
To: The Teacher
From: Sandra Silberstein, Barbara K. Dobson, Mark A. Clarke
Re: Using *Reader's Choice*

Welcome to the fifth edition of *Reader's Choice*. In this section we present our perspective on teaching and learning, and we provide tips for using the book. We do not intend this as prescription; there are as many ways to use a text as there are teachers and classrooms. In fact, the book is designed to encourage teacher flexibility, both in sequencing and in presentation. At the same time, we do have opinions about teaching and learning that have shaped the development of these materials. We have been influenced by our own classroom experiences and by the feedback of scores of teachers and students who have used the book.

We would like you to benefit from these experiences. In the pages that follow, we outline general guidelines for creating an environment conducive to language and literacy development. First, we outline our view of teaching; second, we provide hints for using specific exercises and readings in the book; and finally, we present a narrative of classroom practice that we hope will give you a sense of how we use the book.

General Guidelines

We view learning as change over time through engagement in activity. We believe that students learn a great deal in the course of classroom activity in addition to the content of the curriculum. Among the most important things learned are those that have to do with students' identities as language users and literate human beings. We believe it is important to recognize the transitions our students are negotiating, whether they are immigrants building a new life in an English-speaking country or studying for a degree to return to their home countries. For this reason, we are concerned about the atmosphere in the classroom and about our stance as teachers toward the material and toward the students. We work toward classrooms that embrace diversity and encourage students to express themselves freely.

In contrast to traditional wisdom, we do not view good teaching as virtuoso performance of method. The primary task is not to cover the material or keep up with the curriculum, nor is it to ensure that students score well on tests, although all of these are by-products of effective teaching. Rather, we view teaching as creating an environment in which the students can learn (in this case, to be effective readers), as a function of communication in the context of authentic relationships. We will be effective teachers, we believe, to the extent that we are able to forge meaningful connections with students and move them toward common goals.

We recognize that you may be teaching in a situation that does not give you total discretion in how you use materials or how you approach classroom management or lesson planning. We also know that some students are not prepared for the sort of democratic approach to instruction that we attempt to achieve. However, we will present our approach to using the book as clearly as possible, in the hopes that you will be able to adapt it to your own situation.

We believe *Reader's Choice* can be an important resource in the process of developing independent, critical readers. We have selected a wide variety of readings in an attempt to appeal to a broad range of interests and needs. The activities have been developed to encourage the students to explore ideas while developing and improving reading and language skills and strategies.

We use *Reader's Choice* as a foundation and framework for interaction with students around important topics; we hope to provoke thoughtful conversations and insightful exploration of ideas. In general, we use students' experiences as the departure point for reading the selections and working the exercises. We attempt to provoke students to bring their own experience to bear on the topics presented in the text, and to weigh the knowledge and perspectives of the author, their teacher, and their classmates against their own. In most cases, the process is more important than the product; that is, we care less about the answers to questions than we do about the students' reasoning in arriving at the answers.

The ultimate goal of *Reader's Choice* is to produce independent readers who are able to determine their own goals for a reading task and then use the appropriate skills and strategies to reach those goals. For this reason, we believe the best learning environment is one in which all individuals—students and teachers—participate in the process of setting and achieving goals. A certain portion of class time is therefore profitably spent in discussing reading tasks before they are begun. If the topic is a new one for the students, we encourage teachers to provide and/or access background information for the students, adapting the activities under **Before You Begin** to specific teaching contexts. When confronted with a specific passage, students should become accustomed to the practice of skimming quickly, taking note of titles and subheadings, pictures, graphs, etc., in an attempt to determine the most efficient approach to the task. In the process, they should develop expectations about the content of the passage and the amount of time and effort needed to accomplish their goals. In this type of setting students are encouraged to offer their opinions and ask for advice, to teach each other and to learn from their errors.

This description of classroom dynamics casts teachers and students as collaborators, rather than in more traditional roles of “knowers” and “learners.” We admit that we are not always satisfied with our own attempts in this regard, but we believe it is important to have this perspective in mind if students are to become independent, critical readers, sometimes referred to as “empowered” learners.

Reader's Choice was written to encourage maximum flexibility in classroom use. Because of the large variety of exercises and reading selections, the teacher can plan several tasks for each class and hold in reserve a number of appropriate exercises to use as the situation demands. In addition, the exercises have been developed to make possible variety in classroom dynamics. The teacher can encourage the independence of students by providing opportunities for work in small groups, pairs, or individually. Small group work in which students self-correct homework assignments has also been successful.

Exercises do not have to be done in the order in which they are presented. In fact, we suggest interspersing skills work with reading selections. One way to vary tasks is to plan lessons around pairs of units, alternating skills exercises with the reading selections. In the process, the teacher can show students how focused skills work transfers to the reading of longer passages. For example, **Sentence Study** exercises provide intensive practice in analyzing grammatical structures to understand sentences; this same skill should be used by students in working through reading selections. When communication breaks down, the teacher can pull sentences from readings for intensive classroom analysis, thereby demonstrating the value of this skill.

It is important to *teach before testing*. Tasks should be introduced, modeled, and practiced before students are expected to perform on their own. Although we advocate rapid-paced, demanding class sessions, we believe it is extremely important to provide students with a thorough introduction to each new exercise. At least for the first example of each type of exercise, some oral work is necessary. The teacher can demonstrate the skill using the example item and work through the first few items with the class as a whole. Students can then work individually or in small groups.

