

6. 'Good teaching' - a reappraisal

Abstract

This article is an attempt to walk in familiar territory in a different way, in particular exploring the technique-materials-relationship triangle, and looking at the Yin and Yang of lesson design. I examine the traditional assumptions on which the UCLES 'model' of good teaching is based, and I offer radical suggestions for both a new UCLES model and a hopefully subversive 'anti-model' which is less a yardstick of the good teacher, and more a new way to look at ourselves individually.

Introduction

We all teach differently. And some are lucky enough to feel that they teach well, that they totally understand teaching, that they totally understand the language, and that they totally understand their learners. So what is it about what those teachers do that is the essence of those qualities? And can we capture this magic? Can it be described? Can it be transferred to others?

In this article I want to consider the factors traditionally associated with good teaching over the years, to explore in particular the relationship, in lessons, between what is 'planned' (what we intend) and what is 'organic' (what we allow), and to list some of the methodological options available to the flexible teacher. Finally, I will offer an integrated, and very simple, model of my own.

Good teaching – a historical perspective

As I mentioned in the article on applied linguists and teachers (Article 2), the university world in the UK and the US only became seriously involved in the world of practical language teaching in the late 70s. Before this time, apart from a scattered few PGCEs in the UK, the bulk of practical teacher ELT training was done, on Certificate and Diploma courses in the UK, in the small but significant private teacher-training sector.

By those late 70s, on those short initial Certificate courses, and on their longer sister courses at Diploma level, good teaching was defined in terms which had grown and evolved over the previous 15 years or so. The sort of things that had become important (and I'm working from memory here) were: clear aims in the teacher's mind, clear and explicit lesson plans, anticipating problems, a sense of timing, minimum teacher-talking time, constant concept checking, effective drilling of structure and pronunciation, creative situations for presentation contexts, imaginative substitution drills, clever information gap activities, clear progression of lessons from presentation to practice of target language points, prediction activities for listening and reading texts, interesting and relevant role-play and discussion activities which practised the target language points, etc, etc.

In summary, good teaching was couched in terms of good planning, creative use of materials, effective techniques, structured lessons, and achievement of stated aims. It was a rather teacher-centred approach to evaluation, because it viewed teaching as what the teacher did, rather than what the student did.

Meanwhile, in the US universities, there developed the self-reflection movement. Against a backdrop in which language teaching was theory-driven, where there wasn't the same history of pragmatic problem-solving that characterised teaching in the UK, US pedagogues and applied

linguists took a detailed criteria-based approach to the analysis of teaching. They developed long lists of criteria, of many different sorts, and their intention was to collect actual data from the classroom. An example of such a classroom ‘observation instrument’ was the student-teacher interaction record: here, there was a scribe-in who, armed with a map of the students in the class, recorded the direction of each question from the teacher to each of the students, and the relative time spent talking by each student and by the teacher. Another instrument recorded how much time the students were talking to each other, versus how much time they spent answering the teacher’s questions. And so on.

Real data became very important, because it allowed for several developments. Firstly, it allowed the individual teacher a true basis on which to analyse their teaching. Secondly, it provided the basis for the profession as a whole to start to talk about what ‘really’ happened in the classroom. Hundreds of these instruments were developed, each focusing on a different aspect of the classroom event, and many still survive on teacher training courses today. In the US in particular, the self-reflection movement was not only important to a profession which did not have a practical tradition, but it also provided the much-needed bridge from theory to practice. And indirectly, it led to a more pragmatic approach to the classroom in the US, as evidenced by the wide acceptance in the mid-90s of the British UCLES model of practical teacher training, itself based on the practical courses of John and Brita Haycraft first offered in 1963 at International House.

In the universities of the UK, Australia, and New Zealand, there developed the very similar Action Research movement. This was driven by a similar concern to find real data about the classroom, and to help teachers become more aware of their own teaching. Unfortunately, action research, as with the American observation instruments, is time-consuming, cumbersome, and unwieldy. And so it is not practical for it to be used widely by teachers on low salaries and tight timetables. In the end, the problem with these observation instruments, and the long lists of criteria used to help teachers self-reflect, was that they started to become ends in themselves. They started to replace the internal holistic awareness and judgement of the individual teacher. Nevertheless, much useful data was produced over the 80s and 90s, and on ELT Masters courses they are still central for research into practical teaching.

