

# **Applying SLA Research and Theory to Practice: Cooperative Output-focused Activities for an EFL Reading Classroom in Japan**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The intent of this article is to encourage English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to experiment with the practical application from second language acquisition (SLA) research and theory by sharing ideas for classroom activities. The activities proposed are for classroom teachers to incorporate some aspects of SLA research and theory in a communicative classroom. The article begins by reviewing the important SLA research and theory related to noticing, output, and interaction, followed by the current trend of effective pedagogical approaches and how they relate to the research and theory. Then the article discusses key common challenges in teaching English in Japan. Finally, activities for an EFL reading classroom with applying the described research and theory are presented. The activities attempt to encourage cooperative output-focused activities for EFL reading classrooms in Japan.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Although the history of language teaching established a number of teaching methods, the nature and scope of method are now viewed as having limitations to its usage and application (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Instead of the method-based pedagogy, the notion of postmethod pedagogy has been recently used to describe teachers' practice of language teaching and designing effective tasks and techniques (Brown, 2007). In the postmethod era, teachers' approach to language teaching is to be "a theoretically well-informed global understanding of the process of learning and teaching" reflecting on teachers' own practice as well as to create a dynamic interaction between the approach and the practice (Brown, 2007. pp.42-43).

Then, what are influential research findings that benefit teachers and provide ideas for classroom use? The first section of this paper looks at three major research fields: noticing, output, and interaction which focus on the processes of learning. The assumption is that the noticing function of output through interaction is one of many

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elements that helps promote students learning. The second section looks at the current mainstream teaching principle, *communicative language teaching* (CLT) and how its teaching approaches have the roots in the foregoing research findings. In the next section attention turns to the challenges in EFL classroom practice in Japan, especially a lack of communicative meaningful context, adequate output activities, and collaborative interaction. The last section proposes examples of cooperative output-focused activities in a communicative meaningful context for an EFL reading classroom in Japan with the theoretical underpinnings on the basis of the noticing, output, and interaction research.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Noticing, Output, and Interaction

On the basis of the cognitivist accounts that human beings have a limited capacity of processing input (Broadbent, 1958; Deutsch & Deutsch, 1963; Kahneman, 1973; Wickens, 1980, 1984, 1989, cited in Leow & Bowles, 2005), researchers in cognitive psychology and SLA have been examining the cognitive process of input selection (Doughty, 2001; Gass, 1997; Robinson, 1995, 2003; Schmidt, 1990, 2001; Tomlin & Villa, 1994; VanPatten, 1996, 2004) in order to find out the effective pedagogical intervention. The research developed out of the skeptical views on Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis which proposed that learning would automatically occur through *comprehensible input* (i.e., learners can comprehend language that is slightly advanced learners' competence). Coder (1967, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006) first distinguished intake from input, however, not all input would be processed as intake, whereas Krashen argued that language acquisition is a subconscious process where language rules are acquired in a *natural order* similar to first language (L1) acquisition and that conscious learning or instructional intervention was not useful to second language (L2) learning. Seeing the input hypothesis insufficient to explain language learning, Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2001) advocated the importance of conscious attention or awareness in L2 language learning. Schmidt's noticing hypothesis has become the base for many of today's leading theories in SLA.

#### *Noticing*

Schmidt (1990) rejected the notion of learning without awareness in his noticing hypothesis and argued that input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed and that noticing or awareness is necessary for learning by stating:

...subliminal language learning is impossible, and that intake is what learners consciously notice. This requirement of noticing is meant to apply equally to all aspects of language (lexicon, phonology, grammatical form, pragmatics), and can be incorporated into many different theories of second language acquisition (p.149)

Schmidt defined two different levels of awareness: awareness at the level of noticing which leads to intake of linguistic information and awareness at the level of

understanding which leads to deeper understanding by learners' analyzing, comparing, and testing hypothesis. The former level of awareness, noticing, is claimed to be a necessary condition for language learning and has become one of the most central topics in the SLA research as well as in L2 pedagogy. A number of studies appeared to confirm Schmidt's hypothesis that noticing is a prerequisite for learning.

