

1. Education and communication in the contemporary society

The contemporary society is characterized by a growth of the conflicts of axiological nature. In this case we aren't talking about a productive conflict, meant to incite creating and recreating values, but about an inconsideration of the superior values.

It's true that lately, we have observed crashes of school in responding the needs of life.

The adequacy of the educational approach to the requirement and possibilities of the educated person or of the one who is being educated may determine the school's exit of this situation. A better selection and training of the teachers and the accentuation of the formative-educative character of education must be the priorities of all who are involved in the act of education (family, school, society).

What can school do concerning the moral crisis with which one confronts as an entity as well as the society? School must rethink its axiological nature. Passing the values from the society to one person and the other way around, must be a live, dynamic process which must form the educated ones as autonomous and responsible personalities, a thing which is not possible without an efficient communication.

The educational communication represents not only the texture but also the factor of one's formation in all aspects. The educational communication is the relationship and the content at the same time, through the position of one human in report with his kind and his self and through utilization of some values meant to generate learning, education and development.

In its evolution, from an institution accessible only to some privileged social categories into one meant for the enlightenment of the masses, school has gone through very important changes not only from the point of view of the specific functions but from that of the perceptions of the person and of the society itself about these functions.

This way, the picture of a place where you long to be, a place where young people wanted to discover the meanings of life and world, a place where dreams were born and becoming reality, turned today into a place guilty of the helplessness of people, where it's not so profitable to spend your time as a teacher as well as a student.

The confusion concerning the question "what do we need school for?" exists in the mind of states men as well as in the mind of ordinary people. This question has its roots bounded to at least 3 aspects. The first is the moral state (or the state of education) of the society. The second is the social speech about the mission of education (promoted or more exactly little promoted by the mass-media). And the third one is the communication of the school about its mission (unfortunately, manifested only at a theoretical level)

School must prove that it trains for life, starting from its needs. This thing "is more than bringing school closer to life, to reality, but bringing life with its problems to school" (Soitu, 1997).

Starting from idea accepted by the theoreticians of education that education is an essential element of the social progress; we can identify two categories of mechanisms which are promoted by education to fulfill its functions:

1. reactive mechanisms(as a unity of the answers given to the cultural economical and political needs
2. practical mechanisms (as a unity of the personal decisions of implication in solving some problematic social aspects)

We think that education, as a social phenomenon has lost its credibility, because of all the problems which occurred in the good functioning of school as a principal educational instance. A strategy of recuperating the image of education must ensure a balance between the two types of mechanisms, a balance which affects education.

The value of education lays in its love for people and in its capacity to transform this love in a human success.

In our approach we start from the idea that the improvement of the education realized in school is possible, through the awareness of teachers, students and society of the efficiency of communication in this process.

In the process of communication and forming education there is a relationship of interdependence, and so an authentic communication about the educational values is made and the realized education can't have the efficiency in the absence of a real educational communication.

I. Education in forming one's personality

I.1. Education, as a process of communicating values.

Culture, education and communication-connexions

The most relevant significance of the concept of education is the one meaning initiating in culture and the one of gaining cultural instruments, values (suggested by the finality of the educational act, or by the social context on which they report) and the values are made in some kind of spine of the culture. (Antonescu, 2002) Stefan Barsanescu sees education on three coordinates: one of care, one of guidance and one of cultivation in the direction of creating cultural values and awareness of the people about this, in other words the interdependence between culture and education, giving the culture 3 missions: crashes in education, realizing progress in creation, and national modify in its emission. So culture becomes the fundamental source of contents of education. The crucial importance of the communication factor in the culture-human and culture-education report shows that "all objects and cultural events incorporate through definition a significance and they often re-communicate it in some long periods of time, meaning that the couple formed by education and communication is one about which we can talk and explain only together and in reversible senses.

In essence the concept of education marks a defining element of the human nature: the capacity of creating something in spiritual and material plans as a consequence of its capacity of knowing and communicating.

Education can be characterized by the next marks:

-it's a knowing fact

-it's a value which responds to a need, expressing one of man's aspirations

The concepts of education, information, communication, language are embedded to the culture an communication may be and it is the value from the architecture of culture and approaching the major domains of the culture (religion, science, art, etc) specific forms of inter-human communication reporting to the three constitutive elements of an educational action (establishing the finalities, making the educational process move and the evaluation). Oliver Reboul identifies three groups of educational values:

1. the purposes of education, meaning the values which are cultivated by education (integrity in the environment, cultivation of one's autonomy, ethical spirit, judgment) so we could have a more free society
2. values needed to education (obedience, discipline) so we could have a classic society
3. values which represent hanging points in the judgment of the results of education (the robot portrait of the "smart student" or of the "competent teacher".

