

Creative Testing: A Contradiction?

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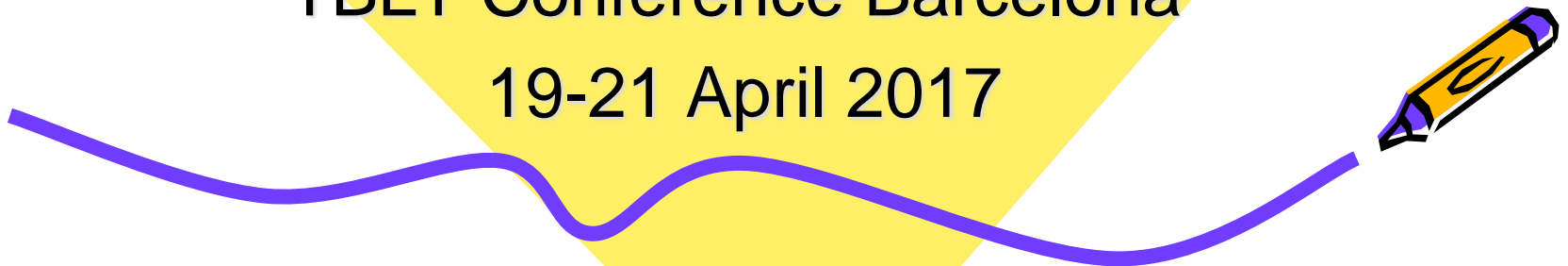


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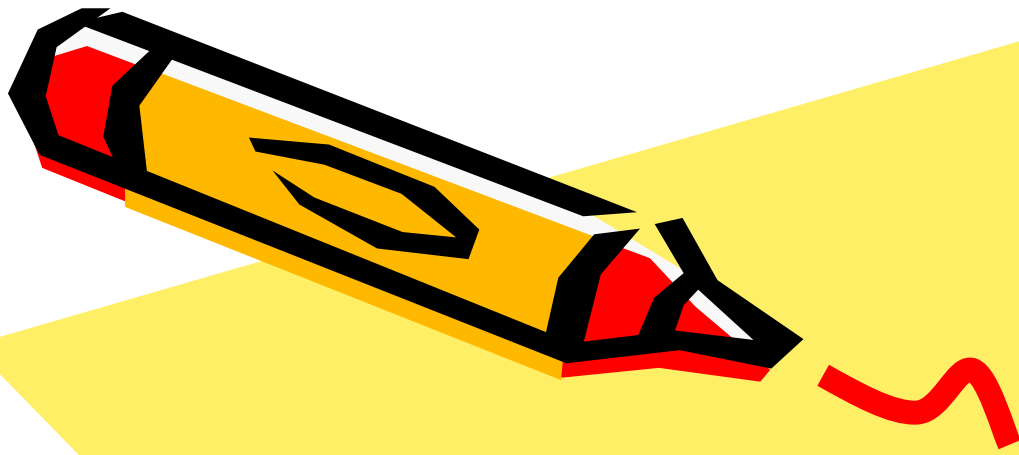
Charlie Hadfield

TBLT Conference Barcelona

19-21 April 2017



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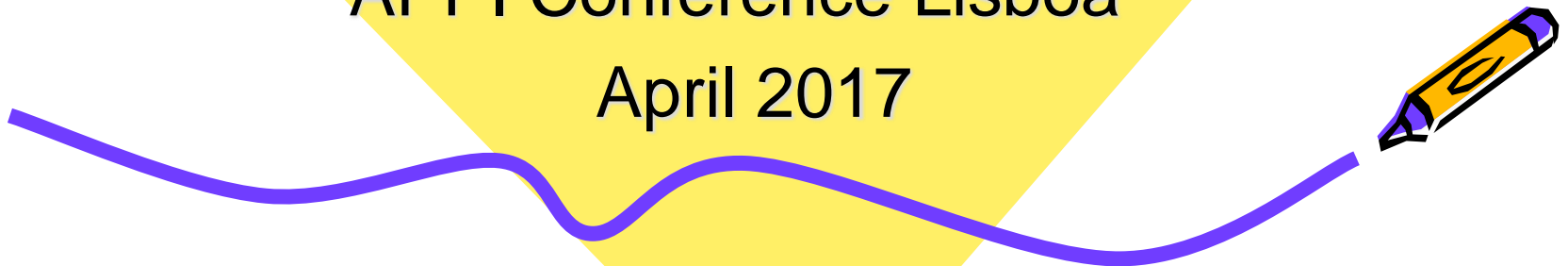


