

Herbade Conf
in N. Lands

Closing Session

Mario Rinvoluceri from Pilgrims, Canterbury, UK opened the session with a Curran-style lecturette. This meant that he asked a couple of us to listen with special care for the first 5-10 minutes of his talk. The two specially designated listeners then fed back to him what they had understood of what he had said. Two new special listeners were then asked for and the lecturette continued. The idea behind the Curran lecture technique is to encourage the rest of the audience to listen with the same task-focussed attention as the designated listeners and to allow the lecturer to see if his ideas are getting across accurately to at least two people in the audience.

In the first phase of his talk Mario focussed on the importance of the staff room in the in-service teacher training process. He suggested that we should leave Rolduc in a receptive state of mind, receptive to the fears anxiety and dissatisfactions of the colleagues we would meet the following Monday morning in our staffrooms. He insisted that colleague training/persuasion depended heavily on starting from the concerns of the colleague, and not from the position we happen to have reached. As an example of the need to start where the trainees were at, he cited the situation with trainees in China and suggested that if you are working with colleagues who believe in Grammar-Translation maybe the best thing to do is to show them ways of humanising and personalising this particular approach, rather than attacking the whole way they conceive of their teaching.

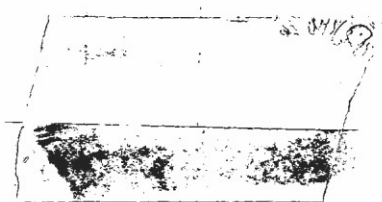
Mario then made a plea for communication to be thought of as more than a mere exchange of anodyne information. He suggested that communication in the FL classroom should have a personal, affective content. He stressed the need to de-trivialise the content treated in the FL classroom claiming that the quality of the message had a lot to do with the learners' unconscious and semi-conscious relationship with the medium, the target language.

First exercise

Since most colleagues agree that revising vocabulary is a useful activity Mario suggested that to show them a person-involving way of doing this might be a good way of starting from where they are at rather than where we are at.

We were given about 20 elementary Spanish words and asked to imagine we had already met them in a lesson. To revise them we had to categorise them under one of the following geometric shapes:

In other words we were asked to put words we associated with triangles in the triangle category and words we associated with spirals in the spiral category etc..... We did the categorisation work entirely alone, without talking to our neighbours.



In the second phase of the exercise we compared our categorisations with our neighbours' and explained our associations.

Second Exercise

This focussed on getting students to ask questions, given that most colleagues will agree that manipulation of the interrogative forms when learning English from another tongue is very hard.

We were asked to write down 20 questions addressed to ourselves the answers to which could be of interest to another person. We did this individually and without talking to our neighbours.

After the writing stage I was paired off with a colleague and put all my questions to her, which she answered from her own life. In some cases I had to modify some of my questions, so for example my:

"Are you a good husband?"

became:

"Are you a good wife?"

She then put all the questions she had written to herself to me. We all worked this way in simultaneous pairs:

Third Exercise

This last exercise aimed at getting free discussion going and was the sibling activity from G. Moskowitz's Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Classroom.

We were asked to split up into the following four groups:

First born
Only children
Middle born
Last born

We were then asked to pair off and discuss our experience as whichever category we were with a neighbour.

To round the exercise off Mario asked us to form groups of three or four, bringing together one person from each category to exchange experiences.

Important source books for the kinds of person-centred exercises outlined above are:

Caring and Sharing in the FL Classroom, by G. Moskowitz, Newbury House, 1978. This is directed at all teachers of languages, including, Latin colleagues!

Learning English Words, by Morgan and Rinvulcri, Pilgrims Publications 1981, obtainable from 8 Vernon Place, Canterbury, England.

Grammar in Action, by Frank and Rinvulcri, Hüner in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and E.J. Arnold in the rest of the world.



Dit is een interview met Jan van Ek, lid van de projectgroep Moderne Talen van de Raad van Europa. Hij maakt zich sterk voor communicatief onderwijs.

Meneer van Ek, kunt u in het kort zeggen wat de bedoeling van deze bijeenkomst in Kerkrade is?

