



Responding to a complex advanced teaching environment at the SNDC

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Overview

- A Brief insight into the English teaching environment at the SNDC
- General language teaching research drawn upon that underlies our approach to teaching
- How we define and observe learning at higher levels
- What *output, analysis and control* and *learner agency* are – how these link in to our view of learning
- 2 examples from our courses

Characteristics of our language learning situation

- High level students on entry (63% C12 - 26% C2 – 1-2% higher) – around 90% advanced level
 - 63% C1
 - 26% C2 (1-2% higher)
- English integrated through course literature, lectures and seminars (a bilingual educational setting? – very high proportion of input in English)
- Limited time for direct English instruction - 2 hours per week (30 hours per term)
- Academic requirements overlap professional ones

What teaching approaches can we draw for content?

- ESP
- EAP
- Task-based learning
- Functional Notional approaches

Language learning

language learning

is defined broadly as changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs about language systems, genres etc., both in participants' accounts of their experience and in tutor accounts through assessed work and feedback (after Borg 2011).

What theories of learning can we draw upon when teaching?

- Rod Ellis for a survey of how languages are learned in an instructional setting (range of theorists drawn on from Krashan to the present day)
- Particularly interested in hypotheses regarding developmental bilingualism (second language acquired outside the home at a higher level) as this is characteristic of our advanced teaching context
- Bialystok and Swain-most relevant as they focus on the bilingual setting

Ellis – The Focus of Instruction

1. Ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence
2. Ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning
3. Ensure that learners also focus on form
4. Focus on developing implicit knowledge of the second language while not neglecting explicit knowledge

5. Take into account the learner's built-in syllabus
6. Provide extensive second language input
7. Provide opportunities for output
8. The opportunity to interact in the second language is central to developing second language proficiency
9. Take account of individual differences in learners
10. It is important to examine free as well as controlled production.

Output

Swain – the output hypothesis re-labeled “output”
as speaking, writing, collaborative dialogue, private speech, verbalizing, and/or languaging.

*Collaborative dialogue is dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem-solving and knowledge-building/co-constructing knowledge – in the case of second language learners, solving **linguistic** problems and building/co-constructing knowledge **about language**.*

(Swain 2000; 2002; 2006)

Under our teaching circumstances (limited time for output) we focus mainly on

1. building a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence
4. attending to developing implicit knowledge of the second language while not neglecting explicit knowledge
7. creating as many opportunities for *output* as possible
8. giving the students as many opportunities to interact in the second language as possible

Bialystok analysis and control

- *Analysis* equates broadly with explicit knowledge about how particular language features can be applied;
- *Control is the process of selective attention that is carried out in real time. Because cognition originates in mental representation, then there must be a means of focusing attention on the specific representation, or aspect of a representation relevant to a particular purpose.*

Bialystock 1994 p. 160

(Student) Agency

Agency - after Vygotsky, Dewey, van Lier

Learning depends on the activity and the initiative of the learner, more so than on any “inputs” that are transmitted to the learner by a teacher or a textbook

Agency is “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act”
(Ahearn 2001:112)

Example Task #1

- Staff Officer Course (SU)
- Integrated with International Strategy course
- Based on set text in English, *Perspectives on Swedish Foreign and Security Policy since the Cold War*
- Functional Aim- help students use a variety of question forms when leading discussions

Functional Grammar – Politeness - Question types for professional discussions (seminars/planning meetings, etc.)

- **Direct**
- **Eliciting further discussion - follow up questions**
- **Indirect questions**
- **Negative question that entails an opinion/a suggestion**
- **Referencing**



You mention neutrality. What do you think that means to the Swedish public today?

The writer suggests that the Swedish public may not have been aware of what he calls Sweden's "dual-track" security policy during the Cold War. What arguments does he provide to support this view?

Were the Swedish people deceived by successive governments during this period?

What we really need to explore is what the preconditions for full Swedish membership of NATO might be.

Wouldn't it have been the case that the Soviet Union was fully aware of Swedish cooperation with Western nations for over 20 years?

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- **What impact do your choices about how you formulate your questions have on the level of politeness you achieve?**
 - Write a further question based on your reading of the text.
 - Discuss the questions and take turns to lead the discussion.
 - Reflect on how well you led when it was your turn.
 - In advance of next week's lesson
- (a) Read *Revising the European Security Strategy: Building a secure Europe in a Better World*
- (b) Write at least one of each type of question in advance of a student led seminar.

Example Task #2

- Officer Programme (OP)
- Integrated with 'Combat Effectiveness'
Ref: 018-NATO-HF-080 Optimizing Operational Physical Fitness chapter 7
- Aim to use both the more abstract thematic terms and to be able to paraphrase and simplify these for an audience who may not know them

Extract 1

Increasing fat-free body mass will usually increase strength and power performances. A greater muscle mass generates higher body strength values and is advantageous for individuals who lift and carry heavy loads.

Decreasing body fat mass is often associated with increased endurance performance. However, a causal relationship to such changes has not been shown. The combination of endurance training and moderate energy intake will lead to an improvement in endurance capability and body weight.

Changes in body weight and body composition of populations in NATO member countries underline the need for improvements in anthropometric measurements in the military. Common definitions and selection criteria as well as training standards are of paramount importance for the near future.

Gunning fog Index 16.66

Snap Briefings - tailoring language/simplifying

In pairs, select one of the following complex texts. Summarise the text and brief to a group of newly enlisted personnel. You will then present the briefing to the class who will act as the target audience.
How easy is the text is to understand?

Consider the following:

- Do you use **simple grammatical structures**?
- Are the words **frequent** or **less common**?
- Are there simpler **synonyms**?
- Can you explain complex ideas simply by using **paraphrase**?