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APPI Conference Lisboa

April 2017



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IATEFL Conference Glasgow

Barra/Jura

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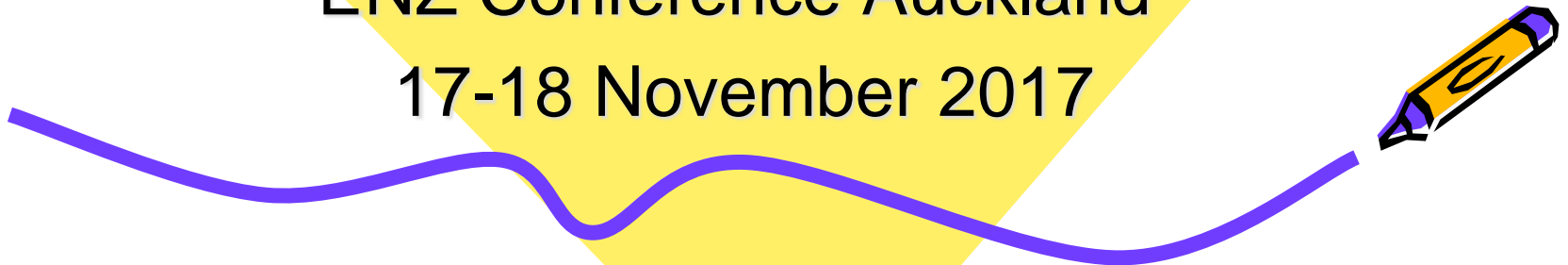


Creative Testing: A Contradiction?

Charlie Hadfield

ENZ Conference Auckland

17-18 November 2017



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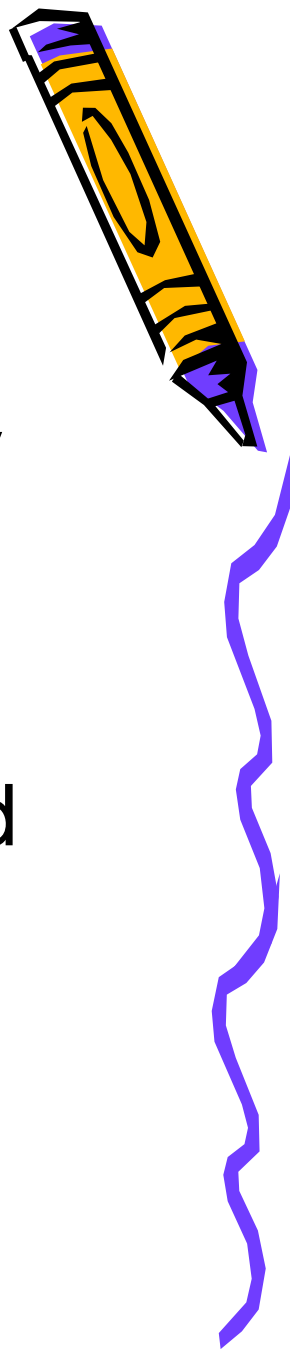
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Warning

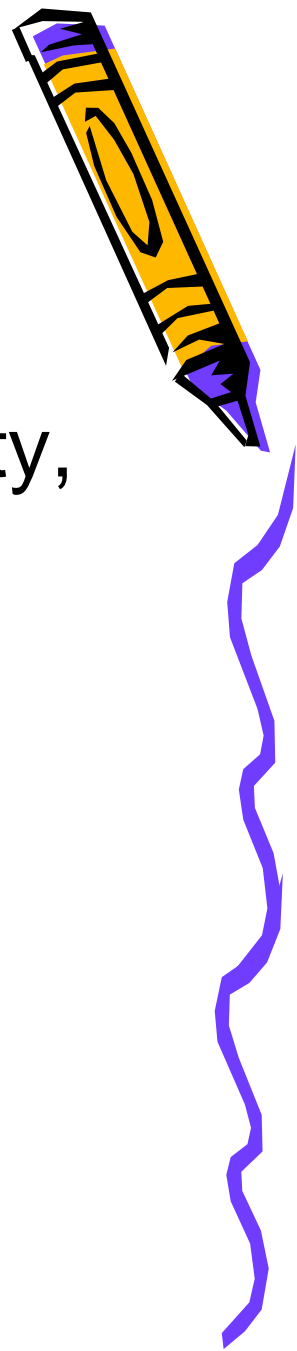
Attending this workshop may seriously affect your teaching and testing.

