

● 大学英语拓展课程系列

拓展课程



Encounters with Westerners:

Improving Skills in English and Intercultural Communication

跨文化交际技巧

——如何跟西方人打交道

学生用书

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出版说明

教育部最新颁布的《大学英语课程教学要求》将大学英语的教学目标确定为“培养学生的英语综合应用能力，特别是听说能力，使他们在今后学习、工作和社会交往中能用英语有效地进行交际，同时增强其自主学习能力，提高综合文化素养，以适应我国社会发展和国际交流的需要”，并提出：“将综合英语类、语言技能类、语言应用类、语言文化类和专业英语类等必修课程和选修课程有机结合，确保不同层次的学生在英语应用能力方面得到充分的训练和提高。”《大学英语课程教学要求》明确要求大学英语教学中开设选修课，以满足大学生的实际需求。

依据《大学英语课程教学要求》，上海外语教育出版社邀请国内外英语教学专家开发编写了选修教材，通过教材的出版引领、促进了大学英语选修课程设置的发展，丰富了我国大学英语教学。这些教材品种丰富，涵盖面广，包括以下多个系列：大学英语应用提高阶段专业英语系列教材、大学英语综合应用能力选修课系列教材、职场英语选修教程系列、大学目标英语、牛津专业英语基础丛书等。这些年来，全国数百所高校使用了这些教材，部分老师对教材的内容和编写形式提出了宝贵的建议，为我们进一步完善教材提供了实践依据。

虽然很多高校多年来一直尝试开设选修课，专家学者也进行了理论研究，但目前此类课程在大学英语教学中所占比重并不大，仍处于探索阶段。多数教学专家对大学英语选修课程的具体教学目标和教学内容范围未形成统一认识，教育主管部门亦未出台具体的选修课教学要求。为了进一步推动大学英语选修课教学的发展，外教社在多年选修课教材使用情况调研的基础上，结合专家学者的最新研究成果和建议，充分考虑我国目前的大学英语教学现状、师资条件、实际需求等因素，重新策划编写了“大学英语拓展课程系列”，该系列教材包括ESP、EAP和EOP三个子系列。

- ESP (English for Specific Purposes)

专业英语类, 侧重提升专业英语能力, 在培养学生听、说、读、写、译等基本语言技能的基础上, 教授与该专业相关的英语词汇和表达, 并尽可能传授专业知识, 以使大学生轻松通过英语媒介获取本专业知识和信息。此类课程适合相关专业学生学习, 针对性强。

- EAP (English for Academic Purposes)

学术英语类, 侧重高级水平英语听、说、读、写、译等技能的培养, 为大学生出国留学、攻读研究生、进行科研等学术活动打下更扎实的英语基础。此类课程包括: 演讲听说、跨文化交际、文学赏析、学术英语写作等。适合需要继续在学术上深造的大学生使用。

- EOP (English for Occupational Purposes)

职场英语类, 侧重提升职场英语能力, 为大学生将来在英语环境中工作打下扎实的职场交际基本功。此类课程多数适合所有大学生使用, 有部分教程与专业结合, 适合相应专业学生使用。

除了重新修订已出版的教材外, 我们还通过邀请更多海内外英语教学专家参与编写、和国外出版社合作出版等方式, 扩大本系列教材的选题规模, 以满足各专业大学生的学习需求。本系列教材具有时代感强、实用性强、课堂可操作性强等特点, 相信会给我国大学英语教学带来新风向。

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Don Snow
Hong Kong, 2003

To the Teacher:

Teaching *Encounters with Westerners*

I. General

The ultimate goal of English study is not just to learn a language for its own sake. Rather, the goal is to learn how to understand and effectively communicate with people from other nations and cultures. *Encounters with Westerners* is a textbook to help students not only improve their English, but also grow in their ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures, especially Westerners.

This integrated skills textbook provides students with practice in speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is appropriate for use in courses on Western culture or intercultural communication, but due to its heavy emphasis on discussion it is also appropriate for use in oral skills courses.

II. Goals of *Encounters with Westerners*

This textbook aims to achieve five different kinds of goals:

- 1) **Help students improve their English language skills.** *Encounters* allows students to build their English skills by reading about and discussing topics that are intellectually appropriate — and generally interesting — to adult learners in China. In particular, *Encounters* helps students:
 - Learn to explain ideas at ever greater levels of nuance.
 - Learn to share ideas effectively in discussion.
- 2) **Help students develop good intercultural communication habits and skills.** In particular, *Encounters* builds students' awareness of how they go about interpreting the behavior of foreigners. It also encourages them to develop the habit of pausing to consider alternative possible explanations of puzzling or problematic behavior on the part of foreigners, rather than jumping to (often ethnocentric) conclusions.
- 3) **Familiarize students with basic concepts of intercultural communication.** *Encounters* introduces students to many of the basic concepts of intercultural communication. The more students understand about the

various factors that affect intercultural communication, the more aware students will be of the role these factors play in how they interpret the behavior of foreigners.

