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ELTWeekly

India's first weekly ELT eNewsletter

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News: Children who use technology are 'better writers' – BBC

Children who blog, text or use social networking websites are more confident about their writing skills, according to the National Literacy Trust.

A survey of 3,001 children aged nine to 16 found that 24% had their own blog and 82% sent text messages at least once a month.

In addition 73% used instant messaging services to chat online with friends.

However, 77% still put real pen to paper to write notes in class or do their school homework.

Of the children who neither blogged nor used social network sites, 47% rated their writing as "good" or "very good", while 61% of the bloggers and 56% of the social networkers said the same.

Read the complete news item at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/02/49-news-children-who-use-technology-are-better-writers-bbc/>

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Video: Teaching Phonics 44 Sounds of English

The teaching phonics video teaches the 44 different sounds of the English language. Great for a classroom center activity or individual practice of phonics sounds.

Watch the video at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/02/49-video-teaching-phonics-44-sounds-of-english/>

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Learnhigher – An Excellent Resource for All Teachers

Learnhigher is launched by the Universities of Brunel, Bradford and Leeds.

This site is designed to help both students and tutors understand and overcome the challenges of group work. The learning path involves a series of 10 episodes, taking five students through the journey of a group work project. Each episode highlights a different aspect of working as part of a group and includes a number of video clips, audio clips as well as observation and discussion points. There are also a range of additional resources that can be accessed to expand upon or reinforce points raised within the episode.

The resource can be used independently or as part of a tutor led session. Users can dip in and out of the episodes or follow the students through their task from start to finish. To launch straight in, select The episodes option from the menu (new users may find it useful to take a look at the Technical 'need to know', Moving around and Accessibility options first). If you find you need some help there are help pages for both students and for tutors.

Visit Learnhigher and utilize the video contents developed by the Universities of Brunel, Bradford and Leeds at <http://www.learnhighergroupwork.com/>

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Download Webinar: Control or Chaos? Managing classes of primary children in a positive way

One of the hardest things in primary language teaching is to give lively, enjoyable lessons and at the same time ensure that children behave in an acceptable way. In this webinar, we will explore the concept of classroom management as an interactive process and I will share with you a range of practical strategies and techniques for managing classes of primary children in a positive and effective way.

Download this webinar now for your iPod / iPhone / iTunes by visiting

<http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/02/49-download-webinar-control-or-chaos-managing-classes-of-primary-children-in-a-positive-way/>

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Lesson Plan: Living in the UK

In this lesson, learners read about the different countries of the UK, either online as a webquest or in paper form. They practise reading for specific information, and guessing the meaning of words from the context, both important reading micro-skills. There is an optional extension in the form of a role-play, in which groups of learners compete to persuade a professional couple to move to 'their' UK country.

Plan components

Lesson Plan:- guide for teacher on procedure including answers to tasks.

Worksheets: – exercises which can be printed out for use in class. The worksheet contains:

Warm-up activity

- Reading and vocabulary activities
- Texts on regions of the UK and their culture
- Role-play activity

Download the 'Living in the UK' Lesson Plan by visiting

<http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/02/49-lesson-plan-living-in-the-uk/>

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eBook: ESP for the University

This book, from 1986, provides a snapshot of developments in ESP teaching at university level during the 1970s and early 1980s. In his Preface, Christopher Brumfit challenged a recent claim that ESP had 'legitimised English teaching', suggesting rather that it had made English teaching 'more purposeful'. The papers in this book include an extensive one on task-based learning, and all are focused on practical solutions.

Download the 'ESP for the University' eBook by visiting

<http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/02/49-ebook-esp-for-the-university>

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Article: 'Personal Learning Networks' by Gavin Dudeney

“Here is Gavin Dudeney's second exclusive article for TeachingEnglish.

I'm fortunate enough to be able to go to quite a few face-to-face conferences every year, generally as a speaker, though I also attend as many sessions as I can at each event – there's always something to learn from any speaker, no matter how experienced they are. This year I've seen some great speakers, not just some of the more famous people in ELT, but a wide variety of teachers talking about what they do with great passion, and sharing their experiences and teaching ideas. In fact, these types of events are my favourite kind of professional development, combining – as they do – the talks, plenaries and workshops with fun social activities and occasionally some sightseeing.

