

# TEACHING OUTSIDE THE BOX

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SYDNEY

## What's your usual teaching context?

- › Find the heading that most closely matches your teaching situation and sit in this section of the room.
- › Briefly introduce yourself to the others in your group.

## Session theme

Reconsidering traditional boundaries in language teaching to help open up new perspectives and learning opportunities in the classroom.

Focussing on the boundaries between...

- learners by proficiency level (Lydia)
- grammar and lexis (Marcella)



<http://mhsaphuge1.wikispaces.com/Political+Organization+of+Space>

› Why do we traditionally group learners by proficiency level?

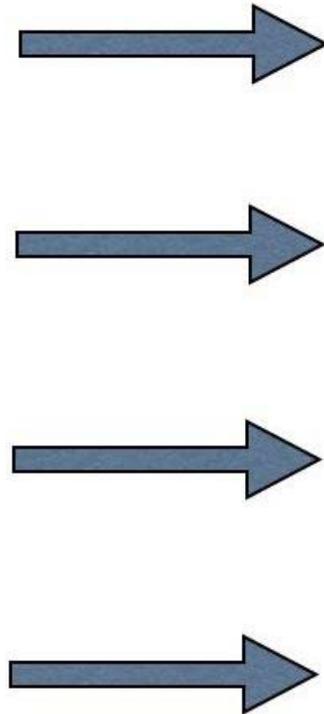
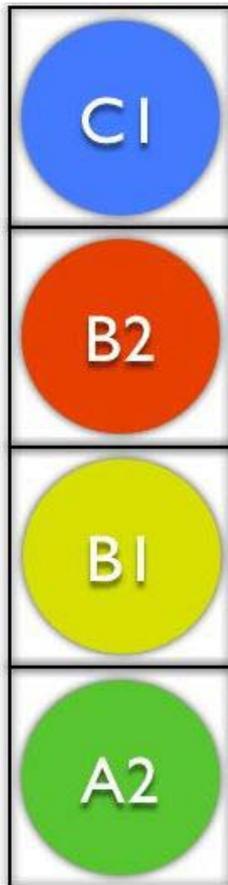
It makes things easier!

- planning and assessment
- language presentation and activity types

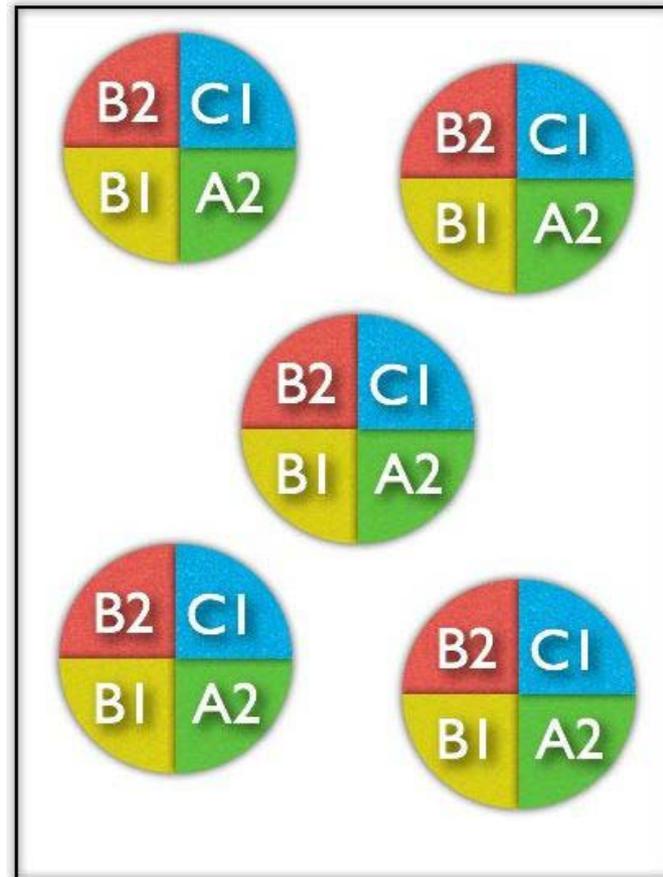
› So why would we bring learners of different proficiency levels together during lessons?

