

## In the Classroom: The Grammar Translation Method

We begin a series of end-of-chapter vignettes on classroom applications with a language teaching "tradition" that, in various manifestations and adaptations, has been practiced in language classrooms worldwide for centuries. A glance back in history reveals few if any research-based language teaching methods prior to the twentieth century. In the Western world, "foreign" language learning in schools was synonymous with the learning of Latin or Greek. Latin, thought to promote intellectuality through "mental gymnastics," was until relatively recently held to be indispensable to an adequate higher education. Latin was taught by means of what has been called the Classical Method: focus on grammatical rules, memorization of vocabulary and of various declensions and conjugations, translation of texts, doing written exercises. As other languages began to be taught in educational institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Classical Method was adopted as the chief means for teaching foreign languages. Little thought was given at the time to teaching oral use of languages; after all, languages were not being taught primarily to learn oral/aural communication, but to learn for the sake of being "scholarly" or, in some instances, for gaining a reading proficiency in a foreign language. Since there was little if any theoretical research on second language acquisition in general, or on the acquisition of reading proficiency, foreign languages were taught as any other skill was taught.

Late in the nineteenth century, the Classical Method came to be known as the Grammar Translation Method. There was little to distinguish Grammar Translation from what had gone on in foreign language classrooms for centuries, beyond a focus on grammatical rules as the basis for translating from the second to the native language. But the Grammar Translation Method remarkably withstood attempts at the outset of the twentieth century to "reform" language teaching methodology, and to this day it remains a standard methodology for language teaching in educational institutions. Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979: 3) list the major characteristics of Grammar Translation:

1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language.
2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words.
3. Long elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given.
4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.
5. Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early.
6. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.

7. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
8. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

It is remarkable, in one sense, that this method has been so stalwart among many competing models. It does virtually nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in the language. It is "remembered with distaste by thousands of school learners, for whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose" (Richards & Rodgers 1986: 4). In another sense, however, one can understand why Grammar Translation is so popular. It requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers. Tests of grammar rules and of translations are easy to construct and can be objectively scored. Many standardized tests of foreign languages still do not attempt to tap into communicative abilities, so students have little motivation to go beyond grammar analogies, translations, and rote exercises. And it is sometimes successful in leading a student toward a reading knowledge of a second language. But, as Richards and Rodgers (1986: 5) pointed out, "it has no advocates. It is a method for which there is no theory. There is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for it or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory." As we continue to examine theoretical principles in this book, I think we will understand more fully the "theorylessness" of the Grammar Translation Method.



## III THE CLASSROOM: François Gouin and Berlitz—The First Reformers

In the second of our series of vignettes on classroom applications of theory, we turn the clock back about a hundred years to look in on the first two reformers in the history of "modern" language teaching, François Gouin and Charles Berlitz. Their perceptive observations about language teaching helped set the stage for the development of language teaching methodologies for the century following.

In his *The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages* (1880), François Gouin described a painful set of experiences that finally led to his insights about language teaching. Having decided in midlife to learn German, he took up residency in Hamburg for one year. But rather than attempting to converse with the natives, he engaged in a rather bizarre sequence of attempts to "master" the language. Upon arrival in Hamburg he felt he should memorize a German grammar book and a table of the 248 irregular German verbs! He did this in a matter of only ten days and then hurried to "the academy" (the university) to test his new knowledge. "But alas!" he wrote, "I could not understand a single word, not a single word!" Gouin was undaunted. He returned to the isolation of his room, this time to memorize the German roots and to rememorize the grammar book and irregular verbs. Again he emerged with

expectations of success. "But alas!"—the result was the same as before. In the course of the year in Germany, Gouin memorized books, translated Goethe and Schiller, and even memorized 30,000 words in a German dictionary, all in the isolation of his room, only to be crushed by his failure to understand German afterward. Only once did he try to "make conversation" as a method, but because this caused people to laugh at him, he was too embarrassed to continue. At the end of the year, having reduced the Classical Method to absurdity, Gouin was forced to return home, a failure.