II. The components of education

Today the education theory targets to the study of the next component parts of education: intellectual, moral, ethic, religious, physical, scientific, technologic, sexual, civic, ecological , for the human's rights, for participation and democracy, for peace, for communication and Mass-media, economical, for house keeping, a modern one talking about population, for changes, nutritional, for spare time, intercultural, for axiological

education, the education of over doted children, permanent education, and open education at distance.

The cooperation between the elements of education can be analyzed and justified in at least four plans:

- the followed finalities (starting from forming the ideal which synthesize the values option)
- the principles substantiate their realization (all the components of education are ruled by general principles)
- the highly used contents (not only elements of cognitive nature but also affective, and action nature elements)
- realization methods (strategies which lay on The general didactic methodology)

III. Educative actions made for supporting the individual formation

The dimensions of the education, as well as the appropriate objectives must be held in our view when planning the educational approach by the teachers of all specialties. Their task is to identify the finalities which correspond to the specific of the discipline, use them and make the most appropriate didactic strategies for its realization.

The educative actions made towards the individual formation must have in view the next aspects:

- the individual sensibility towards others' reality and towards his own interior reality
- facilitate the identification of the rules and values in actions and behaviors
- stimulate expressing the affective adhesion for the moral principles
- cultivation of the will power of respecting moral rules through the individual's awareness about the internal and external obstacles
- the theoretical justification of the values to facilitate the constitution of your own individual values
- the systematical and continuous evaluation of the conduit of the young man in order to consolidate some habits and customs
- forming the capacity to efficiently communicate of your own ideas and principles

IV. The dimensions of education

The most important dimensions and finalities meant to be fulfilled through education:

- 1) Education and the humanist spirit- its purpose is to form the representation of the notions, ideas, feeling, beliefs and attitudes in report with the human and its condition and has as objectives:

2. Tips for Reading Extensively

Extensive reading has the potential to help English language learners become better readers and make improvements in other aspects of their English skills. However, most students are not accustomed to the autonomy accorded by extensive reading. In addition, they may be used to struggling through short, boring, and extremely difficult texts, which, for many learners, entails painfully careful reading and constant use of a dictionary. In short, language learners may not understand the language learning value of reading easy, interesting material.

In extensive reading, English language learners read large quantities of easy material in English. They read for information and enjoyment, with the primary goal of achieving a general, overall understanding of the reading material. Students select their own reading material and are encouraged to stop reading if the material is not interesting or is too hard; over time, students are also encouraged to expand their reading comfort zone—the range of materials they can read easily and with confidence. To capture these aspects of extensive reading, Day and Bamford suggest that the motto of extensive reading be "reading gain without reading pain" (1998, 121).

There are several reasons why it is beneficial to encourage language learners to read extensively. Studies show that when students read extensively, they not only improve their reading fluency, but they also build new

vocabulary knowledge and expand their understanding of words they knew before. Additionally, extensive reading can help students write better, as well as improve their listening and speaking abilities. And perhaps the best result is that students develop positive attitudes toward reading in English and increased motivation to study it.

Teachers have an important role to play in helping their students get the most out of extensive reading. As Day and Bamford (2002) point out, teachers need to introduce their students to extensive reading and provide essential guidance as they read extensively. In this article, we offer ten tips that teachers can give to students when they engage in extensive reading. The title for each tip is addressed directly to the learner, whereas the rationale and instructional advice are written to you, the teacher. "We discuss the rationale for each tip and suggest ways to present these tips to your students. We recommend that you present them before students begin to read extensively and then revisit them periodically throughout the semester or school year.

Tip 1: Read, read, and read some more.

This is perhaps the most important piece of advice that you can give your students. You might want to introduce this tip by emphasizing to your students that we learn to read by reading; this is true for both a first or second language. The more students read, the better readers they become.

When you encourage your students to read, read, and read, you might want to point out that reading extensively can:

- Help them read faster and understand more.
- Help them to read in meaningful phrases, rather than word-by-word.
- Increase their confidence in their reading.
- Increase vocabulary knowledge.
- Consolidate grammatical knowledge.
- Help improve writing proficiency and oral fluency.

Tip 2: Read easy books.

Generally, it is hard to read books that have many unknown or difficult words. Frequently encountering challenging vocabulary can be frustrating, if not discouraging. The same can be said for the level of grammatical and organizational difficulty of books. So it is very important for students to choose books that they can read quickly and easily. This will increase their confidence and help them to become more comfortable with the process of reading in the foreign language.