Tomlin and Villa (1994) proposed three components of attention: *alertness* (overall readiness to deal with incoming stimuli), *orientation* (the direction of attentional resources to a certain type of stimuli), and *detection* (the cognitive registration of stimuli) in the functional model of input processing. The last kind of attention as detection is claimed to be the most important for input processing and subsequent learning to take place. Robinson (1995) and Gass (1997) both stressed that there is no learning taking place without awareness at the level of noticing. Robinson defined noticing as "detection plus rehearsal in short-term memory, prior to encoding in long-term memory" (p. 296) by accommodating both Schmidt's notion of noticing and Tomlin and Villa's notion of attentional function of detection. In Gass' (1997) models of SLA, noticing is the condition under which input becomes intake, arguing that awareness may lead learners to analyze and assimilate new L2 information through the process of intake which may be influenced by a number of factors, such as saliency and frequency, prior knowledge, attention, and affective factors.

It should be clear from these arguments that by drawing on a cognitive approach toward SLA with a focus on learners' attention or conscious awareness, Schmidt's noticing hypothesis has been a core component of understanding how learning can be nurtured. Many experimental SLA studies have been generated and most research has been supportive of Schmidt's argument by underscoring the superiority of attentive learning as Schmidt (2001) summarizes that "SLA is largely driven by what learners pay attention to and notice in target language input and what they understand the significance of noticed input to be" (p. 3-4).

### ***Output***

Swain (1985, 1993, 1995, Swain & Lapkin, 1995) also emphasized the crucial role of noticing in her output hypothesis by postulating that L2 learners become aware that they cannot say what they want to say in the target language (TL) through output activities and that it is the act of producing language which constitutes the SLA process. She concluded that "the activity of producing the target language may prompt second language learners to consciously recognize some of their linguistic problems; it may bring to their attention something they need to discover about their L2" (1993, cited in Swain 1995, p.126). According to the output hypothesis, language proficiency is developed not through input alone but through language use (spoken discourse or written text) in meaningful contexts. Output leads learners to a deeper process of language acquisition than input because it requires more mental effort and more accurate processing of language by learners in control of their language production while employing their existing linguistic forms and meanings (Swain 1985, 1993, 1995, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1995).

The output hypothesis consists of three functions: the noticing/triggering function, the hypothesis-testing function, and the metalinguistic (reflective) function. The

noticing/triggering function comes into play whenever learners notice that they do not know how to say or write precisely what they want to say or write during the process of producing the TL (Swain, 1985). Noticing this hole triggers in learners an awareness of the language gaps, i.e., the differences in L1 and L2 forms. Accordingly, it is likely that noticing during the output process enhances subsequent learning. The link between the noticing function of output and learning has been widely investigated and there are a great deal support confirming the output approach to language learning (Izumi, 2002; Izumi & Bielow, 2000; Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara, & Fearnow, 1999; Gass & Mackey, 2002, Mackey, 1999; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993; van den Branden, 1997).

### ***Interaction***

The interaction approach explains language learning with input, noticing, output, and negotiated interaction, which developed on the basis of the Long's (1996) influential claim of the interactional hypothesis. Long (1981, 1983, 1996) argued that learning is promoted through *negotiation for meaning* because the learners will notice and pay attention to the language gap in their TL knowledge and modify output through negotiated modifications through interaction. Negotiation "connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways" (Long, 1996, p. 451-2), and thus facilitates acquisition. Interaction is an attention-drawing device which provides for negotiation of meaning, and providing opportunities for interactive input in the classroom is important for learning to be enhanced (Ellis, 1994; Gass & Torres, 2005; Mackey, 1999; Pica, Young & Doughty, 1987, cited in Ziglari, 2008).

Gass and Mackey (2002) emphasized the importance of feedback in interaction among the three components of interaction: negotiation, recasts, and feedback. Receiving and interpreting feedback on the output, learners can possibly draw attention to linguistic problems which would lead them to notice gaps between their output and the TL. How interaction promotes learning has been explained from socio-cultural perspectives as well. For example, Gass (2003) claimed that the environment in which learners interact can facilitate L2 development. Ellis (1994) argued that through interaction learners of equal states can share similar goals of solving a problem to understand.

In summary, by receiving comprehensible input and interactional feedback, learners are pushed to modify their output through negotiating for meaning, and noticing occurs in every stage which is all helpful for SLA (Gass, Mackey, & Ross-Feldman, 2011). The interaction research has provided rich pedagogical insights because the concept which encourages providing opportunities to interact among learners easily fits in the language classroom.