De bedoeling is om in internationaal verband de vertrouwdheid met een moderne benadering voor het vreemde talen-onderwijs bij docenten, vooral die betrokken zijn bij vernieuwingsprojecten in het onderwijs, te bevorderen en om gezamenlijk nieuwe ideeën uit te werken, die essentieel zijn voor de uitvoering van een aantal ontwikkelingen die op het moment aan de gang zijn in het onderwijs essentieel zijn. Het gaat er vooral om in deze conferentie een aantal idealen die zo langzamerhand wel geaccepteerd zijn in praktische lespraktijken om te zetten.

En dit zijn ook leraren uit twee landen, hè?

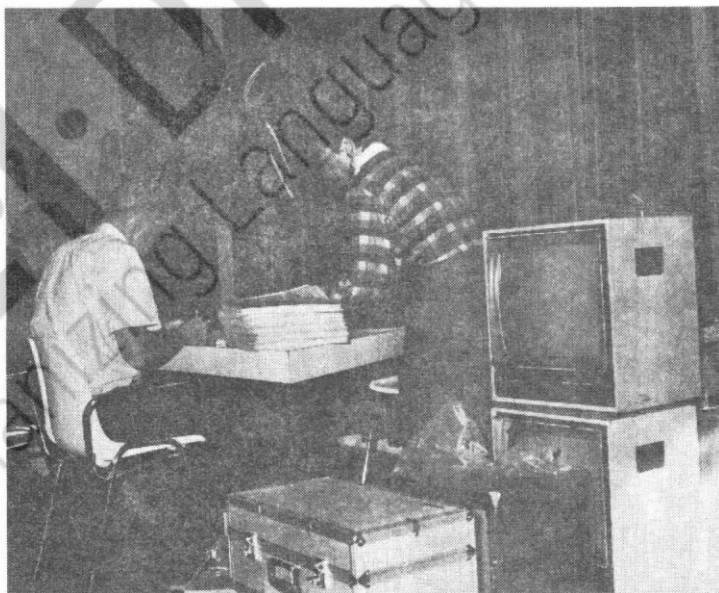
Ja, het zijn mensen uit Nederland en uit Duitsland en gehoopt wordt dat de volgende conferentie drie landen zal omvatten, Nederland, Denemarken en Duitsland en voor het merendeel mensen die betrokken zijn bij projecten waar vernieuwingen in het taalonderwijs worden ingevoerd.

Internationaal wordt er nog niet zo veel aandacht aan deze work-shops besteed, ook in de Raad van Europa niet. Dat zal in de toekomst wel gebeuren. Er zijn momenteel groepen zoals de pedagogische centra hier in Nederland, het Goethe-instituut samen met Duitse groepen die zo'n bijeenkomst organiseren, maar vanuit de Raad van Europa hebben wij ons tot nu toe niet of in zeer geringe mate beziggehouden met de bijscholing van leraren in het vreemde talen-onderwijs.

6 Follow-up Activities

Disguising the classroom. Creating a new atmosphere. Phantasy trips for sale.

preparatory activities



Footnotes:

For a survey of the project see: Michael Legutke and Wolfgang Thiel: Airport. Bericht über ein Projekt im Englischunterricht in Klasse 6. In: Westermanns Pädagogische Beiträge, Heft 7 / 1982, S. 288 - 299 (= Projekte nach den Sommerferien ed. by Christoph Edelhoff).

A full documentation and discussion of teaching techniques of the AIRPORT project is available from HESSISCHES INSTITUT FÜR BILDUNGS-PLANUNG UND SCHULENTWICKLUNG, Bodensteinstraße 7, D-6200 Wiesbaden.

GROUP 2.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AND THEIR FUNCTION IN THE CLASSROOM.

PARTICIPANTS:

Jürgen [REDACTED]
Detlef [REDACTED]
Linda [REDACTED]
Mario Rinvolucrí
Claire [REDACTED]
Gerah [REDACTED]
Fred [REDACTED]ki
Carl [REDACTED]
Gé [REDACTED]
Gudrun [REDACTED]
Brigitte [REDACTED]
Koos [REDACTED]



Report

This group actually experienced a number of activities. It was often stressed during our sessions that you must experience the activities, play the games yourself and that reading about them is but a very poor alternative. In this report a very short survey of what the group did will be given, followed by a number of activities. Readers are invited to try out these games and activities in their own classrooms.

