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Gu Yueguo

English Language Teaching Methodology

(Part 2)

中央广播电视大学"专升本"指定教材

英语教学法

（下）

Help Yourself to a BA Course Series

"专升本"高级英语自学系列教程

（14）

外语教学与研究出版社

English Language Teaching Methodology (Part 2)

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Help Yourself to a BA Course Series

"专升本"高级英语自学系列教程

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(14)

(Trial Version)

(试用本)

Help Yourself to a BA Course Series

"专升本"高级英语自学系列教程

Help Yourself to a BA Course is a series specially designed for those self-study learners who want to upgrade their English from intermediate to advanced levels. It is thematically structured and five-skill integrated on activity/task basis. It consists of two modules: English Language Communication Module and Professional Training Module. Module 1 caters for general learners of English, and Module 2 provides up-to-date professional training for senior middle school teachers of English.

English Language Communication Module:

A Guide to Success 1: Orientation　　　*A Guide to Success 2: Learning Strategies*
English in Daily Life　　　　　　　　　　*English for Studying*
English at Leisure　　　　　　　　　　　*Cross-Cultural Communication*
English at Work　　　　　　　　　　　　*English in a Changing World*
English in Current Affairs　　　　　　　*English Through Literature*

Professional Training Module:

A Guide to Success 3: Professionalism
Language and Linguistics: A Workbook
English Language Teaching Methodology (1)
English Language Teaching Methodology (2)
Practical Project Design

Print materials are supplemented with both audio and video cassettes.

Successful completion of the course leads to a *benke* certificate (equivalent to BA non-hons in Britain) validated by the Ministry of Education via China Central Radio & Television University.

The Third Year Pack

Checklist

Materials Provided:

(trial version available for Autumn Semester)

- *A Guide to Success 3: Professionalism*
  with 1 audio cassette
- *Language and Linguistics: A Workbook*
  with 1 audio cassette
- *English Language Teaching Methodology* (1)
  with audio and video cassettes

(trial version available for Spring Semester)

- *English Language Teaching Methodology* (2)
  with audio cassette and video cassettes
- *Practical Project Design*

Materials Students Should Provide Themselves with:

- 2 assignment notebooks (standard A4 size recommended)
- 1 rough notebook
- 1 self-assessment record notebook
- 2 blank cassettes for speaking practice
- a tape recorder

English Language Teaching Methodology (2)

Specially prepared by

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Unit 6   Focus on Writing

Objectives

By the end of this unit you should:
- understand the features of a good writing in English
- be aware of the importance of having a purpose to write, a context or situation, a sense of audience
- be able to set up situations for writing
- be able to design guided writing tasks
- understand the process of writing: planning, drafting, composing, getting feed-back, editing
- be able to set up tasks for different stages of the writing process

Warm-up

In *English for Studying* we discussed various aspects of writing in English and through that you should already have a clear view about the role of writing in our daily life, in our academic life, as well as in the whole process of English language learning. As a teacher of English language, have you ever thought of the role of teaching writing in your language teaching process? Let's first consider the following two questions.

1. Do you teach writing in your English class?
   a. never   b. sometimes   c. very often

Based on our interviews with some of the middle school teachers, those who *never* teach writing and those who teach writing *very often* are in a minority. The majority of the teachers seem to teach writing *sometimes*. This may reflect the situation of your own teaching experience. And you may have your own explanations about why you are doing so. Now look at the next question and the answers given below, then make your choices. You may choose more than one answer.

2. Why do you teach writing?

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a. To enable students to pass exams that demand writing skills
b. To enable students to write good articles expressing their feelings or points of view
c. To enable students to communicate with others through writing notes and letters
d. To help students to improve their reading skills by taking notes and writing summaries
e. To help students to improve their listening comprehension by taking notes and writing summaries
f. To prepare students to make oral presentations by writing down their speech outline or even the whole script

Your answers to the question might be very different from those of other teachers depending on the situation you are in. We may teach writing in English classes for various reasons based on the needs of the students and the requirements of the curriculum. The role of teaching writing in the whole process of English language teaching can be categorized in several aspects.

