

Suggestions for Curricular Implications of the OPI, or  
What do I do to work towards those outcomes with the textbook I have?

26 June, 1995  
Susan Hayden  
Aloha High School

- Realize that this may be major change, and avoid trying to change all parts of all levels you are teaching.
- Obtain copies of proficiency oriented textbooks by publishers such as Heinle and Heinle and Holt, Rinehart, and look over how contextualized exercises are constructed.
- Look over what you want to achieve and the textbook. What can the students do with the language in a particular chapter or chapters? Think of the tasks or functions which logically go with the structures and vocabulary. Sometimes the organization is only by structures, and you'll need to add some information for it to be usable as a function.

Example: If a chapter is about words used for description, include someone's nationality, and city of origin, after the students have learned the new information, set up four identities, including name, nationality, city of origin,. Give a card with an identity to one of four students out in the hall. Give a handout with the four identities to the remaining students and tell the students they must ask one question at a time, and determine which of the four mystery visitors is which. This exercise is conducted in the language, and can be by the second month of the first year.

- Information gap activities call on students to communicate in order to find out information which the partner has, i.e., one student has the map of the town, and the other student is visiting and wants to know whether there is a movie house, or beach or train station, etc.
- Try and make agreements with colleagues in your department or in other schools. Prepare different activities and exchange them.

**The attached suggestions and activities will assist in your creation of opportunities for students to use the language they are learning.**

0135-2

# REVIEW OF THE PROFICIENCY LEVELS IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

June K. Phillips  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

## NOVICE LEVEL LANGUAGE BEHAVIORS

Functions/Tasks: Novices operate with memorized utterances in areas of immediate need. No real communicative tasks performed. List, use isolated words and phrases, respond simply to familiar cues or context, express basic courtesy formulae.

Novices recognize letters, words for objects, places, people in highly contextualized situations. Cognates recognized within predictable areas. Assign meaning to phrases learned in text or orally, so that they can read isolated words, standardized messages in areas of immediate needs.

Content/Context: Novices depend greatly on context. Tend to be vocabulary oriented. Topics controlled include: greetings, names and family members, time, weather, date, days, months, numbers, everyday objects, clothing, food. At this level content is determined by what has been taught.

Accuracy: Pronunciation intelligible to those used to dealing with beginning learners, such as teachers. Reading/listening highly dependent on context and background experience and logic brought to the situation. Close match with memorized material essential; little inferencing or guessing.

## POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Renewed emphasis on dialogues for phrases with broad potential and applicability, and for formulaic expressions. Effort to provide some repertoire of relevant memorized utterances.

More emphasis on vocabulary building and practice at early levels of instruction. Limited set of structures with much item substitution. Addition of personalized vocabulary from the beginning.

Visual literacy in reading: signs, information-bearing phrases in context.

Writing practice which conforms to data-giving tasks.

Realistic expectations in terms of pronunciation when focused on more communicative tasks. Phonemic emphasis.

Continual review, recycling of vocabulary in major topical areas.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL LANGUAGE BEHAVIORS

Functions/Tasks: Intermediates create with the language. They ask and answer questions and begin to participate in the conversation. They can get into, through, and out of a simple survival situation.

They can carry out purposes such as socializing, sharing personal information, expressing likes and dislikes, obtaining food and shelter, managing to travel, shopping orally and in writing.

Content/Context: Intermediates can deal with the language of social conventions, with expressions of personal interest in conversation, and with survival level topics.

They can give and receive information of a biographical nature, of leisure and school activities.

Reading content includes personal notes and invitations, announcements of public events, some news headlines for identification purposes, some edited materials.

Accuracy: Intelligible to those used to dealing with foreign speakers of the language.

Grammar tentative, syntax fragmented. Commoner tense/number forms. Question forms. Some accuracy in basic structures. Sentences as well as phrases. Generally short, discrete utterances.

Vocabulary carries ideas; circumlocution often necessary.

In reading and listening gets the gist, main ideas. Life experience and logical reasoning advance guessing.

POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Learner must be helped to develop a personalized repertoire of expressions. Opportunities to adapt course content to self. Especially important on vocabulary level. All students can use same structures but lexical variation essential to talk about self. Basically egocentric content/context must be exploited.

Need for survival level topics/units in course.

Authentic reading/listening materials to develop cognitive strategies of guessing from context, bring experience to situation. Input materials with comprehension checks at appropriate level of understanding.

Interviewing opportunities to develop questioning, seeking information purposes.

Role plays, situations to develop sustained communicative opportunities beyond classroom settings.

## ADVANCED LEVEL LANGUAGE BEHAVIORS

0135 (4)

Functions/Tasks: Advanced learners participate fully in conversations and carry out many language purposes such as sharing information and facts, giving instructions, describing people, places and events, reporting on issues, narrating about past, present and future activities.

They operate on a discourse level (not a sentence level) orally and in reading.

They can sequence events and express some reactions.

They can carry out work or school tasks in the language and handle some complications in everyday situations. They can read routine business or social correspondence.

Content/Context: Generally concrete topics, background, family, interests, work, study, travel, current events. Expanding from very immediate world.

News and magazine articles on concrete or everyday topics; classifieds for housing, jobs, travel; formatted or social correspondence. Text materials and short stories or excerpts at appropriate level.

Accuracy: Understandable to native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners. Sometimes miscommunicates.

Strong in either vocabulary or grammar. Control of elementary constructions but uneven in less common structures. Sustained narration in past, present, future time.

Some groping for vocabulary and evident need for circumlocution.

Receptive understanding of main ideas, some supporting detail. Guesses sensibly, uses discourse cues. Reads/listens for facts.

### POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Opportunities for discourse-length practice. Repeated assignments to narrate and describe in various time frames.

Practice in circumlocution and vocabulary expansion. Much recycling of grammar and vocabulary.

Extensive exposure to authentic receptive materials and appropriate strategies for decoding them. Increased work in current events, global themes.

Problem-solving practice in communicative situations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF REAL LIFE SPEAKING

0135-5

1. We speak to someone whom we assume listens to what we say, more than how we say it.
2. We usually don't talk about things we know nothing about or care nothing about.
3. We speak for a purpose, to perform functions through the language. We want to make sense.
4. We decide both what we want to say and how to say it.  
We speak standing up, sitting down, walking, on the phone. Every utterance does not carry informational value.
5. Sometimes we speak to more than one person at the same time.
6. We do not like interruption because we can lose our train of thought.  
We have to know how to take turns when speaking.
7. We speak differently to different people.
8. We often ask for and expect our listener to identify gaps in communication or to confirm the message.
9. We hesitate, we restate, we rephrase, we stall, we make errors, we self correct.
10. We do not always speak in complete sentences.
11. We are not given a time limit.
12. We use conventional expressions in response to certain situations.
13. We use strategies such as circumlocution and reduction simplification.
14. We often enhance or complete face-to-face oral communication with paralinguistic.
15. We handle unpredictability.
16. We often speak in reaction to what we hear.
17. We expect correction or reaction only on content - the truth, logic, or sense of our utterance.
18. In most instances, our minds are at work when we speak. We have some investment in our message and in having it received and responded to.
19. Language we use to speak is different from the language we read or write.
20. Every time we speak we make decisions:
  - whether to talk at all
  - to whom
  - what to say
  - how to say it
  - why - for what purpose

Teaching students to speak does not just involve teaching them structures and vocabulary, but teaching them how to make these decisions and providing them with opportunities to use these skills as they might be used in real life.

# INSTRUCTIONAL APPLICATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

By Chantal P. Thompson

## I. The Oral Proficiency Interview as a model

1. Role of teacher
2. Teacher behavior and techniques
3. Four phases of the interview/class period
4. Assessment criteria: accuracy and content are not alone
5. Focus on what students can DO with the language

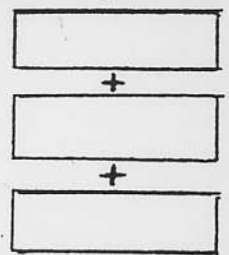
## II. Proficiency NOT a method, but an organizing principle.

## III. Key concepts in teaching for proficiency

Changing the focus

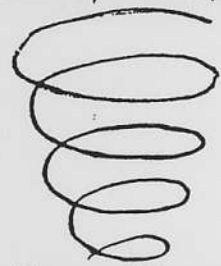
1. Observable performance vs. assumed knowledge
2. Competence: linguistic + cognitive + functional + discourse + pragmatic
3. Skill development: interaction of receptive and productive skills; Teach vs. test; process vs. product.
4. Focus on real life: authentic input, authentic tasks; language used in context to perform real-life functions involves risk-taking, meaningful purposes, communicative strategies, experience.
5. Realistic expectations  
Accuracy = process of evolving precision  
Conceptual awareness --> partial control --> full control

Traditional approach  
(block upon block)



Ex: Grammar block  
Interrogative pronouns  
"covered" once and for  
all in chapter \_\_.

Proficiency-oriented  
(use/recycle/expand)



VS

Function: asking questions  
Can be recycled in every  
chapter, with any topic,  
in all 4 skills.

0/35-7

**TEACHING AND LEARNING  
FOR VARIOUS DEGREES OF CONTROL**

**Conceptual control**

Level of instruction seen in most foreign language classrooms.  
Initial presentation and practice (skill getting)

Focus on form and accuracy.

**Partial Control**

Focus on language use rather than form.

Greater tolerance for inaccuracies.

Objective: use/ recycle / expand

**Full Control**

Involves extensive experience with a variety of activities dealing with the functions, topics and structures targeted for full control.

Focus on functional language use with correction of form.

**Questions**

With a novice-level student, what kind of control can you reasonably expect regarding the following functions?

- Making lists
- Asking/answering questions
- Describing simply in the present
- Explaining in detail in the present

### DESIGNING ROLE PLAYS

1) First step: **itemize** what's in the chapter (+ recycling as needed)

Example: Chapter 6, "Au restaurant"

<u>Functions</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Culture</u>	<u>Grammar</u>
Ordering a meal	Restaurant	Food items	French meals	Vouloir Pouvoir Partitive articles Expr. of quantity
Expressing likes and dislikes			Menus	
(Asking and answering questions)				

2) Second step: **create** an authentic or semi-authentic situation based on itemized functions, context, content, culture, and grammar. The situation may be in English, so that vocabulary and grammatical structures are not given away, and to encourage greater use of communicative strategies. Students are instructed to use the given information as a framework for a natural conversation.

**The situation must be open-ended enough to allow students to create with the language, yet structured enough to correspond to their level. Students express personal meaning but within carefully planned limits, so that accuracy is within reach.**

Example: Au restaurant

You go into a French restaurant. After exchanging greetings with the waiter, request a table in a specific part of the restaurant, then ask questions about today's menu. Order a meal, complete with drink and dessert. Be prepared to deal with minor complications, such as menu items not being available or requiring a supplement.



# On va au syndicat d'initiative

You are a tourist visiting the north of France. You want to find out about some of the towns in the area. Your partner works in a tourist information office. The written information tells you the things you want to ask for. You should check whether you have to pay for the maps.

Ask your partner what there is to see in the town.

<p>1. <b>BOULOGNE</b></p> <p>plan de la ville (prix?) dépliant les choses à voir</p>	<p>2. <b>CALAIS</b></p> <p>dépliant les choses à voir carte de la région (prix?)</p>	<p>3. <b>DIEPPE</b></p> <p>liste des hôtels plan de la ville (prix?) les choses à voir</p>
<p>4. <b>ROUEN</b></p> <p>plan de la ville (prix?) dépliant les choses à voir</p>	<p>5. <b>FÉCAMP</b></p> <p>liste des campings carte de la région (prix?) les choses à voir</p>	<p>6. <b>DEAUVILLE</b></p> <p>liste des hôtels plan de la ville (prix?) les choses à voir</p>

Copy out the grid below. In the appropriate box, write down what your partner gives you and any places in the town (s)he recommends you to visit.

<p><b>EXAMPLE</b></p> <p><b>BOULOGNE</b></p> <p>Map - 7francs + brochure - see old town, port and shops.</p>	<p><b>CALAIS</b></p>	<p><b>DIEPPE</b></p>
<p><b>ROUEN</b></p>	<p><b>FÉCAMP</b></p>	<p><b>DEAUVILLE</b></p>

# On va au syndicat d'initiative

You work in a tourist information office in the north of France. Your partner is a tourist who wants to find out about some of the towns in the area. The written information tells you what brochures and maps are available for each town, and what to recommend visiting there. It also tells you the prices of the maps or whether they are free.

SYNDICAT D'INITIATIVE. OFFICE DE TOURISME Ouvert toute l'année					
ville	dépliant	plan de la ville	carte de la région	liste des hôtels et des campings	attractions touristiques
Boulogne	✓	✓ (7 francs)	✗	✓	vieille ville port magasins
Calais	✗	✓ (7 francs)	✓ (10 francs)	✓	musée casino phare
Deauville	✗	✓ (gratuit)	✓ (10 francs)	✗	plage casino
Dieppe	✓	✗	✓ (10 francs)	✓	marché château/musée casino
Fécamp	✓	✗	✓ (10 francs)	✓	église musée casino
Rouen	✗	✓ (gratuit)	✗	✗	cathédrale monument à Jeanne d'Arc musée

Copy out the grid below. In the appropriate box, make a note if you give your partner any maps, brochures or lists.

**EXAMPLE**

1. ...Map and brochure of Boulogne	2. ..... .....	3. ..... .....
4. ..... .....	5. ..... .....	6. ..... .....