

**THE ROLE**

**OF**

**‘CUED ARTICULATION’**

**WITH THE**

**THE E.S.L. STUDENT**

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## THE ROLE OF CUED ARTICULATION WITH THE E.S.L. STUDENT

English as a Second Language, or ESL students, often have difficulties in learning English sounds. Even students exposed to English in the preschool and early primary years often need some special assistance with students from the same language background tending to have similar difficulties. These difficulties can cause problems in articulation, language and in the learning of literacy skills.

‘Cued articulation’ is extremely useful for students whose first language is not English, as it gives them a way of unlocking the mysteries of the English sound system. Through visual and kinesthetic information, it codes the three distinctive features of our sound system- voice, place and manner.

This information assists the E.S.L. student in the following ways:

### *1. ARTICULATION*

As the language skills of E.S.L. students improves, their articulation skills often do not progress at the same rate. This results in class teachers noting that a student is becoming more difficult to understand. These students are greatly assisted by the use of ‘cued articulation’ with all sounds, but particularly, with those sounds that are causing difficulties.

‘Cued articulation’ assists the student in:

- learning about the properties of the English sound system, including both consonants and vowels. Students learn how to categorize the consonants by the three distinctive features of voicing, place and manner.
- learning to **discriminate** between English sounds which would not be heard as different in their first language  
eg. between /l / and /r / for a Chinese student
- learning to **use sounds** which do not occur in their first language.

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### *1. ARTICULATION cont.*

After learning the properties of those English sounds which do not exist in the first language/s, students can be taught to contrast the sounds which they confuse. This can be done using a 'minimal pair' approach ie. words which differ in only one sound eg. sip/ship. This assists students to see the importance of learning these contrasts, in order to signal the correct meaning. It also assists students to avoid unwittingly using 'swear words', due to an inability to produce a contrast, between certain consonants and/or vowels.

- learning to shape attempts until the 'target sound' can be produced correctly. It can be used to highlight to the student, which of the feature/s of the sound needs to be changed ie. voicing (voiced/voiceless), place (where in the mouth the sound is produced) and manner of production (how the sound is made –oral/nasal, explosion sound/continuant sounds etc.)
- learning to signal the sound even when it can't be pronounced correctly.
- learning the vowels as well as the consonants.

The English vowels often cause as much, if not more difficulty, for ESL students. This appears to be due to a number of factors. Where most of the consonant sounds remain very similar across all native speakers of English, the vowel sounds show considerable variation from one country to another, and even from one speaker to another, within the same school. The ESL student may therefore be hearing subtle variations in the pronunciation of the vowels. Older ESL students, who have learned some English overseas often have great difficulty adapting to a different accent. The students also need to learn which syllables are stressed and how stress patterns on individual words can be used to signal meaning.

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### *1. ARTICULATION cont.*

'Cued articulation' can be used to teach that the English vowels can be categorized according to a number of features. It can also be used to signal the different stress patterns on and within words.

The errors in ESL students are often similar to those seen by children with articulation difficulties, where those difficulties also involve the vowels.

Common difficulties are:

- errors of position ie. confusing vowels which are made in a similar position in the mouth eg. confusion between the front vowels / /, / / and / /.
  - errors of position ie.confusing vowels which are made in different positions eg. between the central vowels / / and the front vowel / /.
  - confusion between long and short vowels eg. / / and / /
  - substituting pure vowels for diphthongs and/or triphthongs
  - substitution of one of the elements of the diphthong.
  - substitution of one or two of the elements of the triphthong.
  - difficulties discriminating between the central vowels.
  - substitution of a vowel from the first language/s for an English vowel which it is close to.
  - incorrect jaw movement
  - insufficient lip rounding or spreading.
- Older students who can read, often try to read English words phonetically resulting in a range of unusual pronunciations.

Students need to be taught that one letter doesn't represent one phoneme or sound. This phonographic relationship is particularly important when learning about the vowels. There are only five vowel letters to represent the twenty three Standard English vowel phonemes or sounds- twelve English pure vowels, the nine diphthongs and the two triphthongs.