But there was a happy ending. Upon returning home Gouin discovered that his three-year-old nephew had, during that year, gone through that wonderful stage of child language acquisition in which he went from saying virtually nothing to becoming a veritable chat-terbox of French. How was it that this little child succeeded so easily in a task, mastering a first language, that Gouin, in a second language, had found impossible? The child must hold the secret to learning a language! So Gouin spent a great deal of time observing his nephew and other children and came to the following conclusions: Language learning is primarily a matter of transforming perceptions into conceptions. Children use language to represent their world to oneself. (These insights, remember, were formed by a language teacher more than a century ago!)

So Gouin set about devising a teaching method that would follow from these insights. And thus the Series Method was created, a method that taught learners directly (without translation) and conceptually (without grammatical rules and explanations) a "series" of connected sentences that are easy to perceive. The first lesson of a foreign language would thus teach the following series of fifteen sentences:

1. *Voilà, voilà! Une door. I draw near to the door. I draw nearer to the door. I get to the door. I stop at the door.*

I stretch out my arm. I take hold of the handle. I turn the handle. I open the door. I pull the door.

The door moves. The door turns on its hinges. The door turns and turns. I open the door wide. I let go of the handle.

The fifteen sentences have an unconventionally large number of grammatical properties, vocabulary items, word orders, and complexity. This is no simple *Voilà la table lesson!* Yet Gouin was successful with such lessons because the language was understood, stored, recalled, and related to reality.

The "naturalistic"—stimulating the "natural" way in which children learn first languages—approaches of Gouin and a few of his contemporaries did not take hold immediately. A generation later, largely through the efforts of Charles Berlitz, applied linguists finally

established the credibility of such approaches in what became known as the Direct Method.

The basic premise of Berlitz's method was that second language learning should be more like first language learning: lots of active oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation between first and second languages, and little or no analysis of grammatical rules. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 9–10) summarized the principles of the Direct Method:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
4. Grammar was taught inductively.
5. New teaching points were introduced orally.
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
7. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.

The Direct Method enjoyed considerable popularity through the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. It was most widely accepted in private language schools where students were highly motivated and where native-speaking teachers could be employed. To this day, "Berlitz" is a household word; Berlitz language schools are thriving in every county of the world. But almost any "method" can succeed when clients are willing to pay high prices for small classes, individual attention, and intensive study. The Direct Method did not take well in public education, where the constraints of budget, classroom size, time, and teacher background made the method difficult to use. Moreover, the Direct Method was criticized for its weak theoretical foundations. The methodology was not so much to be credited for its success as the general skill and personality of the teacher.

By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, the use of the Direct Method had declined both in Europe and in the United States. Most language curricula returned to the Grammar Translation Method or to a "reading approach" that emphasized reading skills in foreign languages. But it is interesting that in the middle of the twentieth century, the Direct Method was revived and redirected into what was probably the most visible of all language teaching "revolutions" in the modern era, the Audiolingual Method (see Chapter 3). So even this somewhat short-lived movement in language teaching would reappear in the changing winds and shifting sands of history.



## In the Classroom: The AudioLingual Method

In the first part of the twentieth century, the Direct Method did not take hold in the United States the way it did in Europe. While one could easily procure native-speaking teachers of modern foreign languages in Europe, such was not the case in the United States. Also, European high school and university students did not have to travel far to find opportunities to put the oral skills of another language to actual, practical use. Moreover, U.S. educational institutions had become firmly convinced that a reading approach to foreign languages was more useful than an oral approach, given the perceived

linguistic isolation of the United States at the time. The highly influential Coleman Report of 1929 (Coleman 1929) had persuaded foreign language teachers that it was impractical to teach oral skills, and that reading should become the focus. Thus schools returned in the 1930s and 1940s to Grammar Translation, "the handmaiden of reading" (Bowen et al. 1985).

