Reading comprehension

Example 8

Open-ended or multiple-choice comprehension items based on a text are well-known test formats. However, there is no need to base comprehension items on texts alone. Timetables, calendars, tables and notices are just a few of the sources for task-based comprehension items.

August

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Read the following carefully and write out the dates:

Today is the first of August. Ann is now on vacation. She has ballet lessons every other Thursday. What will be the date for her last ballet lesson?

_____

She plans to go swimming on the last two Sundays. On what dates will she go swimming?

_____

She has a dental appointment on the first Monday in August. What date will she go to the dentist?

_____

She has to register for school on the last Friday in August. When is the registration?

_____

Fig. 8: teacher-designed materials

Note that there has been a serious attempt to make the questions as realistic as possible in that what they ask the pupil to do with the calendar is the sort of thing that we would generally use a calendar for.

Example 9

Read the sentences. Write the correct names next to the places.

Mr. Chan was born in Kowloon. Mrs. Chan was born in Kowloon too. They had two daughters, Amy and Lisa. Amy and Lisa were not born in Kowloon. They were born in the New Territories. Mr. Lee was born in China. He came to Hong Kong in 1946. Mrs. Lee was born in Hong Kong.
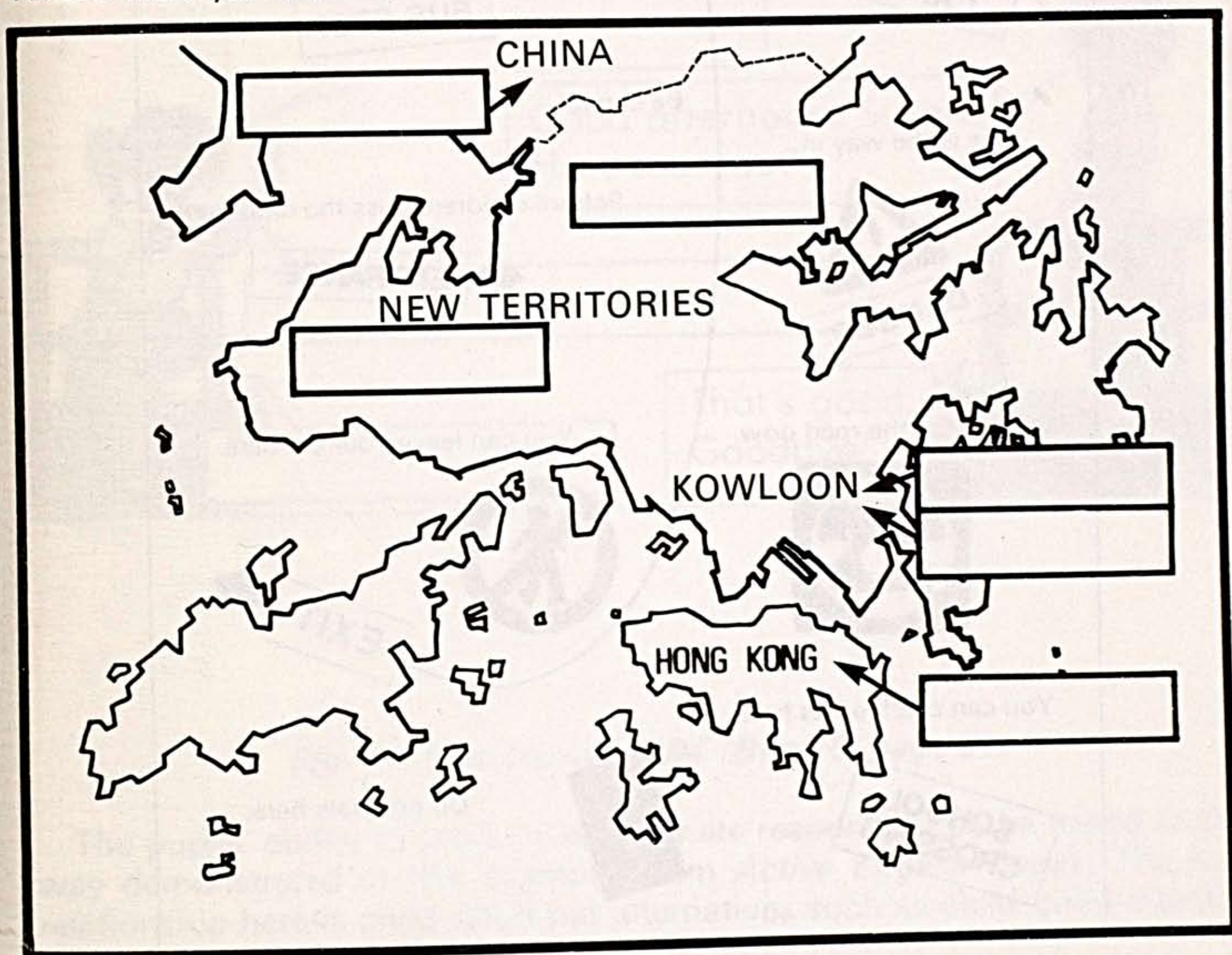
Where were you born?

Fig. 9: from Young et al., 1984 (Workbook 3B, page 42)

This reading comprehension activity is another example of a task-based comprehension item. The pupils do not have to respond with full sentences, they simply have to extract from the text the names of the people who were born in different places. The activity has much more surface appeal than one where the pupils have to answer WH—questions.

The test writer designing this sort of reading comprehension item could equally require a non-verbal response by asking the pupils to underline or circle things on the calendar or map. However, care should be taken in the design of this type of item not to set a multitude of totally unrealistic tasks. This is a temptation, because meaningless tasks are often easier to think of than meaningful ones.

Example 10

This is the way out.

There is a telephone here.

P

CAR PARK

BUS STOP

Be careful.

This is the way in.

School children cross the road here.

!

DANGER

◄ ENTRANCE

Walk across the road now.

You can leave your car here.

You can catch a bus here.
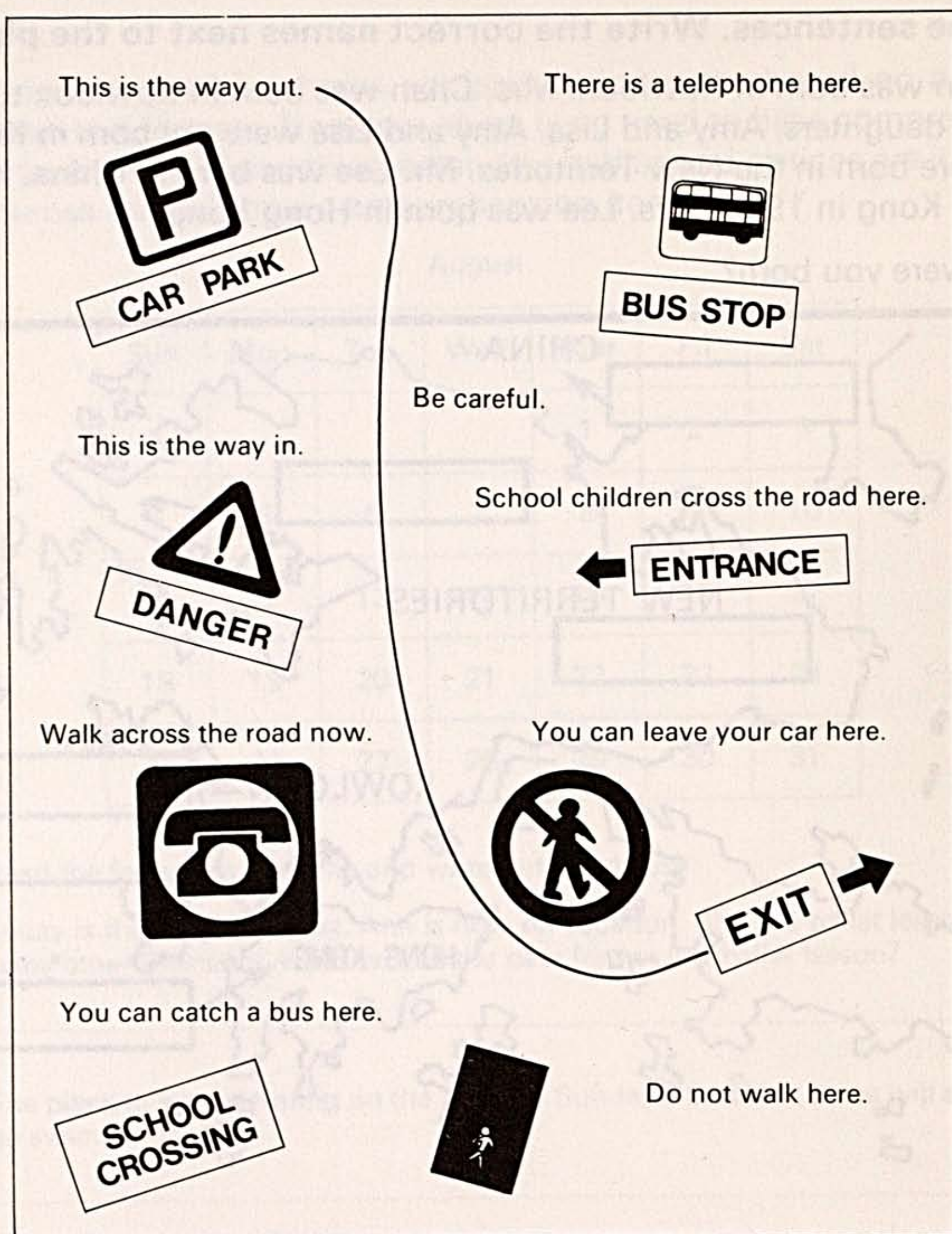
EXIT ►

SCHOOL CROSSING

Do not walk here.