Disclaimer: No test items were harmed intentionally in the creation of this powerpoint presentation.

charlie.hadfield@waikato.ac.nz

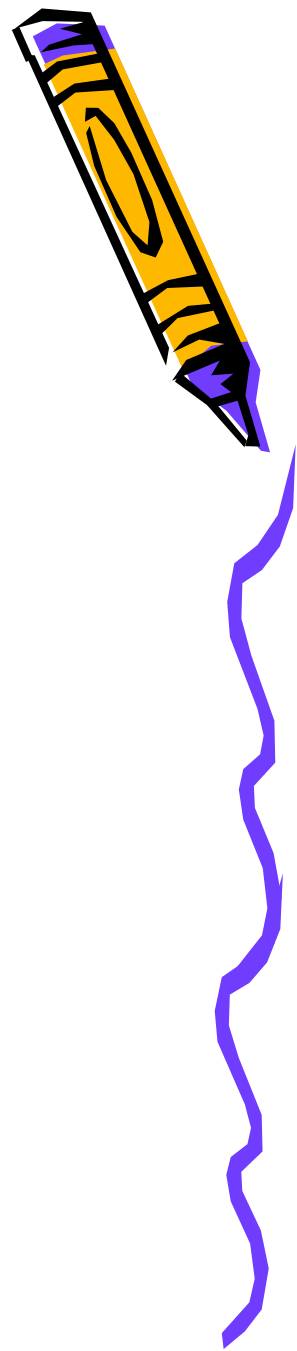


Creative testing: a total contradiction?



- Testing = rules, regulations, regularity, conformity, norms, grammar....
- Creativity = ?? Novelty?
Experimentation? Playfulness?
Questioning? Rule-breaking?
Rebelliousness?





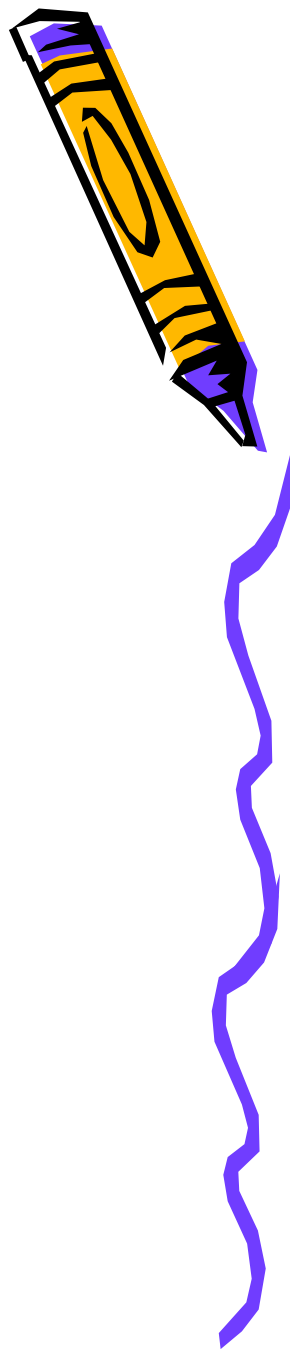
Hughes (1989) :

Testing... should be supportive of good teaching and where necessary, exert a corrective influence on bad teaching.

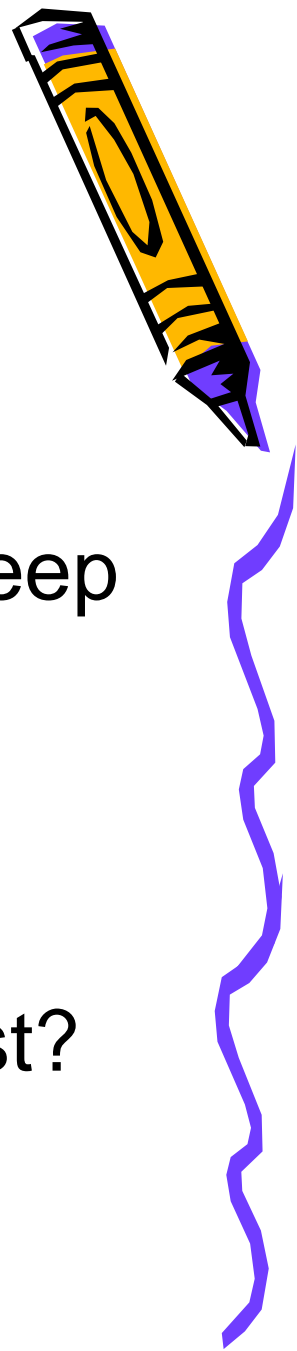


Hughes (1989, 2003):

A test is reliable if it measures consistently.