The outbreak of World War II thrust the United States into a worldwide conflict, heightening the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages of both their allies and their enemies. The time was ripe for a language-teaching revolution. The U.S. military provided the impetus with funding for special, intensive language courses that focused on the aural/oral skills; these courses came to be known as the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), or, more colloquially, the "Army Method." Characteristic of these courses was a great deal of oral activity—pronunciation and pattern drills and conversation practice—with virtually none of the grammar and translation found in traditional classes. It was ironic that numerous foundation stones of the discarded Direct Method were borrowed and injected into this new approach. Soon, the success of the Army Method and the revived national interest in foreign languages spurred educational institutions to adopt the new methodology. In all its variations and adaptations, the Army Method came to be known in the 1950s as the AudioLingual Method.

The AudioLingual Method (ALM) was firmly grounded in linguistic and psychological theory. Structural linguists of the 1940s and 1950s were engaged in what they claimed was a "scientific descriptive analysis" of various languages; teaching methodologists saw a direct application of such analysis to teaching linguistic patterns (Fries 1945). (We will return to this particular theory-practice issue in Chapter 8.) At the same time, behavioristic psychologists advocated conditioning and habit-formation models of learning, which were perfectly married with the mimicry drills and pattern practices of audioLingual methodology.

The characteristics of the ALM may be summed up in the following list (adapted from Prator and Celce-Murcia 1979):

1. New material is presented in dialog form.
2. There is dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and overlearning.
3. Structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis and taught one at a time.
4. Structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills.
5. There is little or no grammatical explanation; grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than deductive explanation.
6. Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context.
7. There is much use of tapes, language labs, and visual aids.
8. Great importance is attached to pronunciation.
9. Very little use of the mother tongue by teachers is permitted.

10. Successful responses are immediately reinforced.
11. There is a great effort to get students to produce error-free utterances.
12. There is a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content.

For a number of reasons the ALM enjoyed many years of popularity, and even to this day, adaptations of the ALM are found in contemporary methodologies. The ALM was firmly rooted in respectable theoretical perspectives at the time. Materials were carefully prepared, tested, and disseminated to educational institutions. "Success" could be more overtly experienced by students as they practiced their dialogs in off-hours.

But the popularity did not last forever. Due in part to Wiliga Rivers's (1964) eloquent exposure of the shortcomings of the ALM, and its ultimate failure to teach long-term communicative proficiency, its popularity waned. We discovered that language was not really acquired through a process of habit formation and overlearning, that errors were not necessarily to be avoided at all costs, and that structural linguistics did not tell us everything about language that we needed to know. While the ALM was a valiant attempt to reap the fruits of language teaching methodologies that had preceded it, in the end it still fell short, as all methods do. But we learned something from the very failure of the ALM to do everything it had promised, and we moved forward.



## In the Classroom: The "Designer" Methods of the 1970s

4

The age of audiolingualism, with its emphasis on surface forms and on the rote practice of scientifically produced patterns, began to wane when the Chomskyan revolution in linguistics turned linguists and language teachers toward the "deep structure" of language and when psychologists began to recognize the fundamentally affective and interpersonal nature of all learning. The decade of the 1970s was a chaotic but exceedingly fruitful era during which second language research not only came into its own but also began to inspire innovative methods for language teaching. As we increasingly recognized the importance of both cognitive and affective factors in second language learning, certain teaching methods came into vogue.

These methods attempted to capitalize on the perceived importance of psychological factors in language learners' success. At the same time they were touted as "innovative" and "revolutionary," especially when compared to Audiolingual or Grammar Translation methodology. Claims for their success, originating from their proprietary founders and proponents, were often overstated in the interest of attracting teachers to weekend workshops and seminars, to new books and tapes and videos, and, of course, to getting their learners to reach the zenith of their potential. These claims, often overstated and overgeneralized, led David Nunan (1989: 97) to refer to the methods of the day as "designer" methods: promises of success, one size fits all!

Despite the overly strong claims that were made for such methods, they were an important part of our language teaching history, and they gave us some insights about language learning that still enlighten our teaching practices. What follows is a brief summary of five of the most popular of the "designer" methods.