The third major influence on our notions of good teaching, at least in the UK, was the exam board, the RSA (their remit passed on to UCLES in 1987). As standards-maintainers, they were obliged to set out notions of ‘passing’ and ‘failing’ as teachers. And this entailed criteria. In the early days, it was felt these criteria should only be descriptive not evaluative – areas for the examiner to indicate a view, not areas which in themselves implied effective teaching. Such areas included very similar ones to those listed above: clarity of aims, handling of text, effectiveness of language practice. However, as you can see from these examples, the first and third are clearly implicitly evaluative, as were many other criteria, and so a movement developed against any form of prescription in the classroom at all (a fact which genuinely puzzled me – what are we afraid of?). The upshot of this was that in the new CELTA course framework of the early 90s, of the six categories of criteria, only one category refers to practical teaching skills in the classroom itself, and it is very bland.

Despite attempts to escape the charge of prescription, the teacher-training exam boards have found it difficult. In particular, this has applied to the overall shape of an effective lesson. The RSA was accused for many years of requiring both initial and advanced trainees to follow a Presentation-Practice-Production model (see Article 4) of presenting a language item. And the son of RSA, the UCLES Board is, even today, similarly hampered, perhaps inevitably so.

So where are we now? In 1994, Jim Scrivener wrote an influential book called *Learning Teaching*, in which among other things he outlined two different types of lesson. The first was the planned UCLES-style three-stage lesson – a style which gave a bad name to the PPP because it falsely equated the two; the second was the semi-planned ‘walk-through-the-jungle’ type of lesson, in which both teacher and students set out and allowed things to go where they went.

For the teacher who feels nervous about having to handle things which are unforeseen, this second lesson-type must seem very unsettling. But for my teaching, both in General English teaching and in Business English teaching, it has led to a remarkable shift, and I strongly recommend it.

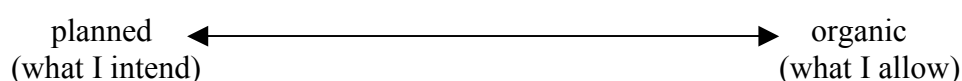
The ‘planned’ and the ‘organic’

I think that, since the Enlightenment, western culture has become convinced by its own myth – the myth of control. Control of nature, control of populations, control of events, control of outcomes. I think this desire to have control comes from a *fear* of not having control, a fear that everything that is not under control will be ‘chaos’.

But I think both the desire and the fear are illusions. What I want to suggest is that, whether in our political and economic systems, or in science and technology, or in our everyday lives, or indeed in our classrooms, we should replace the desire for control with the desire for awareness. And then, with awareness, we can start to let go. We can start to trust – trust in our students, trust in ourselves.

In our classrooms indeed, the more we become aware, the more we can stand back and let things happen and manage things with light touches, in the knowledge that everything will come out well.

I see two ends of the teaching spectrum. I call them ‘planned teaching’ (what I intend) and ‘organic teaching’ (what I allow). And, in my view, all lessons should move seamlessly between these two bases. The teacher’s role then becomes one of managing events, with a super-awareness of what is going on at every second, rather than trying to manipulate the learning which the students take away.



These concepts are very similar to the ‘yin’ and ‘yang’ of the universe. ‘Yang’, the male principle, is the force of active, of making, of doing, of bringing into being. ‘Yin’, the female principle, is the force of passive, of letting, of giving, of creating space. And both of these oscillate, giving the pure balance of ‘chi’ – the energy that flows in the universe.

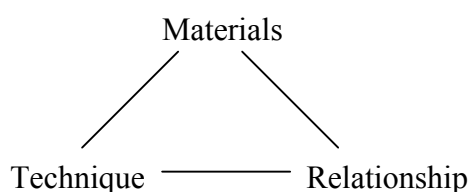
These concepts of the planned and the organic also oscillate equally, providing a balance of energy within the classroom community and enhancing the relationships that are formed within it. The planned side gives us the drive, the overall vision of the lesson by the teacher, the fit of the lesson into the wider scheme, and the pushing of the students in things that they want to achieve during the lesson. The organic side gives us the space, and the relaxedness, and the potential, in which learning opportunities emerge seamlessly, and are exploited spontaneously by the learner or the teacher as appropriate.