Fig. 10: from Howe, 1984 (Activity Book 3B, page 6)

This activity is taken directly from *Active English Today*. The pupils need to be able to read and interpret signs of various sorts. These signs appear everywhere, (generally in English, when there are any words), and it is important that the pupils know what they mean. The fact that the signs are a common feature of Hong Kong life helps to make the activity meaningful.

This idea can be easily adapted. Although matching is a well known testing activity, it is rarely used to its full potential and most matching activities are very boring. They generally entail the matching of uncontextualised sentences that have been broken in half. There is no purpose to this sort of test item. A little bit of imagination and time can make matching items much more interesting and meaningful.

Appropriateness

Example 11

3

Good afternoon, Susan.
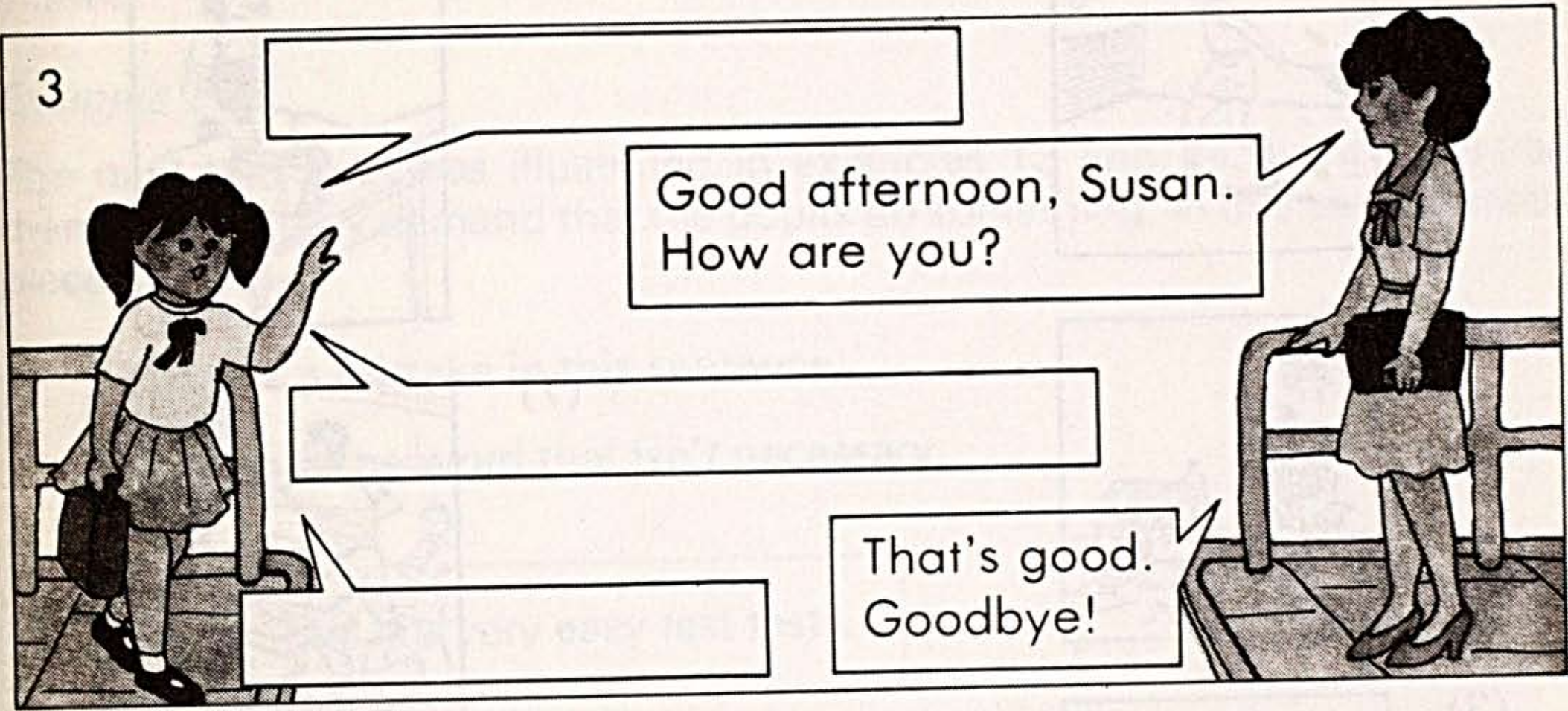How are you?

That's good.
Goodbye!

Fig. 11: from Howe, 1984 (Book 3, page 2)

The pupils' ability to produce appropriate responses can be tested in the way demonstrated in this example, from *Active English Today*. The role relationship here is child-adult but alternatives such as child-child interactions are just as easy to find.

Marking is an important feature with such items. They aim to test appropriateness in the first instance, accuracy, being only of secondary importance here. A useful marking scheme might be:

| 0	1	1
inappropriate	appropriate and inaccurate	appropriate and accurate

If the response is inaccurate, then the pupil would get no marks at all. If the response is appropriate, only *then* should it be marked for accuracy. Spelling should not be a consideration with this sort of item, since that can be tested elsewhere.

Care must be taken that all appropriate responses have been anticipated. There is a danger that very short responses will be discounted or penalised, but this is unfair since appropriate responses are indeed often short ones.

Listening comprehension

Example 12

Listening comprehension is one of the least tested skills in Hong Kong and elsewhere. This is due partly to neglect and partly to the practical problems involved.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)
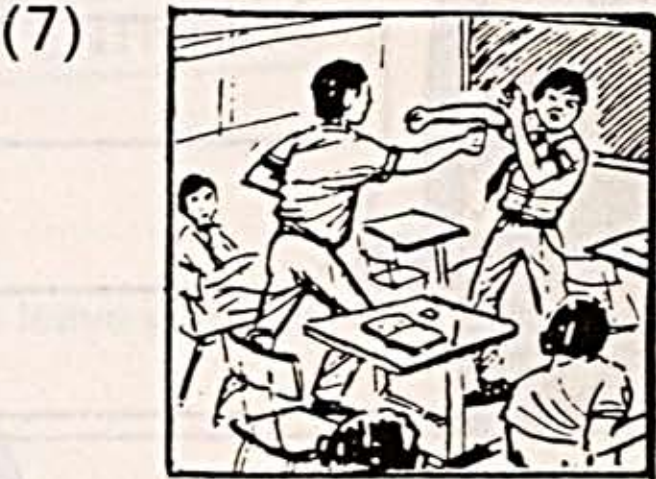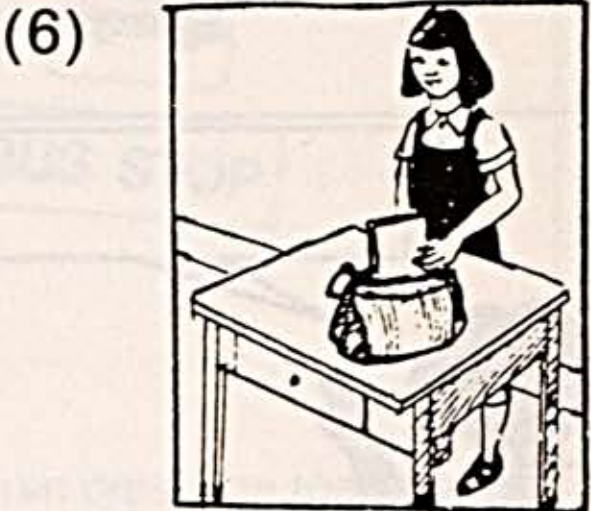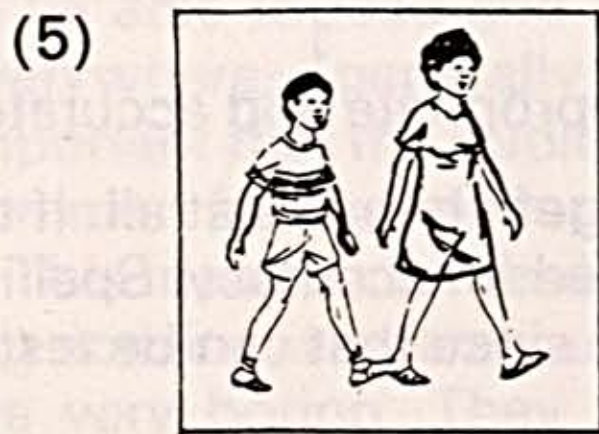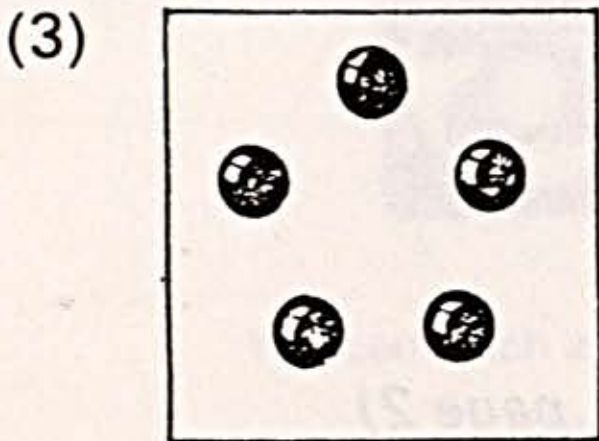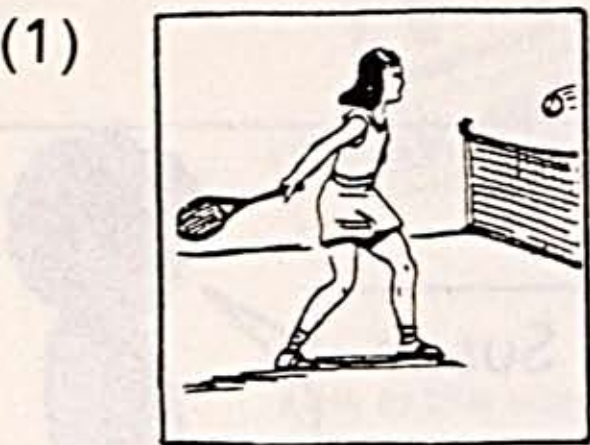
	True	False
1	✓	
2	✓	
3	✓	
4	✓	
5	✓	
6	✓	
7	✓	

Fig. 12: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

The activity illustrated in this example is a very simple true/false activity (which could also be used for reading comprehension The difficulty is dictated by the level of the prompt. For example, Item 1 could read—'Mary's playing tennis.' or, if it needed to be more difficult, 'Mary's about to hit the ball.' The pictures chosen should be from a context the pupils will recognise, and they should not) be too complex. Also, the questions asked should not demand minute scrutiny of the picture for features that could be easily missed.