Unfortunately, many students (and perhaps some teachers) are conditioned to believe that they must read books that are difficult, that the only way to learn to read is by reading material that is beyond their capabilities. Day and Bamford label this the "macho maxim of second language reading instruction: no reading pain, no reading gain" (1998, 92; emphasis in the original). This is the wrong approach. When learners read a lot of easy books, it allows them to become more fluent, effective readers. In addition, they are able to learn new words and phrases, over time, while enjoying what they are reading. To help wean students from the macho maxim, ask them to reflect on their experiences of learning to read in their first language—what types of materials did they read? Most likely standardized testing material was not in their selection of bedtime stories.

You can help your students select material at the appropriate level—books well within their reading comfort zone. Ask them to scan two or three pages of a book, looking for words they do not recognize. If there are more than four or five difficult or unknown words on a page, the book is probably too difficult for extensive reading.

Even after your students choose a book that appears to be appropriate, they may find that they are re-reading a few grammatically difficult sentences to try to figure out the meaning. If this is the case, the book is probably too difficult, so they should find another.

Extensive reading materials can be any material in English that is easy enough for your students to read with overall comprehension. Depending on the abilities of your students and the resources available to you, such materials may include children's books, comic books, or online texts. Additionally, a useful source of language

learner literature, reading material written for an audience of language learners, is graded readers. Graded readers are simply books, fiction and nonfiction, in which the content is controlled to match the language ability of learners. All the major publishers have graded readers. Hill (2001) provides an insightful review of readers published in the United Kingdom.

Tip 3: Read interesting books.

Because students need to read many books, it is important that they are interested in and enjoy what they are reading. If the learners are excited about their books, they won't want to put them down. Additionally, they will be more likely to attend to the content (meaning) of the text, rather than merely focusing on grammatical aspects. If your students do not find their books interesting or exciting, advise them to stop and find other books they may enjoy more.

At the same time, you might also want to point out that they should not give up on a book prematurely. Some books start slowly.

Tip 4: Reread books you found particularly interesting.

Reading books a second or third time is useful for several reasons. Having already read a book once, students will be able to read it more fluently the second time. This helps build vocabulary knowledge as well as confidence, and this, in turn, leads to increases in reading rate. Also, reading gains aside, it is fun to reread a favorite book!

Tip 5: Read for general understanding.

When students read extensively, it is not necessary to read for 100 percent comprehension. On the contrary, they should simply read for general, overall understanding. This means that they should be able to follow the general storyline and grasp the main ideas of the text. In extensive reading, the aim is to read a great many books, so it is in the learners' best interest not to struggle over every detail and worry about the exact meaning of every word or phrase.

To reinforce this idea, you could ask your students to think about reading in their native language (or, if they do not read much in their native languages, ask the students to think about watching television or movies). Most likely, they do not fret over every detail in their native language, so they should not expect to understand every word when they read extensively in English.

Another way to encourage reading for general understanding is to remind students that they are reading for pleasure, and for benefits such as increasing fluency and vocabulary knowledge. You might want to stress that there is no penalty for not understanding every detail because they will not be tested.

Tip 6: Ignore unknown or difficult words. Skip them and continue reading.

Although extensive reading material should be easy for students, they will inevitably encounter unknown or difficult words on occasion. Students do not need to understand every word. Often, they can ignore words they do not know and still maintain a general understanding of the passage. Sometimes they can guess the meaning of words from the context.

You can be of particular importance here by helping learners get used to living with a bit of ambiguity when they read. One way to do this is to have students skim a page or two of their books, circling any words they do not understand. Next, have your students read those same pages, encouraging them to focus on the general meaning and ignore any circled words. After they have finished, find out how successful they were by asking general questions about their texts, such as: Who are the characters? Where are they? What are they doing? Most likely, students will grasp the overall meaning, despite encountering a few unfamiliar words. If a student is unsuccessful, then it is likely the book is too difficult. (Recall Tip 2—if the book has more than five unknown words on a page, then it is probably too difficult.)

Tip 7: Avoid using dictionaries.

Although students often resort to using their dictionaries whenever they encounter new words, convince them to break the dictionary habit. Stopping two or three times per page to look up words in the dictionary is laborious and time-consuming, and it can distract students from reading for general understanding.

It can be difficult for students to ignore unknown or difficult words when they have their dictionaries right beside them. Some students, when they engage in extensive reading, make a point of putting their dictionaries across the room, out of the way. Thus they will be less inclined to reach for their dictionaries when they come across unknown words.

But sometimes it is not possible, or advisable, to avoid the use of dictionaries. There are times when not knowing the meaning of a word prevents overall understanding, or the unknown word reoccurs frequently in the text. In such situations, tell your students to use a dictionary.