### Community Language Learning

In his "Counseling-Learning" model of education, Charles Curran (1972) was inspired by Carl Rogers's view of education in which students and teacher join together to facilitate learning in a context of valuing and prizing each individual in the group. In such a surrounding, each person lowers the defenses that prevent open, interpersonal communication. The anxiety caused by the educational

context is lessened by means of the supportive community. The teacher's presence is not perceived as a threat, nor is it the teacher's purpose to impose limits and boundaries; rather, as a "counselor," the teacher's role is to center his or her attention on the clients (the students) and their needs.

Curran's model of education was extended to language learning contexts in the form of Community Language Learning (CLL) (LaFarge 1971). While particular adaptations of CLL are numerous, the basic methodology was explicit. The group of clients (learners), having first established in their native language an interpersonal relationship and trust, are seated in a circle with the counselor (teacher) on the outside of the circle. The students may be complete beginners in the foreign language. When one of them wishes to say something to the group or to an individual, he or she says it in the native language (say, English) and the counselor translates the utterance back to the learner in the second language (say, Japanese). The learner then repeats that Japanese sentence as accurately as possible. Another client responds, in English; the utterance is translated by the counselor; the client repeats it; and the conversation continues. If possible the conversation is taped for later listening, and at the end of each session the learners together inductively attempt to glean information about the new language. If desirable, the counselor may take a more directive role and provide some explanation of certain linguistic rules or items.

As the learners gain more and more familiarity with the foreign language, more and more direct communication can take place, with the counselor providing less and less direct translation and information, until after many sessions, even months or years later, the learner achieves fluency in the spoken language. The learner has at that point become independent.

There are advantages and disadvantages to a method like CLL. CLL is an attempt to put Carl Rogers's philosophy into action and to overcome some of the threatening affective factors in second language learning. But there are some practical and theoretical problems with CLL. The counselor-teacher can become too nondirective. While some intense inductive struggle is a necessary component of second language learning, the initial grueling days and weeks of floundering in ignorance in CLL could be alleviated by more directed, deductive learning: by being told. Perhaps only later, when the learner has moved to more independence, is an inductive strategy on the translation expertise of the counselor. Translation is an intricate and complex process that is often easier said than done; if subtle aspects of language are mistranslated, there could be a less than effective understanding of the target language.

Despite its weaknesses, CLL offers certain insights to teachers. We are reminded to lower learners' anxiety, to create as much of a

supportive group in our classrooms as possible, to allow students to initiate language, and to point learners toward autonomous learning in preparation for the day when they no longer have the teacher to guide them.

The Designer Methods of the 30's

**Suggestopedia**

5

Suggestopedia was another educational innovation that promised great results if we would simply use our brain power. According to Lozanov (1979), people are capable of learning much more than they give themselves credit for. Drawing on insights from Soviet psychological research on extrasensory perception and from yoga, Lozanov created a method for learning that capitalized on relaxed states of mind for maximum retention of material. Music was central to his method. Baroque music, with its 60 beats per minute and its specific rhythm, created the kind of "relaxed concentration" that led to "superlearning" (Ostrander & Schroeder 1979: 65). According to Lozanov, during the soft playing of Baroque music, one can take in tremendous quantities of material due to an increase in alpha brain waves and a decrease in blood pressure and pulse rate.

In applications of Suggestopedia to foreign language learning, Lozanov and his followers experimented with the presentation of vocabulary, readings, dialogs, role-plays, drama, and a variety of other typical classroom activities. Some of the classroom methodology did not have any particular uniqueness. The difference was that a significant proportion of activity was carried on with classical music in the background, and with students sitting in soft, comfortable seats in relaxed states of consciousness. Students were encouraged to be as "childlike" as possible, yielding all authority to the teacher and sometimes assuming the roles (and names) of native speakers of the foreign language. Students thus became "suggestible."

Suggestopedia was criticized on a number of fronts. Scovel (1979) showed quite eloquently that Lozanov's experimental data, in which he reported astounding results with Suggestopedia, were highly questionable. Moreover, the practicality of using Suggestopedia was an issue that teachers faced where music and comfortable chairs were not available. More serious was the issue of the place of memorization in language learning. On a more positive note, we can adapt certain aspects of Suggestopedia in our communicative classrooms without "buying into" the whole method. A relaxed and unanxious mind, achieved through music and/or any other means, will often help a learner to build confidence. Role playing, drama, and other activities may be very helpful techniques to stimulate meaningful interaction in the classroom. And perhaps we should never underestimate the "superlearning" powers of the human brain.



