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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the development of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) curricula that are consistent across course levels. The article argues that to maintain consistency, teachers must cooperate to form an ongoing, systematic development of subskill-based course guidelines in the skill areas of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and grammar. The discussion outlines a process for identifying relevant learning subskills and ways in which they can be developed and addressed in a pedagogically sound manner. An account of curricular reform at one intensive ESL center follows, detailing the process used by teachers to cooperatively establish course guidelines. Skill development in the preliminary drafts of listening and speaking guidelines is examined, and methods for coordination with other teachers are noted. Recommendations are made for other language institutions wishing to take this approach. Drafts of speaking and listening guidelines are appended. (Author/MSE)

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Robert W. Long III

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Using Skill-based Course Guidelines to Attain Curricular Coherence and Consistency

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Abstract

As both EFL/ESL language institutions and universities throughout the world expand language programs, the ability to maintain courses which address student needs and learning skills, from level to level, in a consistent manner can become a problem. It is proposed that in order to attain consistency in skills between course levels, teachers must cooperate to form an ongoing, systematic development of subskill-based course guidelines in the language skill areas of speaking, listening, reading, writing and grammar. The process of identifying relevant learning subskills and how they can be developed and addressed in a pedagogically sound manner is presented. An account of curricular reform at one intensive ESL language center follows, detailing the process of teachers cooperatively establishing course guidelines. Skill development is specifically analyzed in the preliminary drafts of listening and speaking guidelines, along with a brief look at how coordination with other teachers can be carried out effectively. Recommendations are made for other language institutions.

Using Course Guidelines to Attain Curricular Coherence and Consistency

Introduction

There is now some attention being paid to the issue of curricular reform at language institutions (Carlin, 1991; Henrichsen, 1994; Kreidler, 1988; Pennington, 1991). One of the most difficult issues for many institutions to address is to provide a curriculum that adequately identifies and sequentially develops relevant learning skills. Too often crucial learning skills are either not taught, or having been initiated, are not developed in more advanced classes. The problem can often be traced to a simple lack of coordination or communication, with teachers simply unaware of the subskills being taught in classes that proceed and follow their own. This lack of curricular consistency, however, has two immediate consequences: first, teachers are forced to rely on their own intuition in regard to what kind of material should be taught (this can sometime result in instruction that is often random or textbook driven); and second, teachers must spend large amounts of time identifying goals, locating sources, and designing materials on their own. In addition, there might be possible dissatisfaction from students who may discern that their courses are simply too varied in the orientation, scope,

methodology, and skill-development. Despite these obvious problems, most language instructors are resistant to overall curricular change, being wary of anything that might affect their academic freedom.

In examining the issue of curricular change, there are four important issues. First, teachers need to be aware that any curricular reform will not ultimately impose restrictive objectives; changes should offer possibilities, goals, and guidance allowing teachers a means of selection, interpretation, and the freedom to choose their own approaches and methodology. Having initial meetings to clarify the scope and purpose of any reform will thus minimize any misunderstandings in this regard. Second, reform must tap into the practical experiences, ideas, and values of all the teachers involved so that the changes will be understood, respected and implemented. Clarke (1994) notes that numerous scholars have supported the importance of re-conceptualizing curriculum development which emphasizes the teachers experience, and, thus, takes the position that teachers constitute the "fulcrum of any substantial curricular reform" (p. 10). Part of the problem of implementing real change is related to the lack of real involvement of teachers who are central to the classroom. Third, teachers should clarify their beliefs and assumptions about language learning, stating what information and subskills students should have acquired before taking their class as well as identifying what they feel are the student needs. Fourth, the importance of teachers sharing ideas, values, and experiences can not be overemphasized. In short, these are just a handful of the issues that are relevant to the change process. The process of implementing curricular change that specifically addresses the issue of subskill development in the various skill areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking and grammar is a long and difficult one.

The Process of Forming Preliminary Course Guidelines Established at the Center of Intensive English Studies at Florida State University

Background

The Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES) at Florida State University in Tallahassee, a small intensive ESL institute with around 35 to 50 students, began formulating a skill-based curriculum in 1993. There are five classes per day with classes ranging from 10 to 15 students. The sessions last seven weeks. The curriculum is divided into separate language skills: speaking, writing, listening, reading, and grammar with various levels --elementary, high-elementary, advanced elementary, low-intermediate, intermediate, high-intermediate, and advanced--being offered depending on the proficiency of the students. Students are promoted depending on teacher recommendations, skill test scores and TOEFL score. The program is well-established having been in existence since the 1980's and is reputable.

Situational Analysis

CIES began its situational analysis early in 1993 with several formal and informal meetings to clarify the need for changes and the purpose of the reform. The need for collaboration in these preliminary discussions with other teachers was crucial. In examining the program, it was decided that CIES could improve in several areas: (a) being able to identify worthwhile language and academic learning skills for each level and to develop these subskills in a consistent manner; (b) to have teachers coordinate more effectively to create more whole-language activities; (c) to create an ongoing resource file which teachers can access and update, creating a file of useful data based on specific learning subskills; and (d) in general, develop an enhanced sense of teamwork.

The reform proceeded to address the overall issue of subskill development. CIES, for example, provided a unique opportunity insofar as there was great diversity in teachers' backgrounds, ages, philosophical outlooks, professional experiences, cultures: this fact provided a rich pool of knowledge and experience from which to draw, and while these differences did increase debate, they also intensified the manner in which the skills were reviewed. Discussions that are specific rather than general (beginning with the goals and activities that teachers are currently doing in their classes) tend to be more productive since teachers do not get bogged down in theoretical and ideological digressions. A 'give and take' atmosphere helps teachers to feel free to posit ideas and ask questions, and, as Henrichsen (1994) observed from conducting an institutional self-study, reacting defensively to a negative comment tends to cut off further discussion and potentially valuable suggestions.