Tip 8: Expand your reading comfort zone.

As your students read more and more, their reading fluency will increase and their reading comfort zones will expand. As learners increase the size of their reading comfort zones, they will be able to read books that were initially too difficult.

To assist students with expanding their reading comfort zones, it is important that you are familiar with the level of texts they are reading and the extent to which they are able to achieve general understanding. You can monitor your students' overall comprehension of their reading by incorporating extensive reading activities in the classroom. One idea, suggested by Iwano (2004), is that teachers briefly interview their students individually while the rest of the class is reading. For other useful activities for monitoring your students' extensive reading, see Bamford and Day (2004).

Additionally, it is a good idea to be familiar with the range of extensive reading materials available to your students. Being familiar with extensive reading materials and having an awareness of each student's level and reading interests will allow you to better help students while they expand their reading comfort zones; you can offer useful recommendations when students choose new books.

We should add a note of caution, however. Students can easily be confused about the balance between reading easy, enjoyable books and challenging themselves with books at a slightly higher level to expand their reading comfort zones. Because everyone has a desire to improve as quickly as possible, some learners might challenge themselves too much, too soon. Thus, it is important to pay attention to what your students are reading and to make sure that they are not struggling with texts that are too difficult. It makes sense to help build learners' confidence and fluency with easier books, bearing in mind that books that were at one time too difficult will later become easier to read.

Tip 9: Set reading goals and keep a reading log.

Setting personal goals can often be a strong motivational factor. This is especially true for reading. Advise your students to consider their schedules and to set aside times to read (at lunch, before going to bed, etc.). You might want to help your students set a reasonable target number of books per week or month, as their schedules allow; encourage them to meet those goals. An extensive reading target can be expressed in pages, chapters, or even time - two hours a week, for example. Extensive reading targets are flexible and can be adjusted to fit the reading abilities and schedules of your students.

One way to set and monitor reading goals is to encourage, or require, your students to keep a log of their extensive reading. This will allow them (and you) to see their progress. Concrete, visible evidence can be very motivating. Two samples of simple extensive reading logs are provided in the Appendix. These can be modified according to the needs of your students and the extent to which you integrate extensive reading activities into your curriculum. Some teachers have found it useful to monitor extensive reading according to the weeks of a school semester (see Appendix, Form 1); others require students to provide a very brief summary of each book entered into the log in order to monitor general comprehension.

Tip 10: Enjoy! Enjoy! Enjoy!

The more your students enjoy what they are reading, the more they will read. If they do not enjoy reading, their desire to stick with it will probably dwindle, and they may give up on reading. And they need to keep reading in order to improve their reading fluency and increase their vocabulary knowledge. Recall the motto of extensive reading: reading gain without reading pain.

As teachers, our goal is to spark our students' interest in reading and find encouraging ways to make sure they keep on reading. If you find that some of your students are starting to lose their enthusiasm, it might help to read aloud to them from a book that is easy, but captivating. Your enthusiasm when you read aloud can help them to get back into the frame of mind where they want to pick up a book at every opportunity.

Conclusion

Most teachers, above all else, must help their students do well in their courses and pass the required examinations. However, at the same time, teachers can increase their students' competency in English and help them become fluent readers in English by engaging them in extensive reading. It is important to realize that the increased fluency, confidence, and motivation that so often result from reading extensively will help students in their academic endeavors, such as improving exam performances. As Colin Davis said: "Any ESL, EFL, or LI classroom will be poorer for the lack of an extensive reading programme of some kind, and will be unable to promote its pupils' language development in all aspects as effectively as if such a programme were present" (1995, 335).

We hope that these ten tips will help your students get the most out of reading extensively. When you provide insightful and careful orientation and guidance to extensive reading, you are not only helping your students improve many aspects of their overall reading and language ability; you also might be opening a door to the variety of worlds that reading can present.

We close with a tip for you, the teacher: Be a role model as a reader. Day and Bamford claim that "effective extensive reading teachers are themselves readers, teaching by example the attitudes and behaviors of a reader." (2002, 140; emphasis in the original). If you are a first language reader of English, then consider reading extensively in your students' first language. If English is a foreign language to you, then read English with your students. As Nuttall observed, "reading is caught, not taught" (1996, 229).