## The Silent Way

6

The Designer Methods of the 70's

Like Suggestopedia, the Silent Way rested on more cognitive than affective arguments for its theoretical sustenance. While Caleb Gattegno, its founder, was said to be interested in a "humanistic" approach (Chamot & McKeon 1984: 2) to education, much of the Silent Way was characterized by a problem-solving approach to learning. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 99) summarized the theory of learning behind the Silent Way:

1. Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned.
2. Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical objects.
3. Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned.

The Silent Way capitalized on discovery-learning procedures. Gattegno (1972) believed that learners should develop independence, autonomy, and responsibility. At the same time, learners in a classroom must cooperate with each other in the process of solving language problems. The teacher—a stimulator but not a hand-holder—is silent much of the time, thus the name of the method. Teachers must resist their instinct to spell everything out in black and white—to come to the aid of students at the slightest downfall—and must "get out of the way" while students work out solutions.

In a language classroom the Silent Way typically utilized as materials a set of Cuisinere rods—small colored rods of varying lengths—and a series of colorful wall charts. The rods were used to introduce vocabulary (colors, numbers, adjectives [*long, short, and so on*], verbs [*give, take, pick up, drop*]), and syntax (tense, comparatives, pluralization, word order, and the like). The teacher provided single-word stimuli, or short phrases and sentences once or twice, and then the students refined their understanding and pronunciation among themselves, with minimal corrective feedback from the teacher. The charts introduced pronunciation models and grammatical paradigms.

Like Suggestopedia, the Silent Way had its share of criticism. In one sense, the Silent Way was too harsh a method, and the teacher too distant, to encourage a communicative atmosphere. A number of aspects of language can indeed be "taught" to students to their benefit; they need not, as in CLL as well, struggle for hours or days with a concept that could be easily clarified by the teacher's direct guidance. The rods and charts were thin after a few lessons, and other materials had to be introduced, at which point the Silent Way resembled any other language classroom.

There are, of course, insights to be derived. All too often we are tempted as teachers to provide everything for our students, served up on a silver platter. We could benefit from injecting healthy doses of discovery learning into our classroom activities and from providing less teacher talk so that the students can work things out on their own. These are some of the contributions of innovation. They expose us to new thoughts that we can—through our developing theoretical rationale for language teaching—sift through, weigh, and adapt to multiple contexts.

The "Designer Methods" of the 70's

Total Physical Response (7)

The founder of the Total Physical Response (TPR), James Asher (1977), noted that children, in learning their first language, appear to do a lot of listening before they speak, and that their listening is accompanied by physical responses (reaching, grabbing, moving, looking, and so forth). He also gave some attention to right-brain learning: According to Asher, motor activity is a right-brain function that should precede left-brain language processing. Asher was also convinced that language classes were often the locus of too much anxiety and wished to devise a method that was as stress-free as possible, where learners would not feel overly self-conscious and defensive. The TPR classroom, then, was one in which students did a great deal of listening and acting. The teacher was very directive in orchestrating a performance: "The instructor is the director of a stage play in which the students are the actors" (Asher 1977: 43).

A typical TPR class utilized the imperative mood, even at more advanced proficiency levels. Commands were an easy way to get learners to move about and to loosen up: "Open the window," "Close the door," "Stand up," "Sit down," "Pick up the book," "Give it to John," and so on. No verbal response was necessary. More complex syntax was incorporated into the imperative: "Draw a rectangle on the chalkboard," "Walk quickly to the door and hit it," "Humor was easy to introduce: "Walk slowly to the window and jump," "Put your toothbrush in your book" (Asher 1977: 55). Interrogatives were also easily dealt with: "Where is the book?" "Who is John?" (students point to the book or to John). Eventually students, one by one, presumably felt comfortable enough to venture verbal responses to questions, then to ask questions themselves, and the process continued.