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### *1. ARTICULATION cont.*

The vowel letters are used on their own or combined in different ways with each other and/or the consonants /w/ or/y/, to represent the twenty three Standard English vowel phonemes/sounds.

This phonographic relationship or ‘The Phoneme:Grapheme Principle (PGP) can be taught alongside ‘cued articulation’ using programs such as the THRASS program. See resource list in the Appendix.

- learning to **use sounds** which occur in their first language, but not in the same contexts as in English.

eg. A Vietnamese student needs to learn to use:

sounds in blends eg. snake

sounds in the middle of words eg. heating

certain sounds at end of words eg. buss

- being cued to use a sound/s in certain frequently occurring key words in the classroom. This may be sufficient to allow transfer of these skills to other words containing the sound/s.
- learning how to say words correctly as new vocabulary is introduced.
- speaking more slowly and clearly by learning how to break multisyllable words up into smaller parts using pauses and cued articulation to signal the sound at the beginning of each syllable.
- learning how to speak using ‘ Slow Clear Talking’ until articulation skills can support a faster speaking rate. See resource list in the appendix.

Cued articulation can help students who speak too quickly resulting in slurred or indistinct speech , as it usually has the effect of slowing down the speaking rate. It also helps make the student more aware of saying individual sounds and the need to speak slower to be understood.

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### 2. LANGUAGE

#### 2.1 GRAMMATICAL RULES

**In English many grammatical rules are marked by the use of the following sounds in the final position of words - /s /, /z /, /t / and /d /.**

Many ESL students find these grammatical markers particularly difficult to learn because:

- They involve sounds which don't occur in the first language at all
- They contain sounds which don't occur in the first language/s in the final position.
- They rely on the ability to discriminate and produce final blends
- They involve letters that follow a different rule to the first language
- Eg. 's' can say /s/ or /z/. Students who can read often pronounce the words phonetically eg. / d mp d/ for jumped.

The following grammatical rules are marked using these sounds:

- possessive nouns eg. Sam's hat. This is pronounced as:  
/s / when the final sound in the word is voiceless eg. Pat's bag  
/z / when the final sound in the word is voiced eg. Sam's hat
- third person singular eg. writes, runs. This is pronounced as:  
/s / when the final sound in the word is voiceless eg. He writes  
/z / when the final sound in the word is voiced eg. She runs,  
She sees
- regular plurals are pronounced as:  
/s / when the final sound in the word is voiceless eg. cats  
/z / when the final sound in the word is voiced eg. dogs, bays  
/ez / when the noun is made plural by adding the syllable 'es' eg.  
Houses

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### **2.1 LANGUAGE - GRAMMATICAL RULES cont.**

- regular past tense 'ed' ending. This is pronounced as:

/t / when the final sound in the word is voiceless eg. jumped is heard as 'jumpt'.

/d / when the final sound in the word is voiced eg. tagged is heard as 'tagd'.

\* In connected speech these distinctions become subtler and more difficult to hear due to the co-articulation effect of the adjacent sounds.

The E.S.L. student can be taught using 'cued articulation' in activities, which focus on these rules. The 'Colour Coding' associated with 'cued articulation' is extremely useful in assisting the students to remember whether the sound is voiced or voiceless. ie. the letter pattern is underlined once, if it is pronounced as a voiceless sound, and twice if it is pronounced as a voiced sound.

The ability to produce the sound contrasts needed for the above rules can be taught using various game activities or board games eg. dominoes, snakes and ladders, lotto etc. Drama eg. pretending to be requesting goods in a shop, can be used to bridge the gap between these activities and real life situations. 'Cued articulation' can then be used to cue them in everyday situations.

