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Materials

Materials in line with the framework were written and used in 8 x 50-minute classes. Many used small-scale dictation and transcription. A small number of students vol-unteered for the classes and completed a questionnaire. All responses indicated that this type of training was beneficial, and all recommended this type of training for other learners. They particularly referred to the usefulness of using co-text and stress to aid decoding, and listening and reading the transcript simultaneously.

When writing materials of this type, we offer the following advice regarding level of listening ability: the speaker can adjust the degree of reduction (degrading); be careful not to slow down speech using software so that natural stress and rhythm is degraded; simplify tasks by adding longer pauses at syntactic boundaries; and grade the vocabulary. Field (2008) is a great source of theoretical and practical information on this topic.

Conclusion

We argue that L2 learners' needs are not being met by the comprehension approach and the impact of this is wide-ranging, given that listening ability impacts learners' success in all skills. Material does not necessarily need to be designed from scratch as current coursebooks can be adapted to create small-scale word recognition tasks in accordance with the framework above. The result may be that both teachers and learners are more satisfied with listening courses.

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3.2 Deconstructing jigsaw activities

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A jigsaw can be defined as a cooperative information gap activity with two stages. The initial *input stage* involves input of (usually textual) information, with learners accessing different information to create an information gap. The second *communication stage* involves communication of that information to each other in pairs or groups for a range of purposes. Most popular in communicative language teaching (CLT) are reading jigsaws, although many other types are possible (see below).

The origins of jigsaw

Despite being one of the most popular activity types in CLT, jigsaw originated in the mainstream cooperative learning movement in the USA, when psychologist Eliot

Aronson and colleagues (e.g. Aronson *et al.* 1978) were asked to help school authorities in Austin, Texas to reduce conflict and improve relations between children of different racial backgrounds during the period of desegregation in 1971. Their solution was 'The jigsaw classroom', a learning environment in which learners both depend on each other (known as *positive interdependence*) and take responsibility for their own contributions (known as *individual accountability*), meaning that each member of a group had to contribute for the group as a whole to succeed.

Jigsaw in language teaching

Jigsaw entered CLT in the late 1970s through Geddes and Sturtridge's listening jigsaws (1979), although it was reading jigsaws that were to catch on during the 1980s; these were made popular by the OUP *Headway* series, and are still common in coursebooks today. As they were seen primarily as a means for skills practice in language teaching, important aspects of the original jigsaw activities were lost, including the principles of positive interdependence and individual accountability, the potential of jigsaws for helping students to learn declarative content (e.g. lexis and grammar) and the opportunities they provide for a focus on higher-order thinking skills.

Another often neglected feature of jigsaws is their ability to support differentiation through the use of same-ability 'expert groups' during the *input stage*, when groups receive texts matched to their ability level, and mixed-ability 'home groups' during the *communication stage*, when learners work together to foster peer understanding. This highlights another often overlooked attribute of Aronson's original model; the potential for peer teaching. As CLT around the world moves increasingly into secondary and primary classrooms, I suggest that a renewed focus on these features can improve the efficacy of jigsaw activities, alongside the typical advantages perceived in language teaching (e.g. integrated skills practice, noticing, pushed output and negotiation of meaning).

Improving traditional reading jigsaws through synthesis questions

To improve the efficacy of reading jigsaws, typical comprehension questions can be supplemented with *synthesis questions* that encourage more detailed comparison, evaluation and synthesis of the texts during the *communication stage* of the activity. For example, if learners have just read three texts describing different jobs, rather than asking, 'What are his/her responsibilities?', a synthesis question would ask: 'Who has the most responsibility, and why?'

New ideas for jigsaw activities

In *grammar jigsaws* (Anderson 2019), expert groups work together to revise their knowledge of different areas of related grammar (e.g. past simple tense in one group, past continuous in another, and time expressions in another), and then get together in home groups to write a story using their combined revised knowledge during the *communication stage*.

Translingual jigsaws (Anderson 2019) work particularly well in multilingual classes where learners have their own devices (e.g. mobile phones) and access to the internet. Groups of students with different first languages access the same news story (usually chosen by the teacher), but using websites presenting the story in their own language.

They use a mediating language, such as English, to notice, discuss and evaluate differences in how the story is presented, what images and text is used in the headlines, and then go on to create their own version of the story that draws on all the perspectives they have accessed.

Finally, *whole class jigsaws* involve learners in classes of any size receiving brief facts from a story, after which they mingle to share these facts. Learners then congregate in home groups to try to create a story from all the facts they have acquired. Even if a group only has part of the original story, they can draw upon their combined creativity to complete the story, which can then be compared with stories created by other groups.

While jigsaw activities can be made effective in a variety of class types, critical evaluation of the ideas presented here is always encouraged; what works in my classroom may not work in yours!

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3.3 The Socratic seminar from a sociocultural perspective

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Socrates is known as one of the most significant teachers ever, and his questioning method has been very influential in education. My students had been engaged in debating tasks, mostly in speaking courses, but I searched for other task options that would make them speak, think critically, listen to each other's ideas, and not necessarily refute each other's arguments. In debates, I would put them into groups and then ask them to record their group work, so that they would speak English with each other. In debates we want to improve reasoning skills by avoiding logical fallacies, yet debates are more concentrated on proving each other wrong, and they polarise us. We 'otherise' each other because we listen to each other to find flaws in arguments. The focus in classroom discussions, however, can be on our strengths and similarities.

In a Socratic seminar, students sit in a circle where everybody is equal; help is provided by an outer circle of students sitting behind the members of the inner circle. This approach conforms to Vygotskian sociocultural theory and the more knowledgeable other or peer scaffolding (Vygotsky 1978). In a Socratic seminar, the outer circle students write notes about content, vocabulary and maybe sometimes even grammar. There might even be an observer, who gives feedback to a student in the inner circle about their participation manners and civility, usually using a rubric.

The instructor prepares critical thinking questions ahead of time on the topic of the discussion, sometimes from previously assigned texts or videos, and projects