Hellenic Open University

MAIN ASSIGNMENT

Module: ΑΓΓ 60

Course Design and Evaluation

Academic Year: 2000-2001

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Part 1

Evaluate the syllabus you have described in mini-assignment 1.

Part 2

Select an area of the syllabus, such as development of skills, aware-ness issues [e.g. (inter)cultural issues], grammar development, vo-cabulary development, which you consider to be in need of adaptation or development and make detailed suggestions for such adaptation or development.

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A CURRICULAR METAMORPHOSIS
(An Amphibian[1] Hypothesis)
PART 1

The Teaching Situation

The setting of the curriculum venture we are about to plunge in is the 2nd Junior High School of Corfu, Greece.

The teaching situation comprises three forms of pupils with an age range between 12 and 15 years, who are streamed in two levels conventionally labelled '*Beginners*' and '*Advanced*'.

The syllabus, which is supposed to cater for the needs of this teaching situation, is the '*approved*' 'Snapshot' series. There are opposing views as to the usefulness of textbooks due to inflexibility[2] and their failure to satisfy set goals and policies[3] on the one hand, and on the other views in their favour due to practicality reasons[4] like time and money efficiency, pupils' revision facilitation, or views that textbooks may suit the needs of a specific teaching situation, albeit not constructed specifically for it[5]. Regardless of the former and due to the latter the faculty of our school have decided to follow the teaching framework of this series as predicted by Skierso.[6]

Syllabus Type

As already described in a previous paper[7], the type of syllabus employed by the 'Snapshot' series is, according to White's[8] description, a combination of *Type A* and *Type B* syllabus, namely with predefined topics and objectives and with a functional-notional as well as interactional-communicative slant. At regular intervals there are sections, which expose the learner to authentic input, allowing for authentic-like use of language. The teacher's role is that of facilitator-regulator rather than lecturer, while there is opportunity for learners to reflect on and evaluate their progress.

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[1] Charles Moran (1992) cited in R.Holeton, http://horizon.unc.edu/TS/default.asp?show=article&id=512.
[2] Allwright, R.L.(1990) cited in Kitao, K, http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Kitao-Materials.html.
[3] Fullam, M.G. (1991) cited in Lamie, J., http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Lamie-Textbooks.html.
[4] O'Neil, R.(1990) cited in Kitao, K, http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Kitao-Materials.html.
[5] O'Neil, R.(1990) cited in Kitao, K, http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Kitao-Materials.html.
[6] Skierso, A. (1991:432) cited in Garinger, D., http://www.teflweb-j.org/garinger.html.
[7] Cf. Damianopoulos, D. (2001). HOU Module : ΑΓΓ60 Mini-Assignment 1, p.p. 6-8.
[8] White (1997:44-47).

Components

The series comprises the following components for each of the four levels, namely *Starter*, *Elementary*, *Pre-Intermediate*, and *Intermediate*:

- ❖ The student's book
- ❖ The Workbook with a *'grammar builder'*
- ❖ Teacher's book (interleaved with the student's book)
- ❖ Test book
- ❖ Class audiocassettes or CDs
- ❖ Interactive CD ROM for *Starter* and *Elementary*
- ❖ Video pack
- ❖ Video Workbook
- ❖ Companion Website, which provides information on the books and a few more details on some topics in the books.

Layout Grading and Sequencing

The series is characterized by a highly organized layout of material[9]: the twenty units of each student's book are divided in four sections of five units each.[10] For the first three levels, the first and third units comprise the *'Unit pages'*, which present and practice new language, and a *'Photo story'* section, which recycles forms. Every second and fourth unit, apart from the unit pages, feature a grammar review section called *'Fast rewind'*, while every fifth unit comprises the *'Wide angle on the World'* section, which develops skills with international themes, a *'Project'* section, where students can make free use of language according to their abilities, and the *'Take a Break'* section which features a song with different activities. In the *Intermediate* level the *'Photo story'* is replaced by sections practicing writing skills, whereas every fifth unit comprises the section *'Literature'*, developing skills by means of literature texts of fiction practicing fluency by means of discussion, role play and project work, and *'The Big Picture'*, whose aim is fluency practice with discussions, role plays and project work.

In the unit pages the *'Learning goals'*, comes first and there follows the presentation of the new language through reading/audio texts and/or the *'Grammar Snapshot'* feature, which provides structural analysis. Then there follow relevant practice exercises, after which there are some interactional-communicative activities.

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[9] Cf. APPENDIX I, layout for Starter-Pre-Intermediate, APPENDIX II, layout for Intermediate.
[10] Brian Abbs et.al. (1999/2000). Teacher's Books Snapshot series.

The various exercises have a modular form and there is not any tight task dependency, so it is possible for the teacher to sequence the material according to the needs of the learners.