- “...the majority of uses of English as a second language around the world today involve interactions of one non-native speaker with another, rather than the prototypical situation of a native speaker and a non-native speaker assumed in ESL textbooks” (Sridhar & Sridhar 1986).
- “[In EFL countries] English has rapidly metamorphosed in the past half century from a foreign language to an international one. Its most frequent use outside the L1 countries...and the ESL countries is between speakers *neither* of whom learnt it as an L1.” (Jenkins 2000)
- One implication is that many of our learners’ needs have changed.
- By bringing learners of different levels together to work on a variety of tasks, we can provide practice of communicating in these international contexts.

## Session 1



## Session 2



*Competency* Expressing your opinion on issues      *Topic* Crime and punishment

## Session 1

### *Input*

#### **Lower levels**

- Language presentation and practice
- Key vocabulary from Session 2 task;
  - Language for giving opinions.

#### **Higher levels**

- Language review and practice
- Extended vocabulary for crime and punishment;
  - Language for giving opinions.

## Session 2

### *Task*

Students act as jury members to decide on and present appropriate punishments for people who are accused of crimes.



[http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/Virtual\\_Tour/jury.jpg](http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/Virtual_Tour/jury.jpg)

## › Do...

Team-teach cross-level sessions

Choose flexible tasks

Give the rationale to the students

View level differences as a resource rather than an obstacle, e.g. give level-specific roles in the activity

### **Session 1**

Give a preparatory lesson to individual classes

Focus on competencies and language for the task; these may be different for different levels.

### **Session 2**

Run short, focussed task sessions with clear aims

Monitor groups carefully

Allow time for reflection

## › Don't...

Give up if students are resistant to the idea at first

### **Session 1**

Conflate practical knowledge with proficiency level

### **Session 2**

Limit yourself to the classroom

Teach language in the second session if there's a big difference in levels



## Discussion (5 minutes)

**How would you design a cross-class activity for your context?**

*Competency  
Topic  
Task  
Input*

Check the [UECA website](#) next week for everyone's ideas.



- › Murray, N. (2012). English as a lingua franca and the development of pragmatic competence. *ELT Journal* 66(2).
- › Jenkins, J., A. Cogo, and M. Dewey. (2011). Review of developments in research into English as a lingua franca. *Language Teaching* 44(3): 281-315.
- › Canagarajah, S. (2007). Lingua franca English, multilingual communities, and language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal* 91: 923-939.



The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)?

A corpus and corpora?

The Academic Word List (AWL)?

Lexico-grammar?

## The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

- [http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents\\_intro/Data\\_bank\\_descriptors.html](http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents_intro/Data_bank_descriptors.html)

## Corpus - computerized databank of natural spoken and written texts

Examples:

- <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>
- <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>
- <http://www.lexchecker.org/>
- <http://www.lextutor.ca/>

## Academic Word List (AWL)

- <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/>

CEFR ‘can-do’ statements → Implication for teaching:

Help learners achieve ‘can-do’ goals

(ie how to do things in the language rather than present abstract knowledge of the language)

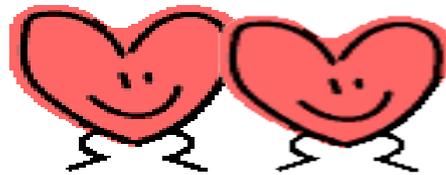
“It’s not what the language is that’s important in and for the CEFR, but what language does”.  
(Camerer & Mader, 2010)

