exchanges
between groups and instructor.

Role-play provides a good opportunity for the students
to show how well they can use their new vocabulary and how
well they understand the context appropriate to it. Some ideas
they can role-play are as follows: applying for a job with a
particular firm, planning or conducting contractural negotiations
with a client and subcontractors, planning for a business trip
or a job assignment in a foreign country. It works best when
you provide the groups with some guidelines, such as sample

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questions that might be asked by a personnel director in a job
interview. If the group is role-playing contractural negotiations,
you might list the expectations of the client and the sort of
problems that have to be solved by contractors, such as
delivery schedules, subcontracting, tarrifs, insurance, exchange
rates, and the like. In the case of the business trip or the
job assignment in a foreign country you could have the groups
deal with such things as bonus pay, benefits, foreign exchange,
living conditions, and travel expenses.

One additional project possibility that should be mentioned
here is the idea of the "test dry run." During the meeting
before each hour test I give the students a sample test that
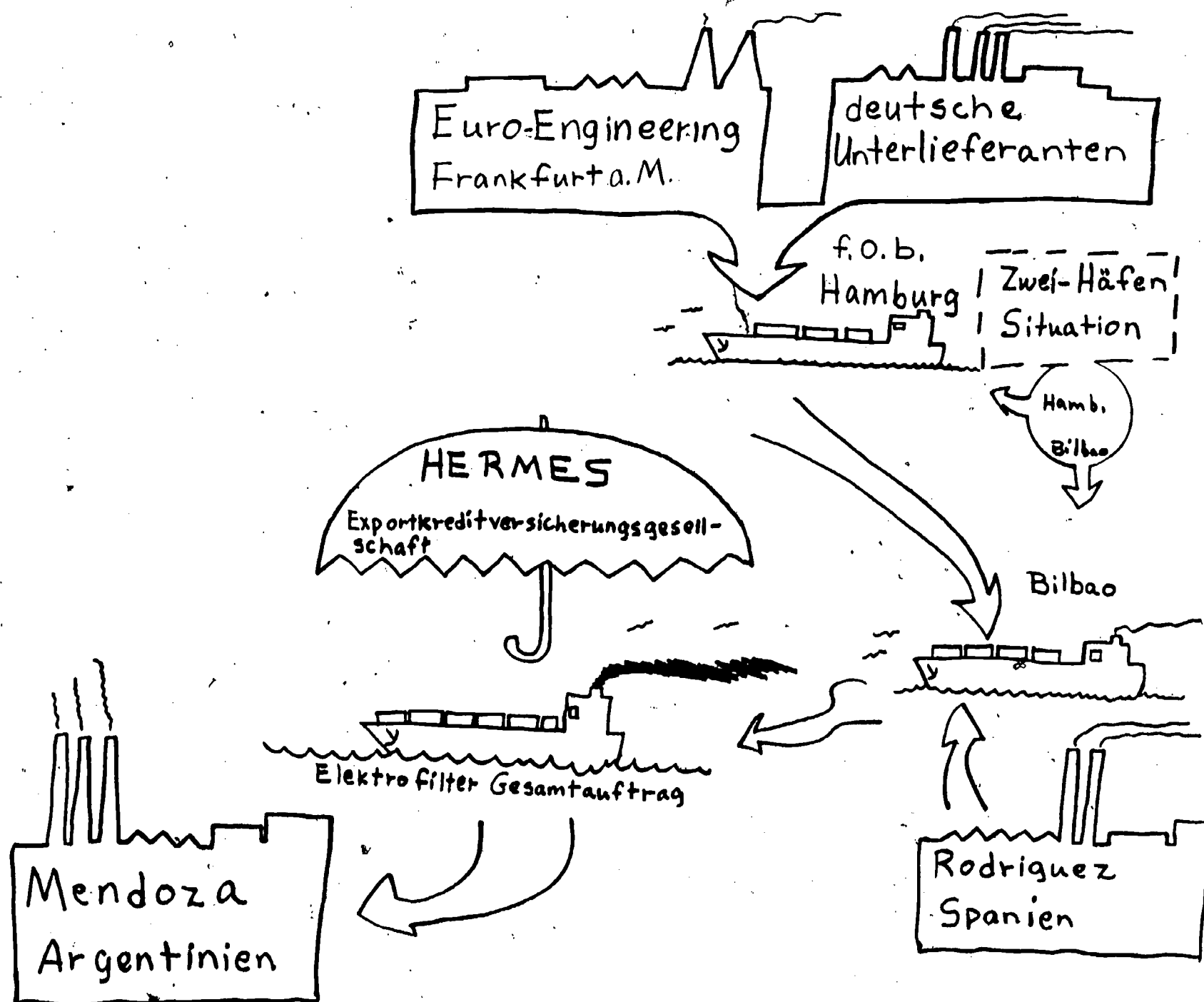differs from the real thing only in actual content. The form
and length are identical to the test they will take in the
following meeting. The students work in their groups, discuss
their answers, and come up with a version they can agree upon.
They have an hour to do this; the last fifteen minutes are
devoted to the in-class correction of the groups' papers.
This is another example of the kind of group activity that
can be scored and used in the competitions. But more important
than that, the students have just taught each other a great
deal in their discussions of the test questions. Moreover,
they have found out what they did not know, and they will
leave the classroom knowing exactly what kind of questions
will be asked on the real test.

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In summary, I would like to make the following points.
Anyone who is willing to put in the requisite planning time
can teach a successful business foreign language course without
undergoing special training. The objectives for such a course
must be realistic, i.e. everyone, students and instructor
included, must understand that this is an introductory course
to an important, extremely complex, and highly sophisticated
aspect of a foreign culture. The objectives for the course
must be realizable, i.e. the amount of material for which the
students are to be held responsible and the level of
sophistication they are expected to attain will be, given the
depth and breadth of the field as a whole, appropriately
modest, though nonetheless worthwhile. Finally, the class
meetings themselves should be structured in such a manner as
to involve the students in immediate active use of their new
vocabulary and concepts. Small student groups, controlled
by means of specially designed group projects, afford an
excellent means for realizing this goal.

1		2		3
RECEIVE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT	→	LANGUAGE LAB	→	HOME STUDY

7	6	5	4
RECEIVE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT	GROUP RESPONSE OR PROJECT PRESENTA-TION & DISCUSSION	GROUP A / GROUP B / GROUP C / GROUP D	TUESDAY GROUP ASSIGNMENT ca. 5 min. / THURSDAY QUIZ DISCUSSION GROUP ASSIGNMENT ca. 30 min
	15-30 min.	ca. 30 min.	

Euro-Engineering Frankfurt a. M.

deutsche Unterlieferanten

f.o.b. Hamburg

Zwei-Häfen Situation

Hamb. Bilbao

HERMES

Exportkreditversicherungsgesell-schaft

Bilbao

Elektrofilter Gesamtauftrag

Mendoza Argentinien

Rodriguez Spanien

Unfall an der Baustelle!

Schade!