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3. To Teach Standard English or World Englishes? A Balanced Approach to Instruction

"English has now acquired the title of the world's leading "global language" (Crystal 2003, 1) because it is used for business, science, and politics. When we use the term English, readers may assume that we are referring to a standard of usage that everyone agrees upon. Readers may think that we must mean British Standard English or American Standard English because the English that exists in such places as Africa, Asia,

the West Indies, the Philippines and Singapore is not real or standard English. Readers may also think that teachers of English as a second language (ESL) must be teaching British or American Standard English because that is what their learners want to learn. In fact, the issue is not as straightforward as we may think; there is neither an agreed-upon definition of Standard English, nor is there agreement on what students of ESL need or want to learn. This leads to the following question: Has rapid change in the status of English as a global language left the classroom practices of many English language teachers lagging behind learners' desires or even their needs? To answer this question, this article outlines why and how teachers can inform their practice as they create a balanced approach to instruction that suits their particular context and students' needs.

Standard English

The term Standard English suggests that we all share a similar understanding of exactly what this means, yet it is not easy to define. One reason for this is that there is no world-recognized governing body that dictates what should and should not be included in such a *standard*. However, McArthur (2003, 442) maintains that Standard English has at "least three identifying characteristics: 1) It is easiest to recognize in print because written conventions are similar worldwide. 2) It is usually used by news presenters. 3) Its usage relates to the speaker's social class and education."

McArthur (2003, 442) also suggests that Standard English is generally considered "the variety most widely accepted, understood, and perhaps valued within an English speaking country." We can see that the community decides what is acceptable and what is not, what is correct usage and what is not. Yet, for example, a Canadian's definition of what is standard may vary dramatically from that of an Irish person. This lack of a clear, agreed-upon definition of the term standard presents a problem for learners and teachers of English, especially when learners say they want to learn Standard English and when their teachers are supposed to instruct them in this standard.

As teachers of English, we look to the research in the hope of finding answers that will clarify what this standard is so we can teach it, and what we find is even more confusing. Teaching Standard English can in fact have negative consequences for the language learners (Tollefson 2002) for the following reasons:

-Standard English is a native-speaker model which may be unattainable for many second language learners. Therefore, it may be unrealistic to use a native-speaker model for language learners who, by definition, can "never become native-speakers without being reborn" (Cook 1999, 187).

-Insisting on Standard English can devalue other varieties of English that exist around the world. For example, so-called non-standard varieties, such as Singlish in Singapore (McArthur 2004; Qiong 2004), are often considered illegitimate because they are believed to be failed attempts at being Standard English. Anything that is different from a standard is considered inferior. By idealizing Standard English, and consequently devaluing non-standard varieties, some governments and language teachers may in effect be actually devaluing their own local varieties of English. An example in Singlish is the absence of past tense marking, such as "What happen yesterday?". Singlish does differ from so-called Standard English in some grammatical features and lexical items, but can we then say it is inferior because of these differences?

-Teaching Standard English may promote discrimination. Some employers, for example, may discriminate against speakers of American English or Irish English by saying, "Oh! You don't speak British English, which we prefer for this position." Given that accent is often "an implicit code for race or ethnicity" (Tollefson 2002, 150), discrimination based on accent can even be considered a form of racism.

World Englishes

If Standard English is supposed to be an example of only one norm of the English language, then the term *World Englishes* would be the norm that includes all varieties of the language. Kachru (1985) categorizes the usage of English into three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. He maintains that the inner circle represents the more traditional bases of English that are used in places like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The outer circle includes countries which "have gone through extended periods of colonization, essentially by the users of the inner circle

varieties" (Kachru 1985, 12), and includes Nigeria, Singapore, and India. Unlike the outer circle, the expanding circle does not have the same effects of colonization as the inner circle; in the expanding circle, English is used mainly for business and international purposes. The expanding circle includes such countries as China, Greece, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, and represents the largest expanding numbers of English speakers in the world today (Crystal 2003). Considering the large population of English speakers located in various parts of the world, Kachru (1985, 14) proposes that English now comprises "a unique cultural pluralism, and a linguistic heterogeneity and diversity."

In light of this ever-expanding outermost circle of English language usage, it is conceivable that the continued use of inner circle Standard English as the target of instruction in classrooms worldwide should be re-examined and may even be somewhat inappropriate in a global context. As Widdowson (1994, 381) has pointed out, inner circle Standard English "is not simply a means of communication but the symbolic possession of a particular community, expressive of its identity, its conventions, and values." Many speakers of *World Englishes* use English in their own way as an expression of their identity and their cultural values because language is "a major means (some would say the chief means) of showing where we belong, and of distinguishing one social group from another" (Crystal 2003, 22).

A balanced approach to English language instruction

If English usage is taken to be a means of identity, then the question is: Which variety of English should be taught as a second or foreign language? One important factor that makes this decision difficult is that many of the new varieties of English may be mutually unintelligible (Smith 1992). Singlish, for example, is generally regarded as being unintelligible to other English speakers outside of Singapore (McArthur 2004). Some unique features of Singlish are shown in the following examples:

Absence of possessive inflections: "My mummy friend"

Use of particles: "Hurry up lah!"