Hopefully, it is already clear that a new kind of paradigm is emerging, in which lessons can be devised in a totally new way, with the teacher becoming a super-chairman of a mutually satisfying and mutually active endeavour.

Teacher types

But the model is only half complete. I want to provide a complementary notion, so that it has greater strength. The second part of my schema is the notion of teacher's own fundamental *raison d'être* in the classroom.

As I see it, at the extremes, there are three basic types of teacher: the technique-oriented teacher, the materials-oriented teacher, and the relationship-oriented teacher.



Obviously, they are not mutually exclusive. All of us will find ourselves at some point within the triangle as we plot our own preferences towards one or two or all three of these co-ordinates.

The technique-oriented teacher may well be early in their career, unsure of how everything works in the classroom, and holding on to techniques learnt in training as a steadying device for the time being, as they gain their footing. Some teachers go on to believe that technique is actually everything, and they spend much energy perfecting their techniques and reading about new ones, because they believe that technique is what counts for the learners.

The materials-oriented teacher takes masses of photocopied material into every lesson. They may be unsure of what may happen if they are caught with time to spare and no material left. They may feel that this is what the students expect of a professional teacher. They may feel that, if the students have physical material to work with, they can make notes on it and thus assimilate its contents more readily. Whatever the reason, they believe that materials are primarily what make learning effective.

The relationship-oriented teacher is clear that what counts above all in the learning process is what happens between them and the students. They may be lazy. Or they may have simply discovered that techniques and materials have their limitations, and that a good working relationship works wonders. Such a teacher needs at their disposal four key attributes (i) a complete conviction that they have the ability to maximise the language value for the students of every opportunity that arises in the classroom (ii) experience of techniques that make this 'opportunistic' learning possible (see Article 4) (iii) good spontaneous knowledge of the language to enable fast illustrations of language points when asked (iv) a confidence in their own ability to respond with principled and split-second spontaneity at every opportunity in the lesson. In effect, for this teacher, the students become the resource, the students indeed become the material. How this can be achieved on a daily basis for entire lessons will be explored further below.

No one of these teacher-types is better or more effective than the others. The personality and career-stage of the individual may be a key factor in determining which type you are. But I invite you to at least consider where you are in this picture, and whether this is actually where you want

to be. And even if you are an evolved relationship-oriented teacher, it has to be accepted that there is no substitute for knowing all your techniques, and knowing all your potential materials, because you never know when you may be called upon to use them.

Good teaching: Model 1 – The current UCLES framework¹

Over the years, the UCLES (now Cambridge ESOL) model for the evaluation of their Diploma candidates has evolved considerably. The current assessment instrument has a distinct division of lesson-types into three: (i) language systems and language skills (ii) resources and materials (iii) experimental techniques. And these lesson assessments exist within a notion of (a) professionalism and (b) sensitivity to teaching context.

However, the criteria for the assessment of these lessons, while they attempt to be as descriptive as possible, and allow the maximum width for interpretation and evaluation by the assessor, do still end up being very similar to the criteria which were being used twenty years ago.

Let me be explicit. Here are the criteria used by the UCLES DELTA assessors for both the language lessons and the resources lessons.

Planning

Successful candidates must submit:

1. a lesson plan which:
 - a. states the needs and level of the specific group
 - b. sets out a clear focus for the lesson in terms of aims and objectives
 - c. designs and sequences the procedures planned to achieve these aims
 - d. outlines any links between this lesson, the previous lesson and the next
 - e. anticipates the problems and strengths of the group
 - f. identifies appropriate materials and resources
 - g. assigns realistic and appropriate timing
2. a commentary of 700 words, which:
 - a. shows how the systems focus of the lesson relates to supporting skills work, or vice versa
 - b. provides a profile of the learners

Teaching

Successful candidates should be able to:

1. demonstrate in their teaching that they can:
 - a. teach the class and individuals within it, with sensitivity to the learners' needs, level and context
 - b. make effective use of use learning materials and resources, including aids and equipment
 - c. monitor learning and manage effective feedback

¹ Taken from: UCLES DELTA Syllabus and Assessment Guidelines 2002. NB UCLES is now called 'Cambridge ESOL'