Specific Suggestions

Reader's Choice has been organized so that specific skills can be presented before students use those skills to tackle reading selections. Although exercises and readings are generally graded according to difficulty, it is not necessary to use the material in the order in which it is presented in the text. Teachers are encouraged

- a. to intersperse skills work with reading selections.
- b. to skip exercises that are too easy or irrelevant to students' interests.
- c. to do several exercises of a specific type at one time if students require intensive practice in that skill.
- d. to jump from unit to unit, selecting reading passages that satisfy students' interests and needs.
- e. to sequence longer readings as appropriate for their students either by interspersing them among other readings and skills work or by presenting them at the end of the course.

Language Skills Exercises

Nonprose Reading

For students who expect to read only prose material, teachers can point out that nonprose reading provides more than an enjoyable change of pace. These exercises provide legitimate reading practice. The same problem-solving skills can be used for both prose and nonprose material. Just as one can skim a textbook for general ideas, it is possible to skim a menu for a general idea of the type of food offered, the price range of a restaurant, etc. Students may claim that they can't skim or scan; working with nonprose items shows them that they can.

Nonprose exercises are good for breaking the ice with new students, for beginning or ending class sessions, for role playing, or for those Monday blues and Friday blahs. Because they are short, rapid-paced exercises, they can be kept in reserve to provide variety or to fill a time gap at the end of class.

The **menu, newspaper advertisements, bus schedule, and road maps** exercises present students with realistic language problems they might encounter in an English-speaking environment. The teacher can set up simulations to achieve a realistic atmosphere. Since the focus is on following directions, students usually work individually.

With **charts and graphs**, students are challenged by the economy of presentation and the need to translate graphics and numbers into statements that accurately express the information provided. This is an especially important skill for students in technical fields.

Word Study

These exercises can be profitably done in class either in rapid-paced group work or by alternating individual work with class discussion. Like nonprose work, **Word Study** exercises can be used to fill unexpected time gaps.

Context Clues exercises appear frequently throughout the book, both in skills units and accompanying reading selections. Students should learn to be content with a general meaning of a word and to recognize situations in which it is not necessary to know a word's meaning. In skills units, these exercises should be done in class to ensure that students do not look for exact definitions in the dictionary. When **Vocabulary from Context** exercises appear with reading selections, in addition to providing practice in this skill, they are intended as tools for learning new vocabulary items and often for introducing ideas that will be encountered in the reading. In this case they can be done at home as well as in class.

Stems and Affixes exercises appear in five skills units and must be done in the order in which they are presented. The exercises are cumulative: each exercise makes use of word parts presented in previous units. All stems and affixes taught in *Reader's Choice* are listed with their definitions in the **Appendix**. These exercises serve as an important foundation in vocabulary skills work for students whose native language does not contain a large number of words derived from Latin or Greek. Students should focus on improving their ability to analyze word parts as they work with the words presented in the exercises. During the introduction to each exercise, students should be encouraged to volunteer other examples of words containing the stems and affixes presented. Exercises 1 and 2 can be done as homework; the matching exercise can be used as a quiz.

Dictionary Study exercises provide review of information available in English/English dictionaries. **Dictionary Use** Exercise 1 in Unit 1 requires a substantial amount of class discussion to introduce information necessary for dictionary work.

Sentence Study

Students should not be concerned about unfamiliar vocabulary in these exercises; grammatical clues should provide enough information to allow them to complete the tasks. In addition, questions are syntax based; errors indicate structures that students have trouble reading, thus providing the teacher with a diagnostic tool for grammar instruction.

Paragraph Reading and Paragraph Analysis

If **Main Idea** paragraphs are read in class, they may be timed. If the exercises are done at home, students can be asked to come to class prepared to defend their answers in group discussion. One way to stimulate discussion is to ask students to identify incorrect responses as too broad, too narrow, or false.

Restatement and Inference and **Paragraph Analysis** exercises are short enough to allow sentence-by-sentence analysis. These exercises provide intensive practice in syntax and vocabulary work. In the **Paragraph Analysis** exercises the lines are numbered to facilitate discussion.

Discourse Focus

In Units 1 and 3, **Web Work** sections use Internet pages to introduce students to a range of approaches to reading. Some web pages are reproduced in the text, but if students are online, they may complete these exercises by using the *Reader's Choice* website: www.press.umich.edu/esl/readerschoice.

Throughout the book, skimming and scanning activities should be done quickly in order to demonstrate to students the utility of these approaches for some tasks. Critical reading activities introduce the kinds of decisions students will need to make in their own research. In addition to these, the short mysteries benefit from group work, as students use specific elements of the text to defend inferences. Prediction activities are designed to have students focus on the discourse signals that allow them to predict and sample texts. The diversity of student responses that emerges during group work can reinforce the notion that there is not a single correct answer, that all predictions are, by definition, only working hypotheses to be constantly revised.

Reading Selections

Readings represent a wide variety of topics and styles. The exercises have been written to focus on the most obvious characteristic of each reading.

Teachers have found it valuable to introduce readings in terms of ideas and vocabulary before students are asked to work on their own. **Before You Begin** introduces the concepts and issues encountered in reading selections. Several types of classroom dynamics have been successful with reading selections after an introduction to the passage.