## 1. Patterns form a large proportion of language.

*explain*



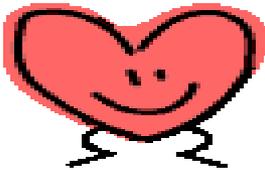
*wh- clause*



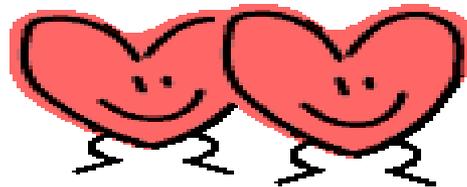
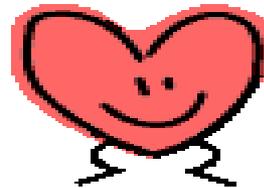
*explain / wh-clause*

# What corpora have revealed

*a + ? + of*



*series*



*a series of*

“The hidden curriculum” (Kennedy, 2003)

2. Key role of **colligation** (= grammatical environment/structure in which a lexical item is typically used).

Example: *require & situate* → mostly used in the passive

*tea* → mostly used as adjective  
or in preposition phrase

- Traditional distinction between lexis and grammar is blurred.  
→ **lexico-grammatical** view of language

## EG What is the pattern associated with the word 'factor'?

1. Several *factors* are responsible for this disturbing development.
2. Appearance is only one of many *factors* that influence body image.
3. Many external *factors* can influence suicidal people.
4. Wind is always an important *factor* in soil erosion.
5. I think this is a *factor* we should consider
6. The weight of portables is a key *factor* in attracting customers.
7. Your reputation is the biggest *factor* in business.
8. Television viewing is an important *factor* in childhood obesity.
9. Television advertising is the prime *factor* in determining what you buy.

Which preposition often follows *factor*?

List the adjectives that are used before *factor*.

Which verbs follow *factor*?

Put *factor* together with the preposition, adjective and verb – what is the complete pattern?

During the second half of the eighteenth century, **transport** systems in Britain began to improve markedly. **Innovations** in **construction techniques** led to new surfaces being used on roads and, thanks largely to the work of Thomas Telford, the **expansion** of the canal **network**. It was the application of steam power, however, which played the most **significant role**.

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~alzsh3/acvocab/index.htm>

Does a preposition follow the word?

Which adjective/s are used with the word?

Can you identify any other collocates  
(nouns/verbs/adverbs)?

Does the word appear to occur in a phrase?

One way of highlighting patterns...

You can use *-ing* forms after certain verbs, for example:

*admit, avoid, consider, deny, dislike, enjoy, fancy, feel like, finish, give up, imagine, involve, keep, mind, miss, practise, risk, can't stand, suggest, understand.*

Notice how all of these verbs can also be followed by a normal noun:

*I need to finish painting this room.*

*I need to finish this job.*

(English Unlimited Upper Intermediate)

Another way...

## A Star Is Made

by Stephen J. Dubner and Steven D. Levitt



If you examined the birth certificates of every soccer player in a World Cup tournament, you would find an unusual tendency: elite soccer players are more likely to have been born earlier in the year than later. If you then examined the European national youth teams that supply many World Cup players, this tendency would be even more noticeable. In recent English teams, for instance, half the elite teenage soccer players were born in January, February or March. In Germany, fifty-two were born in the first three months, with just four players born in the last three. What might account for this?

Swedish-born Anders Ericsson, a psychology professor at Florida State University, is leader of a group of scholars trying to answer an important question:

simply repeating a task. Rather, it involves setting specific goals, getting immediate feedback and concentrating equally on technique and results.

Ericsson and his colleagues therefore began studying expert performers in a wide range of pursuits, from soccer and surgery to piano playing and software design. They've come to a rather startling conclusion: practice really does make perfect. What we call 'talent' is highly overrated, as expert performers are nearly always made, not born. The research also suggests that when it comes to choosing a life path, you should do what you love. People often give up trying to do things they don't like, telling themselves they simply don't possess the talent. But what they really lack is the will to succeed and to put in the deliberate practice that would



It's all about noticing patterns...



## Activities →

- *Words in sentences*
- *Highlight lexico-grammatical patterns in feedback*
- *Dictation activity – “bend me shape me”*
- Lindstromberg, S. & Boers, F. (2008). Teaching Chunks of Language: From noticing to remembering.