Vertreter der Deut. Bundesgenosseschaft

DBG

Warum ist er da?

Wir haben ermittelt, daß der Angestellte zu viele Überstunden gearbeitet hat!

DBG

Ach!

E.E.

Wer wird wohl regreßpflichtig gemacht?

Und was bedeutet das eigentlich?

Der Verletzte

DBG

Firma

BUSINESS LANGUAGE COMPONENTS
FOR VARIOUS LEVELS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

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'As some academic institutions do not yet offer a separate

course in foreign language for business, teachers in these

institutions are seeking ways to introduce business materials

into the existing, more traditional foreign language course

offerings.   Even when the curriculum does include a course in

foreign language for business and the professions, the student

needs to be exposed to the idea of such a course in the early

stages of language study, thereby demonstrating to the student

the practical applications of foreign language study and thus

stimulating his interest in the specialized business language

course.   To do this effectively foreign language teachers need

to include business-related materials in their courses at all

levels of study, from beginning to advanced.   In view of this

need, this paper will suggest several business language components

which can be easily incorporated into existing foreign language

courses.   These components emphasize a variety of skills and

include examples of activities, techniques, and materials which

can be employed at various levels of foreign language study.

On the elementary level of language study "password" and "What's my line?" are two oral communication activities which can be used as early as the second semester and which lend themselves easily to a business orientation. Examples of vocabulary appropriate for "password" at this level include simple financial terms, office machines, office supplies, secretarial duties, and the like. The first few times students play "What's my line?" at this level they may need some written materials to guide them. The instructor can prepare a list of various jobs, related vocabulary, and sample questions concerning where the person works, whether or not he works alone or with others, whether he travels in his job, whether he uses machines, etc.

At this level a business orientation can easily be given to many writing activities. After the students have studied the past tense and have learned the vocabulary for various academic disciplines, courses of study, diplomas, etc. they can be given the necessary terms and the format for a curriculum vitae and asked to write their own curriculum vitae. After having studied numbers, dates and the currency of the country

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involved, students can be given simple business forms to complete, for example, checks, money orders, forms for opening checking accounts, hotel registration forms, mailing labels, etc. Sending a telex is another writing activity which can work quite well during the second semester of language study. In order to generate more interest the instructor may divide the class into small groups and have the students do the activity as a competition. Each group is given a piece of paper containing the same business situation; for example, company X receives an order from company Y and wants to inform the latter of the shipping details and confirm the price. Students are instructed not to begin until each group has the written description. The groups then read the situation described and write the telex in question. The group which completes the telex first writes the text of the telex on the board; this is then read and corrected by the entire class.

At this level relatively simple want ads constitute a good learning tool for a reading comprehension activity. After all students understand the content and vocabulary of the ad, they practice question formation by asking one another

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questions about the content of the ad: What is the job in question? Does the candidate need to know several languages? What is the salary? What degrees must the candidate have?

In courses on the intermediate level the various business language components involve somewhat more elaborate reading and writing activities. Import-export business forms, such as a bill of lading, shipping documentation, customs declarations, and the like make very interesting tools for teaching business vocabulary and generating conversation. In activities involving such forms the instructor can give the students certain information in written form, such as a conversation between a shipping clerk and a secretary, who are discussing the content, packaging, weight, destination, carrier, freight forwarder, etc. for an order to be shipped abroad. After reading the conversation, students are asked to work in groups to complete a bill of lading based on the information contained in the conversation.

At this level the use of want ads can be expanded to include a writing component. After reading several examples of want ads in the target language, students work in teams to

prepare similar ads for such positions as secretary, sales

representative, interpreter, accountant, etc. Similarly,

product advertisements taken from publications in the target

language can constitute both a reading and writing activity.

While reading these advertisements students are not only

learning vocabulary, reviewing colors, adjectives, command

forms, and the like, but they are also being subtly introduced

to certain cultural aspects of the people who produced the

advertisements. After reading several sample advertisements

in the target language, students may write a similar advertisement

for a product of their choice.

As an oral communication activity intermediate-level

students can be asked to write and then act out a certain

dialogue, for example, one in which they ask their employer

for a salary increase. This works very nicely when reviewing

the use of the past tense for completed actions, as contrasted

with the use of the present tense for certain actions which

began in the past and which are continuing at the present time.

Students will have to state how long they have been working

for the company in question and what they have done to merit

a pay raise.   Business-oriented brochures gathered during a

trip abroad (from post offices, rental agencies, banks, train

stations, travel agencies) make interesting reading material

for students at the intermediate level.   Such realia is much

more appealing to the students than the fabricated articles

taken from a book written only for language courses.

A course in conversation lends itself quite easily to

activities having a business orientation.   Due to their practical

nature, conversations simulating a job interview are always

very successful in such a course.   The instructor may give the

students a list of want ads from which they must choose a

position and work in pairs to create the job interview for the

position chosen.   Before presenting themselves for the interview,

the students must simulate telephone conversations in which they

ask for additional information about the position and request

an appointment for the interview.

Further use of product advertisements in the target

language can be made in the conversation course by having the

students give an oral critique of an advertisement of their

choice.   Points to include in the critique might be: What

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constitutes the appeal of the advertisement? What social

group is targeted by the advertisement? What is the probable

educational level of the target group? What makes the

advertisement visually appealing? How does it differ from an

American advertisement for the same product?

By including various types of commercial correspondence.

the instructor can give a business orientation to the course

in Advanced Grammar and Composition. After having the class

study certain formulae (salutations, introductory statements,

complimentary closings), the instructor gives examples of

subjects for business letters--such as a request for space in

a trade show, a complaint concerning an incorrect shipment,

a cancellation of an order, or a reminder of payment due--and

has students work in groups to prepare the appropriate business

letter. Using an overhead projector to correct the letters

allows all students to benefit from the work of each group.

As a more personalized type of business correspondence,

students can be asked to write a cover letter to accompany a

job application.

The instructor can add a business perspective to a course

in contemporary civilization by discussing certain social

practices in the business world--forms of address, appropriate

times for business phone calls, etc.--and by giving the

students recent socio-economic and political information about

the country in question. In conjunction with the study of

geography in a civilization course the instructor can ask

students to organize a tour for a business executive who must

make a trip abroad and who wants to remain an extra week in

the country in order to visit several particularly interesting

areas. The student must plan the tour, keeping in mind the

particular business interests of the person involved (textiles,

automotive, interior design, fashion, computer software,etc.) while

guiding him to those areas which will be particularly interesting

for him, not only from an historical and cultural perspective,

but from a business perspective as well.

While the foregoing examples of business components for

the foreign language classroom are in no way intended to be

exhaustive or to be appropriate to every course or student

group, these activities can provide the foreign language

instructor with several ideas for effectively introducing

students to the notion of foreign language for business and

the professions. In those institutions which do not yet have

a specific course in foreign language for business these

components can provide the instructor with a means of devoting

some class time to business-related activities. Even if the

institution does offer a separate course in business language,

the inclusion of such components in other foreign language

courses will stimulate student interest in the specialized

business language course, increase the student's chances for

success when he later enrolls in such a course, and will give

a certain unity to the foreign language curriculum of the

institution.