A critical look at the institutional, political, cultural, and interpersonal constraints and expectations was the second step. Teachers need to recognize their limitations before planning: class size radically changes the skills and activities that can be addressed in speaking and writing classes, and cultural factors may be important in choosing topics or in how activities are conducted. Administrators should clarify institutional goals, philosophy and expectations. It is important at this time to closely examine the needs and expectations of the students. This, of course, will vary from level to level, but it is well worth the time to conduct formal or informal student interviews or distribute student questionnaires.

A final step in the situational analysis was to determine short-term and long-term goals. While change is a process, the need for results can not be indefinitely postponed or studied. Teachers must clarify several aspects:

- a) determine the purpose of an end-product
- b) set time-targets
- c) establish funding or other forms of support
- d) delegate responsibilities
- e) define the scope of the changes

Once these aspects are understood, teachers can then outline worthwhile long-term

goals. Our end product was to include the following features: (a) course description and overview, (b) a listing of major and supplementary skills, (c) a listing of relevant activities that develop the subskills, (d) a means of coordination with teachers in other language areas, (e) a listing of pertinent resource material, and (f) an ongoing file of teacher input. Initial reports were due in six months. Funding was provided. The responsibilities were divided up between two people: I was assigned to write up drafts of the reading, and listening guidelines while my colleague, Sue Riley, developed the speaking and writing guidelines. The grammar skills were divided between us. The end product was then to provide guidance to teachers as well as another possible means of evaluation of student progress. The following section will examine the process of identifying relevant subskills in the skill areas of speaking and listening.

The Process of Specifying Relevant Subskills

In general, we both began by identifying subskills relevant to each particular level. The subskill had to be relevant to language acquisition, and to the needs of the students. Our duties included interviewing and getting feedback from teachers, conducting textbook analyses, examining pertinent research, and talking with various experts. The general aim of the speaking course guidelines (see appendix A), is to establish an interactive classroom where students get lots of opportunities to talk, and that classrooms should be learner-centered. Richards (1990) describes two ways of approaching the teaching of speaking: the indirect approach which is task-based, aims to set up interactive tasks to encourage students to engage in conversation and the direct approach which, as it implies, assumes the aim is to teach the specific aspects of conversational management. The curriculum, which uses both techniques, stresses at the higher levels English for academic purposes (EAP). Functional language tasks are particularly emphasized at elementary levels: for example, a subskill relating to interactive functions would be 'asking for information concerning time, quantity, cost, and quality.' This one subskill, in turn, would be developed at the intermediate level by having students 'talk about advantages and disadvantages,' 'discussing alternatives,' and 'reaching consensus.' At the advanced level further development occurs by having students participate in debates and give formal presentations. There are eight principal elementary speaking skills:

Figure 1. Elementary Speaking Subskills

1. Greeting and leaving-taking.
2. Introducing self.
3. Asking for information time, location, price, quantity and responding to such requests.
4. Requesting information about help, food.
5. Giving instructions.
6. Giving simple directions and explanations.
7. Describing people, objects.
8. Asking for biographical information and reporting back.

These skills are all developed through the elementary levels by having students go from a few words and short phrases to describing narratives, giving longer and more complicated instructions, requesting more information. There are additional skills at the advanced elementary level that include asking questions to presenters, presentation skills (giving talks, using notes), requesting advice, explaining a problem, complaining, and the conversational skills of facilitation, expressing disagreement and agreement.

At the intermediate level these skills are further developed by having students provide more information in their conversations, clarify their opinions, express disagreement and complain more tactfully, ask more in-depth and probing questions of presenters, become more polished in their presentation skills, explain and simplify more complicated problems. In addition, there is a strong emphasis on community-based situations and related skills, along with students participating more in class discussions. There are ten core subskills:

Figure 2. Intermediate Speaking Subskills

1. Discussing future plans and intentions.
2. Asking for clarification.
3. Talking about advantages and disadvantages.
4. Considering and discussing alternatives.
5. Reaching consensus.
6. Conceding.
7. Leading discussions.
8. Soliciting and evaluation of alternative opinions.
9. Referring to other sources.
10. Giving oral summaries.

These subskills in turn are developed at higher levels by having students consider more alternatives, polish leadership skills in discussion formats, refer to more sources in presenting arguments, and give longer summaries. Subskills that come in the high intermediate level include making requests in academic contexts, and the conversational skills of reformulation and checking comprehension; at the advanced level there are six core subskills:

Figure 3. Advanced Speaking Subskills

1. Making adequate preparation and organization of material.
2. Making main points clear.
3. Using supporting arguments and details.
4. Handling questions.
5. Using video and more audio visual materials as supportive material.
6. Developing conversational skills of interrupting, giving and getting the floor, closing the conversation.

In the skill area of listening (see appendix B), one overall aim is to have students being able to comprehend and respond to ideational meaning. Relevant elementary subskills would include understanding main ideas; identifying key information as it relates to time, place, person; and following directions. The subskill of understanding main ideas, for example, is developed at the intermediate level, by having students understand corresponding detailed information. At the advanced level, this subskill can be developed by having students understand more complex ideational information. Related subskills include understanding implications, implied meanings, identifying contradictions in meanings and compensating for missing information. Another listening aim is to develop students ability to discern various linguistic aspects of English with relevant elementary subskills including discerning comparisons: focus on letters and sound; discerning comparisons: focus on words; understanding reductions like "gonna"; and identifying changes in meaning through changes in stress. In more advanced levels these subskills can be de-emphasized or deleted because of a focus on ideational content. In looking specifically at CIES's course guidelines for the listening classes, one can see at the elementary level that the primary goal is to acquaint the student with sound/letter association and to assist in basic vocabulary development. There are eleven core subskills:

Figure 4. Elementary Listening Subskills

1. Developing vocabulary through pictures and short passages.
2. Understanding main ideas.
3. Comprehending short conversational exchanges based on pictures.
4. Matching spoken language to the appropriate written form.
5. Discerning comparisons: focus on letter sound.
6. Discerning comparisons: focus on words.
7. Inferencing: identifying speakers.
8. Identifying key information as it relates to time, place, and person.
9. Understanding changes in ideas with changes in stress.
10. Understanding reduction.
11. Understanding main ideas.