First, writing serves as a tool in teaching all language skills. It can be integrated with the teaching of listening comprehension, oral presentation, and reading skills. For example, making notes and writing summaries can be used in teaching listening comprehension, writing outlines and scripts can be used for the preparation of oral presentations, and writing can be integrated with the teaching of reading skills by asking the students to write answers to reading comprehension questions.

Second, writing may be a goal in itself. Since writing is often required for passing a particular examination, from writing simple answers at an elementary level to composing essays at an advanced level, teaching writing can surely help meet students' needs in fulfilling their full course of study.

Third, writing has its practical value and can be used as stimulus in motivating students to learn the language. For example, students may write notes or letters to communicate with teachers, classmates, and friends. If they have access to Internet, they may be able to communicate with others around the world in English wherever they are. They may find writing useful in applying for further study opportunities as well as in looking for a better job since many jobs require applicants to have good command of written English.

In conclusion, there is no one reason for teaching writing or one method that can prepare students for all the different situations they might encounter. However, writing is worth developing in the whole process of language teaching because of the role it plays in communication. What is important for learners to understand is the process of writing

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that they need to go through and this unit attempts to give you the means to understand that.

In the following activities, we will have a close look at how to make our students aware of the features of good writing, how to help our students to compose a good piece of writing through the different stages of the writing process, and how to design some guided-writing and free-writing tasks for our students.

Activity 1   How to Identify Features of Good Writing

To become a good writer of English, a student should be aware of the features of good writing. We can use various ways to help our students to identify these features. Students can usually tell a good piece of writing from an awkward one, if we put the two together. So by comparing the two, they will be able to identify what the good and bad features are. To help students have an idea of how a good piece of writing is structured, we could use a scrambled text (i.e. one the sentences of which have been mixed up in the wrong order) for the students to rearrange the sentences in the right order. We also need to help the students to understand the importance of using cohesive devices in composing a text. Now we will discuss these methods one by one.

Task 1   Comparing Two Pieces of Writing

For the purposes of identifying the features of good writing, we could select two pieces of writing on the same topic, then ask the students to compare them and answer some questions. We may design different sets of questions, but our purpose is to highlight the points we consider to be characteristic of a good piece of writing. We could design a task in the following two steps.

Step One: Select two pieces of writing about the same topic. One piece should be a good one, the other should be an awkward one. These could be student productions from a different class. They should be something like the following two pieces of writing on the topic "Smoking Should Be Banned".

Text 1

I hate those people who smoke. They <u>don't</u> care about the others. Smoking in public not only <u>concerns with</u> one individual's interests, but also <u>concerns with</u> the

public interests. The smoke <u>out of</u> cigarettes has several poisonous <u>materials</u>. <u>It is</u>
<u>carried by the air</u>, therefore, besides the smoker himself, people nearby also
breathe in some poisonous <u>materials</u>. Actually, according to some <u>sientific</u>
reports, the smoke breathed in by them does more harm than <u>that</u> to the smoker
himself. Some people like to throw away the cigarettes no matter where <u>he is</u>
which is very dangerous. It is likely to catch fire if the <u>surrounding</u> is dry. <u>Un-</u>
<u>countless</u> property and lives are lost due to the little burning cigarette end. Smok-
ing in public <u>bring</u> about more <u>polution</u> problems. Though smoking can make peo-
ple relaxed, in my opinion it should be banned.

Text 2

Smoking should definitely be banned because it is harmful to people's health. On
the one hand, smoking does a lot of harm to the smokers themselves. When a
smoker smokes, many poisonous substances in the cigarettes will get into his lungs
and remain there for the rest of his life. These harmful substances may damage
their lungs and may even lead to lung cancer. They are especially harmful to
women smokers since they may endanger the health of the unborn babies. On the
other hand, smoking is harmful to the people around the smokers. It is reported
that the people around them will inhale ninety percent of the poisonous substances
exhaled by the smokers.

Since smoking is harmful to both the smokers and the people around them, it is
reasonable to ban smoking for the good sake of everybody.

Step Two: Design some questions to get the students to think about the two texts and
give their comments. In order to guide our students to think in the correct way, we
could provide some information and ask them to fill in the rest. The following task is de-
signed to get students to note down their general impressions of the two texts. Let's
work through it now.