MOVING FROM VOCABULARY ACQUISITION TO FUNCTIONAL PROFICIENCY: TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

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Moving from Vocabulary Acquisition to Functional Proficiency:
Techniques and Strategies

The student who takes a course in commercial language will
certainly acquire a set of new vocabulary words, many technical in
nature. Teachers preparing such a course for the first time must, in
many cases, reorient themselves and master a content that involves
knowledge of economics, political science, and trade. From
the point of view of the teacher venturing into the area of
commercial studies, the primary challenge, or, in some cases,
obstacle, is the need to learn the many specific terms needed to
express concepts in the second language. Some of those terms,
for example "bill of lading," may not be completely familiar
in English. As a consequence, the teacher views his or her
preparation in terms of learning words.

The teacher of the commercial language course, because
of the attention demanded by vocabulary, may find that the
resulting course that he or she structures is oriented to
acquisition of isolated words and to the learning of lists of
vocabulary items organized in terms of fine distinctions
among them. In fact, the goal of the commercial course should

be to lead the students to achieve a far broader goal: the acquisition of functional proficiency.

The term "functional proficiency" is a broad one; it covers awareness of culture-based language functions as well as sensitivity to style. A course that has the development of functional proficiency as its goal focuses on three areas:

1. Context

The course considers the country where the target language is spoken and fosters a critical understanding of business within the society of that country as a whole.

2. Practice

Class activities permit the student to use newly-acquired terms and concepts in communication situations.

3. Verification

Testing measures the student's progress in identifying the features that distinguish business in the country whose language is being studied from American business and requires use of the technical vocabulary in situations that vary functionally, that is, in situations that require the student to inquire, persuade, deny, etc.

Verification includes the administration of an oral proficiency interview test, given at the conclusion of the

course. This test measures students' progress against the standard of real-life linguistic behaviors of native speakers, including the ability to use certain functions in particular contexts with suitable accuracy. The scale used to measure progress is that developed by ACTFL/ETS. Students enrolled in the course may also have the option of taking a test administered by an internationally recognized agency. For example, students of French do the examination administered by the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris for the certificat for proficiency in commercial French. Earning a high rating on the ACTFL/ETS scale and such a certificate increases the credibility of students as they search for jobs, internships, or financial support for graduate programs.

The specific example of a course in French will show how each area identified above figures into the structuring and development of an effective commercial course.

CONTEXT

In the commercial French course, emphasis is placed on the historical and cultural forces which have shaped French industry in the past. Essential to this task is the development of a perspective on the distinctive features of traditional French businesses which emerged during the Industrial Revolution and which scarcely changed until after World War II. Students

need to understand that the structures and management practices
of French industry developed during pre-war years reflected
the cultural values of those times. Similarly, a discussion of
the post-war era, which heralded the transformation within the
space of forty years from an agrarian-based society in 1944 to
a major industrial power, is crucial to an understanding of the
characteristics of French businesses today. These dramatic
changes reflect as well the shift in cultural values which
occurred during France's industrialization. The massive exodus
from rural to urban centers, the subsequent disappearance of
the peasant and his unique ethic along with a huge swell in the
tertiary sector, the increase in the numbers of working women,
and fundamental changes in the educational system have transformed
the nature and fabric of French society.

Once this historical-cultural backdrop is in place, the
course can move to the treatment of the relationship between
business and the important social partners— the State, unions,
inter-governmental agencies such as the Common Market, and
Chambers of Commerce and Industry, etc.-- which comprise the
working environment. The teacher plans for discussion of a
limited number of social partners, according to his or her
priorities and time constraints. In France, the most significant
social partner for industry has been and still is the State.
A brief overview of the interventionist role the State has

traditionally played in areas like the regulation of investment
procedures and labor-management practices can serve as a transition
to the discussion of the effects of Socialism on the business
community. An analysis of Socialist philosophy (i.e. traditional
distrust of unbridled capitalism and faith in a strong, central
State to establish guidelines for industry while protecting
the working person and the economy) and of legislation enacted
under Mitterrand (i.e. third wave of nationalizations, increase
in paid vacation and minimum wage, hiring of additional civil
servants, Lois Auroux, etc.) points to the dramatic impact of
government on French business. Students, appreciating the role
of the State in France, will be interested in having current
figures from the important economic indicators: growth of the
GNP, the rate of inflation pre- and post- Mitterrand, unemployment
statistics, the balance of trade, and the status of the franc
against the dollar and other major currencies.

Finally, as a bridge to span the theoretical material
and the functional use of language in culturally authentic
notions, the class should begin the study of the major legal
forms of business organization in France at the present time.
Students should also learn the staff-and-line functions which
most commonly represent the internal structure of French firms.
Having a specific example of a French company to use as a model

and a basis for comparison is extremely useful. (See below,
Part II.)

This approach ensures that the language, albeit technical
and specialized, will not be separated from the culture. Indeed,
adequate treatment of language and culture is the foundation of
functional proficiency. Once the class has a perspective on the
profound cultural changes of the post-war period, students
can more fully appreciate the impact these changes have on
culture-based language functions and the communication style
required in the business world.

PRACTICE

The second focus of the course, therefore, is the
acquisition of functional proficiency in oral and written
expression. Integrated into the presentation of the background
material is practice on tasks or functions which students will
need in order to perform effectively in a variety of culturally
authentic settings. Locales like financial institutions, service
agencies such as insurance and advertising firms, the post office,
and personnel office, are the point of departure for creating
situations in which students get interactive oral and written
practice. Besides mastering the vocabulary associated with
the settings, the student learns which aspects of these
institutions' functioning are intrinsically French and learns

or reviews the expressions used in greeting, inviting, soliciting information, stating opinions, stating preferences or dislikes, agreeing, disagreeing, suggesting, and persuading. Students must build a sensitivity to the choice of the formal versus the informal level of language. For example, the choice of expressions differs when one expresses disagreement to the company's chief officer rather than to a trusted colleague of equal status.

Knowledge of appropriate levels of language is not restricted to spoken discourse. Learning the variations in written style required in business correspondence is imperative as well. One does not write to a faithful client of many years as one does to a firm with a questionable credit history. Practice in drafting letters of different tones insures that the students will become aware of nuances and will be able to understand and write texts that imply the nature of the business-client relationship.

VERIFICATION

Providing students with an adequate cultural background, pertinent vocabulary, and practical interactive models throughout the semester is an effective means for developing functional proficiency. However, the increasing emphasis placed on accountability by educators and employers in the area of oral proficiency demands that there be a credible means of evaluating

students' progress. The oral proficiency interview test and
the corresponding ACTFL/ETS rating scale provide a viable
diagnostic tool for evaluating students' functional proficiency
in the spoken language. The structure and focus of the test
speak to the concern for making the acquisition of functional
proficiency a primary goal in the writing of curricula for
professional language courses. A brief description of the
test illustrates its relevance for the commercial course:

As outlined in the ETS testing manual, the oral proficiency
interview is a testing procedure that measures a wide range of
speaking ability. In the interview, a trained tester holds a
conversation with the candidate for from ten to forty minutes.
The speech sample elicited in the interview is assigned a
global rating from 0 (no ability in the language) to Superior
(ability to function in a variety of professional settings).
Most importantly, the candidate's language performance is
evaluated in terms of real-life linguistic behavior. The
interactive format of the test is in itself an example of a
communication situation.