But of course not everybody is lucky enough to be able to go to these events very often, and have to rely on local development opportunities such as workshops or in-school training. And, at least in my experience, this is actually relatively rare too. In all my travels this year I've met hundreds of teachers who receive no professional development each year. It's as if they've simply been forgotten about... Now they're in place and teaching, there's no need to develop them any further or help them widen their repertoire, at least that is what seems to me happens in many schools. So what is a teacher to do in that kind of situation?”

Read the complete article at

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/personal-learning-networks>

Research Article: 'Grammar in Second and Foreign Language Pedagogy' by Anindya Syam Choudhury

The issue of “grammar instruction” in Second/Foreign Language Learning Teaching is among the most hotly debated ones. Of course, there is no gainsaying that grammatical competence alone cannot account for what is involved in the mastery of a language. However, the reaction against grammar teaching which resulted due to the communicative approach revolution has certain inherent weaknesses. This article evaluates the role of grammar in Second/Foreign language pedagogy and subsequently goes on to show how grammar is, in fact, so important that it cannot be ignored. Hence the issue now is no longer whether grammar is to be taught or not but rather how grammar items are to be taught most effectively. With this end in view, the article looks into a model of task-based grammar teaching, which blends grammar instruction with communicative tasks so that accuracy is not sacrificed at the altar of fluency.

Grammar teaching in English as Second Language/ English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) pedagogy has always been a contentious issue. In fact, there has been a pendulum swing regarding whether grammar should be taught or not. Before the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970's, for instance, grammar was in a position of domination in language education, with curricula being organized around it. However, the supremacy of grammar was questioned when developments in the field of Sociolinguistics in the seventies challenged the traditional notions about the nature of language and learning. One of the primary reasons for the rejection of a narrow focus on grammatical forms and structures in language learning was the blurring of the notion of 'correctness' of language thanks to the investigation of language varieties. Also, sociolinguists like the American Dell Hymes went on to put forward a broader concept of 'communicative competence', which drew attention to language use in social context. This had a tremendous impact on language teaching, encouraging a more critical look at language and sharpening an awareness of the need to make language relevant to students' needs and to provide opportunities for language use in the classroom.

However, these developments led some theorists, methodologists, teachers and syllabus designers to go overboard so much so that many of them started advocating a ‘no grammar’ approach in second and foreign language teaching and learning as in their opinion grammar teaching didn’t produce proficient second language users. But should grammar be blamed for such a predicament? The failure actually stems from the inadequacy of the methodologies that have traditionally been used to teach grammar, the methodologies which have failed to recognise the crucial distinction between teaching about language and teaching the use of language which in turn has led to a sort of an unbridgeable chasm between the true goal of language teaching and the means employed to achieve the goal. The true goal of all second language teaching is to produce students who can communicate well in the second language, comprehend and create at will novel utterances that conform to the grammatical system of the language (whether in speech or writing). What this entails is that we, as the teachers of English, should facilitate “free and unfettered language use, by providing our students with the linguistic means to create novel utterances through a carefully designed and presented program they can digest and enjoy.” (Rivers: 1983, p.33). But traditionally the language teacher has been focusing primarily on the “means” only, failing to recognise the need to encourage students to use these means to express meanings they themselves wish to communicate. For instance, the language teacher traditionally has been teaching discrete points of grammar in separate lessons, focusing mainly on the formal features of the language at the expense of encouraging students to use the language. This sort of an approach, perhaps, has its germ in the belief that the purpose of all teaching is to simplify learning and one way of doing that is to break down the contents into smaller parts and then present them in a sequential and graded manner.

