

**A Match Not Always Made in
Heaven:
Critical Approaches to Textbooks
in the Language Classroom**

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Question No. 1

- What is language? Think of a few possible definitions.
 - Don't tell me; tell your neighbor.

Question No. 2

- How is language teaching different from other types of teaching?
 - For example:
 - History, Mathematics, Chemistry, etc.

Question No. 3

- How much time do you have to plan each lesson? Is it enough? Why or why not?

Question No. 4

- What do you use more often? Why?
 1. The course textbook
 2. Teacher-created materials

A quick overview: Fundamentals of Language Teaching

Integrated skills

Task-based instruction

Contextualized language

Learner autonomy

Critical and creative thinking

Meeting student needs/goals

Pair and group work

Integrated Skills

- Learners use all four skills together creatively
 1. Receptive skills
 - Listening and reading
 2. Productive skills
 - Speaking and writing
- All lessons exploit all skills

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 6. Just above learners' proficiency levels

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 3. Learners understand the personal practicality of classroom language
 4. All language production has a real audience.
 5. Purpose precedes form

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- Assessment involves application of these strategies

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- Very motivating to students
- Lessons can be very lively and energetic

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- Every learner has his/her own learning style
- Teacher can ask, “What do you want to learn?”

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- Allows for project work/group presentations
- Gives learners more control over the lesson

Let's Look at Samples

Sample Textbook Activity

No. 1

- From p. 88 of Upstream Intermediate B2:

Use the prompts to make complete passive sentences, as in the example.

A: my office / break into / last night

–My office was broken into last night.

B: Oh no! Did they take anything?

What I like about it

- It re-enforces grammatical explanations.
- Good for the student who prefers to work alone, but can be done in pairs.
- Does not rely on transformation from active voice

What I don't like about it

- No communicative context
- No creativity or critical thinking
- No skills integration
- No explicit or implicit purpose

Sample Textbook Activity

No. 2

- From p. 119 of Upstream Intermediate B2:
Writing Project

Write the recipe of a famous dish from your country for an international students' magazine. First write the *list of ingredients*, next write the *steps* that need to be followed. End your recipe saying how many people the dish serves.

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- How do I start?
- How long do I have?
- Can I get help from my classmates?
- What is the point?

How to improve the activity

Work in a **small group** to **plan, revise and edit** the recipe of a famous dish from your country. The recipes will be **published online** and **shared with international visitors** to your school.

Directions: First write the *list of ingredients*, next write the *steps* that need to be followed. End your recipe saying how many people the dish serves.

Choose your dish by the end of class today.

*Your first draft is due in one week.

*The final draft is due in two weeks.

*You must choose a dish which takes at least 5 steps to prepare.

*Your recipe should be at least 300 words and must include a picture of each step.

See the attached rubric for grading.

Assessment Rubric

Mechanics: 15%

- Appropriate length
- Includes all students' names

Content: 25%

- Recipe is easy to follow and understand
- No steps appear to be missing
- Photographs are included with each step

Organization: 25%

- Recipe is organized as required in directions

Language: 15%

- Language errors do not interfere with understanding

Drafts: 10%

- All drafts were submitted on time

Group Work: 10% (individual student grade)

- Student participated in all group activity (in English)

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Critical and creative thinking: Students choose material and prepare their work independently

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Pair and group work: Entire lesson is conducted in small groups

Thank You!

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