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*Suggested Sources and Activity Types for Teaching English in a Business Setting**

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In order to develop a language teaching program in a business setting for EFL learners, teachers start by investigating the various sources of possible material which are available. Teachers have to keep their eyes and ears open to both local sources and imported sources. According to my experience, I will divide these sources into 3 categories.

I. Textbooks Texts are a major core of material banks. They are the first place that teachers should look to seek support. At the very least teachers can get orientated towards the business concepts by scanning through these business textbooks. The sort of textbooks that are most likely to cover quite a wide range of topics in business include textbooks on Marketing, Management, Organization Behavior and Finance. For example Philip Kotler's *Marketing Management 1976* (Prentice Hall); Edgar F. Huse and James Bowditch's *Behavior in Organizations: A Systems Approach to Managing 1973* (Addison-Wesley); and Roger Nelson's *Personal Money Management 1973* (Addison-Wesley). These textbooks will provide not only some business concepts but also some case studies of different forms which then can be used for activities in the lesson.

II. Business Magazines and Journals This category is quite large. It embodies international business magazines, local business magazines and journals. Magazines such as *Business Review*, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Fortune International*, *International Business Week* are quite well-known on an international basis. *Business in Thailand* and *Asean Investors* are local magazines which are written in English. Journals such as *Harvard Business Review*, *Senior Management*, and *Executive Digest* are also useful in different ways. The H.B.R. is very academic but the other two are not so theoretical and they seem to be more concerned with on the application side. Also in this category I would like to

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include the monthly reviews, mid-year and annual reviews which are all especially issued on business topics by either the newspapers or the banks. For example the Bangkok Bank has its *Monthly Review*, and the *Bangkok Post* (English newspaper) has its *Mid-Year Economic Review*, and *End of Year Economic Review*. These reviews and reports cover a wide range of current issues in business and economics. Articles on Trade Centers, Banking and Finance, Tourism, Investment, Computers etc. are quite comprehensively and nicely covered. They have statistics, charts and so on to support their presentation.

III. General Magazines and Newspapers In magazines such as *Time*, and in many *Newspapers* there is always a section on "Economy and Business" or "World Business" which teachers might find interesting. Even in women's magazines, *Glamour*, for example, there are some interesting articles on business related topics. Besides, the daily English newspapers in Thailand always have a page or a column on Economics and Business.

Types of teaching activities used in the classroom can be divided into two kinds :

1. Warm-up Activities At the beginning of a new unit there should be a warm-up activity of some kind in order to prepare the students for the lesson. Warm-up activities should be something fairly simple and easy to do so that the students will not feel discouraged from the start. We can have the students skim quickly through the reading text and then check given statements as to whether they are true or false. Or we can give them the topic first and then give a number of statements, ten for example, and then let them indicate those statements that they anticipate their reading or listening will discuss. If the teacher would like to have an oral activity for the warm-up, the teacher can present the student with a situation which calls for some sort of decision and discussion on the part of the students, in pairs or in small groups.

2. Integrated Activities The activities in each unit interweave all 4 language skills. Each task or activity requires the students to make use both of their productive and receptive skills. For example, in one task the students have to listen, then write the notes, and be able to reproduce the message orally. However, each activity will have one main focus. For example, the focus of one exercise is "report writing". But the means to achieve this "end product" might involve the students' listening to a lecture or reading some extract, followed by their discussion of the essential points derived from either the listening or the reading, and only then can they each start to write their own report.

A number of useful activities that can be used for this type of activity are suggested as follows.

1. Interviewing This activity can be used if the teacher would like to focus on the oral production of the students. It is a pair activity and calls for everybody's involvement. And the students can go round interviewing a new person, thus forming a new pair as so-no as he finishes with his original partner. The

teacher's job is to set up a situation whereby the interviewing activity can fit in nicely. Here is an example (In the Unit "manager") "Interview a manager and get his definition of a manager's job. Does this agree with the definition given in the text? If not, what do you think makes the difference?"

2. Developing arguments and discussion This activity can be an end in itself or a means to some other activities. It involves the interaction among the students either in pairs or in groups. There are 2 ways for the teachers to generate the atmosphere for the students to develop arguments and generate discussion: first, by means of giving them a written situation, and second, by exposing them to some film, video or the like which portrays the points towards which the teacher would like to direct the discussion. For example look at the activity on page 4. The students can discuss the possibility of opening a new branch of a department store. They have to argue the pros and cons and all the factors involved before they make a decision.