One feature that distinguishes the oral proficiency
interview test from other kinds of oral tests is the fact that
it is curriculum-free. Unlike an oral achievement test, whose
purpose is to measure the students' acquisition of a fixed body
of material (for example, one component of a given course), the
interview test focuses on language competence without regard

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for length or method of the student's preparation. The interview test probes to find areas in which the student is not competent, unlike the achievement test which never asks the student to handle material not covered in the. curriculum.

The tester's role, therefore, is to find the limits beyond which a candidate is unable to go. It is the tester's responsibility to elicit a sample of the best sustained level of language that the candidate is capable of producing. The tester then assigns the candidate a rating, based on the sample that the tester has elicited by interviewing the candidate. A vital part of the process of assigning ratings is the evaluation of overall speaking performance. Three factors comprise this performance: functions, context, and accuracy. Is the candidate capable of performing certain functions in a particular context with appropriate accuracy? At Advanced/Level 2, for example, the student could be asked to perform the function of description of a past event. The context would be his or her feelings on the first day of a new job. The accuracy would involve consistent use of the imperfect tense of some high and low frequency verbs and sufficient vocabulary and grammatical control to make the account intelligible to a person not used to dealing with foreigners.

Functions, such as "describing," cited above, are universal linguistic tasks, performed in all settings and common to all trades and professions. The oral interview test provides for

the evaluation of the functions at each level of the rating

scale. Although functions are always attached to a context or

topic and must be performed with acceptable levels of accuracy,

these task universals merit particular attention. The ETS manual

states that frequently a low rating in an interview results

not from inaccurate grammar or faulty pronunciation, but from

failure to accomplish functions, a failure which keeps communication

from taking place.

The functional ability at Advanced/Level 2 includes

asking and answering questions, narrating, describing,

and getting in, through, and out of a survival situation with

a complication. Because many business language students aspire to

participate in internships with international firms, at home or

abroad, achievement of this level of linguistic performance is a

reasonable goal for the commercial course and should constitute

the organizing principle for determining the curriculum in

the course. Using the oral interview as a measure has the additional

advantage of providing the student with a nationally-recognized

rating. The interview is used for persons of diverse backgrounds.

The uniformity of its application and rating procedures insures

that a future employer or graduate admissions officer will

know the candidate's strengths and limitations. The decision to

admit or employ the person will be an informed one. Furthermore,

the identification of oral proficiency as a goal and the

specification that the level of proficiency will be determined

by oral testing has a final advantage as well: using

proficiency-based scales makes the importance of the mastery

of oral skills clear to the student.

TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

The teacher who has identified the development of functional

proficiency as a course goal and who accepts the definition

of functional proficiency that is outlined above must combine

material from a number of sources to develop an effective course.

I. Context: the cultural component

Few texts in Commercial French provide the background

information necessary for understanding the context in which business

operates. The outline below, labeled "Lecture Format," can serve as

a model for the presentation of this material. Two possible

procedures are:

(1) presentation of the material as a rapid overview during the

initial two or three weeks of the semester or

(2) inclusion within each week's work during the semester of a

cultural/historical component.

The topics are presented using appropriate instructional

media; typed outlines, provided before lectures, facilitate

students' understanding.

A. Lecture Format

1. Brief Historical Overview

    a. The development of the French nation prior to World War II

    b. The organization of the State

2. Post-War Years: Dramatic Industrial Transformation

    a. Major features of post-war French society

    b. Cultural conditions reflected in types and structures of French businesses

    c. Post-war renewal and political change (Ve République, evolution of former colonies, etc.)

    d. Current success stories in traditional and non-traditional businesses (Renault, Ariane, etc.)

    e. The role of France and French in the world

3. The Cultural Environment: Significant Social Partners

    a. The State

        i. Etat-puissance

        ii. Etat-patron

    b. Intergovernmental organizations

        i. Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie

        ii. Common Market

    c. Unions

        i. CGT

        ii. CFDT

        iii. FO, and others

    d. Political parties

4. La Force Tranquille: Impact of Socialism on French Business Enterprise

    a. Third Mauroy Cabinet, May 1983

    b.   Traditional Socialist Model (ex. Léon Blum, Jean Jaurès)

    c.   Legislation / Policies enacted under Mitterrand

    d.   Economic indicators / Future projections

5.   Legal Forms of French Businesses

    a.   S.A., S.A.R.L., etc.

    b.   Case Study

        Teachers can help students by providing case studies
of French businesses. Seminars such as those offered by the
Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris include _stages_
during which the teacher çan acquire first-hand experience of
la vie en entreprise in a French company. The authors' case
study of Nina Ricci, done in the summer of 1983, provides a
model, distributed and explained to their classes.

        In addition to lecturing, the teacher can present
background information by using other techniques:

B.   Abstract format

        The teacher selects an article on one "context" subject
or another relevant topic. The article is in the target
language. The student is given the following assignment: You have
been asked by Mr. Jones, an American executive, to summarize for
him the contents of this article. He does not understand French.
The teacher provides a series of questions to help the
student understand the article. (EXAMPLE: The article discusses

a particular company and its successes. The specific questions
point to key passages: What kind of company is it? How has the
strong dollar affected the company's performance? etc.)
Students who do readings of this sort will acquire vocabulary more
naturally than those who memorize word lists; the fifth time
that a student reads chiffre d'affaires, the term will have a
direct and immediate meaning. The assignment also suggests
an important role that the student proficient in a second
language will play, that of conduit of information to those
people who do not have second language skills.

C. Common reading

In this format for presenting background material, the class
is given a text in French to read on a topic from among those
discussed above, for example, the Common Market. Each person is
given one question to answer by reading the article carefully.
The question may ask for factual information, or the question
may require interpretation. (EXS: Quels pays en font partie?
D'après ce que vous avez compris, quels sont les problèmes
auxquels on fait face à ce moment?) During the class hour,
without any reference to books or notes, each student contributes
the piece of information that he or she has to offer. Before
the exercise, each student is given a written questionnaire

to fill in as other class members speak. The questionnaire, once
evaluated and returned, becomes a summary sheet.

II. Interactive Models: Practice that incorporates the cultural
component and functional proficiency

The assignments described below provide functionally-oriented,
authentic practice.

Long-term projects.

A. La Création d'une entreprise

1. Objectives and general description

Students become familiar with aspects of the organization
of a company by creating their own enterprise. For this model,
the class is divided into teams of three to five students,
and each team creates its own French business. Students present
their work before the class orally and in the form of a written
report.

