

## Integrating Materials Development into On-Site Visits

As a way of building upon the abilities of my teachers, I started basing my on-site visits around materials development. This enables me to work with the teacher inside the classroom as well as outside, in both controlled and uncontrolled environments. Also, this side project of mine (to give it a name, I shall dub it the 'Materials Development Project [MDP]') allowed me to focus what I was doing at schools and make it specific but relatable to what I was doing at other schools.

I wanted teachers to begin sharing more at my Friday model meetings (FMMs), speaking about actual positive results they were seeing in their classrooms after participating in my program. While the MDP gives me specific goals to accomplish with specific teachers, there is plenty of time to work on other projects with the teachers during on-site visits as well as during the FMMs. This is my personal idea on how to supplement the N/194 ELTT curriculum.

### *Project outline*

The aim of this project is to promote teachers to support one another as they adapt new teaching skills. During the project, the teachers will improve their spoken English and learn to make short, general lesson plans. The project is broken up into three parts:

1. Initial on-site visits
2. Follow-up visits
3. FMMs

My projected work for November 2003 is visiting six schools and spending three days at each school just for the MDP. This schedule is specifically for my MDP. (Many of my schools are located in close proximity to one another; therefore, moving between two schools in one day is simple and often I do other on-site work at schools before or after MDP work.)

<i>On-Site Materials Development Schedule, November 2003</i>						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	School A			School B		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Red Day	School A	School B		School C		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	School D		School C	School D	FMM	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	School E			School F *		
30						
School E						
Initial on-site visit			Follow-up visit		FMM	
*Follow-up visit scheduled for Monday, December 1, 2003						

## Initial on-site visits

Three days are allotted to the initial on-site visit. During this period, the teacher is given a selection of several classroom tools, i.e., the materials to develop for the classroom, and chooses one. My initial selections I let my counterpart teachers choose from were

- *Dictionary building*, where students make dictionaries out of their existing copies, led by vocabulary building activities
- *Sentence string*, where the teacher constructs cards shaped like tents to be used by the students on a string to create sentences
- *Dialogue puppets*, where the teacher creates a few puppets for the students to use in role-playing and general dialogue

I kept the selection to three since I want the teachers to be able to share common experiences with other teachers during the FMM. If there were many more selections, my aim of having teachers support one another as they adapt new teaching skills would be more difficult since the teachers' experiences adapting those skills would differ – at least initially.

### *Day 1*

On the first day, I explain what I want to accomplish in the next three days at the school. Then I discuss with the counterpart teacher the three different materials we can develop (see 'Initial on-site visits' above). Then together we make the materials. (I have had no problems at my schools finding the necessary materials.) I began taking notes about the teacher's responses to certain ideas of how to use the materials so I could ask later how they overcame those perceived obstacles.

### *Day 2*

The second day I teach one of the counterpart's teacher's classes using the materials we created the day before. After teaching, I ask the counterpart a few questions about my use of the materials, such as

- Did the students understand how I was using the materials?
- How did the materials assist the students in learning?
- How would you have used the materials?

Before leaving the school on day 2, I discuss observing a class the next day in which the materials will be used. I find it useful to ask what the counterpart teacher is planning on teaching and then we discuss how to use the materials. Sometimes this requires making additional materials, especially for the 'sentence string.'

### *Day 3*

The third day is when the teacher will use the materials in the classroom and the PCV will observe. Co-teaching is also an option if you have a good working relationship with the teacher; however, I rarely do this anymore because I found that the counterpart teacher would always defer to me in uneasy moments, directing attention from their teaching. I think passively observing is the most affective for assisting the counterpart teacher.

## Follow-up visits

A few days to a week after the conclusion of the initial on-site visit, I make a follow-up visit. I always schedule these visits and tell the teacher I would like to observe him again teaching with the materials, offering to look ahead in the book with him and see what is 'scheduled' to

be taught on my return. This causes the teacher to have to think about how to use the materials in class.

The main purpose of the follow-up visit is to observe the teacher teaching again, receive feedback on the materials, and discuss future projects to work together. The follow-up visit is also a good opportunity to remind the counterpart teacher to bring the materials to the coming FMM for 'show-and-tell.'

## **FMMs**

In addition to regular FMM curriculum, I spend about 1.5-2 hours on the MDP at the FMM. Basically, I divide all the counterpart teachers into small groups according to which material they have been using. I give each group 30 minutes to plan a small presentation:

- Present a short lesson (10 minutes) from the book using your material(s)
- Show the large group how to make the materials (10 minutes)
- Make a chart with strategies on how to use the materials (10 minutes)

Depending on the materials and how many questions asked, each group's presentation can last from 20-30 minutes. I provide any materials that the small groups might need to present to the large group on how to make the materials. Most usually I must prompt the group to ask questions or provide feedback by doing so myself, which is annoying, but necessary.