Hughes (1989, 2003)



First sentence of his book:

“Many language teachers harbour a deep mistrust of tests and testers...”

- Buzzgroup:

How far do you share this mistrust?

Why? / Why not? Talk to a neighbour or two



My own thoughts: nowadays (but not
when I started teaching)

Key aspects of tests, reliability, validity
etc: we can be pretty confident nowadays
that the 'big' international tests are 'fair' at
the 'point of delivery'BUT!



BEWARE BACKWASH!

- Backwash 'bakwɒʃ/

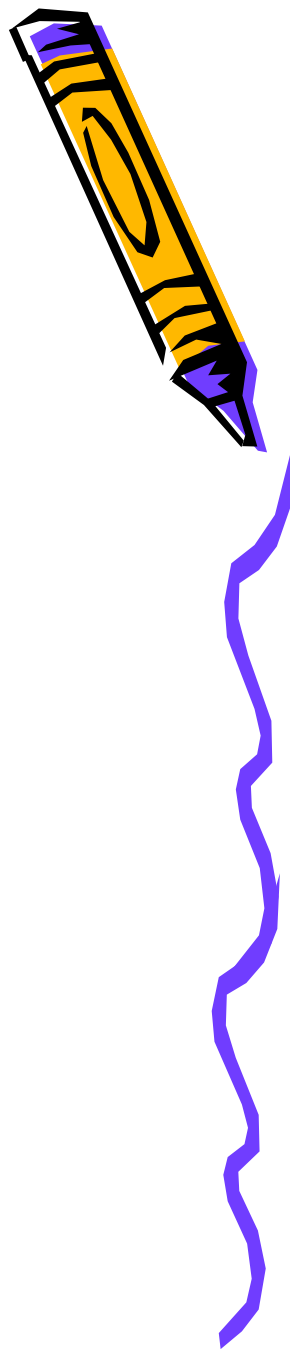
noun

the motion of receding waves.

synonyms:

wake, wash, slipstream, backflow;
path, trail

"a ship's backwash"



BEWARE the BACKWASH



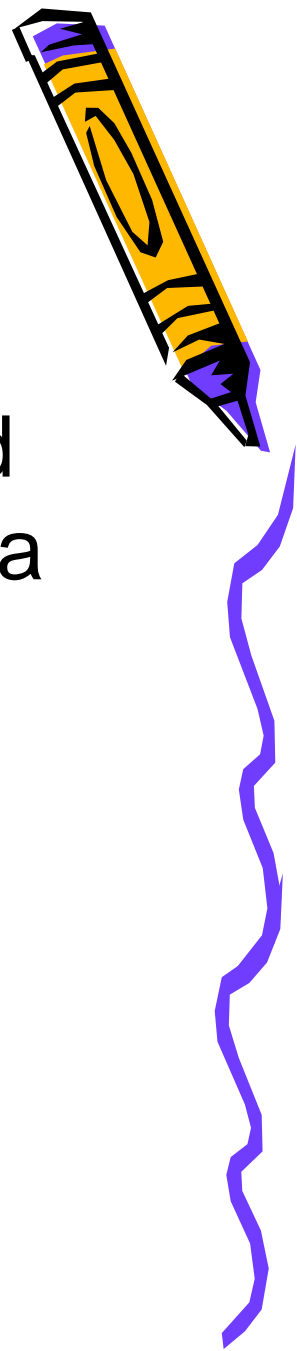
This is where I take up the story....

I am most worried about the 'backwash effect' on teachers and teaching, learners and learning...which loops back to my first slide:



Hughes (2003)

Testing...should be supportive of good teaching, and where necessary, exert a corrective influence on bad teaching.