At the advanced elementary level, additional subskills include comprehending information involving longer descriptions which incorporate geometrical shapes, and personal data; discerning comparisons in ideas and actions; inferring links and connections between events; and general paraphrasing. Listening subskills are developed with the addition of more vocabulary and longer tasks. At the intermediate level the emphasis is on comprehending main ideas and details with longer and more complex scripts. Note-taking skills begin as well as more complex ideational work. There are twenty core subskills:

Figure 5. Intermediate Listening Subskills

1. Note-taking using simplified lectures on process, classification.
2. Identifying contradictions in meaning.
3. Inferencing: Identifying what the other speaker has said.
4. Deducing causes and effects from events.
5. Understanding main ideas and details.
6. Comprehending conversational exchanges.
7. Identifying key information relating to time, place.
8. Comprehending longer descriptions.
9. Discerning longer descriptions.
10. Retaining ideational meaning for short periods.
11. Inferring links and connections between events.
12. Reconstructing situations, goals, participants, and procedures.
13. Paraphrasing material.
14. Aural analysis:
 - a) discriminating differences between two messages.
 - b) identifying missing information--logic.
 - c) identifying incorrectly stated information semantics.
 - d) identifying contradictions in meaning-- semantics.
15. Solving problems.
16. Contextualizing new words.
17. Understanding idiomatic language.
18. Predicting.
19. Recognizing digressions.
20. Listening to pros and cons.

Additional skills at the high intermediate level include identifying missing information and discerning meaning from two or three similar yet different messages.

Advanced listening skills include having students polish notetaking skills, and critical thinking skills. Skills are developed with longer, more complex and academic material. Core skills include:

Figure 6. Advanced Listening Subskills

1. Interpreting complex conversations.
2. Understanding idiomatic language.
3. Paraphrasing material.
4. Comprehending of main ideas and details.
5. Identifying missing information.
6. Contextualization of new words.

At CIES students in the advanced level listen to various academic lectures and speakers, T.V. documentaries, outside presentations, and cultural exchanges between various clubs, classes, and organizations on campus were promoted. This variety gave the students

the needed exposure to different registers, accents, ideas, values, and presentation styles.

After formulating our preliminary outlines, several meetings were held. The need to place relevant language and English for academic purposes (EAP) skills at the right level is critical, for subskills and activities that are too easy will increase boredom among students while skills that are too hard will increase frustration. After obtaining the necessary feedback, the subskills were then revised.

The next stage involved vertical articulation in which teachers, for example, in speaking would review our revised drafts and comment on the subskill development, particularly addressing the issue of consistency. These meetings were then followed by level-based meetings in which teachers on one level examined the practicality of implementing the proposed means of coordination. Teachers then for one session adapted their teaching to these agreed upon changes and after the session they gave feedback on which subskills were appropriate for the level and which subskills should be emphasized. At this point, many teachers were also able to provide insight as to possible new activities.

The coordination with listening and speaking courses takes place through five readily identifiable means. First, with the use of video, with listening teachers presenting certain selected topics, and speaking teachers focussing on the skills of deducing cause and effect, solving problems, reconstructing situations, goals, participants, procedures, and comprehending main ideas and details. Second, coordination can also focus on reinforcing vocabulary. Third, exercises based on the use of the telephone can be easily coordinated so as to develop functional communicative skills such as greetings and responding to questions, along with more advanced skills of clarification, comparing and contrasting, reaching a consensus, asking for explanations, and predicting information. Fourth, the lecture format presents a unique opportunity for aural analysis and having students develop their ability to ask more thoughtful questions. Fifth, coordinated debates provide students the opportunity to listen to pros and cons and to actively respond to them. Paraphrasing can also be developed.

After several sessions of implementation, teacher input, and consequent revisions, a working preliminary draft was made. Subsequent revisions now take place periodically to take account of changes in staff and students, and changing philosophies. Henrichsen (1994) notes that it is important to have tangible outcomes be produced periodically, having ideas put in reports so that teachers have opportunities to reflect, and then comment on what is being done. There must be adequate time. It has taken approximately one year to write the preliminary drafts of the listening, speaking, writing, reading, and grammar course guidelines at CIES. The process will vary greatly depending on the number of courses that are offered, the number of instructors, the ability to have in-depth faculty meetings, the institution's ability to provide funding or time off for teachers, and, of course, the motivation of everyone concerned.

In sum, the purpose and limitations of written skill-based objectives need to be

made clear. Specificity should not become a straitjacket limiting teachers. Neither can written objectives, as Broekhoff (1979) argues, "be expected to carry the burden of providing everything from the direction or the assessment of instruction" (p. 59). As Bosco (1980) observes: "We can not erect a fence around learning so that the only changes in the student occur within the domain of the teacher's objectives" (p. 108). In short, written objectives define only the playing field, but not the outcome of the game.

A common complaint heard against most skill-based objectives is that identifying relevant subskills and setting time targets in which they are to be acquired is too difficult. There is, indeed, no sound research from language acquisition on relevant learning subskills and when they should be taught. The only answer will come from teachers' meetings, analyses of textbooks, and the wisdom and logic gained from years of teaching. Whatever is decided will appear arbitrary, yet it is far more professional to determine issues of this nature than to leave them to guesswork. It is true that once learning objectives are specified, then appropriate content and techniques can be selected; however, care needs to be taken so that the course does not become so objectives-based that students concentrate solely on mastering the skills or on passing the tests.