- Day I: Four types of games were presented to the group.
- a. ice-breakers - a name learning game
 - interviewing each other
 - b. awareness games - 'alibi'
 - 'telling a personal anecdote'
 - c. information gap games - a route finding activity
 - communicating a pattern
 - d. exercises taken from 'the Silent Way'

The last game was played after one of the participants had made it clear that she was interested in these games and activities herself, but that she didn't know how to convince her colleagues at school that these activities may be very useful devices for language learning. The activity played in the group is described under group-presentation.

Day II: The group split up into three sub-groups, who adapted the games to class-room situations:
sub-group 1: discussed and adapted information-gap-games
sub-group 2: discussed role-play for various forms
sub-group 3: discussed and played mainly awareness games, especially for beginners.

Group evaluation:

Most participants said the workshop had been satisfactory, though too short: 'we stopped when we got properly started'. We all agreed that you must play and not just read about games and activities. In order to communicate to others you ought to play these games with them and have discussions afterwards. Most participants felt they had been offered useful activities they could play or adapt in their own classrooms. We had all particularly enjoyed the activity, presented to us by Mario, which might be used to convince your colleagues and which was presented by our group in the final plenary.

Group presentation:

To the final plenary one of the members of the group presented an activity, typical of the 'Silent Way approach', that Mario had introduced us to. The activity would also appeal to teachers using traditional methods, who don't like groupwork and hate noise in the classroom. The following sentence was written on the blackboard:

'If I had realized right from the start that my most respected and honorable colleagues would react in that peculiar way I would never have suggested the idea of playing games at all.'

The plenary (classroom) were asked to cross out either one or two or three words at a time (e.g. most (1), at all (2), from the start (3)). Each time one or more words have been crossed out the sentence must - in its new form - be read aloud.

In this way several things are practiced:

- if-sentences are drilled
- intonation is practiced
- vocabulary is taught.

At the same time this is a highly communicative activity, because the class is continuously negotiating meaning.

Those readers wishing to do this activity in their own classroom might find the above sentence less suitable for classroom use. Although it is not hard to find a similar example yourself, the following sentence, which was used in our group, is offered here as an alternative:

'If I had at all realized how the kids would feel when we split up so suddenly, I am now pretty sure I would not have told John to go off and live with that bitch of his!'

Games and Activities.

1. Ice-breakers:

Activities that may be used in groups at the beginning of e.g. workshops, by means of which members of the group may get to know each other in an informal way.

1.1. False Professions:

One participant says his name and a (false) profession: I'm John. I'm a fisherman. Number two repeats what number 1 said (you are John, you're a fisherman) and mentions his own name and (false) profession.

Thus the last member of the group has to repeat all names and all false professions. Because all names are repeated often, all participants know each other's names at the end of the activity.

If groupmembers wish to extend the game, they may do so by adding to the false profession any activity they like (sitting on the floor, picking one's nose etc.)

1.2. Interviewing each other:

In a limited period of time, say 3 minutes, participants interview as many members of the group as they can. Only two questions per interview. No question may be used twice.

A particular topic may be given (school, teaching). Afterwards groupmembers tell in a plenary what they have heard about each other.

2. Awareness games:

Activities in which people get somehow affectively involved. A sub-group of these games are so-called lying games.

2.1. Alibi:

Two students (groupmembers) leave the room and have to think of a good alibi for a period from 20.00 to 23.00 hours when some jewellery was stolen.

The first of the two is called in and questioned, then the other. If no inconsistencies can be found in their answers they have a perfect alibi, otherwise they are guilty.

This game can be played after the past tense and wh-questions have been dealt with (end of 2nd year). Hand-outs with questions may be prepared, the number of questions may be limited or all students may write down one question. These measures may have to be taken to give less-able students a chance to participate although a lot of spontaneity may get lost.

2.2. Personal Anecdote:

One member of the group tells a story, which is either completely true or completely false.

After the story the other participants may ask one question. They then split up in small groups to discuss whether the story is true or false. Then the truth value is probed in a vote.