

Editorial

This issue of *Prospect* celebrates the 20th anniversary of the journal. To mark this celebration, we invited Professor David Nunan, one of the original editors of the journal, to write a brief retrospective of the changes that have occurred over the past 20 years. As he notes, *Prospect* has grown from an Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) focused journal to one that, while representing the AMEP, also addresses the wider concerns of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Australia and outside Australia.

Our first article in this final issue for 2005 tackles an aspect of English language provision that is surfacing as crucial for the settlement prospects of young adults arriving in Australia, especially those with interrupted schooling and low levels of English. The authors, Luke Harding and Gillian Wigglesworth, survey providers of the AMEP throughout Australia to investigate the English language provision made specifically for young migrants. Drawing on the opinions of teachers and program directors and the young people themselves, they outline a number of ways in which the needs of this group may be addressed in the future.

The second and third articles focus on international students at the university level. Robyn Woodward-Kron's article explores how knowledge, and in particular disciplinary knowledge, is developed and constructed through writing. While others (for example, Elbow 1981 and Murray, D M 1980) have found that meaning develops at the point of the pen, Woodward-Kron frames her discussion in systemic functional grammar and focuses on disciplinary knowledge. Nicholas Cope takes a different theoretical perspective in his article, exploring the nature of apprenticeship in cognitive theory and then positing a discourse perspective on apprenticeship to explain the way international students learn the conventions and discourse of academic and disciplinary language.

The fourth article continues the theme from the special issue in Volume 20, Number 1, which focused on delivery of English as a Second Language (ESL) in predominantly English-speaking countries, especially at the primary and secondary levels. In this article, Margaret Early and her colleagues identify how mainstream education assumes that materials and syllabuses designed for native speakers will be appropriate for language learners. They demonstrate, through describing collaboration between a mainstream teacher and an ESL teacher, how language and content need to be carefully scaffolded for language learners (and perhaps others) to be able to access school content.

The final article in this issue, by Robert Kleinsasser, highlights the role of context in the practice, theory and pedagogy of learning and teaching a course on assessment materials. Using approaches drawn from narrative enquiry, he reports on an innovative postgraduate, second language assessment course in which students negotiated the content and developed assessment materials and portfolios on their professional journey within a developing, supportive, professional community.

We include two book reviews in this issue. In the first, Katy Gerner reviews a practical handbook for teachers in the *Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers* series, *Stories: Narrative activities in the language classroom* by Ruth Wajnryb, which she finds both entertaining and useful. In the second, Rachel Varshney reviews the newly published seventh edition of the *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English*, which follows the 1948 framework introduced by A S Hornby. She concludes overall that its clear layout and technological innovations mean that, although it draws principally on standard British and North American English, this edition will continue to be a useful reference work for learners of English everywhere.

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Book reviews

Stories: Narrative activities in the language classroom

**Wajnryb, R. (2003). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers (Series Editor Penny Ur)**

Reviewed by Katy Gerner

Dr Ruth Wajnryb begins her book with the sound argument that narratives should be taught in the language classroom, as we use them in everyday conversation. She writes, 'I read somewhere in a book about narrative that a researcher monitored a day in her life and discovered that in that period of time she encountered, directly or indirectly, more than 30 narrative events' (p 1). When Wajnryb tested this theory herself, she found that she had heard six stories in a two-hour period: stories that described what happened at places like the gym or the doctor's, or what a person intends to do that day.

Wajnryb divides her book into three main parts; Section A, which includes 14 activities on 'Learning about text as narrative genre'; Section B, which includes 14 activities on 'Language learning through narrative lessons'; and Section C, which includes 14 activities on 'Building a "storied" class'. She also includes a bank of stories and references.

Each activity is neatly laid out into aim, language focus, level, time, preparation, procedure, teacher's notes, variations, and resources and acknowledgment. Each instruction is clear and easy to follow. The activities cover both reading and writing, and speaking and listening activities.

Section A includes activities on sorting and sequencing, complications and resolutions, adventure narrative, shaping facts to fit purpose, travel tales and rumour. This section highlights the importance of different genres.

Wajnryb stresses that students need to see genre as an important feature of language. She believes that knowing about it 'increases and enriches their resources', and that it 'activates any passive knowledge or insights the students may well bring from their first language/culture' (p 22).