- 4) **Teach students basic aspects of Western culture.** While *Encounters* addresses Western culture in general, special attention is given to American culture. In part this is because the US is the world's largest English-speaking nation in terms of both population and economy. Also, as one of the world's most strongly individualist cultures, it provides an especially sharp contrast with Chinese culture.
- 5) **Help teachers learn more about culture and intercultural communication.** Through teaching *Encounters*, it is hoped that teachers – both Western and Chinese – will grow in their understanding of intercultural communication, of their students' culture, and of their own culture.

III. Suggested Plan for Teaching Each Unit

By design, each unit in *Encounters* contains more material than you will probably need. This allows you a degree of flexibility in deciding which parts of each unit you want to cover and how much time to devote to each. The following suggested plan is intended to serve as a starting point for your planning, not as a straightjacket limiting your freedom of movement.

If you want to finish the book in one semester, and plan to cover each unit during two 2-hour class periods, you might cover the parts of each unit roughly as follows:

Class Meeting 1/Period 1: Begin by briefly going over the Language Tools, and also reviewing material from previous lessons. Then devote most of the period to the Encounter exercise; i.e. presentation of the situation, group discussion, group reports and any follow-up discussion.

Class Meeting 1/Period 2: Devote most of this period to the Intercultural Communication Reading and follow-up activities (Usage, Discussion Activities).

Class Meeting 2/Period 1: Cover the Letter to Fran and Fran's Response, and follow-up discussion.

Class Meeting 2/Period 2: Cover the Culture Difference Reading and follow-up discussion.

IV. Teaching the Parts of Each Unit

A. Teaching “Language Tools”

Each unit begins with “Language Tools,” i.e. phrases students can use to achieve a particular communication goal, either explaining something (usually related to culture) or discussing ideas with others. Most of these words and phrases will probably already be familiar to students, but students may not yet be accustomed to using them when they speak, and may not fully understand how these phrases should be used.

Students should be required to study the Language Tools as part of their homework, and it is probably also useful to discuss these briefly in class before doing the Encounter exercises in each unit. However, the main thing is to ensure that students practice using the Language Tools in conversation, both in the Encounter exercises and elsewhere as appropriate through the unit.

B. Teaching “Encounters”

The Encounter exercises are “critical incident” exercises, a type of exercise frequently used for intercultural training. Critical incident exercises start with presentation of a short story describing a problematic encounter between people from two different cultures, an encounter in which there is some kind of cultural misunderstanding. Students are then asked to think about different possible explanations for what went wrong and why. These activities make students more aware of the interpretation process that is such an important part of intercultural communication; they also encourage students to develop the habit of considering a broad range of possibilities when interpreting the behavior of people from other cultures, rather than interpreting from only a narrow ethnocentric basis. Finally, these exercises are useful for illustrating cultural differences.

By intent, the Encounter activities are open-ended – no “right” explanation of the situation is provided. This underlines the reality that in actual intercultural encounters, people often never know what the “right answer” was, and have to tolerate a degree of uncertainty and ambiguity.

Procedure suggestions

Step #1: Presenting the situation

- 1) Before presenting the situation to your class, you may want to change the setting or details of the encounter to make it seem a little closer to your students' lives, or to make it more comfortable for them to discuss. For lower level classes, you may also want to simplify the vocabulary and sentence structure; for more advanced groups you may wish to enrich the language.
- 2) In general it is best to present the situation to students orally (though you can also have them read it from the book).
 - For lower level classes:
 - First introduce new vocabulary as necessary.
 - Then tell the situation as a story, speaking clearly and using short sentences with ample pauses in between.
 - Repeat the presentation if necessary.
 - For more advanced classes:
 - Present the situation more rapidly, using natural speech.
 - Rely on students to ask about unfamiliar vocabulary or details of the situation that they didn't understand.
- 3) After presenting the situation, check students' comprehension by quickly asking the whole class a few questions about the key points of the situation.

Step #2: Small group discussion of interpretations: This step provides students with practice in explaining ideas succinctly and clearly in English. It also provides practice in thinking broadly and flexibly about intercultural encounters. (In this step your students' natural instincts will probably be to cut through the fuss and just decide what is the "right" thing to do. One goal is therefore to help students see that how they interpret a situation is vitally important precisely because it is the foundation for deciding what to do. Another goal is to help students develop the habit of considering alternative interpretations of unclear situations rather than simply jumping to the first conclusion that suggests itself.)