1. *In class*—teacher reads entire selection orally; or teacher reads part, students finish selection individually; or students read selection individually (perhaps under time constraint).
2. *In class and at home*—part of selection is read in class, followed by discussion; students finish reading at home.
3. *At home*—students read entire selection at home.

Comprehension questions are usually discussed in class with the class as a whole, in small groups, or in pairs. The paragraphs in the selections are numbered to facilitate discussion.

The teacher can pull out difficult vocabulary and/or sentences for intensive analysis and discussion.

The **Web Work** activities that accompany some reading selections point students to additional Internet-based research. This gives you the opportunity to extend reading activities if the technology is available.

Longer Readings

These readings can be presented in basically the same manner as other selections in the book. Longer readings can be read either at the end of the course or at different points throughout the course term. A typical schedule for working with longer readings is roughly as follows.

- a. Readings are introduced by vocabulary exercises, discussion of the topic, reading and discussion of selected paragraphs.
- b. Students read the selection at home and answer the comprehension questions. Students are allowed at least two days to complete the assignment.

- c. In-class discussion of comprehension questions proceeds with students referring to the passage to support their answers.
- d. The vocabulary review can be done either at home or in class.
- e. Vocabulary questions raised on the off day between the assignment and the due day may be resolved with items from **Vocabulary from Context** exercises and **Figurative Language and Idioms** exercises.

“The Milgram Experiment” requires students to confront their own attitudes toward authority. The unit begins with a questionnaire that asks students to predict their behavior in particular situations and to compare their behavior with that of fellow natives of their culture and of U.S. natives. Psychologist Stanley Milgram was concerned with the extent to which people would follow commands even when they thought they were hurting someone else. Because the results of the study are surprising and because most people have strong feelings about their own allegiance to authority and their commitment to independence, small group discussions and debriefing from the teacher will be important in this lesson.

“The Third and Final Continent” is a powerful short story by Pulitzer Prize–winning author Jhumpa Lahiri. The story touches on fundamental issues of the role of language and culture in identity, issues that are integral to the transitions that most second language learners confront. Because of its length and the subtlety of the ideas developed by the author, we have organized the comprehension activities by sections. This gives teachers the choice of organizing reading assignments and class sessions around particular segments.

Companion Website

In response to suggestions from teachers, we have removed the **Answer Key** from the back of the book. The key appears on the University of Michigan Press website (www.press.umich.edu/esl/) for teachers to use as they deem appropriate. Because the exercises in *Reader’s Choice* are designed to provide students with the opportunity to practice and improve their reading skills, the processes involved in arriving at an answer are often more important than the answer itself. For teachers who decide to use portions of the Answer Key with students, it is expected that students will not use the Answer Key until they have completed the exercises and are prepared to defend their answers. If a student’s answer does not agree with the key, it is important for the student to return to the exercise to discover the source of the discrepancy. You will find that the Answer Key also provides insight into our approach to teaching reading. It can be used as another opportunity to coach students in comprehension and critical reading.

Teachers will also find that the companion website includes interactive quizzes and some of the vocabulary review activities (moved from the textbook so they can be interactive). Web pages featured in the skills units appear on the companion website to better replicate the Internet reading environment.

Teaching Narrative: Glimpses of a Reader’s Choice Teacher

The story that follows provides a glimpse into how we have used *Reader’s Choice* in our classes. It is a fictional account of a single teacher, a composite of experiences we have had over the years. Our goal in presenting it is to give you a sense of the pace and rhythm of our teaching using *Reader’s Choice*. We do not want to imply that this is the correct way of teaching the text; we see the story as suggestive rather than prescriptive.

The narrative takes place in an urban setting, at an intensive English language center where the students attend five 50-minute classes a day, five days a week. What follows is a narrative of the first five days of the course. You will need to flip back and forth between the narrative and the activities discussed in the text to fully understand the suggestions we are making.

Monday

I enjoy teaching advanced reading at the Intensive English Center. The students tend to be serious about their studies, and they are operating with high enough English language proficiency and reading skills that

I am able to involve them in active decision making about the content and the dynamics of the class. The text, *Reader's Choice*, provides just the right amount of structure and flexibility—a good supply of interesting readings and a wide variety of exercises.

I arrive a few minutes before the first class and arrange the desks in a circle. I push the teacher's table against the wall and arrange the handouts where they will be handy when I need them later. I decide to sit in one of the student desks near the board, in case I want to use it during class, and I put blank name tags on all the desk tops. I peruse the class list as I wait for the students to arrive.

Fifteen students are in Reading VI this term. My class roster lists country of origin and native language: four students each from Japan, Mexico, and the Arab Emirates, one student each from Russia, China, and Argentina.

Japan: Shinya, Shoko, Yuko, Mina

Mexico: Carlos, Ana, Hector, Maria

UAE: Jassim, Mohamed, Mahmoud, Jamal

Russia: Svetlana

China: Pyk

Argentina: Rachel

I know Shinya and Jassim from previous semesters. I will be able to count on them to help me introduce activities and approaches that might be new for some of the students. I notice that I have four students who are here on immigrant visas—Svetlana, Carlos, Hector, and Maria. The rest are on student visas.