## Words in sentences

Blank A4 pieces of paper on wall

Teacher writes a different word/collocation/chunk on each piece of paper.  
Students circulate and write example sentences on each. Teacher monitors.  
When finished, students pass paper around, read, comment correct, focus  
on pattern used with the word.

## Highlight lexico-grammatical patterns in feedback

Example from student essay:

*However, the disadvantages of internet banking cannot be omitted, since people have strict perceptions about what this thing is going on.*

(Coxhead & Byrd, 2007)

## Highlight lexico-grammatical patterns in feedback

Example from student essay:

*However, the disadvantages of internet banking cannot be overlooked, since people have clear strict perceptions about what ~~this thing is going on~~.*

(Coxhead & Byrd, 2007)

## Highlight lexico-grammatical patterns in feedback

Example from student essay:

*However, the disadvantages of internet banking cannot be omitted, since people have strict perceptions about what this thing is going on.*

(Coxhead & Byrd, 2007)

## Dictation activity - *Bend me shape me*

Dictate a text. EG:

- *A bumbling burglar was captured shivering behind a bush after police tracked a set of footprints he'd unwittingly left in the snow.*

Students rewrite the text, changing with synonyms/antonyms as much as possible

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/seminars/20-steps-teaching-unplugged>

- Coxhead, A. & Byrd, P. (2007). Preparing writing teachers to teach the vocabulary and grammar of academic prose. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16: 129-147
- Kennedy, G. (2003). Amplifier Collocations in the British National Corpus: Implications for English Language Teaching, *TESOL QUARTERLY*, 37 (3): 467-487
- Camerer, R. & Mader, J. Putting the CEFR to good use. *IATEFL TEA SIG/EALTA Conference Proceedings Barcelona 2010*.





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PD Fest Sydney  
24 March 2012

### Teaching Outside the Box

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#### › Tips and tricks

Do...	Don't...
Team-teach cross-level sessions Choose flexible tasks Give the rationale to the students View level differences as a resource rather than an obstacle, e.g. give level-specific roles in the activity	Give up if students are resistant to the idea at first
<b>Session 1</b> Give a preparatory lesson to individual classes Focus on competencies and language for the task; these may be different for different levels.	Conflate practical knowledge with proficiency level
<b>Session 2</b> Run short, focussed task sessions with clear aims Monitor groups carefully Allow time for reflection	Limit yourself to the classroom Teach language in the second session if there's a big difference in levels

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## Teaching outside the box...lexis and grammar

### › Key terms

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages  
(CEFR)

A corpus and corpora

The Academic Word List (AWL)

Lexico-grammar

### › Links

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages  
(CEFR)

[http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents\\_intro/D  
ata\\_bank\\_descriptors.html](http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents_intro/D<br/>ata_bank_descriptors.html)

Corpus

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### › Language as “can do”



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› What corpora have revealed

› AWL in use

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› Activities

› References

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**Teaching Outside the Box  
Cross-Class Activity**

Teaching context

Competency

Topic

Task

Input

**Teaching Outside the Box  
Cross-Class Activity**

Teaching context

Competency

Topic

Task

Input

**Teaching Outside the Box**  
**Cross-Class Activity**

Teaching context *Cambridge Exam Preparation: PET/FCE/CAE/CPE Speaking Part 3*

Competency *Speculating, agreeing & disagreeing; Giving opinions with supporting statements*

Topic *Deciding on use of a piece of land in a city*

Task (Session 2) *Students are given 6 options or possible new buildings for a plot of land in a city e.g. hospital, art gallery, theatre, library.*

*They have to select only one which can be built.*

Input (Session 1) *Essential lexis & functional language graded to levels*

**Teaching Outside the Box**  
**Cross-Class Activity**

Teaching context *General English*

Competency *Negotiating; Complaining; Explaining a problem; Reaching a mutual agreement*

Topic *Issues with neighbours, landlords or flatmates*

Task *Roleplay in which learners have to reach a consensus*

Input *Functional language*