- 1) Have each student individually write down several possible interpretations of the situation. Each idea should make sense as an interpretation of the situation; in other words, in a relevant way it should address what needs to be explained about the situation. Each interpretation should also be explained clearly enough that other students will understand the idea, and also see how it differs from other possible interpretations.
- 2) Have students divide into groups of three or four to share their ideas and generate a group list of possible interpretations of the situation.
 - Ask for at least five possible interpretations.
 - Encourage students to brainstorm — i.e. to consider any idea, no matter how wild, and put it on the list. Only after they have generated as many ideas as possible should they look back at their list to decide which interpretations seem especially likely.
- 3) Have each group choose one member to serve as recorder (note-taker). Having a single set of notes encourages the group to work together as a team and discuss their ideas. It also forces them to explain their ideas clearly enough that the recorder can write them down.
- 4) Encourage students to consider both nice and nasty interpretations of a situation. It is very easy for these exercises to degenerate into a search for nice ways to interpret potentially nasty encounters, and unless the possibility of both bad and good intentions are considered these exercises will seem divorced from the real world.
- 5) While students discuss, circulate to offer help with language, suggestions for groups that have stalled, and advice on culture. This is also a good opportunity to deal with interpretations which are simply ridiculous, thus sparing students from embarrassment later — and sparing you from the need to publicly shoot down the interpretation in front of the whole class.

Step #3: Reports and large group discussion: This step allows students to see other options they did not think of, and gives them a chance to check their ideas against your perspective.

- 1) First have groups volunteer suggestions while you note them on the board.
 - Ask each group to suggest just one idea and then move on quickly to the next

group. This keeps things moving and ensures that each group has a chance to contribute.

- Groups should try to add new ideas to the list on the board (so they need to pay attention to what is being said by other groups).
 - After each group has made a contribution, open the floor to anybody who wishes to volunteer additional ideas.
- 2) Then have students look at the list on the board and decide which of the suggested interpretations they think are most likely, and which they think are least likely. (Take care not to indicate your own thoughts at this point in the exercise.)
 - 3) Finally, go over the suggested interpretations and provide a Western perspective by indicating which you think are most and least likely.
 - When your judgment differs from the students', take the opportunity to give additional information about the "target culture" (American culture, Western culture, or whichever foreign culture you are teaching about), explaining relevant cultural points which the students may not be aware of.
 - Try not to make it seem that you are coming in as the final judge with the one and only right answer. Point out interpretations which you feel are especially probable, but also give credit to others which are not very likely but possible. (This allows you to affirm more of the ideas students have suggested, and also reminds everyone that the world is a place of great variety in which the improbable sometimes does happen.)
 - 4) Finally, ask students which of the relatively likely/reasonable interpretations give the most benefit of the doubt to the foreigner in the situation, and which are least generous.
 - You do not need to argue or even imply that students should choose the most generous interpretation, but by asking the question you call to their attention the fact that there is a choice to be made about whether or not to give the benefit of the doubt.

Step #4: Follow-up: Follow up by doing one or more of the Discussion Activities. (See below: Suggested Procedures for Teaching Discussion Activities.)

Step #5: Commenting on students' work: You may wish to collect the

interpretations that students wrote individually at the beginning of the exercise and go over them. This gives you an opportunity to help students improve the clarity with which they express and explain their ideas. It also allows you to comment on how reasonable and likely the ideas they suggest would seem from a Western perspective. Over time, work toward improvement in these two areas.

C. Teaching “Intercultural Communication Reading”

The purpose of this reading passage is to introduce basic concepts of intercultural communication.

Procedure suggestions

Step #1: Reading the passage

- 1) The passage can either be read in class or assigned as homework.
- 2) Before reading, students should look at the Before You Read questions, not least because this provides a “road map” that should make it easier to read the text.
- 3) Suggest that students read the passage according to the following procedures:
 - First look over the Before You Read questions.
 - Read the passage one time quickly for the main ideas, marking unfamiliar words or questions, but not stopping to look them all up.
 - Check comprehension using the Before You Read questions.
 - Study the Usage section.
 - Re-read the passage, paying special attention to the Usage word combinations, and also noting any questions.

Step #2: Discussing the passage

- 1) In class, discuss any problems students have with the content or language of the Reading. (If your students tend to be reluctant to ask questions, you might require them to each have at least one question prepared in advance.)
- 2) You might also choose to elaborate further on one or more points in the passage, based either on your personal knowledge and experiences or additional material from Notes in the teacher’s book.

Step #3: Follow-up

- 1) Go over Usage.
- 2) As time allows, do one or more of the Discussion Activities. (See below: Suggested Procedures for Teaching Discussion Activities.)

D. Teaching “Letter to Fran and Fran’s Response”

The Letter to Fran exercise in each unit is essentially another kind of critical incident exercise. It differs from the Encounter exercises mainly in that it is not entirely open ended – an “answer” of sorts is provided by Fran’s Response. The interpretation task is also subtly different; in the Letter to Fran exercise the students’ task is to try to see things from *Fran’s perspective* and guess how she will view them.

Procedure suggestions

Step #1: Reading Letter to Fran

- 1) First, have students read the Letter in class. Because the Letters are fairly short and probably not too difficult, you might use this as an opportunity to build students’ reading speed by only allowing them a few minutes to read.
- 2) When time is up, check students’ comprehension by asking them to quickly summarize the situation in the Letter to Fran.

Step #2: Answering the Questions

- 1) Once students understand the situation, go to the Questions. If time allows, have them discuss the Questions in pairs or small groups. If time is short, ask them to quickly think about the Questions and come up with one or more answers. Have students write their answers down, and be sure to save their answers.
 - It is best to do this in class rather than at home because students are likely to skip this step if it is assigned as homework.
 - Ensuring that students make guesses before they read the Response will help them build active reading skills.
- 2) Close this phase of the activity by asking a few volunteers what they predict Fran’s response will be (but don’t tell them if they are right or wrong).

Step #3: Reading Fran’s Response

- 1) Have students read Fran’s Response in class.
 - Have students remind themselves of their answers to the Questions.

- Have students read Fran’s Response quickly, checking to see whether or not their guesses were correct.
 - Over time you can help students build their reading speed and active reading skills by only giving them a limited — and ever decreasing — amount of time in which to read.
 - Encourage them to read for main ideas, not 100% comprehension of every word. (They can re-read the letter more carefully later.)

Step #4: Discussing Fran’s Response

1) Among options for discussing Fran’s Response are the following:

- Ask students how accurate their predictions of Fran’s Response were. Which parts did they guess correctly? Which parts surprised them?
- Check students’ comprehension of the Response.
- Answer questions or comment on the content of Fran’s Response.
- Give students a chance to ask about other possible explanations they may have for the situation in Letter to Fran. (When you tell students how likely you think these additional explanations are, give as much credit to each guess as possible.)

2) Go over the phrases in Usage.

- For students at the intermediate and advanced levels, accurate usage of word combinations, especially verb + preposition combinations, tends to be a common problem. To address this problem it is necessary for students to develop the habit of learning word combinations rather than single isolated vocabulary items.
- To check, ask students in class to make sentences using the Usage combinations.
- With verb + preposition combinations, make special note of where the object can come. Ex: “to clear (something) up” and “to clear up (something)” are both possible.

Step #5: Follow-up: Follow up by doing one or more of the Discussion Activities. (See below: Suggested Procedures for Teaching Discussion Activities.)

E. Teaching “Culture Difference Reading”

The purpose of this passage is to teach students about basic aspects of Western culture, in particular, areas in which Western culture differs from Chinese culture. Because the focus of this book is more on the process of intercultural communication than on specific points of culture difference between China and the West, these passages are fairly short and do not by any means provide an exhaustive picture of Western culture. However, they suggest a few ideas which may be new to students, ideas which they can draw on as they attempt to explain the behavior of Westerners in later Encounter and Letter to Fran activities.

Procedure suggestions (See suggestions for Intercultural Communication Reading above.)

V. Suggested Procedures for Teaching “Discussion Activities”

Various kinds of discussion activities are found throughout each *Encounters* unit, but most fall into several basic kinds. Suggestions for teaching each kind of discussion activity are presented below, in alphabetical order.

Interviews: These are especially good for intermediate or advanced oral skills classes because they allow in-depth exploration of a topic and provide students with practice in explaining opinions.

Procedures:

- 1) Decide what topic(s) you want students to interview each other on.
- 2) Give directions for the interviews. Students need to know the suggested topic and approximately how much time they will have. If you want students to write up their own list of questions they will also need a few minutes to do this.
- 3) Pair students. Often it is good to find a way to pair students with someone other than the person sitting next to them (who they probably already know fairly well).
- 4) Have students carry out interviews. Once student A finishes interviewing student B, you can ask them to switch roles, or even switch partners. You may want to set a time limit, and call out when partners should switch roles.