Language Considerations

A most important consideration in the evaluation of syllabuses is the language taught by the syllabus.[11] The **Snapshot** series employs correct language, which displays natural, up-to-date, Standard English lexis, whereas there is an offer of various texts throughout the series comprising authentic or authentic-like material like newspaper articles, letters, narratives, advertisements etc, introducing learners to different styles and registers from slang to formal language.

Referring to the affective facet of the syllabus, the texts contain information, which can be interesting to adolescent learners, as it is relevant to that age and are connected with issues, which they can identify with.

Besides the language enabling skills are equally catered for, balanced and well focused with appropriate activities, and the learners are called to use higher order skills like inferencing, skimming and scanning.

As regards their cognitive and meta-cognitive skills the *'Help line'* activities, provide sufficient guidance through handy tips and effective techniques.

In addition, there is sufficient recycling of the previously taught language with revision exercises every two units and a consolidation unit after every four units, which provides scope for unstructured use of the language with the purpose of gaining fluency in all four skills.

The Exercises

The syllabus contains a collection of both controlled and free exercises, the latter being proportionate to the level of the course book.

Most exercises, which are aimed at communication, have appropriate rubrics and task environments. However, there are exceptions, which do not fully comply with communicative teaching specifications, like for instance a 'write-about-yourself' exercise[12], which is not usual in real life, whereas others comply

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[11] Kitao, K, http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Kitao-Materials.html.
[12] Cf. *Snapshot Pre-Intermediate*, p. 12, exercise 14b.

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fully with communicative language teaching trends, displaying a full task environment.[13] Most activities are meaningful, with objectives to be accomplished and interactive ones allow for negotiation of meaning and opinion.

The Learner's Point of View

Considering the syllabus from the viewpoint of the learner and from impressions expressed by them, one could claim that the textbook is considered useful, relevant and interesting as regards content.

The cultural information in the textbook seems to have a British slant, however it is correct, recent and unoffending to the learners, not excluding the presentation of other cultural examples.

The level of difficulty is conveniently a little higher than the level of most learners not considering extreme cases, in which a pupil either is in no position to attend the lowest level or their knowledge is a lot higher due to home tutoring.

The procedures and methods in the book are also clear and easy to follow by the average learner, creating thus an atmosphere of security and stability during class.

As regards learning supports, the syllabus provides colourful visual aids like photographs and graphics, audio materials and useful word lists, while there are clear, effective and well organised headings in all units.

Finally, coming to the general appearance of the textbook, we can see that it is produced on fine quality paper, while the covers are presentable and attractive.

Coherence between the Syllabus and Classroom Practice

As we have pointed out in a previous paper,[14] there are certain constraints, which render the implementation of the current syllabus problematic in our school.

We have referred to insufficient staff training, lack of interest and commitment on the part of a section of the staff and fluctuating scrupulousness. We have also made a point of the mixed abilities in classes, but as of late several

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[13] Cf. *Snapshot Pre-Intermediate*, page 74, exercise 14.
[14] Damianopoulos, D. (2001). HOU Module : ΑΓΓ60 Mini-Assignment 1, pp. 8-10.
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problems have arisen due to immigrant pupils, who have never had any previous contact with the English language whatsoever, whereas Greek children upon entry have already had a three-year instruction in Primary school. Special mention has been made to the scarce teaching hours, the noise pollution the school is suffering from, the deficient provision of books and the limitations as to their use, the pupils being obliged to return them to the school in *'excellent condition'*. Special reference has also been made to the lack of equipment, which is necessary for the teaching of a foreign language.

This year was the first in which we had to supply our pupils with textbooks, which previous students had returned in compliance with the directive of the Ministry for Education. It was painful to look at their faces, when they took those dog-eared volumes in their hands. Shame and anger were prevalent feelings on the part of the teachers, not being able to look their students in the face. How is coherence supposed to be brought about, when the school year starts with such a disappointment?

Nevertheless, teachers have to overcome obstacles, disregard hurdles and look forward into the future with hope and determination. We have already entered the 21st century and we are in a new setting; we are in the realm of technology and that is going to be our doom or salvation: depending on our choices only.

PART 2

From what has transpired in the first part of this paper, it is obvious that in our teaching situation and for the reasons described, the textbook is the basis of the day-to-day instruction, contrary to Cunningsworth's[15] decree that the textbook should be considered as a tool rather than as a master. And, considering our situation, Kitao[16] is right when she claims that the underlying educational orientation of the textbook will cast its influence on the teaching and learning process employed. Does this approach meet the needs of our learners though?

The question posed is what necessary adaptation could be brought about to the syllabus in use as regards skills, vocabulary, grammar development etc. We believe that the production of ELT textbooks has reached a ceiling performance as regards organisation of teaching materials, finishing and diffusion or dissemination techniques.[17] What is needed now is the adoption of a wholly new approach as to the use of that material. We need to break away from the ossified trudging through the pages of the adopted textbooks by enriching them with the integration of information technology in a new combinatory syllabus, which will not be driven by the initial *'Book Map'* or *'Contents'* grid, galvanising our learners into new action and novel endeavours in a children driven learning environment.[18] This environment we shall try to depict in the next few paragraphs of this paper.

