

Student Process Exercises

by Mario Rinvolutri, co-author of *Ways of Doing*, CUP 99.

Since we teach a **how**, we have to decide, fairly arbitrarily, on a **what**.

There has to be some content in the language classroom.

In East Germany, in the 50's and 60's learners of English studied the child-abusive cotton mills of 19th century England and the many ills of capitalism. In Bangladesh they have a course-book that deals with helping kids to make the transition from a delta village to Dakha. The content of these English classes is the children's current reality. International course-books produced in UK often deal with middle-aged views of "youth topics" (why are there no teenage course-book writers ?).

What we propose in **Ways of Doing** is that students be helped to investigate their own process, both in and out of class. This gives your classes a person-centred focus and yet does not push the students to delve too deeply into themselves. It allows them to come up with text about themselves in areas they have not thought about before and so to express in English things they have never said in mother tongue.

We did a series of exercises in the workshop and here they are- try them out with your classes:

Activity 1 **Making Transitions**

Participants took down the following dictation:

- Am I better at going to school in the morning or at coming back in the evening?

In what specific ways am I better at one or the other?

- Am I better at waking up or at going to sleep?

- How easily do I adapt to change of climate?

- Am I better at starting a holiday or at picking up my normal routine after a holiday?

- Which do I do best, arriving at a friend's place or leaving?

- Add two questions of your own.

- Some people start phone conversation well, some are good at ending them- which am I best at?

- How good am I at starting a book?

- How good am I at making a new friend?

- How easy do I find thinking about making transitions?

After the dictation I asked the participants to group in threes. The level of noise in the room was full and healthy. People were clearly talking about something they found worthwhile.

Activity 2 : **The Last Seven things**

Ask each student to write down the last seven things she does before leaving her house or flat, the last seven things in the last five minutes before leaving.

When this is done ask each student to think of person she knows well and to write down the last seven things this person does before leaving their house. (Remind them of the third person endings)

Group the students in threes and ask them to compare their habit lists.

Activity 3. **Something I did not know last year**

Ask the students what date it is right now. Ask them if any one remembers what day of the week it was on this date last year.

Tell them about two things you know now that you did not know exactly a year ago, a couple of things you have learnt over the course of the year.

Ask the students to write two paragraphs about two things each of them has learnt this last year.

Tell them to stick their paragraphs round the walls- they then move around and read each others'.

These are three of the one hundred exercises that you will find in **Ways of Doing**.

Enjoy!

(This is now frequently said by UK speakers of English- they do not put in the reflexive- I would have corrected this in L2 speakers 10 years ago, but not any more- the language is in continuous movement.)