Conclusion

Skill-based course guidelines seem to be an appropriate means of achieving coherence and consistency in language instruction, helping teachers to think about their activities the overall issue of subskill development. By identifying relevant skills, teachers can create a substantive dialogue that enables teachers to be consistent in their goals, as well as creating new avenues for coordination, especially in regard to task-based activities. Specificity should help develop creativity, forming the basis for an active interchange between teachers so that problems can be identified, needs recognized, and change implemented. Bosco (1980) adds that the "articulation of performance objectives can involve a valuable personal confrontation enabling the teacher to rethink and reformulate their instructional programs" (p. 107).

The end result provides teachers a means of understanding the material that students will have learned when coming into their classes, and will learn when leaving, as well as a means of coordinating whole language activities across language skill areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, providing a realistic basis for teachers to devise their own class syllabi--detailing targeted skills and activities, and providing a coherent means of evaluation.

Still another benefit can be seen in the information that is gathered from teacher commentaries on the classes that they have taught. These impressions can provide valuable information on student reactions, problems, successes, what resource material did and did not work, recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and which skills

to emphasize and which ones to possibly delete. These notes can be used at meetings as one means for discussion.

While other language institutions and universities will differ in their overall purposes, the need to identify and develop subskills is still relevant. Most schools will not have the close coordination and communication that CIES has or have a curriculum based on separate learning skills; thus, I recommend for larger institutions that teachers take the time to analyze the subskills that they are addressing, meet with other teachers, post syllabi, write informal course outlines and try to form a network in which to share information. Skill-based course guidelines do provide a basis for constructive interaction; however, they must be viewed not as an end unto itself, but as an ongoing means towards more realistic, focused, whole-language instruction.

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APPENDIX A

Elementary Speaking Guidelines

I. Overview

The focus of a speaking course at all elementary levels should be on cultural and community orientation with a transactional purpose at the early stages, moving on to interactional skills later. In the elementary classes, appropriate and common functions are used for a variety of everyday survival situations. Community trips should be incorporated. Teachers should begin with recognition and use of formulaic chunks, both phrases and actual conversational routines. Pronunciation, stress and intonation should be covered.

II. Subskills

- A. Greeting and leave-taking, formal and informal.
- B. Introducing self and others.
- C. Asking for information (time, location, price, quantity) and responding to such requests.
- D. Responding to requests for information (biographical, bank business, eating).
- E. Requesting information (food, help, etc.).
- F. Giving instruction (hair salon, etc.).
- G. Giving simple directions and explanations (doctor, etc.).
- H. Describing people, objects, places.
 1. Asking for biographical information and reporting back.

III. Activities

- A. Repeating acting out structured dialogues.
- B. Simple role plays (an extension of the above).
- C. Simple interviewing skills for biographical information.
- D. Picture description.
- E. Information gathering tasks based on visits to places: post offices, cafeteria, visitor's center. Students go in different language pairs and report back on success failure. If it is in class time, teachers must be sure to monitor.
- F. Games.

IV. Coordination

- A. With reading and listening especially in order to reinforce vocabulary through topic coordination.
- B. Listening to dialogues as a model for later tasks.

C. Writing up results of biographical interview.

V. Resources

Breaking the Ice
As I was Saying

High Elementary Speaking Guidelines

I. Overview

Since our lowest class is frequently high elementary and our beginning students are rarely true beginners, teachers will need to use much of the language tasks and cultural content of the elementary guidelines. At the high elementary level, language tasks are expanded to different situations and some specific conversational skills introduced. Also, teachers should begin giving and eliciting opinions on general topics. Extensive speaking on topics of importance to students should be encouraged. Emphasize the opportunity they all have to learn about other cultures from each other. Teachers may begin to audiotape some tasks: giving instructions, directions, giving personal feedback on pronunciation.

II. Subskills

- A. See elementary guidelines-check students' knowledge and recycle as necessary.
- B. Giving, accepting, declining invitations.
- C. Apologizing, accepting apologies.
- D. Describing past events-narrative.
- E. Giving instructions-sequence.
- F. Giving and eliciting opinion: introduce strategies for turntaking, holding the floor, giving the floor.
- G. Telephone skills-requests for information; taking and leaving messages.
- H. Appropriate office interaction (requests).
- I. Introduce notion of register-formal, informal.

III. Activities

- A. Structured dialogues at early stages.
- B. Role plays to stress context and register.
- C. Telephone tasks-back-to-back role play leading to real information gathering tasks (e.g. car rental).
- D. Information gap tasks (sometimes called jigsaw).
- E. Basic interview skills: question and answer (e.g. renting an apartment).
- F. Talk about likes and dislikes.
- G. Introduce discussion format-giving opinions. Discuss cultural content of

topics, here and in students own countries.

- H. Instruction-teach classmates to do something (e.g. Origami, dance, etc.).
- I. Country quiz-students write the questions (may be done at higher level).
- J. Go somewhere (e.g. Union courtyard) and interview FSU students.

IV. Coordination

- A. With reading and listening for topic areas to discuss.
- B. With listening for telephone tasks.
- C. With reading-using the Yellow Pages (teachers creates quiz).

Advanced Elementary Speaking Guidelines

I. Overview

Students at this level can be expected to have control of some basic functional language and this should be checked by the teacher. Where areas are lacking, refer back to Elementary High elementary subskills. At advanced elementary, the focus is split between expansion of conversational management skills and an introduction to more academic speaking through beginning individual class talks presentations for students to concentrate on clarity, accuracy, pronunciation. Continue information-gap tasks to refine questions and expand giving opinions to include explaining reasons.