Supposing you are the owner of Central Department Store you want to expand your business by opening more branches. There are various locations available. Consider for each location whether it is worth opening or not by using all the information provided below.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| I. Location | : Victory Monument area |
| Density of population | : 30,000 per square mile |
| Purchasing power | : mainly middle class |
| Geographical | : on many bus routes central area |
| Convenience | |
| Other features | : Robinson Department Store is already there. |
| II. Location | : Klong Toey |
| Density of population | : 100,000 per square mile |
| Purchasing power | : mainly low class |
| Other features | : no big department store as yet
area of low quality housing |
| III. Location | : Klongprapa area |
| Density of population | : 80,000 per square mile |
| Purchasing power | : middle and lower class |
| Other features | : crowded with townhouse and apartment units |

3. Role-Playing Role-playing is an activity in which the students can use their imagination to portray the role of someone else other than themselves and this can be fun and simultaneously appropriate in the business setting. The teacher should provide the situation and the description of roles. This example is taken from our "budgeting unit". The students have to play the roles of people of different careers. They have different expectations, different goals in their life and thus have their own ways of spending money. Each student has to find out what type of budgeting the person in each role employs. (see Example below).

Role Card I

Somsri Sirikul

Age : 21

You work at the Central Department Store and earn about 3,100 Baht a month after taxes. You are still single and rent a small apartment (rent : 225 B a week). You go to work by bus and enjoy dancing, going to the cinema, clothes and cassette tapes. You also smoke and are trying to save up for a vacation in Chiangmai.

Role Card II

Manop Pitayathai

Age : 30

You are a policeman and earn about 4,600 Baht a month after taxes. Although married, you have no children. Your wife works part time as a dressmaker and earns about 1,750 Baht a month. You live in police housing (rent 500 Baht a month) with your wife's two school-aged sisters whom you also support. Both you and your wife like to eat out as often as you can. You are saving up to buy your own house.

4. Transferring Information In the reading or listening activity, besides having the students answer the questions in traditional ways (for example checking true or false, using multiple choice answers : a, b, c, d) the teacher can generate an activity by making diagrams, outlines or a checklist to test the students' comprehension of the reading or listening. For an easier task the teacher can provide a ready-made outline. The students have to fill in only the information as in the outlines given below.

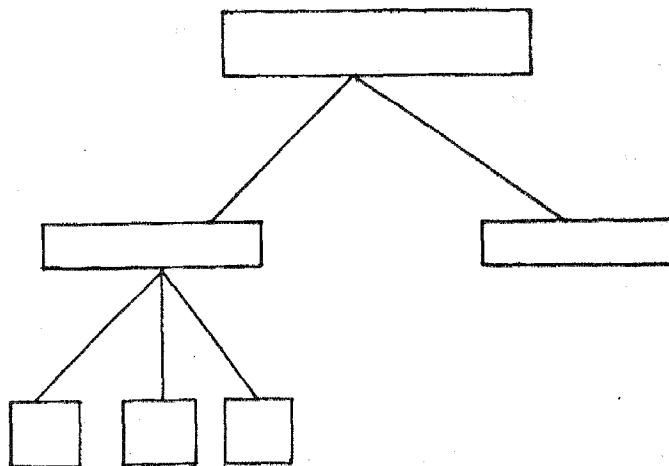
Listen carefully for the 5 main reasons for such a big public response to supermarkets and department stores. Fill in the outline form below :

1. _____
 - 1.1 _____
2. _____
 - 2.1 _____
 - 2.2 _____
 - 2.3 _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Or as in the guided diagram :

TASK 4

- a. Complete the following diagram from the information given in section 2 (Social Characteristics of the Consumer Market).



Or to summarize the information from their reading by putting them under appropriate headings in a checklist.

TASK 8

a. In the following table, list the characteristics of the condominiums in the Sukhumvit area according to the categories indicated.

	Units	Storeys	Facilities	Price	Terms of Payment	Builder	Financial supporter	Special advantage
Siam Penthouse I & II								
Taiping Towers								
Grandville House II								
Baan Prida								
Eden								
Prasanmittra								

If the teacher would like to make the task more difficult he might not give any clues at all. The students have to come up with the information themselves.

5. Sharing Information To strengthen group participation, the teacher can devise an activity that requires bits of information from each of the students. All the information given by each student will be added together to form the whole piece. In other words, each student will be given a small page (or paragraph) of information. He should be able to read, and understand the information in his part and then be able to explain or summarize the information for the other students in his group. In the end, they will have the complete concept. To help the students, the teacher can provide the guideline in an outline form telling them how many topics or sub-topics there are.