Use of borrowings: "Don't be so kiasu."

Inversion for questions with be: "You don't want to go is it?"

Inversion for questions with can: "Like that can or not?"

Although learning these features of Singlish would be an achievable goal for Singaporeans, teaching these features may limit the learners' ability to communicate with speakers of English outside Singapore.

Since teaching local varieties of English (such as Singlish) may be just as problematic as teaching inner circle Standard English, English language teachers may find themselves in a quandary as to what type of English to emphasize to their students. We recognize that many English language teachers may not have the luxury of deciding what variety to emphasize and teach to their students because this may already be mandated by Ministries of Education, school boards, and/or school directors. Nevertheless, we suggest that teachers can inform their practices about the different varieties of English that exist and consider a balanced approach to teaching English. Such an approach would include three key considerations:

1. Teachers need to carefully consider their teaching context (McKay 2002).

2. After choosing their target of instruction based on that context, teachers should value their learners' current English usage (El-Sayed 1991).

3. Teachers need to prepare learners for future international English encounters by exposing them to other varieties of English (Matsuda 2003) and by teaching them strategic competence when interacting with speakers who speak other varieties of English.

Consider the teaching context

The key to following a balanced approach is "to be culturally sensitive to the diversity of contexts in which English is taught and used" (McKay 2002, 128). The variety of English emphasized should be based on the teaching context, the teachers (including their own teaching abilities and style) as well as the learners' educational and cultural needs (McKay 2002). In such a balanced approach, teachers may or may not decide (if they have such a choice) to teach inner circle Standard English. However, as Petzold (2002, 424) points out, the

"specific variety choice is influenced by factors such as the teacher's own education, attitudes toward models, the model's prestige or usefulness, [and] availability of materials and tests." For instance, El-Sayed (1991) maintains that British Standard English may be an appropriate choice for the target of instruction in some schools in Western Asia, such as the Doha English Speaking School (DESS) in Doha, Qatar. This school follows the British curriculum and hires teachers with UK-recognized qualifications. Furthermore, due to a history of British colonization, Qataris value British Standard English and are exposed to it through British media. They have greater access to British books and materials, and are probably more likely to visit the United Kingdom than other English speaking countries. Thus, teaching British Standard English would be the optimal choice for a teacher at DESS.

With so many variables to consider when choosing the target of instruction, it is important to remember that there is no single correct choice for all contexts (Christenson 1992). Choosing to teach British Standard English in Doha can be just as appropriate as choosing to teach China English in Beijing (El-Sayed 1991; Qiong 2004). The point is for teachers to choose the model based on context and learners' needs; as a result, the decision will potentially be different for every teacher (Petzold 2002).

Value learners' English

The second important aspect of a balanced approach is that, regardless of the English variety being taught, teachers should help their learners understand that the chosen variety is just one type of English, and that the learners' own English is valuable even though it may differ significantly from what is presented in class. For example, teachers should encourage learners to "refer to idiomatic expressions of their own language and enrich the communicative dialect of English with exotic and poetic elements" (El-Sayed 1991, 166). Dutch speakers of English for instance, might say, "If you need help, just pull on the bell," which is a word-for-word translation of a Dutch expression. The so-called standard English equivalent would be, "If you need anything, just let me know." When the Dutch shopkeeper asks customers if they need help finding anything, and the customers reply no, the shopkeeper would say, "Well, if you need anything, just pull on the bell" (even though there is no bell to pull). Although this expression is not one that a native speaker of Standard English would use, the message is clear to Dutch speakers, so there is no need to correct the speaker or to provide an alternate English expression within this context. Rather than being thought of as unsuccessful Standard English speakers, these learners would be considered successful English language users who make contributions to their speech community (Cook 1999). It is likely that this change in perspective would positively affect learners' ability to acquire the target language since it would increase their confidence and desire to communicate in English (Cook 1999).

Prepare learners for intercultural communication

Since English truly is a global language (Crystal 2003), all English language learners need to be prepared for future encounters with speakers of varieties of English that differ from their own (Jenkins 2000, 2006). One way to prepare learners is to expose them to different varieties (Matsuda 2003). Examples of different English varieties are available on the Internet, radio, television, and in different newspapers from around the world (Cook 1999). For example, on the Internet teachers and learners can access the International Corpus of English, which provides samples of many national and regional varieties of English. Students and teachers can also access World-Newspaper, which provides links to English language newspapers from around the world. On the Internet it is also possible to view English language television channels from around the world, such as New Delhi Television from India, in which the broadcasters speak Indian English.