II. Subskills

- A. Conversational skills: keep conversations going through introduction of new topics.
- B. Responding by showing interest.
- C. Conversational fillers and small talk.
- D. Supporting own and others' opinions.
- E. Expressing agreement and disagreement-different registers.
- F. Presentation skills: giving a talk using notes.
- G. Asking questions of presenters.
- H. Requesting advice.
- I. Giving advice and suggestions.
- J. Explaining a problem (in dorm, apartment, school, etc.).
- K. Complaining.

III. Activities

- A. Students create own dialogues in pairs, act out dialogues role plays.
- B. Values clarification for agreeing disagreeing (can be done at all levels).
- C. Students work at extending conversations by asking questions.
- D. Individual class presentations.

- E. Formulate questions in response to individual talks.
- F. Campus guided tour-students are the guides. One student prepares notes on each location (e.g. Leech Center, Health center, Business school, etc.) and gives a talk on it. (This can be done at other levels, particularly if most of the class are new).
- G. Students create radio programs with several components: phone in advice, play-reading; interview role play; commercials; short story reading. This can be audio-taped.

IV. Coordination

- A. With composition, to write up one or more of their presentations.

Resources

- A. *Keep talking* for Values clarification activities
- B. *Breaking the Ice* units 1 and 2 for conversational routines-small talk, appropriacy of topics
- C. (Coordinate with listening-teachers need to record dialogues from script in book)
- D. *5-minute Activities*
- E. *Discussions that work*
- F. *Discovery game-World Geography and History*
- G. *The Book of Questions*

Low Intermediate Speaking

I. Overview

At the intermediate levels, there should be a clear move away from community based tasks and situations towards language tasks with an academic purpose and use. At the same time, students' conversational skills should be improved to enable them to have more outside contact with the culture. Students should begin to push themselves, to read widely and discuss issues. All classes can work on coordination to develop themes. Focus on strategies to manage conversation: negotiation of meaning. All through the intermediate level introduce and discuss appropriate conversational routines, idioms, small talk. Don't forget pronunciation-individual work with students' weak areas. Continue individual talks.

II. Subskills

- A. Presentation skills: continue and expand giving short talks using notes. Academic personal themes.
- B. Asking questions of presenters.
- C. Asking for question clarification, fielding questions.

- D. Explain academic and/or occupational field to colleagues, to interviewer.
- E. Give biographical detail related to above.
- F. Discuss future plans and intentions.
- G. Ask for explanation.
- H. Ask for advice-academic, personal.
- I. Talk about advantages and disadvantages; consider and discuss alternatives, compare and contrast choices, reach consensus, concede.
- J. Conversational skills: requesting clarification and repetition; responding to clarification requests, rewording, defining, comprehension checking.

III. Activities

- A. Job interview role play.
- B. Academic interview role play.
- C. Problem-solving tasks-group discussion and consensus.
- D. Ranking, values clarification activities (see activities books).
- E. Individual mini-presentations.
- F. Discuss college choices, explain selection.
- G. Intensive pronunciation (intonation, stress work (e.g. using *Clear Speech*)).

IV. Coordination

- A. With all skills to develop themes for reading, video, and discussions, and writing.

V. Resources

- A. *React-Interact* for problem-solving discussion
- B. *Discussions that Work* (selectively-some are too complex for this level)
- C. *Breaking the Ice* (check what has been done at the advanced Elementary level)

Intermediate Speaking Guidelines

I. Overview

The speaking class at this level should build on the low intermediate work on problems and alternative solutions but can have a more academic focus in students' own areas of interest or general areas. Discussions should become more critical in which students analyze problems and solutions, pros and cons, and cause and effect; students begin persuasive arguments and have consideration of the opposite point of view. Students should be given the opportunity to discuss controversial issues. Begin extend individual evaluation of pronunciation etc., possibly through video-taping individual and group performance and giving feedback. Conversational skills: recycle strategies of turntaking, holding and taking the floor, opening and closing conversations. Also, continue introduction and discussion of idioms and routines, etc. and talk about cultural

differences.

II. Subskills

- A. Leading a discussion.
- B. Soliciting and evaluation alternative opinions and opposing arguments.
- C. Asking questions of speakers and responding to questions from the floor.
- D. Referring to other sources in class presentations.
- E. Giving oral summaries.
- F. Conversational skills as above and continued from Low Intermediate.
- G. Evaluate own speaking strengths and weaknesses.

III. Activities

- A. Group discussions.
- B. Formal presentations.
- C. Formal or modified debate.
- D. Students give short exposes/summaries of articles in field (They don't always have to be academic).
- E. Students present a problem/issue in their field, propose solutions and compare.
- F. Short impromptu talk, fluency workshop.
- G. Group presentation of writing project.
- H. Understand and discuss presented in videos.
- I. Tape dialogue journals.

IV. Coordination

- A. *Discussions that Work* for problem solving tasks (e.g. couples p. 84; choosing Candidates p. 73).
- B. Try to connect these with themes.

High Intermediate Speaking Guidelines

I. Overview

Focus is on leading and participating in discussions, and speaking in front of the class and polishing of the skills begun in Intermediate. Students are expected to dig more deeply into their own subject area. Conversational skills focus on academic interactions. Recycle strategies for negotiating meaning. Recycle language of social interaction with a particular emphasis on discussing cross-cultural comparisons. Individual evaluation of pronunciation etc. through feedback, recordings of presentations.

II. Subskills

- A. Making requests in academic contexts (e.g. extension of deadline).

- B. Responding when requests are granted denied.
- C. Compromising.
- D. Understanding a conversation: asking for clarification, reformulating, checking comprehension.
- E. Presentation skills (see intermediate).
- F. Summarizing issues in the news and expressing opinion.
- G. Using appropriate language in social interactions: tact.
- H. Leading discussions.

III. Activities

- A. Individual formal and informal presentations.
- B. Debate.
- C. Panel discussion.
- D. Role plays of academic situations-interviews.
- E. Attend lecture in own field and report back-summarize and discuss difficulties of comprehension.
- F. Dialogues and role plays in social (non-academic) contexts.
- G. Summarize new articles broadcasts; comment on the news.