The Existing Situation

As Soloway[19] protests, schools are the last area of societal activity, where technology in whatever form has set foot. In the case of our country, the classrooms, which have such a privilege, do not exist or if they do they are sparse and hard to find, despite the fact that children are already familiar with new technologies. Yet, they are deprived of a means, which will be vital in their future lives, thus the educational environment being disproportionately tardy in comparison to society.

The fact that educators are not fully aware of the uses that such new technologies could be put to in class, and that there is no appropriate system to assess how effective they may be, constitutes a hindrance to their adoption and development.[20]

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[15] Cunningsworth (1984: 15), cited in Garinger.
[16] Kitao, K., http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Kitao-Materials.html.
[17] White, R. (1997: 121).
[18] Strommen, E.F. and B. Lincoln (1992), http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/Publications/papers/construct.html.
[19] Soloway, E (1991), cited in Strommen & Lincoln.
[20] Strommen, E.F. and B. Lincoln (1992), http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/Publications/papers/construct.html.

Call for Innovation

What needs to be done is a general refurbishing of the educational process, where the pivotal issue is a universal reform of the teacher-student polarity within the framework of a technologically enhanced educational environment, rich in resources and based on collaborative paradigms.[21] Inside this environment the learner will engage in a hunt for knowledge with the help and guidance of their teacher, who will be transformed into a mentor and a resource, divested of their former authoritarian cloak and even willing to learn and benefit from their charges' flair for technological explorations.

The Tools of Innovation

What are those areas in an EFL classroom, where the new technology can be fruitfully applied? We do not need to replace the paper surface of the books with the computer screen, and the pen and pencil with the cursor and the keyboard: what we need is to teach our pupils how to manipulate the spectacular capabilities of the word processor in the composition of language in collaboration with their peers; we need to open up their eyes and help them communicate worldwide through the e-mail facility, the newsgroups, the e-groups and finally teach them how to retrieve knowledge from the worldwide web, critically assess it, process and assimilate it, and finally create their own knowledge framework with the help of their existing knowledge of the world. Subsequently, they will have to be taught how to use the Internet authoring tools in order to make their findings, thoughts, conclusions and decisions known and advertised to a wider audience by constructing and maintaining their own web pages.

All this procedure will cater widely and effectively not only for the enabling skills, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking, but for a whole new range of skills: practical skills in communicating, researching, constructing,[22] with the classroom opening up a window on the world, as we shall try to point out later in this paper.

However, we need to be prepared: this new venture is not without difficulty. We are on the verge of a new unexplored territory, in an *'amphibious condition'* as Moran[23] points out, something which combines age-old habits of the past with novel practices of the future.

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[21] Strommen, E.F. and B. Lincoln (1992), http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/Publications/papers/construct.html.
[22] Shetzer, H.(March, 1998), cited in Shetzer http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/shetzer.html
[23] Moran, C.(1992) cited in Holeton, R., http://horizon.unc.edu/TS/default.asp?show=article&id=512.
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Rationale

One might wonder though what there is to be gained by such an innovation. Experts[24] in child pedagogy have many a time pointed out that children learn the world they live in by experimenting and playing. According to Piaget, in order to learn children have to manipulate and explore the world around them and formulate answers to their questions. Using the tools offered by Information Technology students are in a position to seek, look around, discover, assess and formulate their own points of view by means of the Internet. Via the same means they are able to communicate with other individuals synchronously[25] or asynchronously,[26] the latter mode giving students the time to work on and form their points of view not only within the narrow confines of the classroom, but at their own time, pace and place.

Besides, the fact that students can retrieve vast amounts of information on the Internet instigates their curiosity and desire to learn more. Thus the experience turns into a personal, autonomous and yet interactive quest, with the student in the centre of it.[27] An additional feature of this quest is that students view their education with a higher sense of responsibility, in this way aiming at accomplishment,[28] creating information themselves and subsequently designing and publishing it in an effort to express their new, formulated opinions.[29]

This intellectual bustling about activates the use of higher order thinking skills[30] like inferencing, assessing etc., thus enabling the students' intellectual faculties to mature.