My favourite exercise is in Section A. It is a card game (cards included) with the aim 'to discuss a dilemma and make a decision based on an unfolding narrative' (p 39). The cards encourage the students to consider important life decisions, such as study or career or relationship choice. The students are expected to discuss each choice carefully with the people in their group, as the wrong choice could eventually lead to them losing the game. Besides introducing the narrative genre, this game would encourage the use of discussion techniques, as well as providing much amusement when students make the wrong choice.

Wajnryb's aim in Section B is to use the communicative language teaching method as much as possible: she believes that 'Stories are first and foremost communication vehicles. Their purpose is to reach a receiver – the listener or reader. Their focus is primarily on meaning' (p 100). Section B activities focus on meaning, fluency (on the understanding that accuracy is a necessary component of fluency), stories as social texts that have a purposive function and activities that have limited teacher intervention. Section B's activities include arguing a case, describing the circumstances of a past event, complaints in the context of a recount and 'milking' a story.

Section C's aim is to use story-telling as a social power, and these activities should encourage class cohesion and community. Activities in Section C include story-telling as a social act, the landmarks of your life, pet hates, parables and 'here comes the bride'. These activities teach how to tell a story as part of a conversation, discuss how you got your name or which languages you speak, how to recognise if a story is true or untrue, and how to explain how much you hate something and what it can lead you to do.

In addition to the resources provided in the book, Wajnryb includes a story bank of narratives involving coincidence, traditional stories from different cultures, newspaper stories, 'strange but true' stories, Aesop's fables, tongue twisters, travel tales, narrative anecdotes, traditional stories without coda, a narrative poem and an urban myth. The book ends with a list of further resources and useful Web sites.

Besides preparing the students for everyday life, Wajnryb's humorous style of writing makes her activities entertaining for teenagers and young adults. I found *Stories: Narrative activities in the language classroom* an extremely useful book, and plan to use my copy next term.

Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English (7th ed.)

Hornby, A. S. (2005). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wehmeier, S. (Chief Editor), McIntosh, C., Turnbull, J. (Editors), & Ashby, M. (Phonetics Editor)

Reviewed by Rachel Varshney

This review examines the 7th edition of the *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English (OALD)*. It initially treats the individual dictionary entries and synonym entries, and is followed by an assessment of the layout. It concludes with a look at the technological inclusions.

The new edition of the *OALD* markets itself as '*the wonder of the world*' and in so doing has a lot to live up to. This new version follows the framework introduced by Hornby in 1948, providing the advanced learner of English with a comprehensive reference of the English language. The new edition includes 183 500 words, phrases and meanings, with 85 000 example sentences, and, while the dictionary incorporates American and British Englishes, it boasts an advisory board including representatives from other Englishes such as Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and African to name but a few. Reflecting this, there are a number of culturally specific entries (for example, the Australian English 'esky' is included), although the choices appear somewhat arbitrary (for example, the New Zealand equivalent, 'chilly bin', does not feature). This, however, seems inevitable as a mere 700 words are indicated as belonging to world Englishes.

The words included in the new edition are based upon the *Oxford 3000*TM – a list established from various sources of linguistic data indicating the 3000 most frequently used words in the English language. The sources include corpora from world Englishes, yet the bulk of the list is alimanted from standard British English. This means that both learners and instructors wishing to use the *OALD* as an aid to vocabulary-building, in contexts other than British or North American, will need to supplement it with additional information.

The concept of vocabulary inventories built on real language use has been at the heart of historic pedagogical initiatives such as the Basic English list developed by Ogden (1930), and Richards (1943), for use in teaching English as a Foreign Language (which eventually led to the *General Service List* of 1936, republished in 1953). While the pedagogical value of such lists has been called into question (due to the issues of contexts of data collection, particularly with respect to differences in register, formality etc),

for the advanced learner they have the potential to be of enormous value, particularly in terms of lexical items likely to be encountered in everyday exchanges with native speakers but that often escape the language lesson.

A survey of learners preceding publication of the 7th edition revealed a need for assistance with synonyms, to which the editors have responded through the inclusion of synonym entries in 'boxes'. Unfortunately, the synonym information included does not appear to be of much use to the *advanced* learner of English. An opinion sought from an advanced learner for this review indicated that the entries were 'simplistic', containing mostly 'common' words already known, and requiring 'further development' before they would be 'useful'. It appears the advanced learner is likely to look for more 'in-depth' references than those provided here. In this particular area the dictionary may be of more use to beginning or intermediate learners and instructors, as it deals only with basic elements.