IV. Coordination

- A. With listening to set up lecture attendance.
- B. With reading to select articles to summarize.

V. Resources

- A. *Say it Naturally* for social interaction
- B. *Discovery Game-Idioms*
- C. *The book of questions*
- D. *Clear Speech*

Advanced Speaking Guidelines

I. Overview

The speaking class at advanced levels is part of a combined composition speaking hour, but clearly, speaking is also a component of other skill classes such as listening. Focus at advanced levels: oral presentation skills including preparation and use of media: classroom interaction skills. Remedial pronunciation work as necessary.

II. Subskills

- A. For Oral Presentation.
 - 1. Adequate preparation and organization of material.

2. Topic choice to interest audience.
 3. Making main point and position clear.
 4. Summarizing reading and listening materials.
 5. Using supporting arguments and details.
 6. Clarity of speaking and voice projection.
 7. Handling questions, including avoidance.
 8. Use of OHP, slides, video as appropriate.
- B. For Classroom and General Conversation.
1. Agreeing/disagreeing.
 2. Interrupting.
 3. Getting and giving the floor.
 4. Ending a conversation.
 5. Changing a topic.
 6. Asking for clarification, reformulating.

III. Activities

- A. Formal presentation of short topics and research paper.
- B. Debate.
- C. Panel discussion.
- D. Informal impromptu talk (e.g. one student each day give exposure on a news item).
- E. Discussion (with peers and teacher) about writing.
- F. Discuss appropriate language for academic tasks, e.g. requesting extension.
- G. Tape Journals.

IV. Coordination

- A. With writing of course but also with all levels to pick up particular weaknesses.

APPENDIX B

Elementary Listening Guidelines

I. Overview

At this level our primary aim is to acquaint the student with the sound letter association and to assist in basic vocabulary development and main idea comprehension. It is very important, however, to remember to still challenge the students on the cognitive level in some fashion so that the course does not become too drill oriented or dull. The students should have, in some fashion, exposure to realistic communicative language. Simplifying this language and getting the students to believe that they do not have to comprehend a hundred percent of the message will be the two most difficult tasks.

Students at this level can easily be overwhelmed so reviewing old information and vocabulary should be done routinely. The course itself can focus on survival English, dictation, songs along with the printed lyrics, short interchanges that reflect everyday as well as cognitively stimulating situations. Relying on pictures to help convey the message and the vocabulary will prove to be an advantage if not a necessary technique. Finally the teacher needs to provide the students a good idea of how the skills learned in this course will relate to the ones above and what is to be expected.

II. Subskills

A. Core

1. Developing vocabulary through pictures and short passages.
2. Understanding main ideas.
3. Comprehending short interchanges based on photographs, sequences of photographs, or on the picture dictionary.
4. Matching spoken language to the appropriate written form.
5. Discerning comparisons: focus on letters: sound letter.
6. Discerning comparisons: focus on words.

III. Activities

- A. Reading out the words in the picture dictionary and having students pick out the items in the picture without referring to the words written below.
- B. Drills: based on sound/letter association or on words.
- C. Using maps to have students identify the words which are used on the map and to follow the speaker's direction.
- D. Having simulated conversations: students select the main idea.
- E. Using the book, *Improving Aural Proficiency*, have students do drills as they relate to numbers.
- F. Comparison drills based on words.

IV. Coordination

- A. The reading teacher can provide the teacher with some of the reading material that will be given to the student the next day. This material can then be read outloud and the students can then respond to it on a main idea basis.
- B. In writing class students can write down the directions that they would take on a map of Tallahassee between several different points. These can then be read out in listening class with the students tracing the way on copies of a Tallahassee map.

V. Resources

- A. Teacher made material -check file

- B. *Picture Dictionary*
- C. *IAP* text
- D. Maps

High Elementary Listening Guidelines

I. Overview

At this level the students should have had some exposure to basic vocabulary so that the pace of the class can be increased. Also, they will have had some idea about sound/letter association so that these drills can focus on more complex sound/letter or diphthong combinations.

This course will now focus more in on survival listening situations as they relate to traveling, getting an apartment, going to a restaurant, doing something recreationally, getting around the university, or doing everyday tasks. Inference is introduced insofar as identifying speakers. Students should be exposed to comprehending markers as they relate to time and place. There should be some exposure to understanding American culture. Critical thinking skills should be introduced in some fashion. Vocabulary development remains paramount so reviewing and recycling the material remains key. Conversational scripts become longer and more challenging. If the class is advanced check the guidelines for advanced elementary.

In the next course understanding of more complex descriptions of people, places, and situations is highlighted. Also, ideas will be compared (instead of words and sounds) and inference exercises become more complex.

II. Subskills

A. Core

1. Inferencing: identifying speakers.
2. Identifying key information as it relates to time, place, and person.
3. Following directions.
4. Understanding changes in ideas with changes in intonation & stress.
5. Understanding reductions, e.g. gonna.
6. Developing vocabulary through pictures.
7. Understanding main ideas.
8. Comprehending of conversational exchanges.
9. Discerning sound/letter comparisons.

B. Supplementary subskills

1. Learning to identify markers that relate to time and place.
2. Matching spoken speech to the written form.
3. Discerning comparisons-words.
4. Comprehending of numbers as heard in addresses, telephone numbers.

III. Activities

- A. Using the Picture Dictionary the student identifies items which are heard with referring to the legend.
- B. Listen to several speakers---identifying who they are.
- C. Tracing in yellow on a map the directions that are called out.
- D. Sound/letter association-check file.
- E. Dictation exercises.
- F. Comprehending of short episodes-check teacher-made video done on Teacher's favorite places and jobs.
- G. Watching TV commercials and interpret the main idea, values, and identify possible advantages and disadvantages-Teacher-made video.
- H. Kari's exercise for shapes, prepositions, and objects-check file.