6. Notes Reconstruction Whether the students read or listen, one thing that can help them in comprehending the message, retaining the message and recalling the message is the taking of notes. Taken from this point, the teachers can design an oral or written activity. Using the students notes as a guide, teachers can ask

the students to reproduce the paragraph in terms of oral presentation or in a piece of writing. Here is an example, notice that the notes given are not in a grammatical sentence. Students have to fill in the omitted information first, or to select the right alternatives, and then reconstruct them into a well-organized, coherent passage. Besides giving the clues in the notes the teacher can also give clues by means of sequential questions. The students have to answer the questions before reconstructing the answers in a coherent passage.

Example of giving clues in the form of sequential questions.

The Threatening Corridor

I. Answer the following questions.

1. What are the three traditional media methods?
.....
2. According to the president, what is the most effective and updated way to transmit messages to employees?
.....
3. What is an interesting practice that Myers discovered?
.....
4. – What did Myers suggest to the President?
– What was the president's answer?
– Why did the president give such a negative answer?
– What was the usual practice for top officers regarding coffee breaks?
.....
5. What was the result Myers' first try-out?
.....
6. What 2 reasons did Myers see for the failure?
.....
7. Describe the situation after the second try out?
.....
8. What was the conclusion?
.....

II. Using these guided questions and your answer as your notes, give an oral summary of the story.

7. Group Consensus Activity or Problem-Solving Activity In business, there are a lot of times where the situation calls for some kind of decision. Decision making can involve an individual, a small group of people, or everybody in the company if the company follows the Japanese decision-making process. An activity can be devised to imitate this decision-making process. The activity will involve a lot of arguing, defending, justifying, explaining, persuading, compromising etc. in order to reach a group consensus or to reach a solution. The group can be very active and aggressive while they are practicing this type of activity.

An example of a problem-solving activity.

A large company, with its head office in an old-fashioned building near the town centre, decided to move to a modern, custom-build office block three miles out of the town. The old offices were over-crowded and the toilets barely adequate; there was no canteen, club-room or sports facilities. The building was on a busy main road and there was considerable traffic noise; the heating system was obsolete and inadequate. But the company gave Luncheon Vouchers, there were plenty of coffee bars; pubs and restaurants within a few minutes' walk, and parks and sports facilities were close at hand. The town itself was a first-class shopping centre.

In the new building there were a canteen and a licensed social club with a gymnasium and squash court. The offices were air-conditioned and carpeted; the nearest main road was a quarter of a mile away and traffic noise was negligible. But staff relations soon began to deteriorate and absenteeism and sickness increased. The openplan layout was criticized; the distance from the town centre meant a bus or car journey for shopping instead of a leisurely walk. Only a limited number of people could use the sports facilities at lunch-time, and for those who either could not or did not wish to use them there was nothing to do but walk round the building or return to the office after a canteen lunch. Can anything be done to check the decline in morale?

8. Simulation This activity is role-playing in a larger scale and requires a lot on the part of the students. Because most of the time the students will handle the activities, progressing through the steps on their own even though the guideline, are given, the rules are explicitly given. This is another good activity for group as a whole, because everybody in the class will be assigned a role to play. Also, it needs full co-operation and participation among the class members. The students should be quite advanced or else the activity will be a failure, because they may not be able to follow the steps and may not fully understand what they should be doing.

The simulation is like putting the real business situation into the classroom whereby a lot of different activities are going on and some consequences are derived

because of certain decisions. I have seen a number of commercial textbooks that provide this simulation situation and they can be adapted to use in the classroom. For example :

Factions and Fictions by Michael Lamb, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1982.

English for Negotiating by Jim Brims, E.J. Arnold & Son, Leeds, 1982.

The Language of Discussions by Frank Heyworth, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1978 are a good

start if teachers are looking for the situations and guideline to plan their simulation activities.

It is true that optimal language environments can be created by teachers in the classroom, according to Burt and Dulay (1983:45) in Oller and Richard-Amato's (eds) *Methods that Work*, but we should not overlook the material aspect. Looking for material does not simply mean searching from language textbooks per-se for there are other sources that may be relevant or easily adapted to the need of the language teachers. As Burt and Dulay (1983:45) stated. "One has also to be willing to explore materials that may not have been designed for language teaching purposes but can be adapted to meet those needs."

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