## **2.2 SIGNING THE FINAL SOUND ON AUXILIARIES/WORD ENDINGS**

**Highlighting the final sounds in the following grammatical structures, often helps students to remember to use these grammatical forms.**

- the copular 'is' and 'am'
- the auxiliaries 'is' and 'am'
- contractions of the above eg. he's running, I'm hot.
- contractions of negatives eg. don't , can't, won't etc
- the present tense 'ing' ending on verbs eg. running, jumping etc.,



### ***3. LITERACY SKILLS***

In general, E.S.L. students experience all the difficulties that non- E.S.L. students experience in acquiring literacy skills, but they may have added difficulties, related to how different the first language/s is to English, in its sound system and in its written form.

E.S.L. students who are having speech and language difficulties or learning difficulties in their first language are particularly at risk.

‘Cued articulation’ enables the differences between English and a student’s first language/s to be explored through listening activities. It can then be used to assist practice in talking, reading and writing activities.

ESL students benefit greatly from teaching the Phoneme: Grapheme Principle (PGP). ‘Cued articulation’ can be used to teach the 'Phoneme: Grapheme Principle (PGP) using programs such as the THRASS program.

In the THRASS program students are taught the Phoneme:Grapheme Principle (PGP) which states that the phonemes of English may be represented by different letters and different combination of letters. See resource list in the Appendix.

Students learn about the three spelling patterns of English.

- ie. a graph means that one letter represents one phoneme/sound.
- a digraph means that two letters represent one phoneme/sound.
- a trigraph means that three letters represent one phoneme/sound.

eg. the consonant phoneme /k/ can be represented by graphs, digraphs including c, k, ck, ch, and q.

the vowel phoneme / / can be represented by graphs, digraphs and trigraphs including ‘er’, ‘ar’, ‘or’, ‘ure’, ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’.

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### ***3. LITERACY SKILLS cont.***

For additional information about how ‘cued articulation’ can be used in the development of literacy skills please refer to the following. See Resource List in the Appendix.

- ‘Role of Cued Articulation in the Classroom’
- ‘Implementing Cued Articulation in the Classroom’

## APPENDIX

### RESOURCES.

In addition to resources you already have you will find the following useful:

- **Cued Articulation** by Jane Passy. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Australia. Phone (03) 9277 5555  
Fax. (03) 9277-5678
- **Cued Vowels** by Jane Passy. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). See above.
- **The Auditory Discrimination in Depth Program** by Charles H. and Patricia Lindamood. Pro-Ed, 1992. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). See above.
- **Cued Articulation. Teaching children about sounds Prep-2.**  
By Fiona Balfe. Self published. Australia Ph. (03) 9598-4994

OR write to:

15a Ebdon Avenue.

Black Rock, Victoria. Australia 3193.

- **Cued Articulation Wordlist**  
By Fiona Balfe. Self published Ph. Australia. (03) 9598-4994. See above.
- **'Role of Cued Articulation in the Classroom'**  
By Fiona Balfe. Self published Ph. Australia. (03) 9598-4994. See above.
- **'Implementing Cued Articulation in the Classroom'**  
By Fiona Balfe. Self published Ph. Australia. (03) 9598-4994. See above.

## APPENDIX

### RESOURCES cont.

- **Suggestions for Eliciting Vowels.**  
By Fiona Balfe. Self published Ph. Australia. (03) 9598-4994. See above.
- **The Slow Clear Talking Program.**  
By Fiona Balfe. Self published Ph. Australia. (03) 9598-4994. See above.
- **Cued Articulation. Practical classroom activities.**  
By Western Region Cued Articulation Group.
- **A Sound Way.** Phonological awareness - Activities for Early literacy. By Libby Love and Sue Reilly. Published by Longman Australia.
- **Sounds Abound.** Listening, Rhyming and Reading. By Hugh Catts and Tina Vartiainen. Published by LinguiSystems.
- **The THRASS Program. Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills.**  
THRASS Australia Pty Ltd. Fax: Australia (08) 9244-4044
- **Sounds like Phonics. The Vowel Sounds. Book 2**  
By Wendy Harris. Published by Learning Solutions.  
This is a phonographic workbook which teaches the common letter combinations for the twenty of the twenty three standard English pure vowels.