IV. Coordination

- A. Again the reading and listening teachers can coordinate on material so that students are exposed to the reading material before they read it.
- B. Students can write down conversational exchanges in listening class and act them out in speaking class.
- C. Students can watch the commercials in listening class and record what they saw and heard as well as what they have learned in composition class.

V. Resources

- A. File
- B. Maps
- C. Teacher-made videos and material
- D. *Picture Dictionary*, if needed
- E. *Side by Side Videos*

Advanced Elementary Listening Guidelines

I. Overview

Students have previously worked with basic vocabulary development and sound letter association. While the previous course concerned survival English skills, basic interchanges, discerning the differences in words, and matching aural forms to their appropriate written form, this course now focuses in on understanding longer descriptions involving personal, situational, discerning differences in ideas and actions, and more complex inference exercises.

The course can still rely on main idea comprehension scripts in which students must identify times, dates, place, people, events, map work, and understanding American culture. These skills and activities can simply be expanded and made more

challenging. It is still important to remember to review and recycle the information in creative ways. Taskbased assignments, and more ideational work such as identifying contradictions in meaning, and questioning the support (examples, facts, reasons) that support a supposition.

II. Subskills

A. Core

1. Comprehending information involving longer descriptions which incorporate prepositions, geometrical shapes, and personal data.
2. Discerning comparisons: ideas and actions.
3. Inferencing-identifying past actions.
4. Retaining ideational meaning for short periods.
5. Inferring links and connections between events.
6. Reconstructing situations, goals, participants, procedures.
7. Understanding main ideas, and details.
8. Comprehension of conversational exchanges.
9. Inferencing.
10. General paraphrasing.

B. Supplementary Skills

1. Identifying key information as it relates to time, place, person.
2. Following directions.
3. Identifying changes in meaning through changes in intonational stress.
4. Understanding reductions, e.g. gonna.

C. Suggested Skills to be dropped

1. Sound-letter association.
2. Comprehension of numbers.
3. Discerning comparisons: words.
4. Matching spoken speech to the written form.

III. Activities

- A. Dictation.
- B. Map work.
- C. Listen to TV commercials: identify values, advantages and disadvantages.
- D. Inference exercises: teacher-made.
- E. Videos: teachers-made.
- F. Tours of Leach Center: set up beforehand.

IV. Coordination

- A. Reading and listening teachers can coordinate on prior presentations (recycling) of material.

- B. The speaking teacher can organize debates. Students must write down their reasons in composition class, and then in listening class the students can listen to two students debate-eventually getting to all pairs and deciding on who has won the debates and why.
- C. Students can write down the short stories which can then be read out loud in listening class.

V. Resources

- A. Video library and public library for possible videos
- B. Teacher-made material
- C. Intonational stress exercises: teacher-made
- D. *Improving Aural Proficiency*

Low Intermediate Listening Guidelines

I. Overview

The students will have had exposure in the previous course to dictation, discerning comparisons of ideas, vocabulary development with a reliance on pictures, and with some critical thinking skills as they relate to advantages and disadvantages of products seen on TV commercials.

At this level, however, the emphasis is now on main ideas and details on longer scripts with more characters, events, and complex situations. Note-taking skills, and ideational work such as identifying contradictions in meaning, and examining the examples, facts, and reasons that support a thesis statements are included. Task-based assignments are continued, yet care must be taken if they take place on campus or outside of CIES. It is also important that students get some kind of exposure to language in their own field or interests.

The next course, Intermediate, focuses in on paraphrasing, note-taking, contextualizing skills, and more critical thinking skills.

II. Subskills

A. Core

1. Note-taking skills with using simplified lectures on process, classification, definition, comparison-contrast cause and effect.
2. Identifying contradictions in meaning.
3. Inferencing: identifying what the other speaker has said.
4. Deducing causes and effects from events.
5. Understanding main ideas and details.
6. Comprehending conversational exchanges.
7. Identifying key information as it relates to time, place, person.

8. Comprehending longer descriptions.
 9. Discerning differences between ideas.
 10. Retaining ideational meaning for short periods.
 11. Inferring links and connections between events.
 12. Reconstructing situations, goals, participants and procedures.
- B. *Supplementary Skills*
1. Understanding reductions.
 2. Identifying changes in meaning through changes in intonation and stress.
 3. Processing speech containing pauses, errors, and correction.
- C. *Suggested Skills to be dropped*
1. Vocabulary development through pictures.
 2. Learning to identify markers that refer to time, place and understand short descriptions.
 3. Inferencing—identify speaker, past actions, purpose.
 4. Following directions.

III. Activities

- A. *Kochen* Lecture Series for note-taking and supplements.
- B. Inference exercises.
- C. Comparison of ideas—check file.
- D. Contradictions of meaning exercises: teacher made.
- E. Guest Lectures: main idea and critical thinking skills.
- F. Task-based assignments: talk to three Americans.
 1. Listen to informal social interactions.
 2. Catalogue ideas, values, and vocabulary.
 3. Write down your own opinions.

IV. Coordination

- A. The speaking teacher can have discussions on various topics: the listening teacher can follow these up with videos.
- B. The composition teacher can have the students write speeches filled with faulty logic, bad reasoning and examples which can then be heard in listening class. Students identify the poor support and logic.
- C. The reading teacher can provide the listening teacher with a list of topics that they have covered. These can be reformulated through the use of videos or papers essays that people have written -check library and newspaper columns which can then be read aloud with students taking notes.
- D. Formulate questions in response to a talk or discussion.