- d. take account of learners' cognitive and affective needs
2. demonstrate their understanding, knowledge and awareness of language by:
 - a. adapting their own use of language to the level of the group
 - b. providing accurate and appropriate models of language use
 - c. giving accurate and appropriate information about language form, meaning, and use
 - d. responding to and exploiting learner contributions
 3. demonstrate their repertoire of classroom techniques and procedures for:
 - a. focussing on learners' control of the language system
 - b. developing learners' fluency and confidence in using the language for communication
 - c. developing learners' language and literacy skills and sub-skills
 - d. promoting learner autonomy
 4. demonstrate their ability to manage learning by:
 - a. establishing and maintaining a positive learning atmosphere for all learners
 - b. managing the space, furniture and equipment
 - c. setting up wholeclass/group/individual activities as appropriate
 - d. managing the class so that the focus remains on the lesson aims
 - e. managing the time so that the pace of the lesson is appropriate
 - f. using the lesson plan as a guide and adapting it to respond to the classroom dynamic
 5. in addition, to gain Distinction level, they must demonstrate exceptional sensitivity, creativity, and skill in all aspects of classroom practice, including:
 - a. insight into the group and the topic area
 - b. understanding, awareness and knowledge of the relevant issues in the teaching of the systems and skills of English
 - c. knowledge of the differences between English and other languages, as appropriate
 - d. teaching a coherent lesson with a clear sense of purpose which fully engages all the learners
 - e. the ability to analyse and evaluate their teaching

The care and effort which went into devising these criteria was immense and impressive. However, they were created within a certain paradigm. Let us call it the 1980s and 1990s paradigm of practical teacher education, in which I confess I was a willing participant at one time. This paradigm was characterised by the following features: (i) a lesson can, and therefore should, be planned from start to finish (ii) the lesson-plan should be followed, and learner activity during the lesson should be controlled, however creatively, in a way which enhances the successful fulfilment of its aims (iii) that, in an unspecified way, if the teacher's language awareness is sound, and their learner sensitivity is appropriate, and their techniques are 'effective' the teaching will be successful!

This model has tried to be different from its many forbears by being less prescriptive. And yes, it is a little less prescriptive. But even in its own terms there are some serious question marks about it. And in comparison with the new model I will put forward below, the flaws become more obvious.

These question marks are:

- (i) why is there *no weighting of criteria*? Is '1b' (using materials and resources effectively) of the same order and value as '4b' (managing the furniture)? Are the criteria in Section 4 (class management) really of the same order and value as the criteria in Section 3 (all teaching techniques)? Why is Section 4 even a separate section, as all its points can be subsumed under classroom techniques or general teaching ability?
- (ii) why is there *no set of assumptions about learning* which lie behind the teaching model? My reading of the model, by inference only and therefore to some extent guessed at, is that it assumes that classroom language learning is best mediated in the form of 'bits' which have been pre-selected by the teacher and which are then made available to the learners, and activated among the learners, in a number of ways in the classroom. All of these 'ways' remain implicit among the criteria, but they must, by implication (because they are omitted), be clear to the examiner and supposedly to the candidate teacher too.
- (iii) why are *some key criteria not given top priority*? For instance, 'responding to and exploiting learner contributions'; and 'managing effective feedback'.
- (iv) why is there *no mention of the relationship* between the teacher and the learners?

Clearly, the answers to some of these questions can be answered by referring to the implicit model of learning mentioned in point (ii) above. The 'bits' model of language may suggest a certain approach to teaching in which those 'bits' are pre-selected and focussed on in some way or other, and then the learners' fluency and confidence in using the language for communication, and their language and literacy skills and sub-skills, are 'developed' (in ways unspecified) during any 'effective' lesson.

However, this 'bits' model does not in fact, as I pointed out in my articles on Noticing and Authentic Participation, always have to imply the pre-selection of aspects of the language system, nor the planning and staging of a lesson. So let us scrutinise the UCLES version of a 'good teacher' from a different viewpoint – that of the 'noticing' view of learning.

Good teaching: Model 2 – The UCLES model from a 'noticing' perspective

In doing this, we find we have to make radical amendments. In fact, it is probably better if we start again from scratch.

In a 'noticing' model, the paradigm has to look completely different.