As the students enter I ask them to take a seat and fill out their name tags. I pass out an information sheet that solicits basic information—living situation (whether they live with their own family, with a host family, or with other students), hobbies, contact information, etc. I ask about their university and career interests and their goals for this class, and whether they have access to a computer. One item is a request for them to give their email address and to describe their familiarity with the Internet, including an estimate of the amount of time they spend surfing the Internet, how often they check email, and so on. Another item is a request for them to list the kinds of reading they do and titles of recent books or journals they have read. The last item is a request for suggestions on making the class work for them.

I tell the class to browse through *Reader's Choice* and to begin reading the student section of the Introduction when they have finished with the information sheet. Maria asks if I want to collect the information sheets, and I tell them to hang on to them in case they think of additional things they want to mention in the course of the class session.

It is time for introductions. We begin with the syllabus for the course, which doesn't take long. Basically, all I expect of them is that they do the reading and participate in class discussions. I have built in some encouragements—tests and the “assignments” so that if they become distracted I can get their attention. But my intent is to orchestrate events in such a way that they become active, thoughtful participants in literate conversations. I tell them that the only certain requirement is that they read and write every day.

Next, I tell them we need to become acquainted. I have organized an icebreaker that will give them a chance to talk to each other and provide me with a sense of who they are and what their interests are. I tell them that we are going to be working together this term and that we will need to get to know each other well. I lead off with the introductions, telling a little about me and my family, our travels and interests, my education and my hobbies. I turn to Rachel, who is seated to my left, and we proceed around the circle with brief introductions. I take notes as they talk and interrupt only to remind them to speak up or to ask for more information if their introduction seems too brief.

When we have finished, I tell them to take out a piece of paper and make a seating chart that includes everyone's first and last names, and one fact or piece of interesting information about each person. This is something of a surprise for them, I think. They are used to doing quick introductions and then not worrying about remembering anybody's name, much less details about each other's lives.

This is the first hint they have that in this class they will not be able to coast along in neutral when other students are speaking. I give them time to work, and after a few minutes, tell them all to stand up, move about the room talking to each other as if they were at an art reception or party, and to complete the task in ten minutes.

I remain seated and take notes. I am interested to see how they interact with each other. I try to watch them all, but I am especially mindful of the quiet ones. Luckily, all goes well on this first excursion into communicative language learning; no one hangs back, no one offends anyone else, and there are no political blowups. I ask them to return to their seats. They are to put the seating charts in their notebooks; if they did not finish getting all the information, they need to do this before class tomorrow.

The next task is to become familiar with the textbook. I initiate a session of “Say Something,” a round-robin reading technique that I use a lot in my classes. I begin, to give them a model to follow. I read a paragraph or two aloud while they read silently. When I stop, I say something about what I’ve just read (hence the name for the technique). I might summarize it, I might ask a question about a concept or vocabulary item, or I might disagree or elaborate on a point in the text. Then the floor is open to the rest of the class for comment or question.

Next, I ask Jassim to begin because he is familiar with the technique; he was in my Grammar IV class last term. Today there is not much discussion because the technique is new to most of the students, so I prod and prompt after Jassim finishes reading, before I ask Shinya to read. We continue in this fashion until we have completed the student section of the Introduction.

I like this technique for balancing control and initiative in a reading lesson. It gives everyone a chance to participate with minimal risk, and it gives me a chance to assess their oral reading and to probe their comprehension. It also often leads to class discussion that otherwise would not surface. It is a regular feature of my classes. Today the activity goes reasonably well. The students seem to have sufficient language and reading skills for the kind of class I want to teach, and they seem amenable to interactive classroom activities.

I give them a few minutes to identify the type of exercise they expect to find most helpful and to locate an example of that type in the text. For most of them, in spite of their advanced language proficiency, the idea of approaching reading selections from a variety of angles is a new idea. As they begin flipping through the book, I walk around and talk quietly with individual students. Pyk, whose language does not have Greek or Latin roots, has focused on the **Stems and Affixes** exercises. Mina, it turns out, likes literature; she is impressed by the fact that we will read a Pulitzer Prize-winning author.

I get their attention, and we go around the room. The students identify the exercise types they think they will find the most helpful this term. As questions arise about the different types of exercises, we turn to examples in the book and discuss why it is important to approach different kinds of reading tasks differently. I have them flip out the menu in Unit 1 and simultaneously find the article on economics in Unit 6 (p. 149). It has been my experience that some students view realia like the menu to be a waste of time, while others are intimidated by technical reading such as this article. I decide to nip these objections in the bud by making explicit the importance of being able to shift gears depending on the nature of the reading.

“How do you read these two types of text?” I ask. “Where would you be reading them? What would be your purpose?” The conversation turns to their preferences and reading habits. I encourage them to voice their opinions about the type of reading they want to do in the class and the kind of classroom dynamics they believe to be the most important. I tell them that my goal is to make sure that we accommodate everyone’s preferences, and I point out that this will require them to speak up, and that it will also require a certain amount of tolerance for differences of opinion and style.

My goal here is to get them thinking analytically about how we spend our time together in the class. I want them to see that they have choices and that I am interested in shaping the class to meet their needs. This is just the first example of the pattern of interaction that I will use to connect the work we do in class with their lives outside of school.