V. Resources

- A. Newspaper columns and essays
- B. Public library videos: biographies
- C. Kochen series
- D. Teacher made material
- E. Guest Lecturers
- F. Outside clubs (choose carefully)
- G. *Missing Person*
- H. CIES video library
- I. The movie "Winter People"

Intermediate Listening Guidelines**I. Overview**

The students in the previous course should have had some exposure to note-taking and critical thinking skills. At some time they should have had some task-based assignment that had them interact with the campus or the community and helped them learn new vocabulary and ideas.

At this level these skills and activities will be continued, however, the note-taking will be more academic and will not be as simplified as before. The critical thinking skills will be more involved. Contextualization drills can be done in earnest now that the student has a substantial enough vocabulary and background to help him, her to discern meaning of the new words or idioms. In addition, the conversations or scripts can be more idiomatic and complex, students can then paraphrase or answer some TOEFL-like multiple-choice questions. Teachers can also bring in material that highlights American culture such as comedy and advice columns.

The next course, High Intermediate, focuses in on problem solving abilities and more on university lectures while further developing critical thinking and contextualization skills.

II. Subskills**A. Core**

1. Paraphrasing material.
2. aural analysis:
 - a) discriminating differences between two sentences messages.
 - b) identifying missing information - logic.
 - c) identifying incorrectly stated information - semantics.
 - d) identifying contradictions in meaning - introduction.
3. Solving mysteries or problems - introduction.
4. Contextualizing new words.

5. Understanding idiomatic language.
6. Inferencing on words—aural clozes.
7. Predicting.
8. Recognizing digressions.
9. Listening for pros and cons.
10. Identifying purpose and scope of lecture.
11. Note-taking.
12. Understanding main ideas and details.
13. Comprehending of conversational exchanges.
14. Understanding comparison: idea.
15. Inferencing exercises: one-sided exercises.
16. Retaining ideational meaning for short and long periods.
17. Inferring links and connections between events.
18. Reconstructing situations, goals, participants, procedures.
19. Task-based assignments—varied.
20. Formulating questions in response to a talk.

III. Activities

- A. The teacher can read aloud Ann Landers and other advice columns and have students write down possible solutions.
- B. Conversational comprehension: *This is a Recording*, do conversations at the end of each chapter along with tests; transcriptions are at the back of the book.
- C. Students can contextualize new vocabulary. Read out an essay and have them guess the meaning of the more difficult words.
- D. Listen to talk shows.
- E. Simplified lectures from text. Put on board how you as American would take notes.
- F. Aural Analysis exercises.
- G. Taking down memos.
- H. Paraphrasing information.
- I. Idioms.

IV. Coordination

- A. Listening teacher and speaking teacher can coordinate on topics with the listening teacher showing videos on topics which are to be discussed in speaking class.

V. Resources

- A. Teacher made materials
- B. Contextualization exercises

- C. Videos: "ABC News Watch"
- D. "Peoples Court"

High Intermediate Listening Guidelines

I. Overview

The students have in the previous course more in-depth note-taking skills, and have been exposed to more challenging task-based assignments. They are now ready for university-like work.

It is now time to provide more in-depth videos, longer lectures, and more challenging social and academic topics. Students should polish note-taking skills, interpretative and problem solving abilities while continuing to develop critical thinking skills. In this course students really begin analyzing what they hear, listening for meaning "in between the lines."

In the next course, Advanced Listening, students will have more exposure to university topics and expectations.

II. Subskills

A. Core

1. Paraphrasing material.
2. Identifying missing information.
3. Contextualizing new words.
4. Understanding idiomatic language.
5. Discerning meaning from two or three similar yet different messages.
6. Identifying contradictions in meaning.
7. Comprehending main ideas.
8. Task-based assignments: various skills.
9. Solving problems.
10. Note-taking skills.

B. Supplementary skills

1. Understanding different accents and registers.
2. Solving mysteries or problems.
3. Detecting the attitude of the speaker toward the subject matter.
4. Recognizing digressions.
5. Recognizing and judging the value of instructional devices such as warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, and instructions.

C. Suggested skills to be dropped

1. Listen to relevant material.
2. Inference exercises: one-sided conversations.

III. Activities

- A. The teacher can use advice columns and essays to have students identify solutions.
- B. Students can listen to talk shows.
- C. *Videoms.*
- D. University like lectures.

IV. Coordination

- A. By listening to songs, students can write down in composition class the lyrics or meaning.
- B. Students can listen to the news and find specific related material in the newspaper for reading class.

V. Resources

- A. Poetry
- B. Contextualization exercises
- C. Videos
- D. University like lectures

Advanced Listening Guidelines

I. Overview

At this level students have been polishing note-taking skills, and critical thinking skills. They have been interacting in some capacity with the campus and community and are now ready to do university level work. Videotapes of various topics ranging from sociology, culture, government, business, study-skills, trade, trade, history, science, mental health, geography can be reviewed. Access the FSU media center for tapes as well as the ones we have here at CIES. It is still important to make sure videos are not too culturally specific, difficult, or even boring for class use.

II. Subskills

- A. Core
 - 1. Interpreting of complex conversations.
 - 2. Understanding idiomatic language.
 - 3. Identifying missing information.
 - 4. Paraphrasing material.
 - 5. Discerning meaning from two or three similar yet different messages or essays.
 - 6. Comprehending main ideas and details.
 - 7. Contextualizing new words.

B. Supplementary Skills

1. Recognizing digressions.
2. Recognizing and judging the value of instructional devices such as warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, and instructions.

III. Activities

- A. Main idea comprehension.
- B. Note-taking.
- C. Interpretation of poetry.
- D. Contextualization of material.
- E. Discerning meaning from different sources.
- F. Task-based assignments.

IV. Coordination

- A. Reading and listening teachers can recycle material and review similar topics of interest.
- B. Students can listen to three TV comedies and then in composition class find similarities.

V. Resources

- A. Contextualization exercises
- B. Videos: FSU and Public library