

## ESL Developmental Continuum P–10

### Teaching strategy – Dictogloss

#### Focuses on

**Speaking Listening** Reading **Writing**

#### Most useful for students at stages

A1 **A2** BL B1 **B2 B3** SL S1 **S2 S3 S4**

#### Purpose of this activity

The aim of a dictogloss is for a group of students to recreate a heard text in writing, not word for word but using their pooled grammatical resources.

#### How this helps ESL students in particular

Dictogloss promotes output that is focused on form. It encourages both bottom up and top down processing strategies.

Learners usually start by being concerned with identifying individual elements in the text – a bottom up strategy. But in order to complete the task, they need to engage the following top down strategies:

- making predictions
- making inferences
- identifying the topic of the text
- identifying the text type
- identifying various sorts of semantic relationships in the text.

#### Procedure

The process of conducting a dictogloss involves the following stages:

- **Preparation:** Learners ask questions, discuss a stimulus picture, work on vocabulary
- **Dictation:** Learners hear the passage read aloud twice (usually on tape). The second time they take notes, being encouraged to listen to content words.
- **Reconstruction:** Learners in small groups or pairs pool notes and reconstruct the text. During this stage it is important the teacher has no input.

- **Analysis and correction:** The texts produced by the groups can be:
  - written on the board
  - photocopied and distributed
  - compared with the original, etc.

### Sample texts:

#### HATS ARE BACK

*Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world and moves are now underway to cut down its incidence. One means of combating skin cancer is to wear a hat. Pressured by parent committees, many schools are now introducing hats as part of the standard uniform. The committees are made up of parents who went through school when hats were rarely worn and they are the ones who have suffered badly from skin cancer. Designed by the parent committees, the hats are tested by the Cancer Council authorities before being accepted as part of the uniform. After being out of vogue for years, hats are now beginning to reappear. (Wajnryb, 1988, p. 80)*

#### EARTHQUAKE

*In 1985 there was an earthquake in Mexico City. Many thousands of people died in the disaster. People searched the city for missing relatives and friends. Rescuers worked without rest for many days. There was a great deal of suffering and enormous destruction. (Wajnryb, 1986, p. 16)*

### Acknowledgments/reference

Wajnryb, R. (1986). *Grammar workout: The Dictogloss approach*. Sydney: Melting Pot Press.