- there will be much more emphasis on teacher awareness of the learners in real time, and therefore of the relationship that they have which acts as a basis for that awareness;
- there will be an emphasis on the teacher's ability to exploit real-time opportunities for noticing within the framework of an overall set of lesson intentions;
- there will be an emphasis on 'accurate fluency', and an understanding that these two aspects of speaking communicatively (in L2) have to work together in tandem;
- there will be an emphasis on student output, as well as teacher input, as a basis for language focus; there will be an emphasis on the personal relationship between the learners and the teacher as a medium for creating a communicatively and linguistically liberating affective environment.

If I were to reformulate the UCLES criteria within a 'noticing' paradigm, they would look like this (I have put suggested changes in *italics*):

Planning

Successful candidates must submit:

1. a lesson plan which:
 - a. outlines any links between this lesson and the previous lesson
 - b. *states the language and communicative expectations of the learner group*
 - c. *sets out a number of potential lesson intentions for the lesson in terms of topic, communication skills, and language focus*
 - d. *describes potential procedures for mediating these potentialities*
 - e. *knows the current language challenges of each individual learner*
 - f. identifies appropriate materials and resources
 - g. *demonstrates a flexible framework of timing*

2. a commentary of 700 words, which:
 - h. *shows how the flexibility of the lesson will allow for maximum exploitation of student output in terms of language focus and language activation*
 - i. provides a profile of the learners

Teaching

Successful candidates should be able to:

3. demonstrate in their teaching that they can:
 - a. *establish a fruitful working relationship with their learners*
 - b. *establish a good affective working environment which promotes engaged participation by the learners*
 - c. *be alert to every opportunity at every minute for inviting the learners to 'notice' selected aspects of language*
 - d. *be aware of every learner at every minute*
 - e. make effective use of use learning materials and resources, including aids and equipment
 - f. *spontaneously, but judiciously, exploit available opportunities for language exploration, whether for focussed language accuracy or communicative fluency, or both*

4. demonstrate their understanding, knowledge and awareness of language by:
 - a. adapting their own use of language to the level of the group
 - b. *reformulating and giving feedback on selected learners' output, at a level appropriate to the level of the individual learner*
 - c. *reformulating and giving feedback on selected learners' output, with relevance and thoroughness appropriate to the nature of the error*
 - d. *giving appropriate information about language form, meaning, and use, in the areas of lexis, grammar, syntax, and phonology*

5. demonstrate their repertoire of classroom techniques and procedures for:
 - a. *focussing on learners' assimilation and control of the language systems*
 - b. *enabling learners to enhance their oral language accuracy while engaging in expressing genuine messages*
 - c. *developing learners' oral and listening fluency and confidence in using the language for communication*

- d. *developing learners' reading and writing fluency and confidence in using the language for communication*
 - e. encouraging learner autonomy
6. demonstrate their ability to manage learning by:
- a. *responding to the classroom dynamic while following the stated lesson intentions as appropriate*
 - b. *ensuring that time is always fruitfully spent*
7. in addition, to gain Distinction level, they must demonstrate exceptional sensitivity, creativity, and skill in all aspects of classroom practice, including:
- a. insight into the group and the topic area
 - b. understanding, awareness and knowledge of the relevant issues in the teaching of the systems and skills of English
 - c. knowledge of the differences between English and other languages, as appropriate
 - d. *teaching an alert lesson, thinking on their feet, with a clear sense of the individual learners*
 - e. *managing a lesson which unfolds into effortless coherence for the learners by the end*
 - f. the ability to analyse and evaluate their teaching

So this is what a re-vamped UCLES DELTA assessment instrument might look like. And I think it could work very well. But for it to work well, there would have to be changes in teacher training procedures. The key to the changes is the word 'control'. In the former scenario, the teacher tries to control everything, from plan, to stage, to activity, to timing, to student output, to etc In the re-vamped scenario, the principle is that the teacher is in control of himself, of his language, and of his acute awareness of the individual learners and their second-by-second involvement. Then he sets things going, directs proceedings as necessary, but he essentially allows each lesson activity to find its own momentum and direction, participating properly and always having high expectations of the learners.

Good teaching – Model 3: New perspectives

What I have done here is to propose a set of new criteria which might form the basis of an approach to teaching – let's call it the 'noticing approach'. This noticing approach to *teaching* is predicated, as will be clear, on the notion of a 'noticing approach' to *learning*.

Referring back to the first part of this piece, I said that we needed to somehow capture the essence of what good teachers do – to discover 'best practice' – and make it available for general consumption and debate. This is what I would like to do now.