-The first steps in creating a company include choosing a product
or service, a company name, and a geographical location
suitable for the production site and/or the company headquarters.
Students must consider the legal structure which would
be most appropriate, based on the number of active or
silent partners, the capital possessed by the partners, etc.
-Once a legal form has been selected, attention is then
turned to the internal structure. Each team must lay out the
staff-and-line functions for their company. The team must also
describe the chain of command and company procedures relating

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to the flow of information and the decision-making process
in their company's management network.

-Equally important is the size of the work force and a definition
of management's philosophy with regard to labor. (Will
there be unions? What kind of relationship exists between
management and labor? etc.)

-Students are also asked to justify their choice of product
and the site of company headquarters. (What market conditions did
they "research," and what economic indicators inspired
confidence at this time?)

-Their presentation should end with a brief plan outlining
their firm's objectives over the next five to ten years.
How does the company hope to meet the challenges of doing
business in France in the 1980's?

2. Procedures

-Working independently, each group meets outside of class
at least three weeks before the project is due.

-During the first week, students structure their
research, and tasks are assigned to each group member.

-In the second week, the students reassemble to choose
their project, location, name, etc. They assign
themselves roles (P.D.-G., chef du personnel, etc.)
and choose topics which they must discuss during
the presentation.

-After the second group meeting, one or two representatives
from each group arrange a meeting with the teacher, who

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provides feedback on the quality of their research
and the initial design of their company.

-In the final group meeting prior to the oral
presentation, students edit and refine their work
and rehearse their individual parts.

-Working through their given roles, the group members
present their company to the class.

-Class members from other groups and the teacher
may play the role of representatives of the
Ministry of Finance or the D.A.T.A.R. They may
challenge the group's arguments or ask
provocative questions.

-The written report is due two weeks after the oral
presentation.

3. Teaching tools provided

-Functional expressions for stating opinions, insisting,
refuting, and conceding

-Pertinent vocabulary: names of section heads, etc.

B. Le Lancement d'un nouveau produit

1. Objectives

The student becomes familiar with the questions that must
be discussed when considering producing and publicizing a new
product. These topics include reasons for developing a new product,
preliminary analysis of an idea, a simulated market study
(favorable to the development of the new product!), development
of marketing strategies, discussion of pricing and packaging

options, and long-range projections.

2. Procedures

The class divides and does group presentations, using

procedures similar to those outlined above for the creation of

a company. The project will be presented orally and in writing.

The in-class presentation includes playing a skit in which

the people involved in the project discuss their ideas.

Included should be scenarios in which several marketers,

long-time colleagues, brainstorm using the tu form and

functional expressions suitable for informal levels of language.

In a subsequent vignette, these same colleagues make a formal

presentation of their market research and their suggested product

to the Board of Directors. They now use expressions/required for

persuading, conceding, etc., and tailor their communication style to

this very formal context.

3. Teaching tools provided

-Samples of French publicity from magazines

-Videotape of commercials available from French Cultural

Services

The two long-term projects outlined above are intended

to represent major efforts on the students' parts. What they

have in common is the requirement that the student be active,

that he or she use the language to communicate, and that

the student assume a particular role. The same demands can be

made in assignments of a more restricted nature. Again, the

objective is to put students into situations in which the language acquired will be used immediately, and be used authentically.

Weekly Projects

A. Skeletons

Using a dialogue from a textbook as a point of departure, the teacher first asks the class to practice a conversation. Once the vocabulary has been discussed and the class has practiced the dialogues in a group setting, the teacher provides skeleton models of the conversations.

EXAMPLE:

The text contains lines of dialogue like the following:

—Vous pouvez quitter Paris demain matin. Il y a un train à dix heures quarante. Vous arriverez à Marseille à dix-huit heures trente.

—Mais je ne veux pas arriver à dix-huit heures trente!

—Bon, alors, prenez l'avion à neuf heures.

The students practice, then use the skeleton to create a variant:

—Vous pouvez quitter _____ _____. Il y a un train à

_____. Vous arriverez à _____ à _____.

—Mais je ne veux pas arriver à _____!

—Bon, alors, prenez _____ à _____.

Students put appropriate information into blanks and use the variant created in that fashion to practice. Students work

in pairs. Student A does not know what information Student B will supply. As a result, the dialogue line in which Student B repeats what Student A has said requires careful listening. When the exchange in question is a telephone conversation, students do the exercise back to back, with toy phones, to recreate a situation in which the other party is not visible.

B. Creations of conversations and letters (written to be handed in), based on text's models

These assignments are prepared outside of class and handed in. The students write letters and conversations of their own, closely following the text's examples. The goal is to increase familiarity with patterns. Good models will provide nuances of doubt, impatience, etc.

C. In-class writing assignments

After practicing by writing letters and conversations based on models, the students do similar exercises in class without reference to texts or notes.

EXAMPLE:

You have been asked to make hotel arrangements for Monsieur Dupont during his trip to Lyon. Write the telephone conversation in which you reserve him a room. Make sure that all relevant considerations have been taken into account.

Weekly assignments that are structured in this fashion insure that the student will have continual practice

using the vocabulary that he or she is learning.

In sum, the most pertinent and successful commercial
course is one that meets the general requirement for any
valuable language course: students learn to use the language
in an authentic and interesting fashion. The emphasis is not on
any of the intermediate skills, the acquisition of vocabulary,
the drilling of verb forms, or the repetition of lines of dialogue,
but on the exchange of information and indication of feelings
and emotions that characterize use of language in the real world.
Thus, for the teacher organizing a commercial course, the most
demanding tasks are ultimately not those that appear to present
the greatest challenges when the project is first envisioned.
The teacher must, of course, master vocabulary and acquire new
areas of expertise. But a different test of the teacher's skills
comes when he or she must organize the course so that the students
do indeed acquire functional proficiency. In order to meet that
goal, the teacher must make choices. The teacher who provides
students with opportunities to do exercises of the sorts
described above will probably require the mastery of fewer
facts than the teacher whose sole aim is to purvey the greatest
amount of information in the shortest possible time. The teacher
will have to narrow the focus of the course. Instead of attempting
to survey business in all Francophone areas of the world,
for example, the point of departure may be restricted to practices .

in France. Rather than attempting to teach students at
all levels at once, the teacher may have to define prerequisites
so that the class is fairly homogeneous, preferably having a
good grasp of the basic structures of the language.

Within the constraints of a semester or even a year,
students cannot learn everything about "commercial language,"
given the extension of that term to include cultural studies,
economics, and political science as well as narrower areas
such a formulae appropriate for the writing of business letters.
Therefore, the teacher must impose limits and define precisely
the goals of the course. The student who acquires functional
proficiency during the course is the student whose teacher
has made the best choice in identifying the objectives
appropriate for a course in commercial foreign language.

TEXTS, ANCILLARY MATERIALS, AND REFERENCES

The following texts have been purchased by students in the courses described above:

Cresson, Bernard. Introduction au français économique. Didier: Paris, 1971. OR

Cresson, Bernard. Introduction au français commercial. Didier: Paris, 1972.