Read Text 1 and Text 2 carefully and give your comments in the table below :

Texts	Good points	Bad points
Text 1		*Not well organized* ...
Text 2	*Well organized* ...	

Feedback

Though the first text lists several harmful effects of smoking and reaches the conclusion that smoking should be banned, the ideas are not very well organized and the passage lacks the cohesive devices necessary to construct a logical structure. Many ideas are mixed together which makes it hard for the readers to see the writer's main point of view. There are also spelling mistakes, grammar errors, problems with choice of words, and even misuse of words. (See the words underlined) The language is not sufficiently formal for such an argumentative article. The second text is much better than the first. It is well structured, its ideas are clearly stated and coherently organized, and there are no spelling or grammar mistakes. The cohesive devices are well used in the passage so that the readers are able to get the writer's point of view at a glance. The first paragraph states clearly the writer's point of view, which is further explained in the second paragraph in two aspects with supporting facts and examples. And the last paragraph brings the passage to a natural conclusion.

Task 2   Identifying the Features of Good Writing

By comparing a good piece of writing and an awkward one and then making general comments on them we have prepared our students to further familiarize the generally accepted criteria for judging a good piece of writing. We can then help them to highlight the features of good writing. We can ask students to compare the two texts once again and consider the comments made on them. Then ask them to make a list of what they consider to be the features of well-written English texts. We can guide the students by providing a table listing the categories of those features and ask them to list the features they identify under each category. Now let's try to work through the following task.

Compare Text 1 and Text 2 once again and consider the comments made on them. Then try to make a list of the features of a well-written English text under each category in the following table :

layout	language	content

Feedback

Layout, like spacing, indention, handwriting or typeface should comply with convention. For language, a well-written text includes spelling accurately, getting the grammar right, punctuating meaningfully, having a range of vocabulary and an appropriate choice of words, and us-

ing a wide range of sentence structures. For content, ideas should be developed and organized clearly and convincingly, and ideas and information in sentences should be linked in a coherent fashion.

Task 3   Forming a Text from Scrambled Sentences

The organization of ideas and the ways in which the ideas are linked coherently in sentences are of great importance to a well-written text. Unscrambling a list of jumbled sentences is one of the methods to help students understand the structure of a text and know something about sentence sequencing. Narrative texts and those describing a process can be good for this kind of practice. We could select a text with good structure and sentence sequencing, scramble it, and then ask the students to think about sentence sequencing and rearrange the sentences to form a coherent text. It would help if we could provide the students with some assistance, like giving the first and last sentences, providing a diagram showing the structure of the text, or pictures showing the process of an event.

For example, we could select a text describing the process of making *jiaozi*, scramble its sentences, and ask our students to rewrite the process based on these sentences. In order to give the students some help, we could use a diagram showing the process of making *jiaozi*. Now, let's try the following example.

Study the flow chart of making jiaozi *and the sentences following the chart, and write a passage describing the process of making* jiaozi. *You should use all the sentences in your writing, but you need to rearrange them and make some changes in order to link them in a coherent way. The first and last sentences are in the correct order.*

Making *Jiaozi*				
prepare dough	prepare fillings	make skins	wrap up	cook and serve *jiaozi*
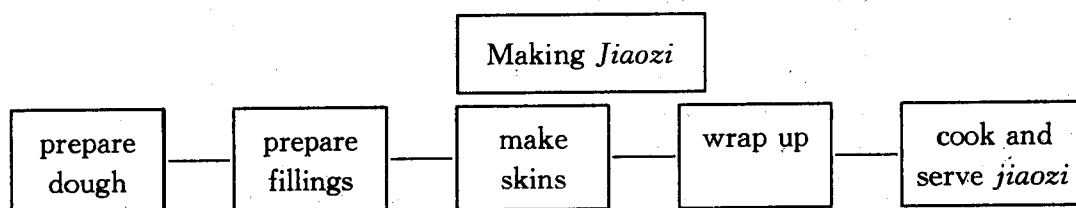
1. First mix some flour with some cold water and beat the mixture to form a cake of dough, which should be stored in a covered container for at least 15 minutes.
2. Use a wooden rolling pin to press them into thin pieces of skin.
3. Cut the dough sticks into small pieces about one inch long.
4. Put some filling in the middle of the skin and fold it.
5. Prepare the filling by mixing minced meat, chopped vegetables with a small amount of ground ginger, and spring onions.

6. Take out the dough and roll it into sticks about one inch across.
7. Use your fingertips to press the edges together to form a *jiaozi* in the shape of a human ear.
8. Boil a pot of hot water and place the *jiaozi* in the boiling water and cook for 10 minutes.
9. Finally, strain the *jiaozi* out of the pot and put them into individual serving dishes.

Feedback

The flow chart shows how the ideas in the text are organized and rearranging the sentences draws the students' attention further to the logical structure of the text. By using linking devices to link sentences, students will become aware of the importance of rhetorical devices in producing a coherent text. By working on a text like this, students should acquire a better understanding of the features of a well-written English text.

The answers for the above task may vary slightly but should be something like the following:

First mix some flour with some cold water and beat the mixture to form a cake of dough, which should be stored in a covered container for at least 15 minutes. Then prepare the filling by mixing minced meat, chopped vegetables with a small amount of ground ginger, and spring onions. Next take out the dough and roll it into sticks about one inch across and then cut them into small pieces about one inch long. After this, use a wooden rolling pin to press them into thin pieces of skin. Next, put some filling in the middle of the skin and fold it. Then use your fingertips to press the edges together to form a *jiaozi* in the shape of a human ear. Next, boil a pot of hot water and place the *jiaozi* in the boiling water and cook for 10 minutes. *Finally, strain the jiaozi out of the pot and put them into individual serving dishes.*

Task 4   Focusing on Cohesive Devices

We can conclude from the previous tasks that a good writer needs to be able to use accurate spelling, meaningful punctuation, appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar, clear handwriting and format, appropriate formality, as well as a variety of coherent sentence structures, and discourse and rhetorical conventions. While some superficial features are easy for our students to notice, the use of cohesive devices also needs to be emphasized. Since cohesive devices play a very important role in organizing the sentences into a coherent text, we will go on to focus our attention a little more on them.

Some cohesive devices indicate meaning relationships between or within sentences. These include those of addition, comparison, contrast, result, exemplification and so on. It is through these devices that the writer is able to organize his ideas and help his reader follow him from one sentence to another. Other cohesive devices link sentences in

a grammatical way through signaling relationships between sentences by means of anaphora or back reference. These include demonstrative adjectives or pronouns or articles, such as *it*, *this*, *the*, *here*, *that* and so on. Another kind of cohesive device is to use repetition of key words or synonymous words to link sentences together. It is necessary for us to help our students become aware of the use of these cohesive devices.

First of all, work through the following task to check your own ability to identify linking devices. Read the text below, which is an extract from a paper written for teachers, and underline all the linking words.

Reflective Teaching in a Wider Context *by Chris Kyriacou*

All teachers think about their teaching. Indeed, it is difficult to see how it would be possible to teach without continually monitoring and reflecting on one's practice. However, since the early 1980s, increasing attention has been paid by educational researchers to the notion of 'reflective teaching'. In essence, reflective teaching refers to an approach to teaching in which teachers regularly think about and evaluate their own practice in a systematic way with a view to developing and further improving their classroom practice. Whilst it has been recognized that all teachers think about their teaching, it is still possible for teachers to adopt an uncritical and mechanistic approach to their teaching for much of the time. Reflective teaching goes beyond simply thinking about one's teaching on an occasional basis. Rather it refers to an orientation towards one's own practice which is based on inquiry and problem solving.

From *Language Teaching in the Mirror*, eds, A. Peck & D. Westgate, CILT, 1994, p.3.

Feedback
You have probably listed the words below.

Indeed	However	In essence	Whilst...still	Rather

Now see if you can work out the purpose of each of them and fill them in on the form below. For example, is it used to contradict a point, add a further argument, emphasize or rephrase a point?

Linking words	Purposes
Indeed	
Whilst... still	
Rather	

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