However, research has shown that learners do not learn one thing perfectly one at a time, but learn numerous things simultaneously (and imperfectly). Hence traditional language teaching has been found to be defective on at least two counts: first, for treating language learning as a system of accumulating structural entities, and second, for neglecting language use. This inconsistency between the goal of second language teaching on the one hand, and the views regarding second language learning and the instructional actions of the teachers teaching the second language on the other, has led to a great dissatisfaction in the pedagogical circles because the methodologies adopted have not been able to yield the hoped-for results. This dissatisfaction, perhaps, was at the root of the reaction against grammar teaching, and this was occasioned also by the rise of CLT? the ‘strong’ version of which shunned grammar teaching altogether, believing that grammar would somehow take

care of itself when the learners engaged themselves in communicative activities. This non-interventionist position with regard to grammar teaching was also given weight by a belief that what is 'necessary' and 'sufficient' for second language acquisition is comprehensible input in the target language, thereby implying that grammar instruction is not required.

However, numerous studies have proved it beyond doubt now that grammar-focused teaching is indeed required for increasing the proficiency of second and foreign language learners. For instance, a study conducted by Lightbown (cited in Devaki Reddy, 2006) points to the significance of grammar-focused instruction. Lightbown conducted an experiment with two groups of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners ³/₄ one group received comprehensible input through listening and reading without any teacher intervention, and the other group had the guidance of a teacher and were also given ample opportunities for language production. It was found that the group which had the guidance of a teacher, who made the students aware of the various grammatical structures in meaningful contexts, performed better than the other group. This study and many other similar ones resolve one of the great dilemmas of language pedagogy: whether or not grammar teaching is required. Surely grammar-focused instruction is a necessity, but does it mean that one is justified in using the traditional grammatically structured syllabuses (which are still ubiquitous in many parts of India!)? The answer is a loud 'No' because these kinds of syllabus and the teaching which accompanies them do not produce communicative competence. These are good enough only for presenting explicit rules and paradigms, providing as they do little or no scope for language learning activities in which communication among learners can occur. So between the two extremes ³/₄ traditional grammar teaching in which grammar rules are presented as models to learners in a linear fashion on the one hand, and the 'strong' version of CLT which neglects grammar teaching altogether on the other ³/₄ is there a middle-ground position possible, a position where learners could be involved in communicative tasks with a focus on meaning while at the same time there would be an ample opportunity to focus on form as well? One interesting option is the flexible model for task-based learning, proposed by Jane Willis (1998), which consists of a 'pre-task' phase, a 'task-cycle' phase and a 'language focus' phase. In this model, tasks are, of course, the central component but grammar is not forgotten altogether as in the last phase there are both analysis of the language used and practice of new structures. In the first phase, the 'pre-task' phase, the teacher or rather the 'facilitator' introduces the topic to the learners and gives instructions for the task that the learners have to perform. In the next phase, the 'task-cycle' phase the learners begin by carrying out the

communicative task with the liberty to use any language structure they want. This allows them the freedom to focus on the meaning of their message thereby making it akin to real-life communication. In the final phase, the 'language focus' phase, the teacher initiates an analysis of the language used in which the learners should be encouraged to participate actively as well. However, much of the technical grammatical jargon associated with traditional grammar teaching may best be avoided while at the same time, learners should be made aware of which structures are ungrammatical or inappropriate by providing them with grammatical or appropriate counterparts.

In the ultimate analysis, it could be said that this model of grammar teaching is an attractive one as it liberates people from the drudgery of traditional 'transmission' approach to grammar teaching and learning in which the learners, rather passively, acquire knowledge from the teacher? Moreover, it's great fun to do and, therefore, motivating as well.

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About Author:

Anindya Syam Choudhury has an MA in English and a PGCTE and a PGDTE from EFL University, Hyderabad. He has also completed the Trinity College Certificate in TESOL at London recently. Presently, he is with the Department of English, Assam University, Silchar, as an Assistant Professor. His areas of interest include Grammar Pedagogy, Task-based Language Teaching and Learner Autonomy.

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'English for Progress: Third Policy Dialogue' – A report by Prof (Dr) Shefali Bakshi

'English for Progress: Third Policy Dialogue' – Dialogue – From Policy to Practice – British Council -18 Nov, to 20 Nov, 2009

A report by **Prof (Dr) Shefali Bakshi**

English for Progress: Third Policy Dialogue was held on 19 – 20 November, 2009 at Hyatt Regency Delhi. The Policy Dialogue focused on issues such as transforming the workforce for 2020, teacher education, methodology, role of assessment, implementing change and the future of English language education. The conference had speakers and delegates from India, Sri Lanka and the UK.