Dany, Max, Geliot, Jacques et al. Le Français du secrétariat commercial. Le Français et la profession, Hachette: Paris, 1977.

Works used for library reserve reading assignments include:

Bénouis, Mustapha K. Le Français économique et commercial. Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich: New York, 1982.

Bruézière, Maurice et Jacqueline Charon. Le Français commercial. 2 vols. Larousse: Paris, 1967. The 2nd volume, Textes d'études, provides interesting and varied readings for advanced students.

Cummins, Patricia W. Commercial French. Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982.

Guback, Denise. Français commercial. Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York, 1984.

Oudot, Simone and David L. Gobert. La France: Culture, Economie, Commerce. Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1984.

Other materials of interest include:

The Français Fonctionnel series, Section gestion, published by CLE International, 88 Boulevard Arago, 75014 Paris. Volumes include: La Décision d'investir; Rentabiliser une production; Lancer un nouveau produit; Vendre, Exporter; L'Organisation de l'entreprise.

Frommer, Judith. _Femmes_ _et_ _métiers_. Harvard University: Cambridge, Mass.

This taped series includes interview with the assistant mayor of a Communist

town, a _fonctionnaire_, and a _directrice_.

Nusbaum, Marlene and Liliane Verdier. _Parlez_ _sans_ _peur_. Holt, Rinehart and

Winston: 1983. This text teaches skills like debating.

Information about videotaped commercials may be obtained from the French

Cultural Services, 972 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10021, (212) 570-4400.

Available tapes also include Videocassette 1307, French Techno-Wonders

(Renault's flexible robotics; Val, underground train in Lille, etc.), English

dialogue, rental $15.00/ sale $75.00, 3/4 inch video.

Information about the _certificat_ for proficiency in commercial French is

available from Monsieur Jacques Cartier, La Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de

Paris, 14, rue Chateaubriand, 75008 Paris (tél. 561.99.00).   f

Oral Proficiency Testing and ACTFL/ETS Workshop Service:

ACTFL/ETS will present workshops to familiarize teachers with oral proficiency

testing and rating, using the modified Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale.

The Project Director is Vicky Galloway, ACTFL, P.O. Box 408, Hastings-on-Hudson, New

York 10706 (914) 478-2011. Dr. Barbara Freed is the Director of the Regional Center

for Language Proficiency located at the University of Pennsylvania.

Other sources of information:

L'Express, 31 cours des Juilliottes, 94705 Maisons-Alfort Cedex, France

Le Monde Sélection hebdomadaire, 5, rue des Italiens, 75427 Paris Cedex 09

Le Nouvel Observateur, 215 Boulevard MacDonald, 75944 Paris Cedex 19

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE BUSINESS COURSE: VARYING THE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

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The Foreign Language Business Course:

Varying the Activities and Assignments

During the past decade the foreign language business course has become a standard offering in many colleges and universities. Although the quality and quantity of textbooks available for such a course have greatly improved, instructors must still spend many hours agonizing over course content and preparing appropriate activities and assignments. The entire course comes more clearly into focus and the preparation of materials is simplified if the course is perceived primarily as a language class rather than a business class. When the class is viewed as an advanced conversation and composition course whose topic is business, three areas for student proficiency in the target language can be observed: the teaching of vocabulary--business terminology, the teaching of composition-- business correspondence, and the teaching of culture--business practices. Then activities and assignments appropriate to these skill areas can be devised and utilized.

1. Teaching Business Terminology

• Research in psychology[1] and in foreign language methodology[2] has demonstrated that it is much easier to remember words that occur in a catagorized list, e.g. typewriter, calculator, desk, computer, file cabinet, than words in a semantically unordered list, e.g. typewriter, industry, mortgage, publicity, transportation, laundry. Most foreign language business textbooks are divided into chapters that are organized around a topical theme such as banking, real estate or advertising. These chapter themes provide a ready-made list of categorized vocabulary. We

need only to develop and use exercises which emphasize this principle
of categorical clustering in order to facilitate student acquisition
of the vocabulary.

The following two exercises are designed to help students men-
tally categorize various forms of business terminology. The exercises
could be used as an outside assignment, in-class activity or as a test item.

FIGURE   1

Find the word that does not belong in the series.

1. (A) calculator   (B) blender   (C) typewriter   (D) computor

2. (A) peso   (B) peseta   (C) bolivar   (D) dollar

3. (A) envelope   (B) closing   (C) signature   (D) heading

4. (A) advertisement   (B) advertising   (C) advertise   (D) advantage

5. (A) Mg.   (B) Kg.   (C) Dr.   (D) Cm.

FIGURE   2

Find the words related to the word on the left.

office: telephone, teller, to type, camera, photocopy,
                 to dictate

industry: factory, faculty, to produce, proper, to manufacture,
                 worker

accountant: debits, to assert, assets, bookkeeping, to invent,
                 entry

advertisement: adventure, to promote, poster, to publicize,
                 propaganda, to protect

The following activity called "The Think Tank" requires a student
to provide a certain number of vocabulary items within a limited amount
of time in response to a question.[3]

    INSTRUCTOR: How many business terms can you brainstorm within

            one minute that begin with the letter "B"?

    STUDENT: bank, bankruptcy, bonds, businessman, balance

There are numerous variations on this activity all of which help the
student categorize vocabulary.

    How many business terms can you brainstorm within one minute
        that begin with (supply a letter of the alphabet)?

    How many words do you know associated with transportation /
        industry / real estate / insurance / advertising?

    How many business machines can you name?

    How many U.S. firms can you name that have branches in France /

        Spain / Germany / Brazil / Mexico?

This activity can also be done in pairs or groups and can serve as a
written assignment as well.

In the assignment "Report to the Board of Directors"[4] the student
is required to prepare a written report or composition of about one page
in length on an aspect of the topic currently being studied in class.
After preparing the written report the student must then give an oral
report to the "board of directors" (his insturctor and classmates). The
student is required to speak for one minute on his topic without pausing
and without the use of notes. This particular assignment/activity helps
the student use the new vocabulary in both a written and oral situation.

Many variations on cloze procedures can also help students master

vocabulary. In the following exercise students must mentally fill in the

missing letters in the words as they read the paragraph aloud. While the

activity seems simple, it requires mastery of vocabulary and structures

and is, thus, most effectively used after students have already become

familiar with the vocabulary of the current lesson. The activity encourages

reading fluency by having the student focus on entire words rather than

individual letters or syllables. The exercise can also serve as a type

of spelling test if students write in the missing letters.

FIGURE   3

Variation 1: Read the following paragraph aloud as you mentally supply the
              missing letters in the words.

Variation 2: Write in the missing letters in the words of the following
              paragraph.

The co_pu.er is r_pid_y b_co_ing a ne_es_ity in t_e

m_der_ bu_in_ss _ffi_e.   A c_m_ut_r ca_ p_rfo_m a _ar_et_ of

f_nc_ions wi_h g_eat s_eed _nd a_cura_y.   A_th_ugh man_

c_mp_t_rs c_n be _xpe_sive to p_rch_se, the_ _fte_ p_y for

t_emsel_es in a s_ort pe_iod of _ime b_ca_se t_ey _re

c_pa_le of do_ng _he _ork of s_er_l e_pl_yees.