Time is running out; we have about ten minutes left in the period. I ask them to take out a piece of paper and make a journal entry for the day. The journal is a way of encouraging reflection and extending com-

prehension. It is also a way of helping them consolidate lessons learned during the class period. Some days I ask them to reflect on what they have read or to respond to comprehension or composition questions. Today, I keep it simple, suggesting that they jot down new words they have encountered, perhaps with brief definitions and sample sentences. I also suggest that they indicate aspects of the class that they like and that they provide suggestions for future classes. I tell them that I will collect approximately a third of the journals each Friday to read over the weekend. I use the journals as a way of monitoring students' learning and their attitude toward the class. They are graded only on the number of entries; I encourage them to be frank in their assessments.

I collect the information sheets as they leave for their next class.

Tuesday

I begin the day with the first exercise in the book: **Discourse Focus: Reading for Different Goals—Web Work.** I write the following words on the board: *skim, scan, thorough comprehension, critical reading*, and ask people to volunteer definitions. We talked on Monday about choosing the best strategy for different kinds of readings, so this is not new, but I want to give them a chance to review the different terms and to become comfortable with the notion that we will use different strategies depending on the reading task that we are focused on.

Using excerpts from websites will spark some interesting discussion, I think. I know from the information sheets that computer skills and experiences are highly varied so I have them pair up for this exercise. I explain that next week we will be going to the computer lab. I make it clear that I have paired them up so that they can teach each other as we go, and I encourage them to ask questions, no matter how foolish they may think they will appear.

I have them look at the web page, and I read the skimming questions aloud. They confer with their partners and arrive at conclusions together. I stroll among the desks and monitor their conversations, asking and answering questions as I go. As the partners finish with a set of questions, I open up the discussion for the whole class, encouraging them to respond to each other and express their own opinions.

We continue section by section. They bend to the task, and the room is filled with the pleasant buzz of collaboration. We proceed through the four types of reading, and I am pleased with the camaraderie, but I know that the range of learning is broad. It turns out that Pyk is going to be a multimedia major; she is clearly the most knowledgeable computer user in the class and will be an important resource for me and the students as the term proceeds.

We turn next to what is, in my opinion, one of the most important skills students will acquire in my class—learning to read with only an approximate understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary. I begin by asking them what they find most difficult in their study of English and, predictably, they say “vocabulary.” I ask what they do when they come to words they do not understand, and a lively discussion breaks out as they all brandish their favorite dictionaries. Several have state-of-the-art handheld PDAs with bilingual dictionaries and mini speakers for hearing the pronunciation of words and phrases.

I amaze them with an ostentatious yawn at their electronic wizardry and assert that the most important skill they will learn in my class is to make wild guesses about the meanings of unfamiliar words. I tell them that I am proud of my ability to travel in a wide variety of countries without the benefit of dictionaries. (I do confess, under some pressure, that my partner is an inveterate dictionary user, however, so I am not totally a free spirit.)

I have them open their books to page 10, and **Word Study: Context Clues.** I read the introduction aloud while they follow along, and after a brief exchange to make sure they are tracking the argument being made, I ask them to turn to the example exercise. I read the directions to them and give them three minutes to fill in the blanks on their own. When they have a guess for each blank, we go around the room, reading the sentences and volunteering answers. I keep this light, encouraging all guesses and refusing to arbitrate or give answers. It is the spirit of guessing, I tell them, that will serve them in this enterprise. After we have finished the seven items, I have them turn the page and read the explanation silently. When they have finished, we work through it together,

comparing their answers with the ones offered in the book. I underscore the strategies and the linguistic clues, encouraging them to use the whole range of textual supports for gleaning the meaning of the text.

I ask them to continue with Exercise 1 on page 12. They work on their own for about five minutes, and then I have them compare answers with their neighbors. I walk around the room eavesdropping on the conversations and encouraging them to guess, guess, guess—to write down whatever word comes to mind.

“To require perfection is the greatest imperfection,” I proclaim. I work hard during this portion of the class. I want them to become comfortable with ambiguity and to grow in their confidence that guessing is, in fact, a productive strategy. With about five minutes left in the class I convene the group to hear each other’s answers. We go in order around the room, each student in turn reading an item aloud and giving the answer and the rationale. Because I am interested more in the strategy than the definitions, we do not finish the exercise before time is up.

I say we will finish the exercise on Wednesday, and I remind them to make journal entries tonight. Next week I’ll spend portions of several class sessions working on the journal entries. For now, it is sufficient to remind them that I expect them to write something in their journals every day.

Wednesday

We begin the day by finishing up with the **Context Clues** exercise, and then I tell them we are going out to eat.

“Turn to page 8, and fold out the menu,” I instruct. “Have any of you eaten at Panera?” I ask. “What do you think of it?” We spend a few minutes talking about eating habits, the benefits and demerits of fast food, their favorite restaurants, and so on. I ask them what reading skills and strategies are required for reading menus. We answer the **Before You Begin** questions during this conversation, as I worked them into the exchange.

I read the directions to **Scanning** to them as they follow along. Then, as they scan the menu for the answers, I read the questions item by item, encouraging them to shout out the answers, calling on students who have not spoken, promoting as rambunctious a session as possible.

I announce that they have seven minutes to work individually on the questions in **Reading for Details**. As they work I circulate and discuss items with individuals, asking questions, providing scaffolding for their efforts, encouraging them to work quickly.

