

From Raw Material to Processed Product

The voracious appetite of the aviation English learner is legendary. They are fussy about what they consume in lessons and they require constant changes of diet to keep them happy. They go off their food very easily and are inclined to become dyspeptic if the diet is not to their taste.

The English for Aviation teacher is the worst served of all ESP teachers in terms of off-the-shelf materials except perhaps English for Fine Cuisine.

This workshop will take the participants through a series of transformations of raw materials derived from aviation oriented but non-specific spoken, written, audio and video sources. The steps will show how the written word can be processed to provide a set of classroom materials aimed at generating authentic speaking activities aimed at improving the speaking and listening proficiency of aviation professionals.

It will demonstrate two approaches:

A top down approach which invokes work-related interactional discourse formulae first (schemata) and then tries to find material make the schemata come alive by providing realistic dialogue/structure/vocabulary objectives and outcomes to flesh out the steps in the sequence. It will show how to assess a text for potential exploitation assets and how these can be re-engineered by such techniques as the use of a scanner and OCR technology or even basic paper cut and paste into a series of role plays or similar co-operative, problem solving tasks

The second approach will involve analysing a text for potential language assets (including the use of a basic concordance program) and building a bottom up series of relevant classroom speaking and listening activities to best exploit the language assets.

A final element will demonstrate how basic tools such as a hand held audio recorder or video recorder can be used to provide virtual instant, fresh and authentic input material. Recording of interviews whether spontaneous or planned can generate a self-contained language practice scenario in the production stage as well as a host of interesting and exploitable texts based on the end result. The texts can be treated at a micro level by analysing the actual language used for accuracy and fluency or by using the text content as a generator of spin-off activities such as reformulating, summarising or expanding in social or work related contexts.

The final stage of the work group will involve syndicate work which will aim to produce a several relevant classroom activity packs from an ungraded input source, whether spoken or written text, recorded audio or video, still image or internet page.

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