In addition to exposing learners to different varieties of English, teachers should focus on teaching both strategic and intercultural competence skills which will help learners be able "to adjust their speech in order to be intelligible to interlocutors from a wide range of [first language] backgrounds, most of whom are not inner circle native speakers" (Jenkins 2006, 174). Strategic competence skills help learners negotiate for meaning in a communication breakdown; these skills are consciously and explicitly employed. Examples of such skills include slowing the rate of speech and articulating clearly (Petzold 2002). Students should be taught strategic skills such as how to ask the interlocutor to slow down, to repeat, or to wait while the student chooses the

appropriate word. For example, teaching students to say: "Could you please repeat that more slowly?" or "Could you please wait a moment while I search for the right word?" would be very useful.

Intercultural competence skills are those which help interlocutors overcome sociolinguistic differences (Alptekin 2002; El-Sayed 1991). Learners should be able to talk about the sociocultural norms of their own cultures "so that sociocultural convergence can be negotiated within the ad-hoc speech community" (El-Sayed 1991, 166). For example, Qatari students could be given the opportunity to explain why they must greet their fellow Muslims in Arabic, no matter what language is being used in the classroom. Similarly, Dutch students could be given the opportunity to explain that being assertive is considered polite in Dutch culture. Allowing students to maintain (and explain) their cultural differences will decrease misunderstandings because it will foster greater tolerance for the uniqueness of human cultures. Teaching such meta-pragmatic awareness skills (the specific skills to be taught would depend on the context) will help prepare learners for the inter-cultural interactions that are likely to occur in the existing global village (Jenkins 2006).

Conclusion

This article suggests that English language teachers should consider all varieties of English, not just British Standard English or American Standard English. In order to better prepare students for the global world, and to show them that their own English is valued, teachers can implement a balanced approach that incorporates the teaching and learning context as well as the learners' values. It also helps to prepare learners for future interactions with speakers of different varieties of English. The guidelines to following a balanced approach presented in this article are not meant to be prescriptive, nor do they claim to be comprehensive; we recognize that not all teachers have a choice about which variety of English to emphasize in their instruction. However, these guidelines can be adapted by all teachers who wish to help their students prepare for real world interactions.

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4. 10 QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTMAS

1. What gifts did the three kings take to baby Jesus?
2. Which meat do the British traditionally eat with their Christmas dinner?
3. What type of pie is typically left out for Santa on Christmas Eve?
4. What two things do we traditionally give to our friends and families on Christmas Day?
5. What are Santa's helpers called?
6. What are the names of Santa's reindeer?
7. If you were born on Christmas day, which star sign would you belong to?
8. What type of cake is traditionally eaten at Christmas time in Italy?
9. Who was the author of "A Christmas Carol"?
10. How do you say Happy Christmas in Spanish?

ANSWERS:

1. Frankincense, Gold and Myrrh
2. Turkey
3. Mince Pie
4. Cards and Presents
5. Elves
6. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, Rudolf
7. Capricorn
8. Panettone
9. Charles Dickens
10. Feliz navidad

5. Ten Questions about Countries

- 1) Which is the only American state to begin with the letter 'p'?
- 2) Name the world's biggest island.
- 3) What is the world's longest river?
- 4) Name the world's largest ocean.
- 5) What is the diameter of Earth?
- 6) Where would you find the world's most ancient forest?
- 7) Which four British cities have underground rail systems?
- 8) What is the capital city of Spain?
- 9) Which country is Prague in?
- 10) Which English town was a forerunner of the Parks Movement and the first city in Europe to have a street tram system?

Answers:

1. Pennsylvania.
2. Greenland.
3. Amazon.
4. Pacific.
5. 8,000 miles.
6. Daintree Forest north of Cairns, Australia
7. Liverpool, Glasgow, Newcastle and London.
8. Madrid.
9. Czech Republic
10. Birkenhead

6. Animal words

Match each word or phrase in the first column with the word or phrase in the second column that produces a proverb or idiom.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. A barking dog | a. the dogs |
| 2. Never look a gift horse | b. out of the bag |
| 3. Curiosity killed | c. but you can't make him drink |
| 4. Dog eat | d. lie |
| 5. You can't teach an old dog | e. never bites |
| 6. Let sleeping dogs | f. new tricks |
| 7. When the cat's away | g. of a different color |
| 8. Let the cat | h. horses |
| 9. There's more than one way | i. hog |
| 10. It's raining | j. dog |
| 11. You may lead a horse to water | k. to skin a cat |
| 12. Go to | l. in the mouth |
| 13. Go whole | m. the mice will play |
| 14. Hold your | n. cats and dogs |
| 15. That's a horse | o. the cat |