As having seen the link between the noticing, output, and interaction approaches and language learning, it is assumed that the noticing function of output through interaction plays one of the key roles in language learning. Then how can EFL teachers in the classroom benefit from the research findings? What pedagogical interventions would engage learners to attend to noticing, output, and interaction which eventually help promote learning in classroom? Among several contemporary teaching approaches, the next section will examine *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) and its extensions in which the notion of noticing, output, and interaction approaches can be well incorporated to promote language learning.

## **APPLYING RESEARCH AND THEORY TO DEVELOPING METHODOLOGY**

### **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

CLT has been evolving in the last 50 years as an influential set of teaching principles (Richards, 2006) because the principles of CLT are closely intertwined with the research and theory of noticing, output, and interaction discussed in the previous section. CLT focuses on *communicative competence* (i.e., the ability to use the language for meaningful communication) with the view of language learning as a result from learners processing content through meaningful interaction which provides them with opportunities to pay attention, notice how language is used, modify the output from negotiation of meaning, feedback, or collaborative work, and expand their language resources. Activities are based on pair or group work, which gives increased opportunities for output, involving the use of effective leaning and communication strategies. Learners are expected to take great responsibility for their learning with the teacher being facilitator and monitor who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language, to reflect on language use, and to promote language learning (Richards, 2006).

As SLA research and theory has been discovering the processes of SLA, CLT has seen changing and still been alive in this postmethod era. It is because current CLT principles can be interpreted in many different ways, depending on the teaching context, the learners' age, their level, their learning goals and so on (Richards, 2002, 2006). This is consistent with the most important aspect of postmethod pedagogy of *particularity* (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), whose notion is to “be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular socio-cultural milieu [sic]” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p.538 cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Then what are the contemporary CLT teaching approaches with which teachers can make acquisition-rich classroom happen? The next section examines mainstream CLT teaching approaches today: *Content-Based Instruction (CBI)*, *Task-Based instruction (TBI)*, and *Cooperative Learning (CL)*, and sees how these approaches fit into the research and theory findings.

### **Content-Based Instruction (CBI)**

CBI is defined as “the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teaching the language itself separately from the content being taught” (Krahnke, 1987. p.65, cited in Richards, 2006). With the emphasis on content, topics, and themes, learners can focus on meaning rather than on the form of language. The notion behind CBI is that meaningful input through social interaction can help promote language learning. For learners to integrate the content information and their linguistic knowledge, introducing comprehensible authentic texts

which satisfy learners' interests is important (Madrid & Sanchez, 2001).

This can be explained from socio-cultural perspective of Vygotsky, which overlaps with the notion of interaction. Regarding his Zone of Proximal Development, Vygotsky assumed that learners construct meaning through socially-mediated interaction, which is primary for learning development (Ellis, 1999; Fletcher & Garman, 1986, cited in Ziglari, 2008). The teaching of content and providing guidance in the TL gives learners a reason to attend to language as well as to interacting in the classroom.

## **Task-Based Instruction (TBI)**

TBI places the use of tasks at the core of language teaching. Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001, cited in Brown, 2007) defined a task as "an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (p.11). The notion behind TBI is that interactional processes in the classroom through tasks will lead to successful learning.

There are many ways in which tasks are classified, which reflect the theoretical considerations in this paper. For example, *focused tasks* are carefully designed tasks which engage learners in problem-solving and contribute to communicative goals. The assumption is that such tasks promote learner awareness and practice of target forms through communicative activities (Ellis, 2003; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993). *Collaborative output tasks* are developed from the assumption that pushed output leads learners to achieve accuracy. Learners notice their language gaps through the task which provides opportunities for formulating and testing hypotheses (Swain, 1985, 2001). *Dictogloss* (Wajnryb, 1990) has been claimed to be effective in promoting meaningful interaction and improving accuracy (Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

## **Cooperative Learning (CL)**

In CL, students work together cooperatively in small groups to accomplish shared learning goals. The notion behind CL is that learners can connect input, output, and feedback through working cooperatively to learn, notice, understand, and solve problems with peers, which results in cognitive development and intellectual growth (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998). Cooperation results from *positive interdependence* (i.e., each member is responsible for and contributes to group success) among individual goals, and *individual and group accountability, face-to-face interaction, interpersonal and small group skills*, and *group processing* help learners cooperative efforts to be made (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998). These considerations are found in the assumptions of the interaction hypothesis which focuses on the role of social interaction; students help each other to make better communication. Also, the output hypothesis applies because CL provides many opportunities for output when working together.