Example 13

The next two activities illustrated in examples 13 and 14, have a similar theme in that they demand that the pupils do something, in this case, correct pieces of text.

There is a mistake in this sentence.

Cross out the word that isn't necessary.

This is a very easy test tests.

Fig. 13: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

The first one is fairly simple, it requires that the pupils follow a simple instruction. In this case the mistake is left to the pupils to find, but the activity could be made easier by making it quite clear what had to be crossed out.

Example 14

I'd like you to add some things to this paragraph.
First, put a full stop after 'school'. Now, put a comma after 'story books'.
The last sentence is a question. Put a question mark at the end of
the sentence.

There is a library in your school It is a very interesting place. There are story books magazines and newspapers. The library is a good place to spend your time. Do you like reading

Fig. 14: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

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The second activity represents something that might happen in the English classroom and requires that the pupils recognise and locate words and then perform a simple operation on the text.

Example 15

All right class, I'd like you to do something for me.

First, write your name on the top line of page 1.

Now put the date just under your name.

Next, number the pages.

Question 1 is right but question 2 is wrong. Put a cross next to question 2.

Would you please do question three.

Do not do questions 4 and 5.

Fig. 15: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

This item has a good classroom context and represents the type of activity that could take place in English. As is clear from the tapescript, the purpose of the item is to test the ability to follow instructions. These can be made simple or more complex, depending on the level of the pupils. The main focus of the item is clearly not grammar, but rather the successful completion of a task. This is important because it reflects the principles of the 1981 syllabus, which stresses the importance of meaningful activities.

Example 16

Tom's a happy boy. Draw his mouth.

Fig. 16: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

This is a straightforward 'listen and do' item which is fun to do. It tests vocabulary and simple instructions. Hundreds of variations are possible with this type of activity.

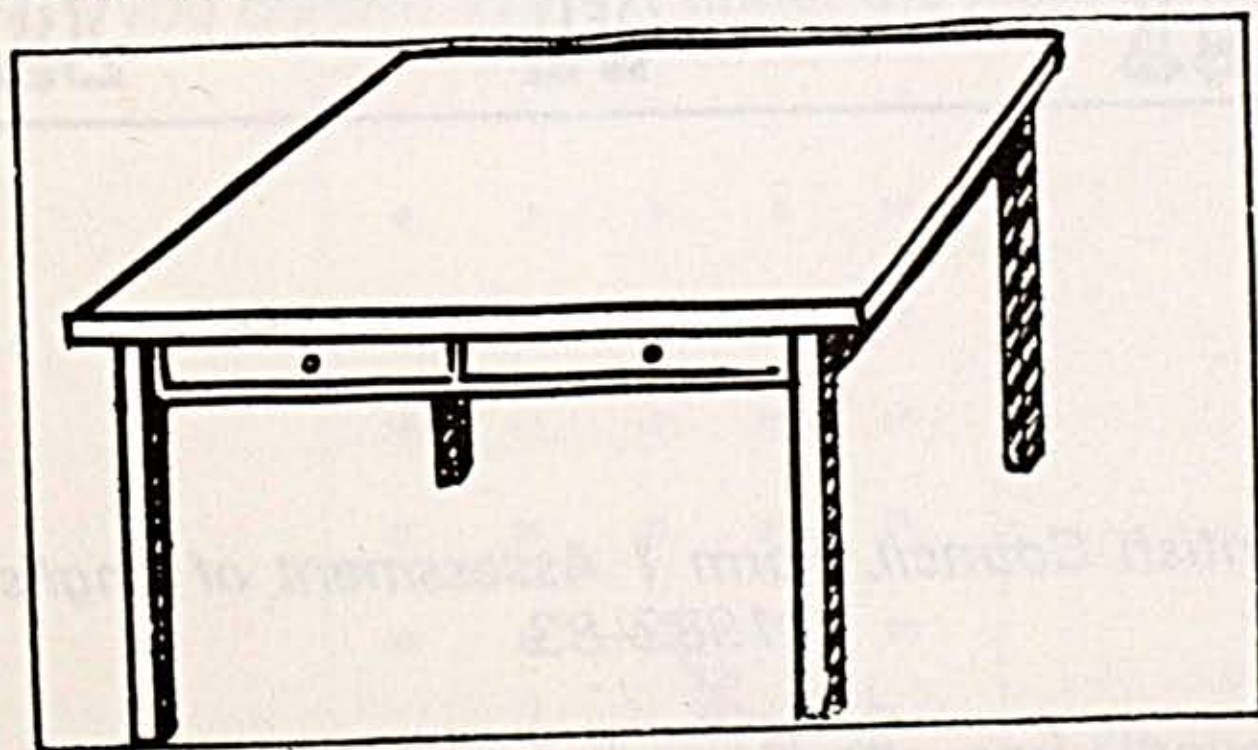*Example 17*

Draw two apples on the table.

Fig. 17: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

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This is also a 'listen and do' item. It should be noted that young children take a long time to draw things. This item was originally tested using books, as opposed to apples, and we were surprised to see that the pupils were taking such a long time drawing the books that they missed the next three questions in the test! It is important that test writers observe the pupils during the pre-test phase of a listening test so that they can pick up unpredictable problems that will invalidate the results of the test unless they are spotted in time.

Example 18

Linda has short hair and is wearing trousers. Write her name under her picture.
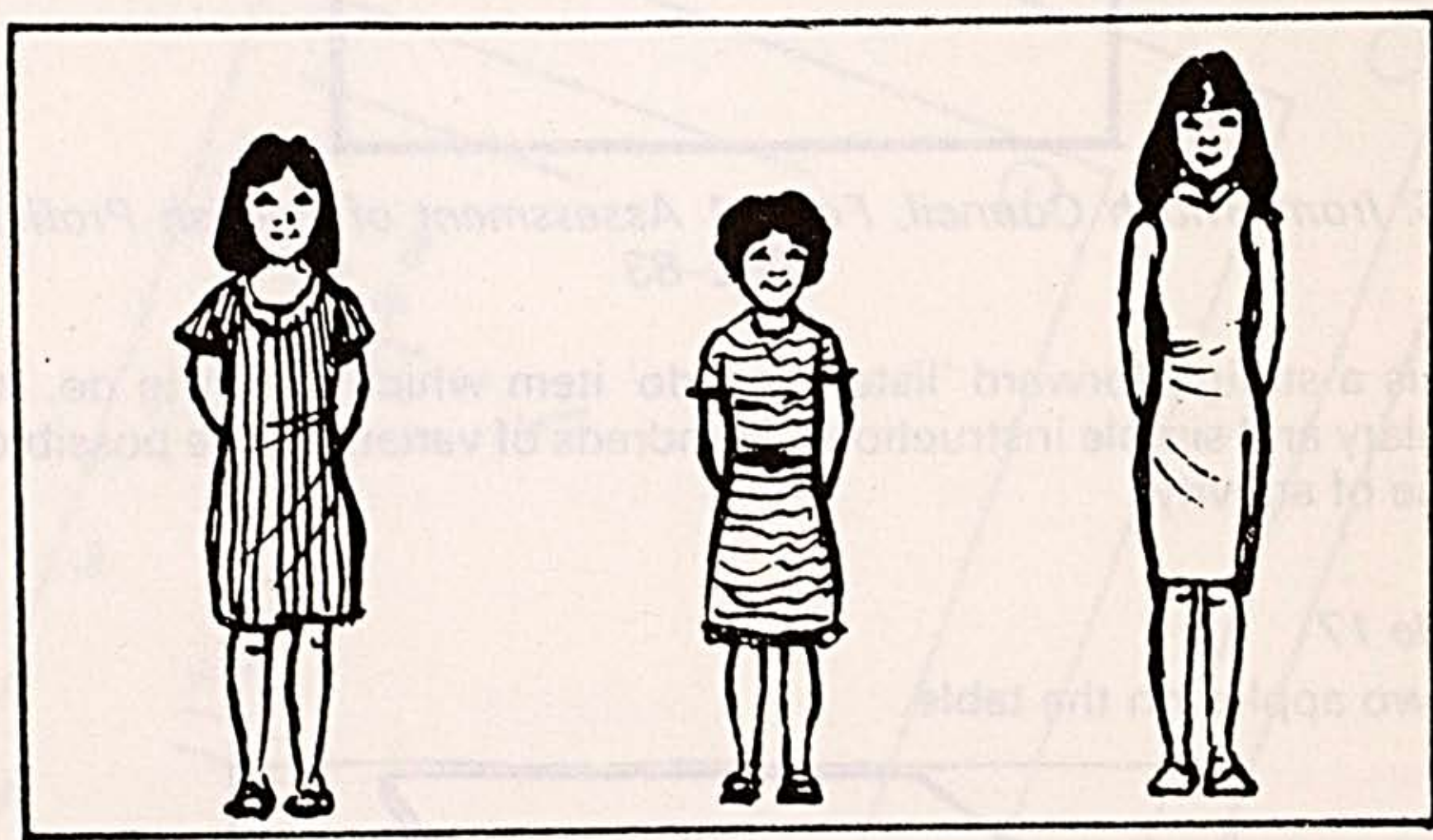

Fig. 18: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

Recognising people from short descriptions is a frequent occurrence, and this type of activity is fairly realistic from that point of view. A similar format can be used to test comparative and superlative forms.

Example 19

Look at the table about Sam, Tom and Sally.

(A) Who is the oldest child?

(B) How much does Sally weigh?

(C) Who is the tallest child?

Sam	Tom	Sally
10 years old	11 years old	9 years old
40 kg	39 kg	38 kg
1.5 m	1.49 m	1.42 m

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

Fig. 19: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

This type of item tests the notions of height, weight and age. Interpretation of a table is a realistic activity, both in English and other subjects, and also occurs outside the classroom fairly frequently.

Example 20

Join 3 and 7. Join 3 and 9. Now draw a line from 7 to 28 and another line from 9 to 28. Finally, draw a line from 3 to 28 and another line from 7 to 9. What have you drawn? Write it under the picture.

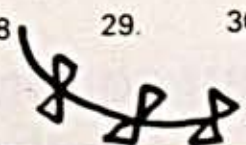| 1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
16.	17.	18.	19.	20.
21.	22.	23.	24.	25.
26.	27.	28.	29.	30.

Fig. 20: from British Council, Form 1 Assessment of English Proficiency, 1982–83

Items such as this one are useful ways of testing the ability to follow directions in space. Pupils have to follow simple instructions and draw lines. When they have finished they are asked to write down what they have drawn.

Example 21

A: What are you doing tomorrow morning John?

John: Well I'm going shopping at 11 o'clock and I'm going to the beach at 12.

A: What are you doing before that?

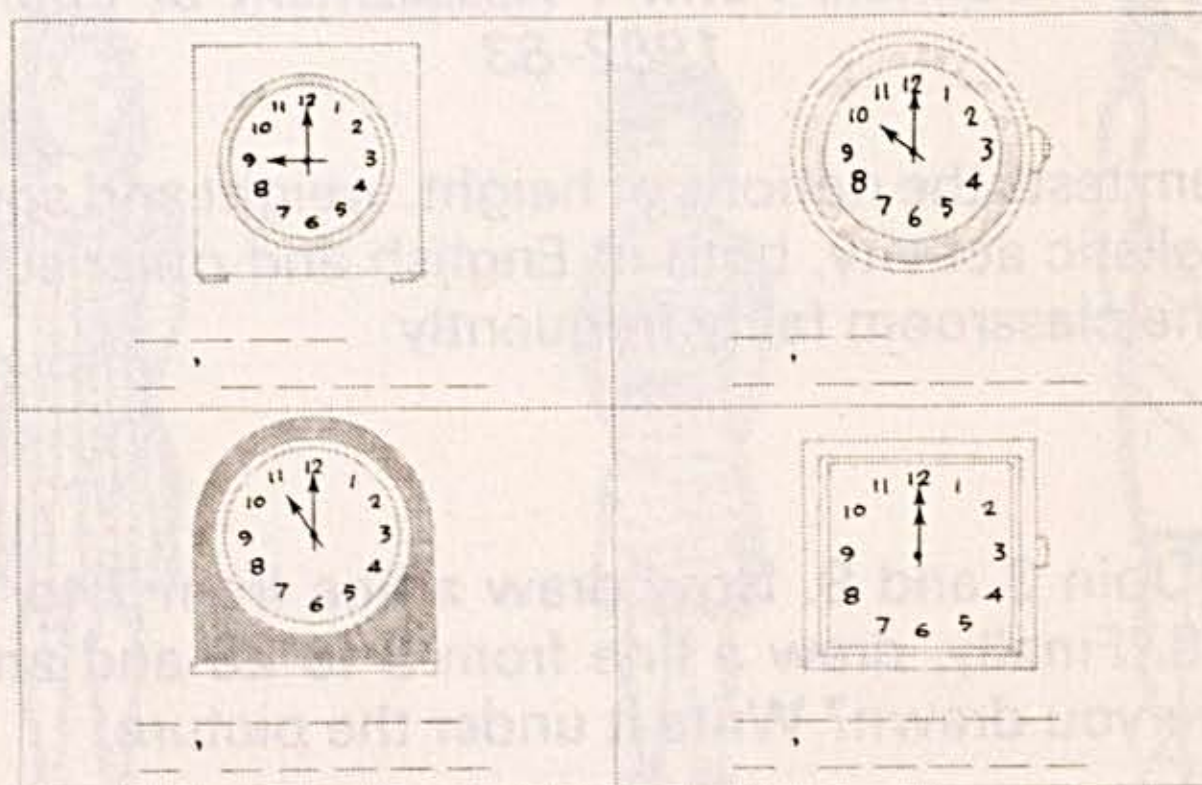John: Oh, at 10 I'm going to the dentist and at 9 o'clock I'm having breakfast.

Fig. 21: from Howe, 1984 (Activity Book 1B, page 15)

This test item uses the present continuous tense in a very realistic way. It is a fairly difficult activity, that tests the pupils' ability to pick out relevant information and the ability to cope with problems based on clocks and time. The illustration is taken from *Active English Today*.

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Example 22

Teacher: David what do you want to be when you grow up?

David: Well, I thought I wanted to be a teacher but now I think I'd like to be a policeman.

Teacher: Really! What about you Mary?

Mary: Oh, that's easy. I want to work in a hospital—I want to be a nurse.

Teacher: How about you John?

John: Well, I've always wanted to be a teacher.

Teacher: And you Susan?

Susan: Oh, either a doctor or a nurse but really I'd like to be a doctor.
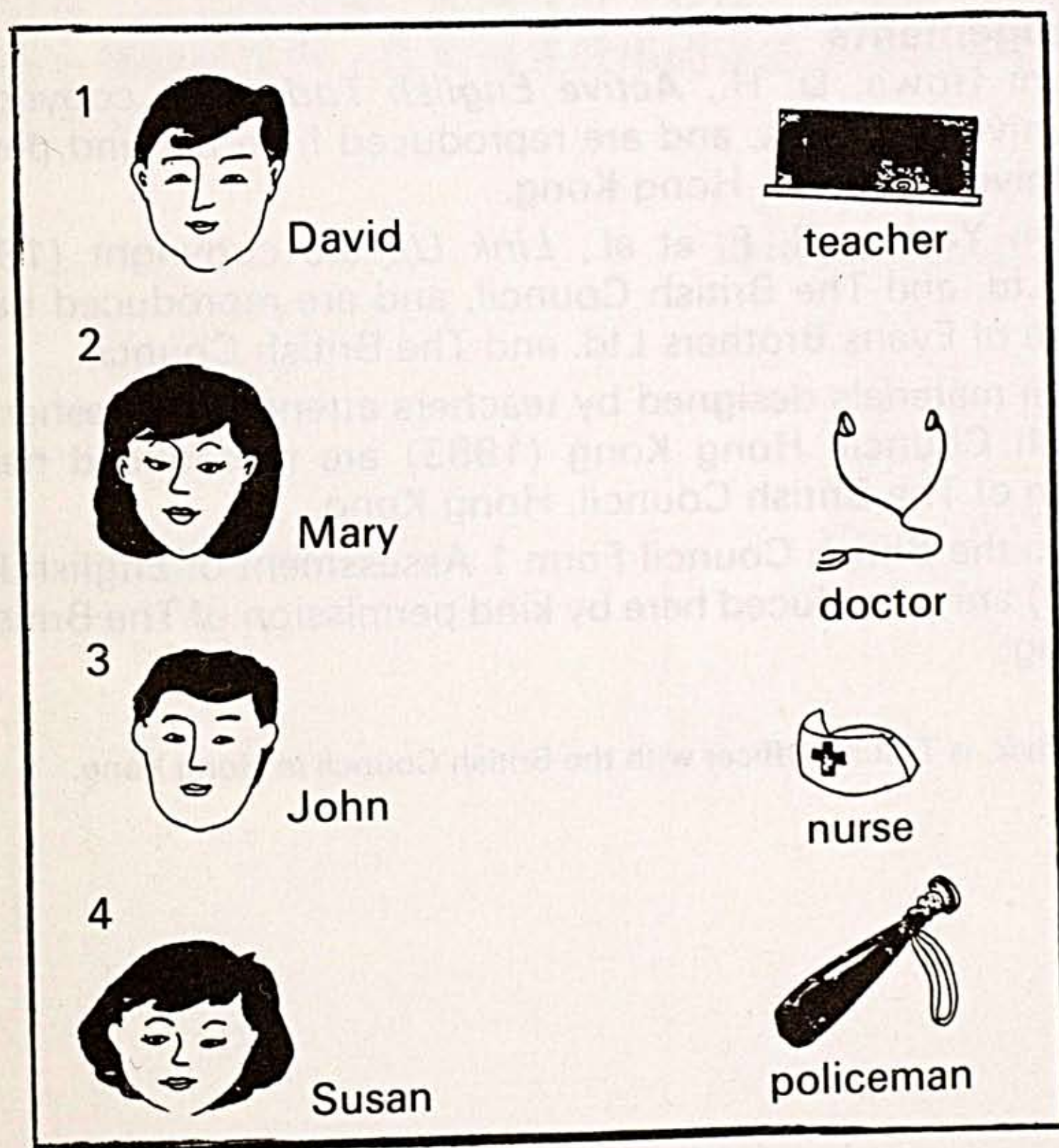

Fig. 22: teacher-designed materials

In this example the pupils have to listen to a short dialogue and join up the person with the job. It is important to note that there is a minimal amount of reading and writing involved in this activity. There is a danger that listening tests will fail to test listening if there is a heavy reading or writing element.

Note

1. The 1981 Primary School syllabus in Hong Kong was implemented in 1984 (Stage I: classes 1–3) and will be completed in 1985 (Stage II: classes 4–6).

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是要

香港小學英文科測驗及傳意教學課程

　　香港教育署課程發展委員會在一九八四年頒佈新訂的「傳意教學課程大綱」，強調語文在傳意和應用方面的重要性，同時要注意及照顧學生的學習動機、興趣和需要。本文作者根據這個課程大綱，探討本港小學英文科測驗的模式和方法。

　　新課程綱要有專章討論測驗，本文作者認為目前的測驗方法和評核標準，亦應配合改革。他認為測驗可以幫助教師了解和量度學生的進步情況，測驗內容應以學生實際應用語文的技巧為主，要盡量持續進行及避免形式化。

　　本文分引言、文法及辭彙、閱讀理解、聆聽、評核標準五部分。作者以現有的新編小學教材為例，說明傳意教學的測驗方法和評核標準，並強調以實用性為主。

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CHILDREN TEACH CHILDREN: AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT IN RURAL SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Theodore S. Rodgers

What sort of educational innovations are possible in areas with minimal physical facilities, minimally trained teachers, overcrowded classes, and few, if any, materials resources? One possibility is to use *older* students as *tutors* for younger students. This approach promises younger students individual instruction and attention otherwise impossible to provide and gives older students focussed requirements for material review, mastery, and presentation to another.

An experimental program was designed to test this possibility with several total school populations. The basic plan was to pair every student in the three earliest grades of primary school with a tutor from the upper three grades in the same school. Each standard-one student would have a standard-four tutor, each standard-two student, a standard-five tutor, and each standard-three student, a standard-six tutor. Several procedures for making the pairings were tested, school scheduling plans to make possible twice-weekly meetings between all pairs were designed and revised, teacher strategies for creating and maintaining pair work were suggested, materials, and activities to facilitate the early stages of pair interaction were constructed, and detailed lesson plans and a Teacher's Resource Book for structuring and supporting pair work were prepared. In the longest experimental period, the pair meetings occurred twice a week for a full class period for four months.

Generally speaking, administrators, teachers, and the students themselves reported the four-month experiment a success and promising in terms of more ambitious plans to expand the pair project.

The content for the initial experiment was English language instruction. The goal was to have the older students become material writers for their younger partners. Thus, the older students would develop *writing* skills while preparing stories, word problems, etc. The younger students would develop reading skills in receiving and reacting to their partner-prepared materials.

Some of the lesson plan steps for organising the program and carrying it out are summarised below:

SUGGESTED LESSON SEQUENCE FOR EACH ONE/TEACH ONE PAIRING: STANDARD III AND STANDARD VI SCHEME (OUTLINE ONLY)

WEEK 1   Books* are made available to Standard VI students. These students pick a book after browsing, to prepare for reading to younger children. Standard VI students do practice readings of the book(s) they have selected.

WEEK 2 An even number of Standard VI and Standard III students meet together in an open area to play the 'Matching Game.' (from Teacher's Resource Book)

Play the game (which randomly pairs each Standard VI students with a Standard III student).

Pairs now prepared to read the sentences from back of Matching Game cards which each player has.

Pairs go to designated reading desks.

Students begin reading together using books Standard VI students have been practising with.

WEEK 3 Standard VI student completes reading aloud and helps Standard III students to read the story on his/her own.

Spot Checking of Standard III students' reading.

Play 'Treasure Hunt,' 'Word Search' Games. (Game I step 17—Teacher's Resource Book)

Play the 'Sentences Construct' Game. (Game II step 18—Teacher's Resource Book)

(The above games are all reading games which use as base whatever book the paired students have been reading together.)

WEEK 4 Standard VI students check reading again of story with Standard III child. Conduct prepared Oral Interview with Standard III child. Standard VI students must ask information and write down the answers. Each Standard VI child will prepare identical interview forms with teacher's help before the interview period.

* Books are a multiple-copy project-developed set of 40 titles (approximately 200 books in total set), covering skill levels from the non-reading level (picture books) to Standard VI reading level.

ORAL INTERVIEW FORM
(Standard VI student conducts with Standard III partner)

    a.   What is your name? _____

    b.   Where do you live? _____

    c.   What is your favourite animal? _____

    d.   What place would you like to visit? (the capital city, friend's house, Singapore, England, U.S.A., moon, bottom of the ocean, mystery place, etc.) _____

    e.   How would you like to travel? (walk, bicycle, boat, train, airplane, rocket, dreammobile, kite, etc.) _____

    f.   What might you see there? _____

    g.   How would you get back? _____

Play another game if time permits (from Teacher's Resource Book).

WEEK 5 Standard VI students (after getting oral interview information) write a 8–16 pp. illustrated story for their Standard III partners. Story should include partner's name in the title, e.g. 'Dem Takes a Trip,' 'Aishah Goes to the Moon,' etc. The story uses interview information as framework for writing.

All books shown to Standard VI teacher for comment and *minimal* editing. (Books returned to writers to make changes.)

WEEK 6 Standard VI and Standard III pairs meet again. Standard VI students present stories to partners and read together a couple of times. Stories are given to Standard III partners.

WEEK 7 Standard III students write 'guided composition' thank you letters to their partners.

FORMAT FOR 'THANK YOU' LETTER

Date _____

Dear _____,

Thank you very much for the book _____
I liked reading it. I really liked the part about _____
_____. Now I would like to read a book about
_____. I hope to see you
again on _____.

Your friend,

_____

WEEK 8 Pairs meet together to show their books to other pairs. Play Pair Trade Games (from Teacher's Resource Book).
Play favourite games.
Younger students read 'their' books to other younger students in pairs.

A few comments in conclusion

We found that the most successful means of pairing students was according to some obviously random procedure like the 'Matching Game' mentioned. More systematic attempts to pair students by educational level, sex, and ethnic background proved not only cumbersome and time-consuming but resulted in resentment among some of the pairs. In the 'chance-pairing' students seemed willing to accept their pairings as determined by fate. Of approximately four hundred pairings, we found it necessary to re-adjust only two pairings due to some obvious incompatibility.

In the later stage of the project, the old students wrote and then presented books they had written to the younger students. These books were (1) plotted about an imaginary trip taken by their younger partner, (2) composed and illustrated by the older students (with editing help, as requested, from the teacher), (3) read to the younger partner until the partner could read the story independently, and (4) finally, given to the younger partner to keep and to read to others.

Most of these younger students had never had a book of their own before. To have a book about themselves, that they could read, made especially for them by a respected older member of the school community combined for these students some of the most overwhelming incentives to reading I have ever witnessed. Many of the younger students literally slept with these books until they turned to dust.

Professor Ted Rodgers, is currently Professor of Psycholinguistics at the University of Hawaii in Manoa. His paper in this journal relates to work he did when serving as Advisor on Language Planning and Language Education to the Ministry of Education in Malaysia.

提要

兒童可以互相教導嗎？
——一個在東南亞農村教學的經驗

　　東南亞的農村，由於缺乏受訓的英語教師，教材及教學設施不足，加上教室空間有限，外語教學便面臨重大的困難。作者面對這種環境，想及英語教學需要創新，於是設計了一個爲期四個月的教學實驗計畫。

　　實驗開始時，教師首先把兩個年級不同的學生編成一組，高年級學生便成爲低年級學生的導師。高年級學生根據教師訂下的計畫，爲低年級學生編寫輔導教材，並引導他們閱讀及理解有關材料。高年級學生在編寫閱讀資料時，漸漸發揮了創作能力，在計畫的後期，已經能夠把他們身邊的人物，改寫成故事。低年級的學生經高年級同學引導後，亦能培養出閱讀能力。作者在本文介紹這個方法，可作爲在條件不足的情況下推行外語教學的參考。

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TWENTY PROPOSITIONS ON TEACHER TRAINING: TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHER PREPARATION

Peter Strevens

Introduction

As has often been observed, notably by H. H. Stern during discussions at the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics in 1983, the theme of which was the preparation of teachers of languages (Alatis et al., 1983) we are frequently at a disadvantage through the absence of a philosophy of teacher training. Since then, the publication of Dr. Stern's monumental book *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* (Stern 1983) has provided a good part of such a philosophy. This paper offers some further contributions in the same direction.

A preliminary word is necessary on the subject of terminology: the terms 'teacher training', 'teacher preparation', 'professional advancement', and doubtless others, are all in current use though with little distinction or definition. The terms all refer to a nexus of ideas, events, techniques, trends, concerned with ways in which teachers of a foreign language receive an orientation towards their occupation. In this paper the term *teacher training* will be used as a cover term for the process as a whole.

It is the intention of this paper to suggest that behind the great variety of different teacher training programmes to be found across the world, there exists nevertheless a *coherent pattern*. An attempt will be made to describe this pattern through a series of twenty Propositions, each of which will be followed by a comment.

Proposition 1: Basic pre-suppositions

The training of teachers of foreign languages (LTT) rests upon three basic pre-suppositions:
  (i) the *learning* of languages is systematically improved by good teaching;
  (ii) the *teaching* of languages is systematically improved by good teacher training;
  (iii) teaching has the status and characteristics of a *profession*, within which teacher training is a central element;
in consequence of these pre-suppositions the improvements in teaching and hence in learning brought about through LTT are not simply contingent or random.

Comment The thrust of Proposition 1 asserts that teacher training is not random and not anarchic; and that LTT is systematically associated with improvement in language learning. These improvements are in the *quality*, the *effectiveness* and the *speed* of learning. In short, Proposition 1 states that training helps teachers help learning. Of course, language learning and

teaching are far from perfect: there are many countries where teacher training is given, yet where the effectiveness of teaching and learning remains low. However, these Propositions are concerned with a philosophy, a model, of what *can* be achieved, even though imperfections in the system often prevent the ideal from being attained.

Proposition 1 also asserts that teaching (including language teaching) is not just an *occupation*, it is a *profession*, that is, a particular category within occupations, having certain characteristics that will be defined in later Propositions. As a preliminary illustration of the difference between an occupation and a profession one might take *welding*, or *house painting*. Various kinds of training can be provided for people entering those occupations, yet their training remains different in *kind*, in *motivation* and in *philosophy* from the training which is systematically offered within a profession.

Proposition 2: LTT within Education
LTT stands within the field of *education* as understood throughout the globe; it aspires to share 'the principles of good teaching' as understood from time to time by leaders in this field.

Comment   So LTT does not exist in isolation, in a vacuum. It is manifested in every country; it supports and is supported by the broader profession of *education* as a whole. LTT is clearly within the humanities: it is not a branch of science, nor of linguistics, nor of psychology—although it can have fruitful links with each of them. It is *international*. And it evolves through time. Today's most advanced examples of language teacher training will seem outmoded in fifteen years from now. It is of the essence of education, and therefore of LTT, that there should be a conscious and continuous effort at understanding and directing the intellectual effort in LTT towards even greater effectiveness and relevance.

Proposition 3: Qualities of a Good Teacher
It is self-evident that a central aim of LTT in preparing 'good teachers' is the imparting and refinement of classroom skills, both of the 'class management' type and of the 'language pedagogy' type; in addition, a good teacher needs three further minimum qualities or characteristics the promotion of which, if they are not already present by virtue of the trainee's previous history, must form part of LTT:—
  (i)   an adequate level of personal education as a citizen;
  (ii) a suitable personality and sufficient emotional maturity;
  (iii) a command of the foreign language at least sufficient for the circumstances in which he/she will teach.

Comment   It follows from this Proposition that a teacher should be an educated person. Just what level of personal education he or she should have depends on the society he or she lives in, the educational level (primary, secondary, tertiary, etc.) he proposes to teach in, and the educa-

itional norms in that society for teachers at that level. But it is clear that a teacher is by definition an educated person, not an uneducated one. What is more, the teacher requires emotional stability, which in turn means that he must be old enough to have attained emotional maturity. And the teacher of a foreign language must possess a sufficient command of the language concerned—'sufficient' being again interpreted according to the society and the educational level where he or she will work.

Proposition 4: Characteristics

The patterns of organisation of LTT directly reflect some principal characteristics of a *profession*, namely:
  (i) *selection*, for training and thereafter for admission as a teacher;
  (ii) *training*, in skills, knowledge and understanding;
  (iii) *standards*, acceptable to the profession, constantly monitored and improved;
  (iv) *a social role* as part of education: cf law, medicine, architecture;
and the basic tenet that, since professional training is available, the admission to teaching of professionally untrained teachers is undesirable.

Comment   Members of a profession share a sense of pride in service and commitment to a social purpose. Equally, 'amateurs'—i.e., un-trained teachers—are not generally welcomed. It is of course true that a great many excellent teachers are self-taught, and that preference for those with training only begins when good-quality training is actually available and can be seen to produce worthwhile effects. It is worth adding that once a profession comes into being within a particular country a professional organisation almost inevitably becomes necessary. Such teachers' associations often start at local level, spread to become nation-wide, then join with international associations. The teaching of English as a foreign language has two such associations, one based in Britain (the *International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language*—IATEFL), the other based in the United States (*Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*—TESOL). The point being made is that these organisations have an important function in the evolution and cohesion of the profession from which they sprang.

Proposition 5: Selection

Selective entry to teacher training, rather than 'free' or open entry, implies that not all would-be teachers will prove to be suitable: some reliable contra-indications can be seen before training while others develop during training; to undertake the process of selection and training entails a responsibility for subsequent honest evaluation of the individual before admission as a teacher.

Comment   This Proposition asserts a 'gate-keeping' function for entry to the profession. But selection of those likely to be good (or at least adequate) teachers also implies rejection of those unlikely to be adequate teachers. And while it is difficult enough to refuse entry to a course of training, it

becomes more difficult to reject a person even for clear indications of unsuitability that develop during training, while rejection at the end of training often carries undertones of heartbreak and personal grief. Nevertheless, the evaluation of a would-be teacher's suitability must be undertaken honestly, in the knowledge that an unsatisfactory teacher can cause immense damage, educational and emotional, to himself/herself and to generations of his/her students.

Consequently, to have completed a course of training is insufficient: for selection a teacher must have *successfully* completed training.

Proposition 6: Teacher Development

LTT assumes that, once trained, a teacher's professional competence does not remain static but develops throughout his/her professional life, following three sets of principles of teacher development:

(i) *perfectibility* (of teacher training): given that learning is improved by good teaching, and teaching by good training, training in turn improves as a result of developments in the practical and intellectual bases of language teaching;

(ii) *progression* (of teacher's competence): the teacher's competence evolves gradually over time, fed by his experience, thought and the growth of understanding;

(iii) *continuity* (of career development): the teacher's development is potentially career-long, hence opportunities for further training are desirable from time to time throughout his/her career.

Comment These principles are central to LTT. They indicate a necessity for the intellectual 'steering' and guidance for the profession which were touched on in Proposition 2. They also remind us that the teacher's first day in the classroom after completion of training represents a beginning point in his development, not an end point. In principle, a teacher progresses in competence throughout his/her career.

Proposition 7: Disciplinary Links

In company with other fields of education, LTT draws upon ideas, concepts, principles, philosophies, from many disciplines—the philosophy of education, classroom research, linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, descriptive linguistics, discourse analysis, logic and scientific method, electronic engineering and others—in the humanities and in the sciences, without being subordinate to any single discipline; in recent years it has been particularly associated with *applied linguistics* (in the sense of 'a multi-disciplinary approach to language-related problems') while also remaining in close connection with the study of practical classroom-based activities and accepting that most of good teaching is an art and a craft.

Comment It is essential to realise what is being proposed here: not that *language teaching* draws on many disciplines, but that *language teacher training* (LTT) does so. It is through the teacher's understanding and

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incorporation into his professional awareness of such broad ideas that they may eventually and gradually affect teaching, not directly. So LTT is not just a matter of practical classroom technique: it also draws on ideas from many disciplines. LTT is not a branch of linguistics, nor is linguistics the only discipline with any important lessons for LTT. In any case, LTT generally takes its disciplinary content at one remove from the disciplines themselves—at least in the British and Canadian formulation—through the mediation of *applied linguistics*. AL is not the same as LTT. But AL is the only multi-disciplinary field which by definition exists to be aware of ideas and developments in any single discipline that can contribute to the solution of language-based problems, including language teaching; and which simul-taneously confronts theory with the knowledge of practical problems that need to be solved. Ideally at least, applied linguistics supplies the disciplinary links that are central to language teacher training.

Proposition 8: LTT's Own Intellectual Basis

LTT is currently changing from a largely pragmatic, technique-centred activity (i.e. centred in methodology, with 'Does it work?' as the sole criterion for adopting or rejecting a teaching technique) into a profession with a philosophy or paradigm or set of principles against which activities can be gauged in addition to observing their surface validity; this philosophy of the language learning process (LLP) must be consistent with the 'universe of discourse' of language learning and teaching, and not be imposed from a more distant universe; once established, a philosophy of LLP provides a motivation and justification for the teacher's exercise of methodological and instructional choice.

Comment   Until recent years it was common for LTT institutions to adopt one or other of two extreme positions: either that since teaching is a practical activity, LTT should also be chiefly oriented towards practicalities, with little or no intellectual content; alternatively, that LTT should be academic in nature, concentrating on theory to the virtual exclusion of practice. It is one of the most heartening of current trends that LTT seems to be moving towards a middle position, in which the inescapable practical needs of the teacher in the classroom (HOW) are backed by a sufficient illumination through principle and theory (WHY).

Proposition 9: Initial vs Further LTT

It is highly desirable for LTT to be undergone *before* a person is first employed as an autonomous 'class' teacher, i.e. *initial training*, to be distinguished from *further training* (often 'in-service training') for those with previous initial training followed by teaching experience; consequently *initial* training tends to be of longer duration, more heavily weighted towards practical classroom techniques, broader and more generalised in application, while *further* training tends to be shorter, more closely focussed on a particular area, and more likely to have a stronger theoretical content; further

training is desirable at intervals throughout a teacher's career, to keep him/her up to date, to revive flagging morale, to gain familiarity with new syllabuses or materials, for personal promotion, etc.

Comment   The general principle being presented here is that through a separation of *initial* ('pre-service') LTT from *further* (often 'in-service') training it is possible to effect two distinct developments: first, to put into initial training a preponderance of those practical skills he/she will need for classroom survival, together with sufficient understanding of principle and theory to maintain intellectual curiosity and permit the individual increasingly to work problems out for himself/herself; and second, to permit a wide range of subsequent specialisation by the teacher, in a framework of further training. This Proposition also foreshadows another (19) which implies that career-long opportunities for further training should be made available.

Proposition 10: General vs Special LTT

Two discrete kinds of LTT must be distinguished: *general* training to be a teacher regardless of the 'subject' or subjects the teacher may expect to handle, and *special* training as a teacher of a foreign language; in LTT, both kinds must be provided, since language teaching is a particular case of the general category of teaching, and language learners form a particular case of the general category of learners: neither general training without special training nor special without general is a sufficient initial preparation for teaching a language.

Comment   Although obviously in *further* training it is chiefly *special* training that is offered, *initial* training tends to comprise the whole of such *general* training as the teacher ever receives, together with the *special* training for at least survival needs as a teacher of the foreign language. The new teacher desperately needs, from his/her first day in the classroom, not only the *general* skill of being a teacher (regardless of the subject he is teaching) but also the special skill of teaching the foreign language.

Proposition 11: Typical Initial Training

The provision of initial training is typically in the form of an organised course, generally full-time, often intensive, in duration up to an academic year if postgraduate or up to 4 years if taken as a first degree or in replacement of a degree; long initial training courses generally indicate that trainees have been selected young, are receiving personal education as well as professional training, and are being given time and guidance for the growth of emotional maturity.

Comment   The interest of this Proposition lies in its attempt to bring into a single framework the great diversity between on the one hand 4-year courses containing both general educational content and vocational, professional content, and on the other hand short courses of 100 hours (e.g. the RSA *Preparatory Certificate*)[1] containing only basic special training in

foreign language teaching. Between these extremes, the commonest patterns are (i) a non-vocational university degree followed by a year devoted specifically to vocational training as a teacher, i.e., initial teacher training; (ii) a course lasting from one to three years of chiefly vocational training as a teacher. Not the least important reason for longer courses is the need to permit young candidates to gain emotional maturity through the natural process of growing older.

Proposition 12: Elements of Content

Courses of initial teacher training ideally contain, in an appropriate combination, three main elements:

(i) an element of training in *practical skills*, both of classroom management and of presentation and teaching techniques;

(ii) an element of *professional information*, i.e. knowing *about* teaching, learning, language, English, education etc.

(iii) an element of *principle and theory*, of understanding the fundamentals of learning and teaching.

Comment The crucial phrase to be noted here is 'in an appropriate combination'. A particular combination of practical skills, professional information, and principle and theory will be suitable for some circumstances but not for others. Nor should the impression be given that initial training typically consists of a rigid 3-part syllabus. On the contrary, there is and there should be great diversity in content, outlook, aims—and in the precise combination of elements to be developed for particular needs. See also Proposition 17.

Proposition 13: Need for Practice Teaching

Initial training in *practical skills* should provide the trainee with the greatest possible range of classroom experience, through observation, demonstration and participation; in particular, LTT programmes must include adequate quantities of supervised practice teaching of suitable learners.

Comment There is no substitute for supervised classroom practice teaching. It is the equivalent for the trainee teacher of the advice to someone learning to drive a vehicle, to 'get the miles in'. Because there are a number of activities to be mastered—physical activities, like learning where to stand, when to stand still and when to move about, like learning a range of standardised gestures for initiating various kinds of action, like talking (as little as possible) and keeping quiet (as much as possible), etc.—and mental activities, like observing each individual in terms of his learning progress, like keeping abreast of the momentum of the class as a whole, like identifying the onset of boredom, like side-stepping attempts to divert the course of the lesson, while still remaining alert to possibilities of quite unexpected opportunities for learning. While these activities can be described to one, and while one can observe them in demonstration lessons, nevertheless in the last resort the trainee teacher typically learns them best

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by *doing*: by experiencing the exhilaration of bringing off a minor coup in the facilitation of learning, and the minor disaster of being taken in by the joker in the class. One further comment: the shorter the amount of initial training, the more important becomes the provision of a core of supervised practice teaching.

Proposition 14: Relate LTT Expected Conditions
Courses of initial training should be related as closely as possible to the particular students and circumstances that the trainees expect to encounter, including familiarisation with syllabuses and teaching materials, pupil age and language background, class size and school organisation; at the same time these particular circumstances must be seen in relation to broader generalities, principles and theories.

Comment This Proposition reinforces the view that initial training courses need to be closely designed to meet the needs of the particular trainees. It also implies an essential interplay between practice and theory, as a result of which the trainees learn not only *what* to teach and *how*, but also something of *why*?

Proposition 15: Familiarity with the Foreign Language
The *information and knowledge* element of initial LTT courses should include the greatest possible familiarity with the nature of the language being taught, awareness of its varieties, knowledge of its lexical, syntactic, phonological and discoursal devices; the selection, quantity and depth of this content will depend chiefly on the duration of the course, the standard of attainment of the trainee, and the intended educational level of the teacher's employment.

Comment This Proposition is not concerned with the teacher's *command* of the language, but quite specifically with his/her *knowledge about* it. It is sometimes astonishing how little teachers know about the language they are teaching, and the criticism often applies when teachers have taken a degree—especially a literary degree—in the foreign language. Such courses commonly include a great many works of literature in the language but virtually no descriptive knowledge.

Proposition 16: LTT Vocational
The *theory and principle* element of initial LTT should be relevant to the trainee's immediate future teaching, should further the trainee's understanding of his/her work; LTT is by definition *vocational*, and is academic only incidentally.

Comment This Proposition is at variance with common practice in some countries, where language teacher training, including initial training, takes the form of an academic M.A. degree, including much theory but little or no practice. The issue in this Proposition is whether initial LTT is by nature

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academic (I believe *not*) or *vocational* (I believe so). Of course there should be opportunities for academic content in later, further training: initial training is inescapably vocational.

Proposition 17: Balance of Elements
The effectiveness of an initial training course depends greatly on the balance of the main elements (practical skills, information, principle/theory); *practical skills* are essential and take a major share when time is short; beyond a small minimum core of *information and knowledge* the trainees can be helped to supplement this by their own efforts, especially when time is short; *principle and theory*, best seen as 'enabling skills' to permit the growth of understanding rather than as autonomous academic study, merit lower priority when time is short, but assume proportionately greater importance in subsequent further training.

Comment   The balance of elements depends on the needs of the trainees, their level of education at entry to training, the educational level at which they expect to teach, and (perhaps above all) the duration of the training.

Proposition 18: Professionalism in LTT Staff
The design of courses for initial LTT entails not simply an appropriate balance of elements but also the provision of facilities for class observation and practice teaching and a high degree of professionalism in the training personnel.

Comment   Without adequate teaching practice, LTT is only partial. And the teacher training staff are equally crucial, since their contribution to training requires a great deal of experience, understanding and wisdom.

Proposition 19: Probation, Up-dating, Specialisation
Successful completion of initial LTT normally merits acceptance as an autonomous teacher, although increasingly initial LTT requires a period of apprenticeship or probationary teaching, under tutelage, before ratification of the trainee's acceptance; thereafter, at intervals throughout the teacher's career, opportunities are needed for further training, for the up-dating of professional ideas, for mental refreshment, and for the chance of specialising in particular areas of teaching.

Comment   The morale of the teacher completing his/her initial training is much enhanced if he/she knows that there will be future opportunities for further training, for up-grading his/her professional knowledge, and for embarking upon specialisation, e.g., in audio-visual aids, in testing, in syllabus design, in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in teacher training, etc.

Proposition 20: Dynamic not Static

LTT is essentially dynamic, not static; it evolves in line with the development of new ideas and techniques in language teaching, and it provides, for new entrants and for existing teachers alike, the opportunities for keeping up to date with practice and philosophy in language teaching.

Comment This Proposition carries a clear implication that courses of training need to be periodically reviewed in order to make sure that they are up-to-date, that teachers are being trained for the circumstances they will in fact encounter, and that they remain broadly in line with good LTT elsewhere.

Conclusion

The variety of different provisions for the training of teachers of languages is very great. Nevertheless they share many concepts in common. Not least of these are: (i) professionalism; (ii) being based in widely-held principles; and (iii) being dynamic, so as to meet the constantly-changing nature of language teaching.

Note

1. The Royal Society of Arts Examination Board is a British public examining body of high reputation and long standing, which has made a considerable contribution to the development of the teaching of E.F.L. and E.S.L.

See also P. Strevens, 'Teacher Training and Changes in Society', in Alatis *et al.* (1983).

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提要

關於師資培訓的二十個建議

　　本文作者列舉和評論二十個關於語文教師訓練課程的建議。他指出現在的各種師資訓練課程，表面上雖有不同，但基本上都是源於相同的模式和概念的。例如：語文教師訓練趨向專業化，設計課程應以廣泛接受為原則，而且要與其他學科互相呼應。作者更指出語文教學方法和課程不斷改變，因此，語文教師的培訓，應該採取更靈活的方式，而且要切合實際情況。

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普通話學習階段的探索研究

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　　很多語言學者都同意，語言的學習與發展是可以劃分階段的，無論兒童母語的發展，或第二語言的學習均如此。一位學者（劉殿爵，1979）認為，對那些以粵語為母語的香港人來說，普通話是第二語言。粵語這種方言與普通話比較起來，語音差別甚大，詞滙不同頗多，而語法的差異很少；整體粗略估計，異同各半，故就操粵語者而言，說普通話是半個第二語言，當不致引起太大的爭論。作為半個第二語言的普通話，它的學習過程有無階段可分？下文提及的小型調查，即在嘗試初步探索此一問題。普通話學習階段的研究甚少，大型的研究僅在台灣一見（許洪坤，1984）。該研究尚在分析資料階段，仍未公佈最後的結果。此類研究的意義重大，因為普通話學習階段的劃分，對課程的編寫，學生程度的審核、教學方法的改進，都有莫大的裨益。這是普通話教學上的一個重要課題。

調查概況

　　本調查為一橫斷面的研究，筆者向一個普通話教學機構的三級學員，發出調查問卷 150 份，每級50份。三級即初、中、高三級，每級的課程均為廿四小時，學員在各該級最後一節課填寫問卷。除學員缺席及作廢的問卷外，初、中、高三級可用的問卷數分別為33、32、30。問卷上的題目共分二類，第一類是看字標音，每題只替一字注音，共八十八題。該機構甚為重視漢語拼音的教學，完成初級課程的學員均能標音。為防一字多音，部份測試題以雙音節詞形式出現。這八十八字均自常用的二千字選出，常用字以《國民常用字彙研究》為據。另外，八十八字的聲調(包括輕聲)、聲母、韻母均儘量平均分佈。第二類是詞滙語法題，要求受試者將粵語改寫為普通話，共十題，一題一句粵語。

調查結果

　　第一類的標音題，初級與中級比較（$t_{(63)} = 1.71$，$P < 0.05$），中級與高級比較（$t_{(60)} = 1.68$，$P < 0.05$），其成績均有顯著差異。為節省篇幅起見，下文用到的"多、少、優於、差異"各詞，均指 t 統計在0.05水平上的顯著差異，而不再臚列數字。三級的標音得分，高級（$\bar{x} = 271.07$）優於中級（$\bar{x} = 199.87$），中級又優於初級（$\bar{x} = 109.88$），標音能力與學習時間成正比。故就標音能力而言，似有循序漸進的階段可說。

標音能力雖不就是語音能力，但在極大多數的情況下，把一字標錯了音，在言語中就會把此字說錯。故下文對標音錯誤的分析，很足以說明語音的誤失與語音學習的困難。分析三級標音的錯誤，聲母方面的主要錯誤是三組舌音的混淆。三組舌音分不清，初級最多，中級次之，高級最少，可見區分三組舌音的能力隨學習時間增長而提升，有如由低而高的階梯。三組舌音的混淆，舌位的差異最易引起錯誤，如zh、z與j等。其次則為送氣與否引致的錯誤，如zh與ch等。舌位加上送氣不送氣兩個成份同時俱誤的較少，如zh與c等。sh、s、x三個擦音甚少與其它塞擦音互混，至於r雖是翹舌音，但極少與其它舌音互混。上述分析可以一簡圖說明之，在圖一中，箭咀表示可能發生錯誤的方向，愈鄰近則愈易產生錯誤，即是說一個語音成份的差別最易引致錯誤，兩個成份者次之，三個成份者又次之。r極少與其他九個聲母混淆，所以沒有箭咀連繫其他聲母。三組舌音不單是粵方言區成人學習普通話的難點，也是中國其他地區兒童的

圖一：

$$zh \longleftrightarrow z \longleftrightarrow j$$
$$\updownarrow \qquad \updownarrow \qquad \updownarrow$$
$$ch \longleftrightarrow c \longleftrightarrow q$$
$$sh \longleftrightarrow s \longleftrightarrow x$$
$$r$$

學習難點，許洪坤(1984)在台灣的研究發現兒童在"一歲半到四歲之間，比較困難的語音是捲舌音、塞擦音。"許政援(1984)指出大陸地區的幼兒也是不易分清三組舌音。
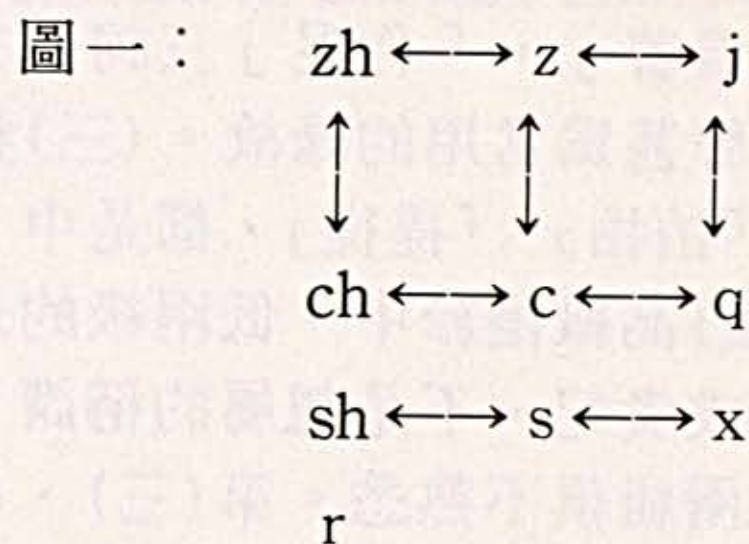
　　鼻音與邊音分不清是聲母方面第二類常見的錯誤。初級多把鼻音誤標作邊音，大概是受了粵語的影響，今日粵語的鼻音聲母幾乎已全部泯入邊音之中。在日常言語中，粵人發音甚少鼻音聲母。中級把鼻音誤為邊音的錯失較諸初級的為少，但甚為奇怪，把邊音標為鼻音的錯誤卻遠多於初級。一個可能的解釋是，中級已然知道普通話嚴分鼻音與邊音，但只知此一規則而仍未能熟記何字為鼻音何字為邊音；為避免將鼻音誤為邊音，矯枉過正，於是把不能肯定的邊音字讀成鼻音字。高級的鼻音邊音不分的兩類錯誤，無論鼻誤為邊，或邊誤為鼻，都遠較初、中級為少。鼻音邊音不分，在不同的級別有不同的學習困難，可見學習普通話，有其發展階段可言。

　　粵語與普通話對應規律的例外字，也易於引致標音方面的錯誤。如粵語b母字百分之九十六（劉銘，1984）在普通話仍讀b，但「坡」是例外，因而誤標「坡」為b母者為數甚多。此外，如誤「編」為p、「踏」為d、「婚」為f、「況」為f、「滑」為w等均是此類錯誤。這種錯誤仍是初級多於中級、而中級多於高級。

　　韻母方面的錯誤甚為複雜，較難歸納分析。有一類錯誤，顯然受了粵語的影響，如將「電」誤注為in，「風」誤為ong，「佈」誤為ou，「敏」誤為en等。介母方面的錯誤，主要是漏標介母，其中漏掉i母的，如將「亮」注

爲 lang，「雄」標爲 xong；漏掉 u 母的，如「快」注爲 kai，「抓」標爲 zha；漏掉 ü 母的則較少。韻尾方面，前鼻音韻尾與後鼻音韻尾不分，是屢見不鮮的錯誤，如「貧」誤作 ping，「藏」誤爲 can 等。無論韻母、介母、韻尾的錯誤，都是高級少於中級，而中級少於初級。母語會影響第二語言的學習，上文述及的聲母、介母與韻母的錯誤，大部份都與粵語有關，一位學者(Chen，1974)指出台灣兒童學國語也受到台灣話的影響。

聲調方面，最值得注意的是輕聲。輕聲的得分，三級均有顯著差異。進一步比較，輕聲可分爲四類：(一)三級對親屬的疊字稱謂如「哥哥」、「妹妹」、「姐姐」都掌握得相當純熟，三級都沒有差異。(二)「我們」、「看着」、「你呢」三詞第二字的輕聲，三級均無差異，可能由於這三個輕聲甚爲常用的緣故。(三)動詞重疊，第二字讀輕聲，如「跳跳」、「算算」、「拍拍」、「提提」，都是中、高兩級優於初級，而中級與高級則無差異。(四)高級優於中、低兩級的是「衣裳」、「葡萄」、「娘娘」(注意：娘娘指皇后或貴妃，不是親屬的稱謂。)三詞的輕聲得分。這三詞較少用，故初、中兩組俱不熟悉。第(三)、(四)兩類說明不同級別在輕聲的學習上有不同的困難，再進一步證實普通話的學習是有不同的發展階段的。

問卷中第二類詞滙、語法題表現上，三級均無差異。這結果甚出人意表，可能由於香港一般普通話課本都強調語音的操練，卻不大注重詞滙語法的訓練，極少系統地安排國語粵語詞滙語法的對比練習。這方面的學習，數量既少且欠全面，故中高兩級無明顯的進步。

結語

三級在語音方面的表現既有顯著差異，而且三級各有不同的學習難點。初級的語音學習困難最多，中級次之，高級最少，學習困難逐級消減，故普通話語音的學習，是可以劃分階段的。本調查初步肯定了普通話語音學習階段的存在；至於各個階段的清楚釐定，則有待大型的調查。本調查還揭示了不少學習普通話的困難，這些發現將有助普通話的課程設計。一般的普通話課本都強調三組舌音的區別，很能針對學習普通話的最大難點。其實除此之外，編寫普通話課本尚應注意以下三點：(一)普通話嚴分鼻音與邊音，課本除指出此一現象外，更應進而給予足夠的常用例字及練習；以免學生矯枉過正，將許多邊音字讀作鼻音。(二)粵語與普通話對應規律的例外字，是三級誤讀的一大來源，所以最好把這些字按常用程度分配到各級之中，作重點學習。(三)多數課本重視語音訓練，而忽略了詞滙語法的練習，以致詞滙、語法的學習進展緩慢；今後的課本編寫，宜語音與詞滙語法兼顧。

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Abstract

AN PRELIMINARY STUDY ON THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF LEARNING PUTONGHUA

Determining the different stages of learning Putonghua will be of much significance in developing curricula, in examining students' standards and in improving teaching methods. The present survey provides primary data to achieve the above goal.

By means of a questionnaire, the ability in transcription and the ability in rewriting Putonghua from Cantonese of three classes of participants was tested. The three classes, each of 50 participants, were of different levels (i.e., elementary, intermediate and advanced) and each level had received at least 24 hours' instruction.

The results show that all three classes had different levels of difficulty in learning the pronunciation of Putonghua, especially in the learning of initial consonants and of neutral tones. It was found that the three groups of sibilant sounds, which occur only initially, constitute the major difficulty; the second difficulty experienced by most Cantonese learners was not being able to distinguish the phonemes /1/ and /n/ in the initial position. Some learners also had difficulty in mastering the exceptions to the Cantonese-Putonghua sound correspondences.

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