Solutions:

- 1-e
- 2-l
- 3-o
- 4-j
- 5-f
- 6-d
- 7-m
- 8-b
- 9-k
- 10-n
- 11-c
- 12-a
- 13-i
- 14-h
- 15-g

7. LETTER PLAY

1. What two letters express the meaning “not difficult”?
2. What two letters mean the opposite of “full”?
3. What two letters spell a number?
4. What two letters spell a word meaning “some”?
5. What two letters mean a kind of short composition?
6. What two letters mean “very cold”?
7. What two letters mean the opposite of “causes”?
8. What letter and number mean “ahead of or in front of”?
9. What number and letter spell a popular outdoor game?
10. What number and letter mean “anticipate”?

Solutions:

1. EZ (EASY)
2. MT(EMPTY)
3. AT (EIGHTY)
4. NE (ANY)
5. SA (ESSAY)
6. IC (ICY)
7. FX (EFFECTS)
8. B4 (BEFORE)
9. 10S (TENNIS)
10. 4C (FORESEE)

8. IDIOMATIC ANTONYMS

Add the right words to complete the pairs, and the initial letters reading downward will spell an appropriate word:

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| 1. _ _ _ | or NONE |
| 2. _ _ | or YES |
| 3. _ _ _ _ | or FALSE |
| 4. _ _ | or OFF |
| 5. _ _ _ | or OLD |
| 6. _ _ _ _ _ | or OLD |
| 7. _ _ _ _ | or LESS |
| 8. _ _ _ _ _ | or LARGE |

Answers:

1. All
2. No
3. True
4. On
5. New
6. Young
7. More
8. Small

9. RIDDLE METAPHORS

1. In the night a mountain, in the morning a meadow. What is it?
2. The more you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?
3. What can you cut with a knife and never see a mark?
4. What asks no questions but receives a lot of answers?
5. What gets wetter the more it dries?
6. What grows bigger the more you take from it?
7. What goes up but never comes down?
8. If you feed it, it will live. If you give it water, it will die. What is it?

Answers:

1. A bed
2. Footsteps
3. Water
4. A telephone
5. A towel
6. A hole
7. Our age
8. Fire

10. The “Ant” Family

The following activity builds upon a common base of letters to create new words. Eg. What kind of an ant works with figures? An account ANT.

Now, what kind of an ant:

1. Lives in the jungle?
2. Is far away?
3. Is extraordinarily large?
4. Works for a master?
5. Is good-natured?
6. Is unchanging?
7. Is luxurious?
8. Is one who takes part?
9. Is a very small child?
10. Is very bright?

Solutions:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. elephant | 8. participant |
| 2. distant | 9. infant |
| 3. giant | 10. brilliant |
| 4. servant | |
| 5. pleasant | |
| 6. constant | |
| 7. elegant | |

11. Idiomatic antonyms

Complete the following idioms by adding a word that is opposite in meaning to the other word in the phrase:

1. Stop and _____
2. Lost and _____
3. Ups and _____
4. Do's and _____
5. Friend or _____
6. For better or _____
7. This or _____
8. Hit or _____
9. Heaven or _____
10. Win or _____

Solutions: 1.Go; 2.Found; 3.Downs; 4.Don'ts; 5.Foe; 6.Worse; 7.That; 8.Miss; 9.Hell; 10.Lose.

12. Spelling bee

Fill in the blanks in each sentence with two or three words that have the same sound but different spelling and different meaning. The number of blanks equals the number of letters in the missing word.

1. They agreed ___ ___ play ___ ___ ___ more games next week, ___ ___ ___ .
2. The four of us were so hungry that we ___ ___ ___ ___ hamburgers.
3. As we approached the coast we could ___ ___ ___ the ___ ___ ___ .
4. We had to ___ ___ ___ ___ in line until they determined the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ of our bags.
5. If you sit ___ ___ ___ ___ very quietly, you can ___ ___ ___ ___ the wind blowing through the trees.
6. The man in the ___ ___ ___ coat ___ ___ ___ ___ the letter to me.
7. Everything looked so familiar; it was as if we had ___ ___ ___ ___ that ___ ___ ___ ___ before.
8. The wind ___ ___ ___ ___ the clouds away leaving a clear ___ ___ ___ ___ sky.

Solutions:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. To, two, too | 8. Blew, blue |
| 2. Ate, eight | |
| 3. See, sea | |
| 4. Wait, weight | |
| 5. Here, hear | |
| 6. Red, read | |
| 7. Seen, scene | |