*Jigsaw activities* well reflect the notion of CL. The process facilitates interaction through which students are encouraged to participate actively and empathetically by providing every member of a group an important role to play. All members work together and depend on each other to achieve a goal in the meaningful communicating practice.

## Summary

As we saw above, the contemporary CLT teaching approaches offer many benefits for enhancing SLA, which are underpinned by the theoretical findings discussed in the first section of this paper. The benefits include promoting noticing, providing opportunities for comprehensible input, output, and meaningful communication through interaction, and nurturing learning strategies by cooperatively working together.

Although there is no single answer to how teachers should adopt which kinds of pedagogical approaches to facilitate language learning when *particularity* considered, it seems agreeable that teachers *should* be encouraged to actively adopt the principles of CLT and apply the teaching approaches into classroom for acquisition-rich classroom practice.

## COMMON CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN JAPAN

Since the 1980's, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has attempted to implement English education reforms with the purpose of developing English skills as a tool of communication in a global age. The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program, started in 1987, allocates assistant language teachers from overseas throughout Japan. The educational guideline, *the Course of Study*, has been revised in 1989, 1999, 2008, and 2009 aiming at higher achievement in English communication skills with the emphasis on English as an international language. A five-year Action Plan (2003) called "A Strategic Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities" was implemented by the MEXT. One of the goals stated is "improving the qualifications of English teachers and upgrading the teaching system" (MEXT, 2002).

These English educational reforms however, have not been successfully implemented in actual classroom practice, especially when teaching reading. Teachers do not seem to be actively encouraged to adopt effective pedagogical instructions which can promote successful learning (Nakagawa, 2003; Nishino, 2008). What hinders teachers from taking in instructions for successful learning? The challenges are threefold: a lack of communicative meaningful contexts, adequate output activities, and collaborative interaction which are all necessary conditions for facilitate SLA.

### A Lack of Communicative Meaningful Contexts

The most critical reason for the lack of communicative meaningful context is that the EFL reading classroom in Japan has been dominated by exam-oriented teaching methodology because of the pressure from the preparation for university entrance examinations. Traditional grammar-centered method or *yakudoku*, which strongly focuses on translation of the difficult English literacy text into Japanese, has remained prevalent as well as making classrooms largely teacher-centered (Gorsuch, 2001; Nishino, 2008). Teachers believe that grammar, vocabulary, and translation are more important for passing entrance examinations (Nishino, 2008) because most universities consider testing English proficiency as testing translation skills, knowledge of syntactic rules, and test-

taking skills (Templin, 2001).

Textbooks also contribute to forming exam-oriented pedagogy. Current MEXT approved English textbooks for high schools have their focus on developing intensive reading skills to prepare for university entrance examination (Gorsuch, 1999, cited in Gorsuch, 2001). Examination focused English requires high school students to learn decontextualized language and peripheral grammar (Law, 1994, cited in Nishino, 2008). In addition, there is a gap between students' reading ability and the difficulty of reading materials, which results in over-reliance on translation, pattern practice and memorization (Browne, 1998, 2004).

### **A Lack of Adequate Output Activities**

The previously mentioned issues, the grammar-focused, teacher-centered instruction resulting from exam-oriented pedagogy and difficult textbooks, hinder teachers from implementing adequate output activities which facilitates L2 development. Teachers with their focus on students' academic results are likely to feel uninterested in introducing output-focused activities in pursuit of efficiency, thinking that output activities are time-consuming for both teachers to provide feedback and for students to produce. Such teachers would be overwhelmed with the outcome of output-focused activities and reluctant to introduce output activities.