Psychological Issues

This new setting for the teaching of English and other languages naturally presupposes certain modifications as regards our attitudes and priorities. The teacher will naturally have to refurbish the course accordingly, but teacher and students will have to brace themselves for the adoption of a new form of intellectual and emotional adaptation.[31] At the beginning special care will have to be taken of those students, who are less capable in the use of the new technologies

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[24] Daiute, C. (1989), Garvey, C. (1977), Herron, R. E. & Sutton-Smith, B. (Eds.).(1971) cited in Strommen, E.F. and B. Lincoln (1992) http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/Publications/papers/construct.html.
[25] Cf. Chat facility, MOOs, MUD and video conferencing programs like NetMeeting.
[26] Cf. E-mail, e-groups, discussion boards.
[27] Woodlief (1997), Hanley (1994), cited in Kasper, L. http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/kasper.html.
[28] Kwi Park-Kim, http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/park2.html.
[29] Mello (1996), cited in Belisle, R., http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Belisle-Email.html.
[30] Mike (1996), cited in Kasper, L., http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/kasper.html.
[31] Hannah, R., http://www.horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Social_Sciences/Hannah.asp.

and those who do not seem to be adequately enthusiastic about the new way of learning.

From reports of colleagues and relevant case studies,[32] it becomes apparent that several subjects, who were usually reticent and refrained from expressing their views in class, developed new participatory patterns under the protection of the privacy that the new technologically enhanced learning environment secured for them.

Additional benefits from the use of new technologies are observed[33], as students display increased social sensitivity and realisation, whereas they become more confident in their search and manipulation of knowledge.

Another interesting observation[34] is that students of varying ethnic origins abandon their ethnic consciousness and concentrate on the person rather than their descent, probably because the audience is disembodied and anonymous[35] when communicating via electronic means.

Our Proposition and Hope

Instead of modifying our syllabus, due to the reasons mentioned earlier,[36] we have constructed a web site[37], which will have as a purpose not only to exemplify our proposition, but also to introduce the new enhanced and *Child Driven Learning Environment*[38] in practice.

Our first concern in this venture is to adequately verse our students in the efficient use of the new tools, namely the word processor, like *Microsoft Word 2000*, a web browser like *Microsoft Internet Explorer 6* and an e-mail facility like *Outlook Express 6*, a web authoring program like *FrontPage2000*, a Chat facility and finally FTP[39] software for the publication of their work on the Internet. Relevant reading material has been collected on our site,[40] and classes will be scheduled to make systematic use of the appropriate literature under the guid-

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[32] Cf. Keenan, K. http://www.horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Language_Music/Keenan.asp.
   Awalt, M. http://www.horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Language_Music/Awalt.asp.
   Inman, J. http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/inman.html.
[33] Belisle, R., http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Belisle-Email.html.
[34] Case study by Lapp, S., University of Texas Pan-American, cited by Belisle, R., cf. previous footnote.
[35] Lund, C., http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/lund.html.
[36] Cf. Part 2, second paragraph.
[37] Cf. 2nd Junior High School Corfu, Greece, Virtual English Classroom, http://users.otent.gr/~damker/.
[38] Strommen, E.F. and B. Lincoln (1992), http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/Publications/papers/construct.html.
[39] File Transfer Protocol.
[40] Cf. 2nd Junior High School Corfu. Virtual English Classroom, http://users.otenet.gr/~damker/pcliteracy.htm.

ance of their teacher of English and in collaboration with the Information Technology master.

Naturally the use of the aforementioned software will have to be supplemented with instruction of our students on how to research the topics assigned to them with the use of key words related to the objects of their search, the manipulation of various Internet search engines, the assessment of the quality and the value of the information by determining the quality and reliability of the sources, the management of the information they collect and finally the citing of the various sources used and the acknowledgement of credit to them.[41]

The Word Processor

Holeton[42] has found that the word processor is very useful in the teaching of writing, as it visually underlines what the writing process is, namely a procedure during which paragraphs, sentences or words can be replaced or transferred from one point of a text to another, thus highlighting the ephemeral and non-permanent character of the writing activity. This advantage encourages pupils to be ready for continuous editing in an effort to reach feasible perfection in their writing efforts.

From the practical point of view, the annotation function of a program like *Microsoft Word 2000* enables the teacher to comment on students' productions and, since texts are digital, to operate on the network as well, thus overcoming the traditional limitation of conventional corrections on the manuscripts of the students.

The E-mail, Discussion Groups, E-groups

The E-mail, which seems to be the most popular, Discussion Groups and E-groups[43] are the functions, which promise the expansion of the classroom beyond its physical confines either for inter-student bi-/multi-lateral or teacher-student collective asynchronous communication or individual instruction.[44]

Such provision for the development of the pupils' e-mail skills has already been made in our web site with the accumulation of material and resources,

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[41] Shetzer, H.(1998), cited in Shetzer, H.: http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/shetzer.html
[42] Holeton, R., http://horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Language_Music/Holeton.asp.
[43] Electronic Groups.
[44] Powers, S. & K. Dutt, http://www.horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Professional_Schools/Powers.asp.
 Also Holeton, R., http://horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Language_Music/Holeton.asp.

which are ready to be used under the teacher's instruction.[45] In this kind of activity pupils will be required to establish e-mail communication not only on a class or school level, but also internationally, so that they may become responsible communicators with the observance of the appropriate *Netiquette*.[46]

Parallel use of e-groups or discussion groups will be introduced for the widening of the students scope, while the activities aimed at through the described facilities will be the request and providing of advice and analysis thereof, the expression or reading of opinions and the widening of their research capabilities with the contribution of information by other people.

The advantages of discussion/e-groups are that there is more widespread participation in a more democratic environment due to the lack of physical presence, which is instrumental in the focusing on points of view without any interference from the individuals themselves. Besides, contributors have ample time to process their 'turns' with more attention and tranquillity at their own time, while a transcript of the exchanges can be fodder for subsequent class sessions or writing activities.

Researching Assignments - Field Trips

Pivotal activities in our proposition are the researching of assignments, which can be set in connection with the subject matter of the syllabus in use, as well as virtual field trips, which the class can engage in collaboratively or individually.[47]

In these activities, the role of the teacher is to prepare their students to organise their research, offering guidelines,[48] topics, which will have to be researched, and generally providing a framework, which the students will always be able to refer to, for the sake of consistency and methodical output. The purpose of either a research project or a field trip should lead to a specific outcome, which must lend itself to evaluation and assessment of the student's linguistic abilities and probably other skills, in case the activities in question acquire an interdisciplinary character as alluded to earlier.[49]

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[45] Cf. 2nd Junior High School, Corfu. Virtual English Classroom, http://users.otenet.gr/~damker/e-mail.htm.
[46] Cf. 2nd Junior High School Corfu. Virtual English Classroom, http://users.otent.gr/~damker/e-mail.htm.
[47] Cf. 2nd Junior High School Corfu. Virtual English Classroom, http://users.otent.gr/~damker/assign.htm and http://users.otent.gr/~damker/fieldtrips.htm.
[48] Cf. *Our Proposition and our Teaching Situation*, pp. 12-13, in this paper.
[49] Cf. *Our Proposition and our Teaching Situation*, pp. 12-13, in this paper.

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A fieldtrip can be regarded as a real outing of the class in a real world, where they will contact real language and authentic situations.[50] In the same way, a research assignment could be considered as a visit to a library and the material retrieved by the students in either kind of activity should be utilised in subsequent classroom sessions, where peer intervention can be feasible.[51]

Web Authoring and Web Publishing

A final stage, which a technologically enhanced EFL/ESL programme might encompass could be the *Web Authoring* component, through which the students can make the results of their efforts known not only to the school community, but also to the general public, like the educational authorities, parents, friends and even e-friends across the world. Naturally, such a component should require further interdisciplinary tuition in the use of additional software, like *Microsoft FrontPage2000*, for the construction of web pages presenting individual or collaborative projects, as well as FTP[52] software, which will help students to publish their material on servers across the Internet.

Such a component in the English Teaching Classroom would be excellent linguistic practice, during which students would learn to formulate ideas, present information in attractive settings, always having an audience in mind, while the procedure towards a final product would sharpen their performance in all enabling skills and would teach them negotiation of meaning and of attitudes in the foreign language.

Class Mechanics

If the class is to function smoothly in this new technologically enhanced environment, we shall have to learn how to manage classes in a collaborative way.

According to the theory of *Constructivism[53]*, we learn through an ongoing analysis of the experiences we harvest from the world around us, and as regards education, negotiation among students is one of the pivotal points in their effort to process experiences and information and to reorganise that material in order to produce their own contribution.[54] Besides, according to Vygotsky,[55] collabo-

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[50] Cf. 2nd Junior High School Corfu. Virtual English Classroom, http://users.otent.gr/~damker/fieldtrips.htm.
[51] Cf. 2nd Junior High School Corfu.Virtual English Classroom, http://users.otent.gr/~damker/assignAadvan.htm.
[52] File Transfer Protocol.
[53] Sigel, I. & R. Cocking (1977), cited in Ginn, W.Y.
[54] On Purpose Associates (1996a) cited in Akers. For on-line availability cf. 'Funderstanding' in bibliography.

ration with peers of higher abilities is a prerequisite for learning and higher performance.

Some additional requirements for the effective function of the collaborative paradigm are the principles of '*positive interdependence*' and '*individual accountability*'.[56] According to the former, the students are aware that they are engaging in a team effort and they will not succeed unless the entire group does; and this leads to the latter, where there is an assessment of each member's contribution to the team effort and each student develops a sense of responsibility as regards their output.

In the learning environment we are trying to delineate in this paper, classes will have to be divided into small groups of 3 to 5 students, at least one of whom will have some experience and will hopefully offer their assistance to the rest of the group.[57] As Strommen and Lincoln[58] point out, peer instruction creates an environment, where there is the feeling of a common cause, which is a safeguard for positive results. In this process, the students will not expect assistance primarily from the teacher, as in teacher-driven/centred learning environments, but they will turn to their peers and the team, thus making precious use of the foreign language in their collaborative negotiations.[59]

Teacher's Role

Although we have alluded to the role of the teacher in earlier paragraphs, we feel that special explicit mention should be made here, as the framework of the teacher's function will change radically in this new technologically enhanced *procedural syllabus*.[60]

The role of the teacher will acquire a new meaning: the teacher will not be an information provider, but an information propagator, a resource to which students will turn to, whenever they require help in the process of knowledge creation.[61] There will not be a one-way flux of information, but mutual cooperative interaction with the students, where both parties will enjoy the beneficial influence of the search for knowledge and its reshaping.

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[55] Vygotsky (1978), cited in Powers S and K Dutt,
http://www.horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Professional_Schools/Powers.asp.
[56] Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991 :3), cited in Jacobs, G.M. and J. Ball (1996).
[57] Perez, L., http://www.horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Language_Music/Perez.asp.
[58] Strommen, E.F. and B. Lincoln (1992), http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/Publications/papers/construct.html.
[59] Esling (1987), cited in Bliss, A. http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/bliss.html.
[60] White, R. (1997:94-111).
[61] Holeton, R., http://horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Language_Music/Holeton.asp.
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Now the teacher will have to produce questions and challenges, which the students will have to plunge in and explore, perhaps enlightening their teacher on the way in terms of techniques and new discoveries in the use of the new tools.

A Proposition for Assessment

In the long run all teaching activity will come down to the common denominator, which is assessment. Participants in the educational process are not only the teachers and the students, but also other stakeholders like the state, the parents and generally the taxpayers, who are required to face the expenditure.

Since we are operating in a completely new educational environment, it is only logical to assess in a way which matches the new product of instruction, as using the traditional methods of assessment would make justice neither to the teachers nor their charges.

Strommen and Lincoln[62] suggest that the portfolio method should be followed. The teacher should keep examples of the students work in a dossier over the duration of a particular programme and the grading should be based on the evaluation of the work therein, as the use of traditional tests employing a certain number of questions would be totally inappropriate.

We also believe that apart from the portfolio method, there should be class observation-evaluation sheets[63] based on explicit criteria[64], which teachers would have to keep during class sessions, thus keeping a record of the progress of their students in collaborative class work. The portfolio material should have a 70% weighting in the overall attainment grade, whereas classroom observation should have a weighting of 30%.

A Final Tour

We think that a guided tour around the site, which is hoped to give a taste of what we propose, is necessary at this point, so that the reader may have a palpable sample of the technologically enhanced environment we have tried to describe.

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[62] Strommen, E.F. and B. Lincoln (1992), http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/Publications/papers/construct.html.
[63] Cf. APPENDIX III, p. 26.
[64] Cf. APPENDIX IV. P. 27.

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The first page listed in the contents is the *'Computer Literacy'* page containing links to sites, which teachers and learners can use for the development of their computing knowledge. It has been inserted first to denote that computer literacy is an indispensable element in the virtual classroom.

The web site of the current syllabus in use is featured second, as we do not intend to discard it; on the contrary we intend to continue considering it as the basis of the EFL classes, but the technological component should be so closely combined with it, that in the end they are perceived as one syllabus.

In the *'WWW Resources'* page we intend to provide unit-by-unit resources, which the students can turn to, in order to widen their perspectives and carry out independent study, additional to the assignments, which will be set in the *'Assignment'* page.

The *'E-books'* page has as a purpose to exhort students to download electronic books offered free on the Internet, but previously supply them with the free software necessary for the reading of those books.

The obvious purpose of the skills features is to provide the teacher with resources, which can be used on-line for the improvement of the students enabling receptive and productive skills, whereas the *'Dictionaries'* page to offer the students vocabulary resources for the support of their needs and improvement of their vocabulary abilities.

The *'E-mail'* page, as well as the one containing links to international schools, are hoped to exhort students to widen their horizons and communicate internationally either on their own accord or as a class project, which will also be able to be subject to assessment,[65] just like all other activities, which will involve student performance.

The feature of *'Field Trips'* and *'Assignments'* has sufficiently been covered earlier,[66] while *'EFL Sites'* is intended primarily for teachers, but more advanced students as well, who wish to further their enlightenment in the language.

The *'Noticeboard'* and the *'V.E.C. Journal'* are intended to help students the former for interpersonal communication, while the latter is hoped to become a podium for the expression of views and ideas, which will be shared more widely.

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[65] Cf. *A Proposition for Assessment*, pp. 17.
[66] Cf. *Researching Assignments-Field trips*, p. 14.

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Finally, the *'Search'* page is designed to introduce students in the use of the search engines, which will be a vital tool in the research activities of the students for assignments as well as field trips.

Epilogue

In this paper we have tried to delineate our present teaching situation expressing our concerns about it, and envisage a future, which will fulfil the hopes for a better language education for our students and a more edifying role for us as teachers.

However, we are aware that in order to realise such a dream we shall have to overcome numerous intended or unintended obstacles like bureaucracy, indifference, unscrupulousness, laziness and so many other weaknesses of humanity. However, we are convinced that commitment and perseverance will finally bring about the desired result.

(Total number of words: 4.778).

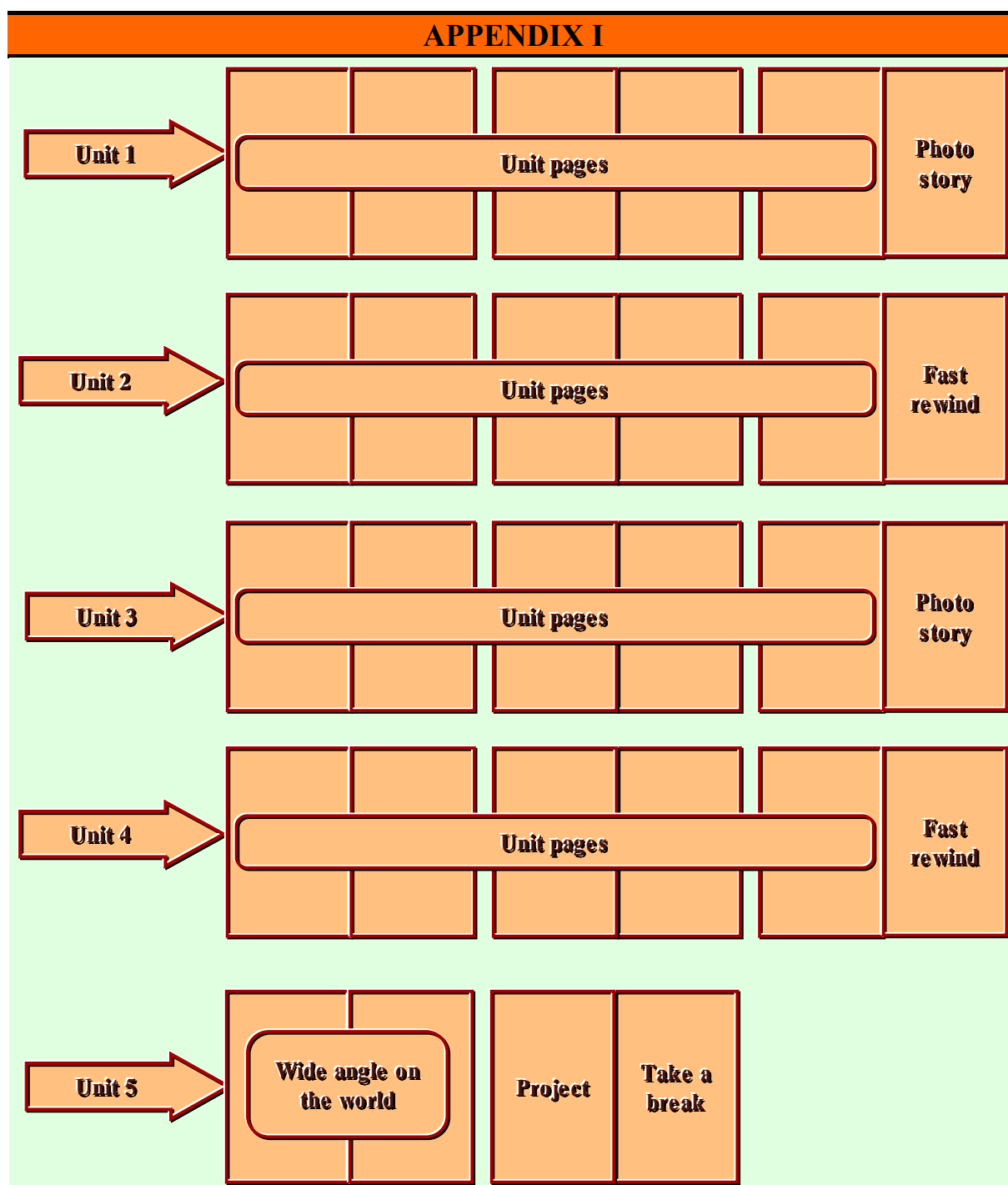| BIBLIOGRAPHY	
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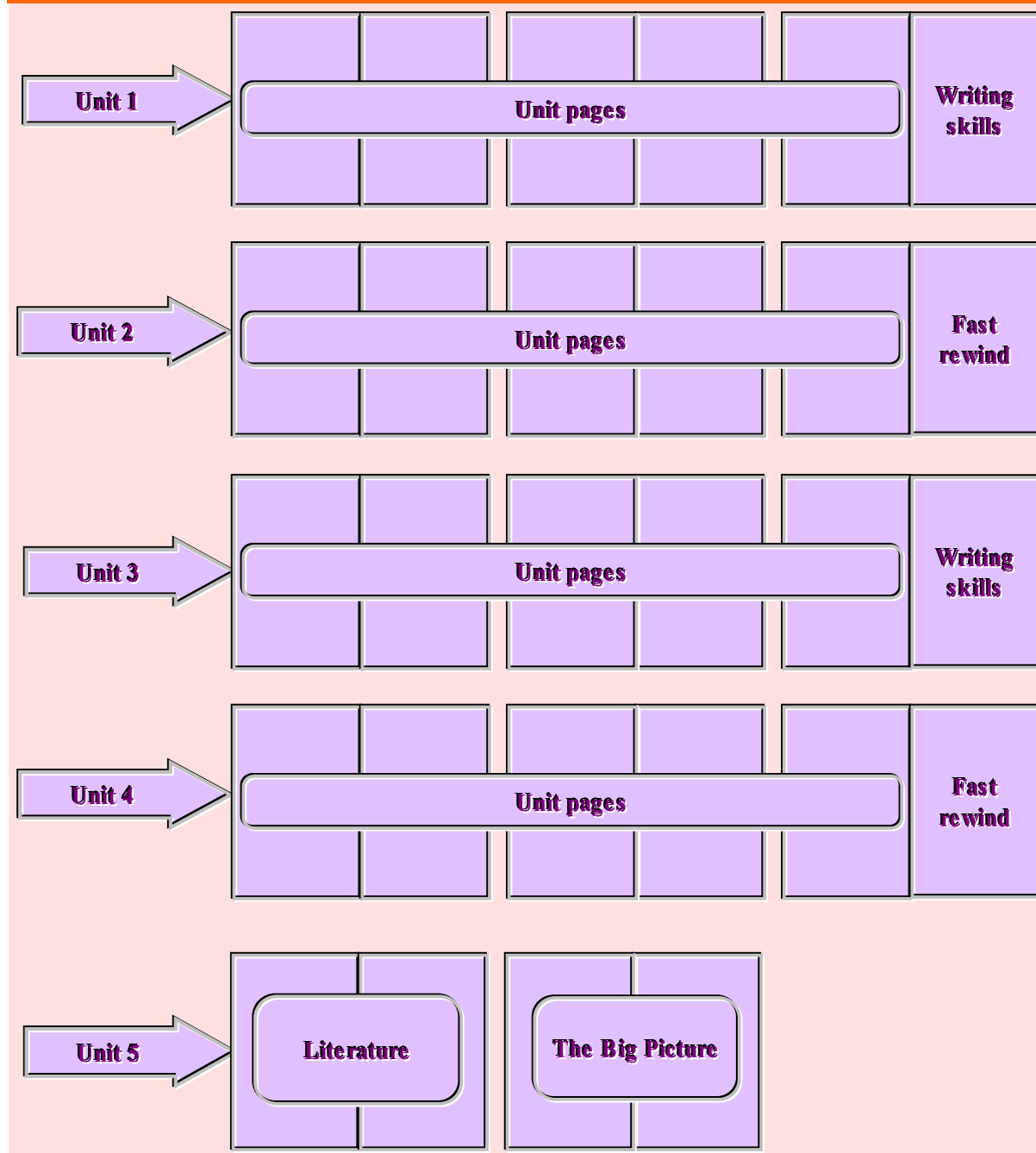| BIBLIOGRAPHY	
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APPENDIX I

Unit 1 →	Unit pages	Photo story
Unit 2 →	Unit pages	Fast rewind
Unit 3 →	Unit pages	Photo story
Unit 4 →	Unit pages	Fast rewind
Unit 5 →	Wide angle on the world	Project	Take a break

APPENDIX II

Unit 1 →	Unit pages	Writing skills
Unit 2 →	Unit pages	Fast rewind
Unit 3 →	Unit pages	Writing skills
Unit 4 →	Unit pages	Fast rewind
Unit 5 →	Literature	The Big Picture

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APPENDIX III	
CLASS OBSERVATION-EVALUATION SHEET	
STUDENT'S NAME:	
CLASS:	
PROJECT:	
CRITERIA	**NUMERICAL RENDERING**
Aesthetic sensitivity	
Collaboration	
Ingenuity	
Negotiation	
Peer assistance	
Technological expertise	
DETAILED OBSERVATION DESCRIPTION	

APPENDIX IV	
DESCRIPTION OF NUMERICAL RENDERING	
VALUE	**ANALYSIS**
5	Excellent display of the quality
4	Very satisfactory display of the quality
3	Adequate display of the quality
2	Poor display of the quality
1	No display of the quality

APPENDIX V

The following site is considered part of the appendix: please access it via a web browser. Best viewed with Internet Explorer. It was constructed by means of Microsoft Frontpage 2000.

2nd Junior High School, Corfu, Greece: Virtual English Classroom. [On-line]. Available URL: http://users.otenet.gr/~damker/.