These elements represent my formulation of the 'good teacher', distilled from a number of sources: past models, experience, contemplation, and conversations with colleagues.

1. *Global context*

- The teacher is aware of, and knowledgeable about, the context in which he is operating and the relationship between that context and his learner group
- The teacher is aware of the learners as a general social group (their backgrounds, their ages, their reasons for learning, their need for ‘results’², etc)
- The teacher understands the nature of the institution he works in and its obligations to its students
- The teacher has relationships with colleagues and line managers, which are mutually respectful and fruitful

2. *Language learning awareness*

- The teacher is aware of and knowledgeable about the historical background of practical anecdotal evidence and theoretical thinking in the area of classroom language learning
- The teacher is aware of and knowledgeable about recent developments in theoretical thinking in the area of classroom language learning
- The teacher has developed their own experiential concept of language learning, and reviews this concept regularly

3. *Language awareness*

- The teacher is aware of, and knowledgeable about, all L2 language systems (lexis, grammar, syntax, phonology, discourse) from the *learners’* perspective, including L1/L2 comparisons where useful
- The teacher is particularly aware of the relationship between lexis and grammar, and is able to mediate this for language learners
- The teacher can call to mind clear illustrative clarifications of L2 when necessary in the classroom
- The teacher can formulate illustrations appropriately to the level of the learners

4. *Classroom dynamics*

- The teacher understands the dynamics of the classroom context in all its potential manifestations
- The teacher knows the various roles that both he and the learners can play, and knows how to manage classroom dynamics effectively
- The teacher can build a relationship with his learners, as individuals and as a group, which is mutually respectful, engaging, purposeful, and fruitful
- The teacher knows the crucial importance of developing a relationship with each individual learner in the class, and of sensing that learner’s specific needs at every point.
- The teacher can create a language learning culture with his learners which is purposeful and fruitful, and in which the learners feel free to contribute
- The teacher knows the potentials and limitations of the physical components (size, furniture, equipment, etc) of his classroom context and his institution, in terms of learning outcomes

5. *Real-time awareness*

- The teacher is alert at all times during a lesson, and senses what is happening in terms of individuals, group dynamics, learners’ confusion, concentration, motivation, and effectiveness
- The teacher is alert at all times to the potentials in each lesson-moment for language focus and noticing, and for language activation
- The teacher can sense at every moment whether the learners can see what is happening and why

² This factor will be key if (i) the learners are being expected to pass an exam (ii) the learners have paid for their own course

- The teacher can sense the real-time ebb and flow of the lesson and make effective second-by-second judgements about the mood of the learners, the state of the lesson, and the next micro-step, so as to ensure that the lesson stays on track
- The teacher can deploy appropriate teaching techniques in every potential context during the lesson (e.g. during a discussion – knowing how and when to switch quickly to a drill of a problem phoneme)?
- The teacher has a sense of each individual learner’s current level of mastery of English, and adjusts their feedback to that learner at every point.

6. *Learning planning*

- The teacher knows how each lesson connects to past lessons
- The teacher sets general objectives for each lesson, and makes a rough plan of stages and activities
- The teacher, at each step, keeps a sense – a ‘helicopter view’ – of what the lesson is about, and which topics, skills, and language points should be ‘in the frame’ of that lesson, to be covered if appropriate
- The teacher can sense the real-time ebb and flow of the lesson and make effective second-by-second judgements about the mood of the learners, the state of the lesson, and the next micro-step, so as to ensure that the lesson stays on track (I call this ‘in-lesson planning’)
- The teacher has established a series of reference points during the course so far, which he can remind the students to think back to and correct themselves
- The teacher has a good sense of how (i) the accuracy objective (ii) the fluency objective, have to work in each lesson and with each group
- When language focus on accuracy becomes appropriate, the teacher can ensure that the students identify, make sense of, and practise, the target item
- When communicative freedom becomes appropriate, the teacher can ensure the students can (i) feel free to express themselves (ii) feel free to ask for support as they need (iii) derive concrete benefit from the freedom to express themselves at length (iv) derive concrete benefit from feedback, in terms of increased accuracy?