In terms of layout, the dictionary is easy to follow, incorporating selective illustrations for more detailed information, as in a number of illustrated dictionaries. The entry words are separated with a blue, larger font, which makes the dictionary easy to use and very helpful for a learner in a hurry. In addition, the incorporation of the letters of the alphabet on the side of the dictionary makes for easy reference. The dictionary also includes phonetic examples at the base of each page, which avoids the necessity of flicking back and forth to the reference pages contained at the front. In all, the layout is very user-friendly, facilitating dictionary use.

Apart from the standard dictionary entries, the *OALD* presents 32 colour pages of illustrations and descriptions of words grouped under such headings as 'extreme sports', 'clothes' and 'buildings'. The usefulness of the colour pages is perhaps lost from a pedagogical point of view (as themes such as buildings and extreme sports are unlikely to feature in the curriculum) and one gets the impression that these 32 pages were included just to add a splash of colour to what would ordinarily be a dull-looking reference book. However, from the point of view of the English learner, the thematic topics presented (also somewhat arbitrarily chosen) provide information that is more easily transmitted through illustrations than words, as well as providing examples of links between semantic fields.

In addition to the colour pages, there is also a 96-page study section that includes information on abbreviations and essay writing, as well as email and telephonic language. This is an excellent resource not only for learners of English but also for instructors who might not be as technologically savvy as their students in terms of electronic abbreviations (SMS, Chat etc). Another technological innovation of the 7th edition of the dictionary is a

CD-ROM, which not only contains the dictionary but also the *Oxford learner's wordfinder dictionary* and the *Oxford guide to British and American culture*. In addition there is information on the etymology of 20 000 words, as well as exercises for practising comprehension of words, idioms etc. In keeping with the technological advances available for the modern language learner via the Internet, the *OALD* also includes access to the online dictionary, allowing download of games and crosswords, information on the *Oxford 3000*TM and how to use the list to the students' advantages, plus other novelties such as 'word of the month' and a current affairs section with articles that include links to definitions for words that are unfamiliar. This aspect represents the progressive nature of the dictionary, which is evolving to take into account 21st century advances. Those who are technologically literate will find the added aspects of the CD-ROM and online access a time-conserving bonus.

The 7th edition of the *OALD*, with numerous entries, effective layout and technological innovations, and in conjunction with the CD-ROM, should prove a useful reference tool for instructors of, as well as advanced learners of, English. Although the treatment of Englishes outside of standard British and North American contexts requires some fleshing out, this reference offers a good starting point on which to build. In sum, this new edition of the *OALD* provides numerous resources to expand the advanced learner's knowledge of the English language.

REFERENCES

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Notes on contributors

Nicholas Cope has disciplinary backgrounds in African History and Applied Linguistics, and has worked in ELT in London, Paris and Sydney. At NCELTR, Macquarie University, where he coordinates the Direct Entry English Program, his principal concern has been with the design and delivery of EAP programs.

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Katy Gerner is an English for Specific Purposes teacher for the Multicultural Education Unit and a disability support teacher (intellectual) for the Disabilities Support Unit in TAFE, where she has worked for 14 years. Her qualifications include a Masters of Education (Support Teaching), Grad Diploma Adult Education (Basic Education), Grad Cert Education (Special Education) and Cert TEASOL. Next year she will begin a Masters of Education (Special Education). She writes reviews for a number of magazines and has written *Australia on Stage*, published by the Adult Literacy Information Office.

Luke Harding has taught English in Japan and Australia, and currently tutors on the ESL program at the University of Melbourne. He is researching the effects of accented speech on academic listening tests for his PhD.

Robert C Kleinsasser teaches postgraduate courses in the Applied Linguistics and TESOL Studies programs at the University of Queensland. He is interested in the development of learning enriched environments and building professional learning communities. His work has appeared in *AILA Review*, *The Modern Language Journal*, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, and *Foreign Language Annals*, among others.

Bernard Mohan gained a PhD in linguistics from London with Michael Halliday. He has worked extensively on language as a medium of learning content in first and second language classrooms and particularly on social practices as large units of meaning and as ecologies of text-types.

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