British Council's Project English in India and Sri Lanka region is well on its way to achieving Prime Minister Gordon Brown's vision of training 750,000 English teachers in the sub-continental region. This Dialogue captured vignettes of how work in teacher and trainer training with state and corporate sector has progressed apace in the last two years.

The most interesting sessions attended by Prof (Dr) Shefali Bakshi were: 1. English Next India: Policy Implications for English Teaching and Learning, A panel discussion on key issues raised by English Next India followed by questions from the floor. 2. Project English: Working with the Corporate Sector Ms Jill Coates, Head Corporate Training, Project English, British Council India

Part I – Transforming the Workforce for 2020: Challenges and Opportunities, Following which was the panel discussion on key priorities for the corporate world. 3. Transforming the Workforce for 2020: Barclays Partnership Case study on transforming the communication skills of the workforce. 4. Building Skills for Employability- What are the English and other skills deficits facing aspiring rural youth and how can they be addressed? Out of three parallel sessions Prof Shefali Bakshi attended 5. Innovations in testing, learning and recruitment in the corporate sector – How do we build a common framework of recruitment across the education and industry segments?

The second Day; 20th Nov'09- began with an introduction with the new Regional Director, Ms Ruth Gee, British Council India and Sri Lanka followed by 1. Project English: Working with the State Sector, An overview of the British Council's work with state governments and NGOs in India and Sri Lanka. 2. From planning for change to seeing intended change in practice-Some key issues for change implementers by Dr Martin Wedell, Senior Lecturer and Director, International Development, School of Education, University of Leeds, UK. 3. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Round table discussions on the best ways to facilitate CPD in the Indian and Sri Lankan contexts. This was again one of the parallel sessions, in which Prof Shefali Bakshi asked some questions on the Professional Development of Teachers. 4. The Future of English Language Education: Methodological Choices-The panel will debate issues on medium of instruction, the role of the Mother tongue, multilingualism and related policies. 5. The Role of English in Conflict Transformation-How learning English can develop better understanding within conflict affected communities. Prof Bakshi then had to leave as it was time for her flight. She felt this was a life time experience to mingle with such varied educators from different worlds, be it industry or university.

The evening witnessed an informal chat with Mr Chetan Bhagat, Author of bestselling novels (latest being 2 States: The Story of my Marriage) interviewed by Dr Debanjan Chakrabarti, Head Project English, British Council, East India, followed by Dance/ music performance and Dinner.

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

- 1. Papers / Articles:** All articles should be computerized using double-spacing, including tables, references and footnotes. Submission of manuscripts should be done in electronic form only. Electronic version of the article/research paper should be e-mailed to the Editor, ELTWeekly at info@eltweekly.com.
- 2. Abstracts:** An abstract in approximately 200 words should assist the article.
- 3. Abbreviations:** No stops are needed between capitals e.g. ELT, IELTS.
- 4. Figures and Tables:** Tables should be numbered sequentially with Arabic numerals.
- 5. Notes:** Notes should be consecutively numbered and presented at the foot of the page.
- 6. References:** References in the text should follow the author-date system. The complete reference list should be given at the end of the article. They should be in alphabetical order.
- 7. Book Reviews:** Book reviews must contain the name of the author and title / subtitle of the book reviewed, place of publication and publisher and date of publication.
- 8. For Event Submissions:** Please submit your event details at least 30 days prior to the event.
- 9.** For a **more detailed stylesheet**, please write to The Editor, ELTWeekly at info@eltweekly.com.

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This is what our readers say:

Hello, Mr. Tarun patel, I have received ur recent work which is praiseworthy and utilitarian .Thanks a lot !All issues r very much interesting for language learners and teachers .God bless U and ur team ! – **neeharika rawat**

Its really a wonderful vision. Its very useful to the teachers' community. Thnkn you very much. – **G. NAGESWARARAO**

Dear Tarun and the team

thank you for being so prompt in sending us the new issues. It is great to learn about teachit & english Next.

regards - **Dr. Ravi Bhushan**

YES, We Want To Hear From YOU!

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