7. *Language teaching methods*

- The teacher knows the value of ‘input-output’ approaches and ‘output-feedback’ approaches as methodological alternatives
- The teacher can deploy a wide range of techniques appropriate to every potential teaching opportunity, whether accuracy-oriented or fluency-oriented. In particular:
 - focussing on learners’ assimilation and control of the language systems
 - enabling learners to enhance their oral language accuracy while engaging in expressing genuine messages
 - developing learners’ oral and listening fluency and confidence in using the language for communication
 - developing learners’ reading and writing fluency and confidence in using the language for communication
- The teacher knows that learners need to feel that expectations of them are high, and teaches accordingly
- The teacher can help the learner in developing their autonomy as language learners
- The teacher gives the learners a sense of continuity (e.g. w/b headings, review, etc)
- The teacher always gives learners a sense of having learnt something (e.g. time to write, review at end, review at beginning, homework, video diary, written diary, etc)

- The teacher encourages the learners to be the main ‘resource’ in the classroom³
- The teacher knows how to create and utilise materials in every medium (print, audio, video)

8. *Professionalism*

- The teacher is confident in their own capacity to analyse what they do and develop their own ideas
- The teacher is open to new ideas in the areas of method and theory
- The teacher is professional in their behaviour with both learners and colleagues
- The teacher takes advantage of regular professional development opportunities

Summary

So these categories, in summary, are:

1. *Global context (socio-geographic, learner group, institutional, colleagues)*
2. *Language learning awareness (history, recent theory, own experiential concepts)*
3. *Language awareness (systems awareness, learner perspective, lexis and grammar, classroom grading, clear illustration)*
4. *Classroom dynamics (roles, individual relationships, group relationships, learning culture, physicals)*
5. *Real-time awareness (alertness: to learners, to opportunities, to process, to progress)*
6. *Learning planning (lesson connections, in-lesson planning, reference points, accuracy-fluency interaction, appropriate accuracy-work, appropriate fluency-work)*
7. *Language teaching methods (input-output, output-feedback, range, value-added, accuracy, fluency, continuity, autonomy, learner as resource, materials)*
8. *Professionalism (confidence, openness, behaviour, development)*

I like them because they capture an essence that I would be pleased to have applied to my teaching. They are not brief, I confess, but the headings are, and the concepts contained in them are easy and logical to comprehend. Above all, they attempt to incorporate, possibly for the first time, that real teaching happens in real time, and that the best teachers have a sense, often crafted over a number of years, of what is really going on for their students at each moment of the lesson, and how best to both digress fruitfully from, *and* ensure a return to, their global intentions for the lesson. This is the role of the consummate chairman.

Conclusion

In this article I have tried to suggest that it is time for a re-appraisal of the teaching models we have become used to over the last 25 years, excellent and timely though those models were. As we move into the 21st century, we are getting a clearer picture of the role of noticing in the way language is learnt in classrooms. We are understanding better how the expanded lexical component in language may help to speed up learning. And we are understanding better that how we relate to and what we expect of our learners, materially affects how well they progress. I think we are finding it easier to become less ‘teacherly’ and more ‘learnerly’. I think that techniques and materials, though essential elements of our toolbox, will become less central to our endeavour, and that our relationships with learners, with the extra expectations on *them* which that implies, will become more central.

³ This is the idea, popular for many years in Executive teaching, and now more popular in General English teaching, that the learners provide the best material simply by talking about themselves and expressing their own views. In so doing, they provide excellent output on which language feedback and therefore language focus, can be applied.

My suggestions can be distilled into (i) a greater emphasis on real-time awareness in the classroom, and the release of teachers from adherence to plans, in favour of a balanced path between what is intended and what is allowed (ii) a greater awareness of the relative value of techniques, materials and relationships as vehicles for teaching and in terms of improved learning.

The intention of my suggested sets of criteria is that they be variously tested out. The first suggestion is the re-vamp, let's say update, of the UCLES DELTA criteria. This could be assessed, amended, and then piloted quite soon I would imagine. The second is a complete reformulation of what I think is required in our teaching generally. It is not really a suggestion for a new model of training assessment. Rather it is a suggestion for a new way of looking at ourselves individually. Am I a good teacher? Well, I think so. Let me check myself against this list. I have tried to be descriptive, though I recognise that some implicit prescription creeps in, and I am open to amendments and feedback.

References

Bowen T and Marks J (1994) *Inside teaching* Macmillan Heinemann
Scrivener J (1994) *Learning Teaching* Macmillan Heinemann