The group activity "Business Survey" combines reading, writing
and speaking practice with the vocabulary.[5] Each student is given a
copy of a questionnaire such as the one illustrated below. The stu-
dent must then orally interview classmates and write down the name
of a person that qualifies for each description. After each classmember
has completed the questionnaire, "de-brief" by asking various students
to name a person that qualifies for each description. Students should
answer in complete sentences. Questionnaires on a variety of topical
vocabulary can be prepared; review surveys combining vocabulary from
several chapters are also very effective.

FIGURE 4

BUSINESS SURVEY

1. Someone who wants to work in a bank.

   _____

2. Someone who has just opened a savings account.

   _____

3. Someone who doesn't have a checking account.

   _____

4. Someone who has several credit cards.

   _____

5. Someone who has stock in an important firm.

   _____

6. Someone who has a student loan.

   _____

7. Someone who has always pays cash.

   _____

8. Someone who has no debts.

   _____

9. Someone who has relatives that work in a bank.

   _____

10. Someone who has a mortgage.

    _____

In the activity Jigsaw Puzzle[6] each student in a small group is given a card with a word written on it. Students take turns describing or defining that word to the members of the group without using the word directly. A "secretary" writes down each word as it is guessed. When all words have been successfully communicated, the group takes the first letter of each word and unscrambles them to form a "group word". For example, six students might be given the following words to describe:

INDIVIDUAL WORDS   GROUP WORD

   check

   receipt

   earnings

   deposit   CREDIT

   interest

   transaction

Note that all the individual words are categorized so that they relate to the resultant group word. In this activity, the student is developing paraphrasing skills and practicing new vocabulary while using the target language to solve a problem.

In the activity "Multi-national Corporation"[7] students must use the target language to bring together for a sales meeting the various employees of a fictitious corporation with branches in many countries. The game consists of a set of cards depicting employees. Each card has a description of the student card-holder (oneself) and of the employee the student is seeking. Each person who is seeking another employee is also being sought. Groups of four, five, and six members are created by using information such as that given in the sample cards of Figure 5.

FIGURE 5

THE MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATION

ME	ACCOUNTANT
Mexican	Mexican
54 years old	36 years old
Buenos Aires	Santiago
Own computer firm	University degree
Large estate	Apartment
Play polo	Swims & skis

ME	SALES MANAGER
Mexican	Colombian
36 years old	43 years old
Santiago	Lima
University degree	House
Apartment	3 cars
Swim & ski	Plays tennis

ME	COMPUTER SPECIALIST
Colombian	28 years old
43 years old	Mexican
Lima	San José
House	Apartment
3 cars	2 University degrees
Play tennis	Plays chess

ME	PRESIDENT
28 years old	Mexican
Mexican	54 years old
San José	Buenos Aires
Apartment	Own computer firm
2 University degrees	Large estate
Play chess	Plays polo

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Before beginning the game count out how many students will be playing

and then determine which sets of cards to use.

To begin play, shuffle the cards you have chosen to use and dis-

tribute one card per student. Then, tell the students to question everyone

else in the classroom in order to find the other employees in their corpora-

tion. After students have located their fellow employees, they can create

names and a short biographical sketch for each other and introduce the

corporation to the entire class.

2. Teaching Business Correspondence

An important component of the foreign language business course

should be information on how to apply for available positions. Assignments

on the reading and writing of business letters and documents correspond well

with the teaching of job application skills.

Students must first learn the basics of letter writing in the target

language before proceding with the unit on job application. Most foreign

language business textbooks contain a chapter on the reading and writing

of business correspondence and provide sample letters and a variety of

exercises and assignments dealing with the formulaic expressions, standard

abbreviations, and business letter form. Supplemental information on

letter writing can be provided by using materials such as James Brown's

Opciones: Spanish Correspondence[8] or any number of other available

manuals.[9]

After learning how to write standard business letters, students

can then learn the procedures for applying for positions. In order to

teach the reading of classified advertisements in the target language,
provide students with various copies of sample classified advertisements
found in foreign newspapers or in foreign language newspapers published
in the United States. Require students to make a list containing five
to seven positions for which they are qualified and in which they are
interested; the students should note the name and address of the firms
for the list will be used in future assignments in which students will
apply for the positions they have chosen.

Another related assignment is the prepartion of a résumé in the
target language to be used for job applications. It has been my experience
that most students in the foreign language business courses have never
prepared a résumé in any language; thus, we are faced with the double
task of teaching them how to prepare a résumé and then how to write the docu-
ment in the target language. Since students have little knowledge about
résumé writing, it seems appropriate to instruct them in the writing of
the newer skills-oriented résumé than in the more traditional résumé.
emphasizing experience. As can be seen in the following traditional résumé
of Figure 6, a recent college graduate with little job experience does
not fare well on paper.

FIGURE 6

TRADITIONAL RESUME

PERSONAL DATA: Mary Ann Smith
                  123 Main Street
                  Dearborn, Michigan 12345
                  (313) 987-6543
                  Married, no children

EDUCATION: Training Program in Career Counseling and Development
                      Crystal Institute McLean, Virginia Summer, 1982
                  B.A. in International Studies
                      University of Michigan-Dearborn June, 1982
                  Summer Program in Puebla, Mexico in conjunction with
                      Wichita State University Summer, 1981

EXPERIENCE: Cashier McDonald's Restaurant 1976-1977
                  Waitress Elias Brothers Restaurant 1977-1978
                  Salesperson /Clerk Winkleman's Women's Clothing Store
                      1979-1981

OTHER INTERESTS: Aerobic dancing
                  Coach for junior high girls gymnastics team 1978-Present
                  Volunteer at Community Hospital 1976-Present
                  Travel in Europe Summer, 1980
                  Travel in Mexico Summer, 1981

ORGANIZATIONS: Member: University of Michigan-Dearborn Ski Club
                           University of Michigan-Dearborn Marketing Club
                           First Methodist Church Choir
                  Treasurer, University of Michigan-Dearborn International Club

REFERENCES: Dr. Robert Jones, Professor of Spanish, University of Michigan-
                      Dearborn
                  Dr. Henry Woods, Professor of Accounting, University of
                      Michigan-Dearborn
                  Rev. Thomas Anderson, Pastor First Methodist Church

FIGURE ·7

SKILLS-ORIENTED RESUME

PERSONAL DATA: Mary Ann Smith
                   123 Main Street
                   Dearborn, Michigan 12345
                   (313) 987-6543

EDUCATION: Training Program in Career Counseling and Development
                        Crystal Institute McLean, Virginia Summer, 1982
                   B.A. in International Studies University of Michigan-Dearborn
                        June, 1982
                   Summer Program in Puebla, Mexico in conjunction with
                        Wichita State University Summer, 1981