I tell them to confer in small groups if they have finished working. When everyone has finished, we discuss the answers using what will become a familiar format: A student reads the question and gives an answer. If no one disagrees, we move on. I keep moving around the classroom, and if I suspect that students disagree but haven’t spoken up, I encourage them to voice their opinions. If there is disagreement, I choreograph discussion and encourage all points of view. In the event that the class cannot agree, I call for a vote. On occasion, I leave the issue hanging without a definitive answer, telling them that this is just like life—there are no final answers out there.

I give them a few minutes to work individually on the **Critical Reading** questions. I tell them to scribble notes-to-self in the margins of the book and to be prepared to support their answers. I give them a few minutes to compare answers with their neighbors, and then I launch into a bit of role-play as we work through the questions. I cast myself as manager or waiter or fellow diner as I paraphrase the questions and prod for answers. I play for laughs, but I am careful to make sure they understand the answers that their peers give, and I press them for details.

We finish the menu work and I shift gears slightly, asking them what goals they had put on their information sheet for the study of English. They take out their sheets, and we hear excerpts from a few students; most have merely indicated that they want to use English to get into a university or to get a job.

I intend to move on to “Can English Be Dethroned?” on page 29, but I want to approach the text through their own words. I ask, “Do you believe you have to lose your native language to become proficient in English? What about the languages you speak? Are they in danger of becoming extinct?” Silence. I leave the questions

hanging, waiting for the students to warm up to the topic. It doesn't appear that they have thought about it before, or maybe it is too early in the day for serious discussion, because no one speaks. I wait quietly, as if I had nothing better to do than watch the chalk dust settle in the room.

Finally, someone comments, someone responds—a question, an opinion, a counter-opinion—and we gradually attain the rhythm of a conversation. I let them do most of the talking, nodding and rephrasing, asking questions, prompting and encouraging, asking for clarification, holding the floor as a student searches for the right word, but basically indicating by word and gesture that this discussion is their responsibility.

I work the **Before You Begin** questions on page 29 into the exchange as things proceed, and then ask them to turn to the article. I read the title aloud.

“What does *dethrone* mean,” I ask. “Is English the royalty of languages?” Then I read the author line aloud and ask them what they think *geolinguist* means. Several students offer definitions, and I tell them to hold those ideas in mind as we work on the essay. I move deliberately here, pausing to permit them to muse about the topic, to let their eyes wander over the page.

I have them turn to **Vocabulary from Context**, Exercise 1 (p. 33), and we do the first paragraph together. I read the paragraph and solicit guesses as to the meanings of *trend* and *imperialism*. Someone offers, “idea.” Another says, “power.” I nod in what I hope is seen as encouragement without confirmation. I point to the phrase, “gradually over time.” I ask for other examples of trends. No answer. I didn't expect one because I don't think they know what the word means yet, or at least, they can't quite articulate their understanding. I walk slowly toward the board, not speaking, so that they can think without my hovering over them. A few minutes pass. I am comfortable with the silence; most of them will become more comfortable with it as the term unfolds. I speak finally. “What about pierced noses?” Is that a trend? “Or tattoos? Brightly colored hair?” I see a glimmer of understanding. Shinya asks if espresso coffee is a trend. “Maybe in this country,” Maria says. “In my country we have had it for a long time.” They seem to be getting the idea, so I push on. “What about *imperialism*?” I ask. Rachel knows this one, and she does a good job of explaining it to everyone's satisfaction. “So, do you get the idea?” I ask. Heads nod. I tell them to work the remaining items as quickly as possible. I watch for signs that most of the students have managed to complete the exercise and then convene the class to go over the answers. As they volunteer answers and debate meanings of words, I work on making them aware of both vocabulary skills and the argument being developed about the role and status of English.

Svetlana and Carlos, apparently, have thought about this topic before, because they speak right up, but for most of the students this doesn't appear to be a burning issue.

I have them turn to the article and I read paragraph 1 aloud as they follow along. We discuss the assertions Breton makes there. I demonstrate a technique I adopted in my college years when faced with a particularly challenging text: I read the first sentence of each paragraph as I attempt to get an idea of the author's argument.

Because we have a few minutes left, I give them the remainder of the period to use as they wish. They can write in their journals or continue reading the passage. I ask them to arrive tomorrow with the article read and the **Comprehension** questions answered.

Thursday

I begin promptly at the appointed hour with **Stems and Affixes** on page 65. I read the introduction aloud as they follow along. I know that the Spanish speakers will find this easier than the students whose native languages do not have as many Latin and Greek roots, so I am alert to ways of using them as experts in the lesson. I tell them to get into five groups with a Spanish speaker in each group, and as we proceed I encourage them to talk among themselves. I remind them to not jump in too quickly with answers—to give each other time to guess. We go through the chart and Exercise 1 in a rambunctious whole-group conversation with the smaller groups conferring as we go. My main goal is to make sure that everyone understands the answers.

I then give them ten minutes to complete Exercise 2 individually. I tell them when they have finished to work within their groups to confirm the answers. I circulate to monitor progress and respond to questions, usually by deferring to others in the group or by opening the conversation to the floor.

We spend the rest of the lesson on “Can English Be Dethroned?” (p. 29–30). Here is what happens.

I ask students to get into five clusters based primarily on a goal of mixing native languages.

Shinya (J)	Shoko (J)	Yuko (J)	Mina (J)	Carlos (Sp)
Jassim (A)	Mohamed (A)	Mahmoud (A)	Jamal (A)	Svetlana (R)
Maria (Sp)	Pyk (Ch)	Ana (Sp)	Hector (Sp)	Rachel (H/Sp)

I tell them that they are to compare their responses to the **Comprehension** questions on pages 31, and to arrive at agreement on the best answer. As often happens, some students have done a more careful job of preparing than others, and it turns out that many students need to read the selection more carefully to arrive at an understanding of the author’s point of view. I see that it is slow going, so I decide to approach the task from the direction of the vocabulary.

I interrupt their work to tell them that I have changed my mind, that we will do Exercises 2 and 3 together (p. 35). I had planned to do these after the **Comprehension** exercise, but they are helpful for working on comprehension through vocabulary clarification. The questions require students to find the meanings of words in the paragraph. They give students a focused vocabulary task, but at the same time require them to read the paragraph and understand the context. I cue the paragraph and ask the question while they search for the answer. I ask them to hold up their hands when they think they have the answer. I wait until most have their hands up and then call on someone to respond. We discuss each item briefly, and I use the opportunity to extend their understanding of the article. We continue with **Figurative Language and Idioms** in the same way.

When we have finished with the vocabulary work, I have them return to their small groups and finish answering the **Comprehension** questions. Things proceed much more smoothly this time, and within a few minutes all of the groups have finished. We check the answers together, going around the room—different students reading an item and giving their answer, followed by discussion and clarification.

We do **Stems and Affixes** (p. 55) together, quickly, to round out the discussion. I think we are wrapping it up, but Carlos and Svetlana have been having an intense conversation in hushed tones at the back of the room. I finally decide it isn’t going to end any time soon, so I ask them to let the rest of the class in on their discussion. It turns out that they have discovered common ground with the author, and they agree entirely with him about the importance of minority languages. They are both from remote regions of their countries and their grandparents were speakers of minority languages before Spanish and Russian were imposed on them. They believe that English poses a threat to all the world’s languages.

A discussion breaks out in full force. Carlos and Svetlana lead the way, playing off each other’s points with energy tinged with indignation. They want international laws and money to support minority languages. And they want the nations with the most widely used languages to curtail their economic and cultural imperialism.

A few students look at me with questioning expressions, and I encourage them to jump in. Jassim and Mohamed join forces with Carlos and Svetlana, who are happy to have allies in the debate. Yuko takes the opposite point of view. Japan, he says, is often accused of such imperialism by its neighbors. These are complex issues, he argues. Culture cannot be controlled by laws and regulations.

Emotions are running high, and most of the class has not spoken, but I like the energy and I am loath to lose the opportunity for spirited exchanges. On the other hand, it is only the first week of the term, and I don’t want this to escalate into a full-fledged schism in the class. I tell the students that I am very pleased with the discussion and that I would like them to record their opinion on the debate in their journals tonight. I tell them that we will return to the topic, pointing out that there are several related articles in *Reader’s Choice* and that there is undoubtedly a lot more that we can find on the Internet. I ask Carlos, Svetlana, Jassim, and Mohamed to see me after class; perhaps we can organize some sort of class project out of this.

I bid them good day and remind my language rights group of our meeting as the students file out.

Friday

We begin Friday with a quiz-like presentation of **Stems and Affixes**, Exercise 3 (p. 21). I tell them that I hope they will take time every night to review vocabulary they have learned, and that they will arrive each day ready for brief comprehension checks of this sort. I give them five minutes to complete the exercise and then check their answers with the person sitting next to them. I ask if there are questions, but everyone seems to have answered whatever questions they had, so we push on.

I want to wrap up the introduction to the Word Study work, so I have them open their books to page 13, and **Dictionary Use**. I ask them to compare the entry for *prefix* in their dictionaries with the one on that page. I tell them they have five minutes to answer the nine questions in Exercise 1 and to discuss their answers with a friend. We go over their answers together and clear up confusions. I have them work in pairs on Exercise 2, with one person reading the questions and the other finding the answers. I wander around and monitor their progress. When they have all finished, we go through the answers quickly.

We have about half the period left, just enough time to launch the project that I have cooked up with the four language rights activists. I give the floor to Svetlana. She asks the group if they would be interested in exploring this issue of globalization, perhaps having a debate. This is a dream for a language teacher—a student taking over the class, proposing an authentic activity, modeling curiosity and mature pursuit of knowledge. I bask in the glow of my good fortune. Svetlana is a bit older than most of the students, late thirties, early forties, perhaps, and she has seen some tough times en route to her current position at a university hospital lab. The other students respond well to her serious demeanor.

She briefly explains the plan. There are six selections in Unit 2 that address the issue, one of which we have already read—“Can English Be Dethroned?” She proposes that they divide up responsibility for reading the remaining five selections and that they develop a position statement on globalization that reflects all the points of view in the class. This is what we decided yesterday in our meeting. I had described the Jigsaw Procedure, a technique I often use in situations where there are many interests around a theme. It involves individuals or small groups reading different selections and then creating opportunities for people to inform each other about what they have found. It is particularly valuable when there are a variety of interests and a range of language proficiencies in the group.

“What do you think?” she asks. “Should we take a few minutes to look at these and decide if they are of interest?”

The class seems amenable to her leadership, and all that can be heard for the next few minutes is the shuffling of pages. After a bit, I become concerned about the time, and ask Svetlana if I may step in and do a bit of previewing. I ask if they have found selections they want to read, but no one seems to be ready to commit, so I volunteer to go through the five and briefly summarize them.

I read introductory paragraphs and give quick sketches of the content and intent of each selection. “English Seen as Co-Star” (Selection 1B) provides quantitative demographic information about the world’s languages—their distribution, number of speakers, and whether they are in danger of dying out. “Gate 4A,” (Selection 2) tells the story of how a bilingual speaker helps an elderly traveler who believes her flight has been cancelled. If you like stories, this one is for you. The “Globalization of Tourism” (Selection 3A) is a summary report with graphics, which might appeal to the more technically inclined reader. Selection 3B, “The Politics of Travel,” is a densely argued essay that calls into question the whole idea of recreational travel; it will be of interest to the ecologically and politically sensitive reader. Selection 3C, “Learning Holidays” is a guide for those who want their vacations to go beyond tourism to include studying and working. Taken together, the five articles can be seen as providing differing views of issues of concern to everyone, examples of the impact of globalization.

I want to work the Internet into the mix, but for the time being, I leave the choices as they are. Some students want clarification about procedures, and I explain that the ideal thing would be for everyone to choose a selection of interest to him or her, and then read it and teach it to the rest of the class. If more than one person chooses the same selection, then they would work on it together.

This seems to have been the question several students were wanting to ask because there is an audible sigh as heads bow and thumbs feather pages again. Svetlana has put the titles of the selections on the board for people to sign up, and in short order there are names under all of the titles. I suggest that the groups convene and discuss how to proceed.

The rest of the period is spent in groups, reading and discussing the selections. I am pleased at the level of engagement, but we are running out of time. I tell them that we will spend time on Monday discussing next steps and preparing ways of teaching their selection to the rest of the class.

I ask them to make two entries in their journals: first, to jot down ideas for teaching their readings to others, and second, to collect their thoughts about the possibility of maintaining a cultural identity in today's complex world.

The first week ends with serious conversation about matters of importance.

Discussion

This is a fictionalized (and somewhat idealized) narrative, of course, but it represents the spirit in which we have written *Reader's Choice*, and it illustrates the approach we take to teaching and learning. Let us examine some of the attributes of the classroom just described.

Creating Connections. The teacher has provided a safe environment for authentic relationships, in which everyone is encouraged to make connections with each other, with the readings, and with the authors of pieces they read. There is a respect for diversity of experience and opinion, and there is an opportunity for people to thoughtfully develop the identity they present to others. Everyone—teacher and students—is encouraged to learn from everyone else.

Reflection and Decision Making. Literacy is presented here as an active, problem-posing, and problem-solving process, one in which there is a variety of answers to every situation. The reading task shapes the approach that teacher and students take. The menu is treated as a tool for getting a meal, and web pages as tools for getting information; the article on language policy is used as an opportunity for exploring issues and values. Vocabulary and grammar work are treated as tools for comprehension, rather than solely as ends in themselves.

Teamwork and Collaborative Problem Solving. Reading and writing are explored as an interactional process, one in which individual decision making is negotiated with others, and in which meaning is emergent in the discourse, rather than existing “out there” to be discovered. Classroom dynamics change to fit the task, and everyone is assumed to bring something to the table. That is, the teacher may be the most proficient English speaker in the room most of the time, but everyone is an expert on something, and everyone has areas of ignorance. Literacy is treated as a social as well as a psychological phenomenon, one that occurs inside individuals' heads but is mediated by interpersonal interaction. Meaning is emergent in the process, always being constructed, rather than lurking beneath the words to be discovered.

Student Choice and Engagement. The class is presented as an opportunity for people to bring their interests and concerns to the table, a place where everyone has a say in tasks and topics. Comprehension occurs when individuals bring their knowledge and experience to bear on the task at hand.

Shifting Roles and Responsibilities. Teaching and learning in this class are responsibilities, not roles. Everyone is an expert on something, and everyone is ignorant and willing to learn about something else. As teachers, it is our responsibility to organize time and orchestrate interaction. Sometimes the best role for this is the one of teacher as conventionally understood—standing at the head of the class explaining a language point at the board. As facilitators, we make possible a range of interaction and learning. At other times, we make an important contribution to our students' learning when we assume the role of participant, contributing our two cents' worth along with everyone else. And there are times when we put ourselves in the position of learner, submitting to students' superior knowledge on matters where they have more experience.

Textbook as Tool. The text is a tool for learning—sometimes a lens for looking at the world, sometimes a lever for getting something done. We shift from focused language skills to reading skill development utilizing

the exercises that are most appropriate for each. If we see that a particular selection does not seem to be going anywhere, we drop it and go on to something else. We keep our eye on the progress students are making and adjust our work accordingly. The book lends itself to mixing and matching readings and language exercises. With the exception of the **Stems and Affixes** work in the skills units, we do not worry about doing exercises in order; we jump around according to what kinds of skills and strategies seem to be required by the classroom context. We integrate skills exercises and readings, working back and forth between units to vary the pace and maintain interest.