### **A Lack of Collaborative Interactions**

In addition to the results from exam-oriented pedagogy, the physical classroom condition would be one reason for a lack of collaborative interactions. Japanese classrooms are usually large. The standard class has a maximum of 40 students in primary and lower secondary schools and an average of 40 students in upper secondary schools (MEXT, 2002). Having smaller class sizes has been a major concern among teachers, but the situation has not improved as the educational reform intended. According to the 2009 OECD data, the average class size in Japan is 33 students in lower secondary education, which ranks in the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest next to Korea among 53 OECD countries. The 2011 MEXT statistics report that the average class size in lower secondary education is 29.4 students, ranging from 38.6 (national secondary schools) to 29.0 (local secondary school). For such a large class teachers may feel incapable of monitoring large numbers of students working at a time. They may feel more comfortable having control in a teacher-centered classroom rather than giving students the wheel to control.

### **Summary**

In spite of aiming to develop communicative competence in English with the MEXT initiatives, these challenges still remain in EFL classroom practice in Japan, predominantly in teaching reading. The difficulties are largely a result from exam-oriented pedagogy accompanied by large class size. Such difficulties can be alleviated by the CTL teaching approaches discussed in the previous section. For example, introducing group work helps teachers manage a large class where positive interdependence and

individual and group accountability among students are created. Furthermore, students can learn more from their working peers and gradually take over certain elements of a teacher's role through collaborative interaction. Teachers can monitor and facilitate each group to make sure students are engaged rather than to control them. Teachers can create student- or learning-centered classes by applying techniques from CTL teaching approaches. The next section introduces possible classroom activities based on CLT principles in order to help solve the challenges discussed above.

## **POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING READING**

### **Jigsaw Reading for Comprehension and Vocabulary Development**

In this activity, the techniques of jigsaw reading (CL) and TBI are combined, which help students learn the material through the cooperative output task. Students will help each other comprehend the material and build vocabulary through interacting with the whole class. The comprehension task of sharing student-generated questions, which are subsequently tested, would be an incentive for achieving the goal of understanding the article.

For preparation, students read the assigned part of the article, make a list of vocabulary of their interest, and generate questions on the assigned part. For an in-class activity, students will present what they have read and understood, test their questions, and receive feedback from peers in small groups. The detail of this activity is described in the Appendix 1.

### **Student-Student Dictogloss**

In this activity techniques from dictogloss (TBI) and CL are combined, which help students understand the material through pushed output and collaborative work. For preparation, students must become accustomed to the assigned part of a reading article. The activity can follow *Jigsaw Reading for Comprehension and Vocabulary Development*. For the in-class activity, each student in a group takes turns reading an assigned part of the text. While one member is reading, other members take notes, discuss, and reconstruct the text. This continues until every group member finishes reading their text. The detail of this activity is described in Appendix 2.

### **Cooperative, Content-Based Discussion Based on Internet-Based Text-Reconstruction**

In this activity techniques of CBI and CL are combined. Students will engage with the content and focus on the meaning to understand with the online media text of their interest as well as sharing the information with each other. Meaningful input and output through social interaction can help promote language learning.

For preparation, students will listen and read a self-selected short video or listening clip online with a transcript (comprehensible input) and write a summary of

what they understand (comprehensible output). For in-class activity, students will share what they watched or listened, understand and exchange opinions on the topic (collaborative output). The detail of this activity is described in Appendix 3.

The proposed activities involve the four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and focus on the process of learning by maximizing learners' opportunities for consciousness raising, producing and modifying collaborative output through negotiated interaction and feedback in a meaningful context so that learning would be promoted. In Japanese reading classrooms, practice of reading skills is not often connected to the practice of other skills or to opportunities using the skills, which is important to facilitate SLA. Therefore, the proposed activities encourage teachers to create and provide opportunities to use the skills in connection with other skills in meaningful ways in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

This article began by reviewing major theoretical foundations of SLA research and theories as well as discussing the role of noticing, output, and interaction in promoting language learning and how they are linked to each other. The second section examined connections between the theoretical foundations and the principles of CLT and its teaching approaches as contemporary language pedagogy. The article's third section explained the challenges in teaching English in Japan from the perspective of the theoretical and pedagogical findings of SLA. The last section of the article presented sample activities for teaching reading, which combine pedagogical ideas of CBI, TBI, and CL in order to promote language learning with theoretical underpinnings from SLA research and theory.