JOB EXPERIENCE: Cashier McDonald's Restaurant 1976-1977
                   Waitress Elias Brother's Restaurant 1977-1978
                   Salesperson/clerk Winkleman's Women's Clothing Store
                        1979-1981

QUALIFICATIONS: Knowledge of Spanish--Rating 3+ om Government Proficiency Exam
                   Adept at writing and translating business letters and
                        correspondence English/Spanish and Spanish/English
                   Outstanding ability to write and present concise, well-
                        organized reports
                   Adept at accounting
                   Experience with handing large amounts of money, taking
                        inventory, keeping financial records and preparing
                        and administering a budget
                   Experience with instructing and coaching
                   Experience in training new sales personnel
                   Ability to encourage and guide others .
                   Proven ability in relating well to other people; displaying
                        tact and diplomacy on the job
                   Abiltiy to work well as a team member
                   Experience with computers and programming
                   Expertise with standard office machines--typewriter,
                        dictaphone, calculator

OBJECTIVE: Position as an accountant in a firm doing business
                        with Spanish-speaking countries; desire to travel
                        or re-locate where accounting and Spanish skills
                        could be utilized.

However, in Figure 7 that same job applicant appears to have much more

to offer a prospective employer when her qualifications are expanded

into skills learned from previous job, school and life experiences.

Richard N. Bolles' What Color is Your Parachute? and Tom Jackson's The

Perfect Resume are excellent resource books for learning about the skills-

oriented résumé and job hunting tactics in general.[10]

After the students have learned how to prepare a skills-oriented

résumé, have then prepare a résumé in the target language. Undoubtedly,

several drafts of the document will be needed before a final, polished

version is obtained.

A third written assignment completes the job application unit.

The students will learn to write a letter of introduction to accompany

the résumé. The letter in the target language should be addressed to

one of the firms on the previously prepared "job list" and should request

an interview. Most foreign language business textbooks and letter-writing

manuals contain sample letters of introduction for use with this assignment.

The letter of introduction and résumé can actually be sent to the firm

or not as the instructor desires.

3.   Teaching Business Practices

A third major component of the foreign language business course

is devoted to the teaching of business practices. Many of the readings

in the typical foreign language business textbook are devoted to the

teaching of this cultural component; business administration, organization

and operations within the native and target cultures are compared and

contrasted. Additional information, exercises and activities for the

teaching of business practices can be found in <u>Business Case Studies</u>
and in <u>Export Marketing</u>; both texts exist in a French, German and Spanish
version.[11]

One of the best activities for introducing cultural information
via business practices is related to the unit on advertising and publicity,
a standard chapter in most foreign language business texts. Using adver-
tisements cut from target culture magazines or slides prepared from those
advertisements, comment on advertising techniques, logos, slogans, and
general appeal. After students have read and learned about advertising
in general, provide each student with a current magazine or newspaper
from the target culture. Students must then prepare a four-to-five
minute oral report on the advertisements found within. Instruct the
students to comment on the types of products advertised, to what age,
economic or education group the ad is appealing and what methods are used
in the advertisement message. Students should also find advertisements
for similar products in U. S. magazines or newspapers and compare the
format and message. In addition, students should note products that are
advertised in one culture but not in the other. This assignment not only
teaches about advertising practices in general but also provides much
cross-cultural information.

Many other business practices can be learned via role-playing
techniques. Banking procedures such as opening and closing accounts,
applying for a business loan, changing money, or rectifying a clerical
error can be re-created to fit role-playing situations. Students should
work in pairs as they re-enact a given situation. If there are native

speakers among your students, use them in the role of the bank employees.
A native "employee" creates a more realistic situation and the language
ability of the student will allow him or her to question and answer more
spontaneously which in turn forces the non-native student to think and
answer more rapidly in the target language.

The aforementioned activities and assignments are just a few of
the many that can be created for the teaching of business terminology,
correspondence and practices. If the idea that the foreign language
business course is primarily a composition and conversation course is
kept in mind, then the instructor can learn to adapt and vary many
existing exercises and activities to a business setting. As a result,
the business class will be more effective and enjoyable for the students
and the instructor's job will be greatly simplified.

Emily Spinelli

University of Michigan-Dearborn

NOTES

[1] W. A. Bousfield, "The Occurrence of Clustering in the Recall of Randomly Arranged Associates," Journal of General Psychology, 49 (1953) 229-40.

[2] For a more detailed discussion of categorical clustering see Howard H. Keller, New Perspectives on Teaching Vocabulary, Language in Education: Theory and Practice No 8, Arlington, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1978 and Raymond Moody, "Scheduling Drills and Teaching Vocabulary," Hispania, 65 (December, 1982), 609-14.

[3] "The Think Tank" is based on "Pressure Cooker"by Robert DiDonato as explained in his workshop "Developing the Speaking Skill: Pre-Communicative Activities for the Language Class" presented at the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, St. Louis: March 24, 1983.

[4] "Report to the Board of Directors" is based on an idea presented by Robert DiDonato at the Central States Workshop mentioned in Note 3.

[5] "Business Survey" is a variation on the activity "Lists" which was developed by Barbara Snyder and explained in her workshop "Communicative Skill-Building Activities in the Language Classroom" presented at the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, St Louis: March 25, 1983.

[6] Alice Omaggio developed the game "Jigsaw Puzzle"; it is described in her article "Using Games and Interaction Activities for the Development of Functional Proficiency in a Second Language," Canadian Modern Language

Review, 38 (March, 1982), 520-521.

[7]The "Multi-National Corporation" is a variation of the game "Mais vous êtes ma femme!" developed by Alice Omaggio and explained in "Using Games and Interaction Activities," Canadian Modern Language Review, 542-544.

[8]James W. Brown, Opciones: Spanish Correspondence, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York: ACTFL Materials Center.

[9]Letter-writing manuals for Spanish include J. Bray and M. Gómez-Sánchez, Spanish in the Office/Español para oficinas, London: Longman Group Ltd., 1980; Mary H. Jackson, Guide to Correspondence in Spanish, Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Co. Passport Books, 1982; Barbara Steel de Meza, Business Letter Handbook: Spanish/English, New York: Regents Publishing Co., Inc., 1973.

[10]The following books and pamphlets contain excellent resource materials on résumé writing and job applications. Bolles, Richard N., Tea Leaves: A New Look at Résumés, Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press; Bolles, Richard N., What Color is Your Parachute?, Berkeley, Calf.: Ten Speed Press, 1983; John C. Crystal and Richard N. Bolles, Where Do I Go From Here With My Life?, Berkeley, Calf.: Ten Speed Press, 1974; Tom Jackson, The Perfect Resume, Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/ Doubleday, 1981; Richard C. Lathrop, Who's Hiring Who, Berkeley, Calf.: Ten Speed Press, 1977.

[11]Spanish business practices can be found in Sebastian Balfour, Business Case Studies: Spanish, London: Longman Group Ltd., 1982 and M. G. Thomas, Export Marketing: Spanish, London: Longman Group Ltd., 1978.