Like other methods discussed here, TPR—as a method—had its limitations. It was especially effective in the beginning levels of language proficiency, but lost its distinctiveness as learners advanced in their competence. But today TPR is used more as a type of classroom activity, which is a more useful way to view it. Many successful communicative, interactive classrooms utilize TPR activities to provide both auditory input and physical activity.



Stephen Krashen's (1982) theories of second language acquisition have been widely discussed and hotly debated since the 1970s. (Chapter 10 will offer further details on Krashen's influence on second language acquisition theory.) The major methodological offshoot of Krashen's work was manifested in the Natural Approach, developed by one of Krashen's colleagues, Tracy Terrell (Krashen & Terrell 1983). Acting on many of the claims that Asher made for TPR, Krashen and Terrell felt that learners would benefit from delaying production until speech "emerges," that learners should be as relaxed as possible in the classroom, and that a great deal of communication and "acquisition" should take place, as opposed to analysis. In fact, the Natural Approach advocated the use of TPR activities at the beginning level of language learning, when "comprehensible input" is essential for triggering the acquisition of language.

The Natural Approach was aimed at the goal of basic interpersonal communication skills, that is, everyday language situations—conversations, shopping, listening to the radio, and the like. The initial task of the teacher was to provide comprehensible input—spoken language that is understandable to the learner—or just a little beyond the learner's level. Learners did not need to say anything during this "silent period" until they felt ready to do so. The teacher was the source of the learners' input and the creator of an interesting and stimulating variety of classroom activities—commands, games, skits, and small-group work.

The most controversial aspects of the Natural Approach were its "silent period" and its reliance on the notion of "comprehensible input." One could argue, with Gibbons (1985), that the delay of oral production can be pushed too far and that at an early stage it is important for the teacher to step in and encourage students to talk. And determining just what we mean by "comprehensible" is exceedingly difficult (See Chapter 10 for further comments). Language learning is an interactive process, and therefore an over-reliance on the role of input at the expense of the stimulation of output could thwart the second language acquisition process.

But, of course, we also can look at the Natural Approach and be reminded that sometimes we insist that students speak much too soon, thereby raising anxiety and lessening the possibility of further risk-taking as the learner tries to progress. And so, once again, your responsibility as a teacher is to choose the best of what others have experimented with, and to adapt those insights to your own situation. There is a good deal of insight to be gained, and intuition to be developed, from examining the merits of all of these five "designer" methods. Those insights and intuitions can become a part of your own cautious, enlightened eclecticism.



## In the Classroom: Communicative Language Teaching

As the field of second language pedagogy has developed and matured over the past few decades, we have experienced a number of reactions and counter-reactions in methods and approaches to language teaching. We can look back over a century of foreign language teaching and observe the trends as they came and went. How will we look back 100 years from now and characterize the present era? Almost certainly the answer lies in our recent efforts to engage in **communicative language teaching** (CLT). The "push toward communication" (Higgs & Clifford 1982) has been relentless. Researchers have defined and redefined the construct of communicative competence. They have explored the myriad functions of language that learners must be able to accomplish. They have described spoken and written discourse and pragmatic conventions. They have examined the nature of styles and nonverbal communication. With this storehouse of knowledge we have valiantly pursued the goal of learning how best to teach communication.

One glance at current journals in second language teaching reveals quite an array of material on CLT. Numerous textbooks for teachers and teacher trainers expound on the nature of communicative approaches and offer techniques for varying ages and purposes. In short, wherever you look in the literature today, you will find reference to the communicative nature of language classes.

CLT is best understood as an *approach*, not a method. (For some comments on the difference between a method and an approach, see Brown 2000 and the vignette at the end of Chapter 6.) It is therefore a unified but broadly based theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching. It is nevertheless difficult to synthesize all of the various definitions that have been offered. From the earlier seminal works in CLT (Savignon 1983; Breen & Candlin 1980; Widdowson 1978b) up to more recent teacher education textbooks (Brown 2000; Richard-Amato 1996), we have definitions enough to send us reeling. For the sake of simplicity and directness, I offer the following four interconnected characteristics as a definition of CLT.

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.
2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.
3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may

4. In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts.