

TOWARDS THE CREATIVE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Maggie Melville, Lydia Langenheim, Lou Spaventa
and Mario Rinvoluti

Edited by Lou Spaventa

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**MAGGIE MELVILLE, LYDIA LANGENHEIM (LYDIA O'RYAN),
LOU SPAVENTA AND MARIO RINVOLUCRI**

Edited by
LOU SPAVENTA

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Preface

This book has grown out of good ideas that were encouraged and given space and time to mature. Since the middle of the seventies, Pilgrims Language Courses of Canterbury, has held intensive summer EFL courses at the University of Kent. The concept underlying Pilgrims' success in these courses has been that of giving pedagogical freedom to a small group of creative teachers. These teachers have shaped the nature of things at Pilgrims Language Courses and in turn have been shaped by the forces of their own momentum.

The present volume of teaching techniques and ideas is a compilation of the work of four of those teachers. Originally, each section in this book was a small book standing alone, used time and again by teachers who were looking for things to do in the EFL class or for ideas to start them thinking about what they could do in the EFL class. Each author of each section was once told, 'That's a good idea. I liked your session today. Have you ever thought of putting this all down in a book so that others could use your ideas?' The result of such encouragements has been a series of slim volumes on many aspects of EFL. The four volumes that comprise the four sections of this book were once part of that series. The present four were chosen because they represent at least three of the tenets which some Pilgrims teachers, and of course, many others, share. These are:

language learning is whole person learning
the content of the language lesson should be the student

the teacher should learn to withdraw creatively
to give learning space to the students.

None of these concepts is radically new. They have all been talked about for quite some time. What is new is the application of these concepts. In the exercises in this book, directions are explicitly given with these three teaching tenets in mind. The guiding and unifying principle of the book emerges through the application of the three tenets. This principle, briefly stated, is that in order for real learning to take place, there must be

a degree of trust and honesty in the relationship of student to teacher and student to student. Real learning comes about when the learner is in a receptive state, not when he is defending himself from the onslaughts of the foreign language through teacher, text or tape. The approach might be called a broad humanistic one, with no particular philosophy or philosopher behind it; just the general acknowledgement that the classroom situation is, after all, a dialogue between people, and that people is the subject matter of the language course.

Language Learning is Whole Person Learning

This aphorism comes from the work of Charles Curran, who through a counseling approach to the learning situation, has shown many of us that the proper subject of study in the language classroom is the person and his relation to others in the class group. This is to say that the teacher profits by whatever insight he can gain into the very human processes of group-formation and realisation of self in the group. The work of Curran is not the subject here, but the willing reader is advised to seek out any of the following titles:

Counseling-Learning in Second Languages—
1976

*Counseling-Learning A Whole-Person Model
for Education—*1977

*Counseling and Psychotherapy: The Pursuit of
Values—*1976

All by Charles A. Curran and available through
Apple River Press, Apple River, Illinois, 61001,
USA.

On another level, the idea of learning with the whole person relates to the infamous idea of talking heads. Talking heads were once the norm of the language classroom. They were disembodied talkers of a foreign language, empty of movement and expression. The exercises using drama techniques in the first two sections of this book attempt to get the human juices flowing, to