The literature review examined the significance of noticing in SLA. Noticing, especially during the output process through collaborative interaction in meaningful contexts, triggers learners' awareness to the language gap, leads to better production, and enhances subsequent learning. CLT as contemporary language pedagogy adopts these theoretical findings into its teaching approaches. CBI focuses on meaningful contexts. TBI provides opportunities to use language with an emphasis on meaning. CL creates more opportunities for students to collaborate and interact by working cooperatively. However, these pedagogical interventions are not well incorporated into Japanese EFL classroom, especially teaching reading, largely because of the influence of exam-oriented pedagogy and the large class size. There seems to be a lack of communicative meaningful contexts, adequate output activities, and collaborative interaction in classroom practice. In order to narrow the gap between these challenges and acquisition-rich instructions, it is necessary to introduce activities which would create communicative meaningful context and opportunities for cooperative output activities. The sample activities were proposed for an EFL reading classroom in Japan which needs considerable improvement, but they can easily be applied to other contexts with different kinds of students. This paper expects teachers to experiment and share many more pedagogical applications of SLA research and theory for effective language learning.

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## Appendix 1

### *Jigsaw Reading for Comprehension and Vocabulary Development*

The standard procedure of jigsaw activities is as follows: The class is divided into small groups (home group). Each member of the home group, the expert, is responsible for learning a specific part of the topic. The experts from each group form expert groups in the same part to discuss what they have learned and help solve the problems they have. After the expert group meets with members from other groups, the experts return to their home groups and present their findings. Team members then are quizzed on all topics.

#### *Preparation*

Step 1: In home groups have students decide the part of the article for which they want to be responsible.

Step 2: Students should (a) study the part and (b) make a vocabulary list of their interest. In the list the students can include, for example, their originally generated sentences for a meaningful use, the collocation patterns, the Japanese translation, the definition in English and so on. Also students should (c) generate a question to test the vocabulary or the content of the article. (The question can be made in the style of entrance examinations, term examinations, TOEIC, or other kinds of test so that they can prepare for.)

*In class*

Step1: Have the experts from each home group form the expert groups in the same part.

Step2: Have the expert groups (a) discuss what they have learned and help solve what they have problems with, (b) compare their vocabulary lists, and (c) test the questions on the group members to get feedback and revise if necessary. Give feedback to each group. For example, check for grammatical errors, misspellings, and problems with word usage.

Step 3: Have the experts return to their home groups.

Step 4: Have each student present what they have learned in the assigned part and test their question on the home group members. Have students to give feedback in the home group.

Step 5: The teacher corrects the questions and compile them as the review test for the next class. (The teacher may want to give feedback for the problems with the final work of the students later on.)

## **Appendix 2**

### ***Student-Student Dictogloss***

The standard procedure of dictogloss involves three stages: preparation, dictation, and reconstruction. First, the topic of the text is introduced by asking questions, showing pictures and working on vocabulary. Second, the teacher reads aloud the text twice at the normal speed. The class can take notes for the second time, focusing on the content. Finally, in small groups students reconstruct the text sharing their notes.

#### *Preparation*

Students should be familiar with the text, so that they can take control of the activity.

#### *In class*

Step 1: In small groups have students decide which part of the text they want to read.

Step 2: The member who is responsible for the first part of the text reads it aloud at a normal speed, while other members of the group listen.

Step 2: For the second reading, other members of the group take notes.

Step 3: After reading, the group pools the notes and reconstructs the text together, while the reader is observing.

Step 4: Once reconstructed, the reader helps identify similarities and differences between the original and the reconstruction in terms of both meaning and form.

Step 5: Rotate readers and repeat the procedure for the rest of the text.

## **Appendix 3**

### ***Cooperative, content-based discussion based on Internet-based text-reconstruction***

#### *Preparation*

Step 1: Give students a list of online audiovisual media website for graded

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listening/watching with a transcript provided, for example, EnglishCentral, VOA Learning English, or BBC Learning English.

Step 2: Students listen to the self-selected audiovisual clip, read the transcript, and write a summary.

*In class*

Step 1: In small groups have students pair up (or make groups of three) and tell each other what they have heard/watched and exchange opinions. Students can read their summary out loud for the first time.

Step 2: Change partners and tell the story again to other members of the group and exchange opinions. This time students look up from their writings.

Step 3: Finally, each member tells their story in a whole group and they exchange opinions in a group.

The repetitive speech practice can be expanded to other group members by swapping group members.

*Sample URLs for graded listening/watching*

<http://www.englishcentral.com/videos>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/VOALearningEnglish>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/>