CAMBRIDGE

Language Teaching Library

Testing for Language Teachers

Second Edition

Arthur Hughes



Hughes

First sentence of his book:

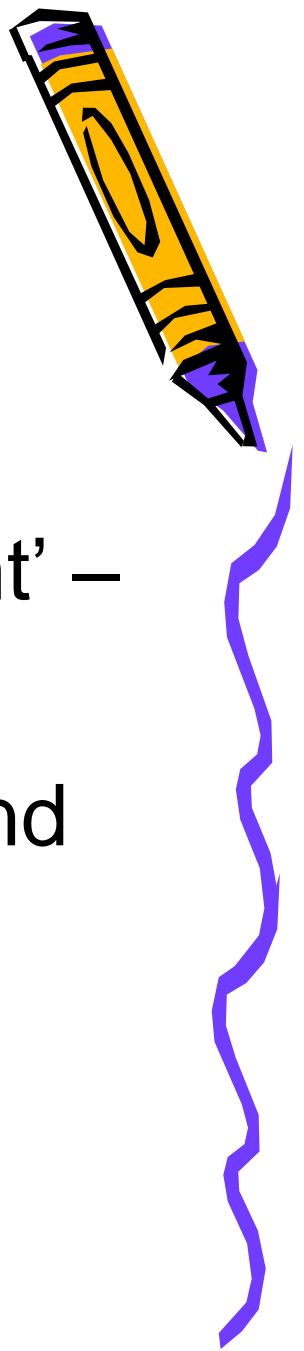
Many language teachers harbour a deep mistrust of tests and testers...

Buzzgroup: How about you? Why / why not?

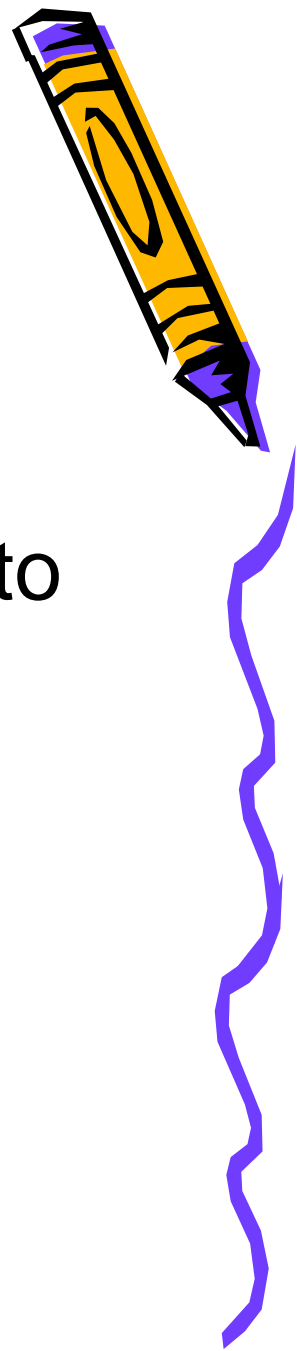


Creating tests

Very satisfying, when you 'get it right' –
certainly a creative process in
same way as materials writing and
lesson planning



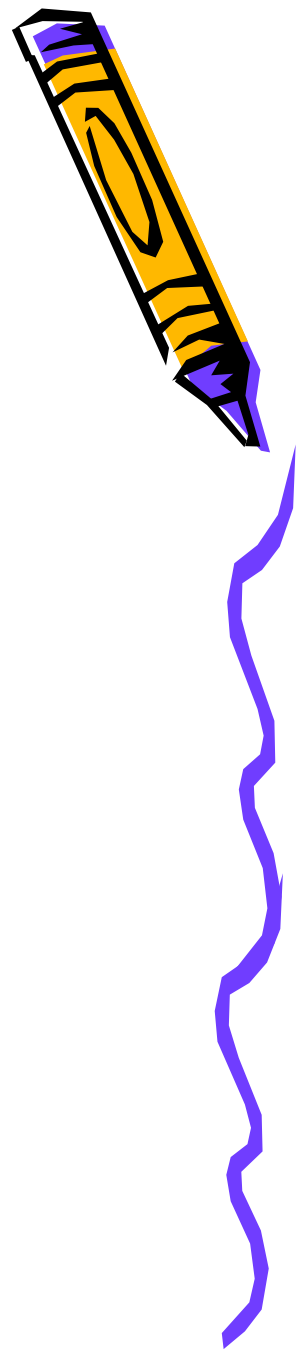
High stakes



- Tests have become more important to more people over recent years
- High stakes for both learners and teachers: “Success matters”.



The Best of the Test



- Work with the energy /motivation /determination to ‘succeed’
- Combined with

“Less Stress”



Train 'over the top'

Analogy with Don Thompson, Rome Olympics 1960 British Gold 50 kms walker, 4 hours 25 minutes 30 seconds, training régime.... Inspiration to me as a boy...

....prepare for the very worst, on the day it it will seem much easier.... ☺

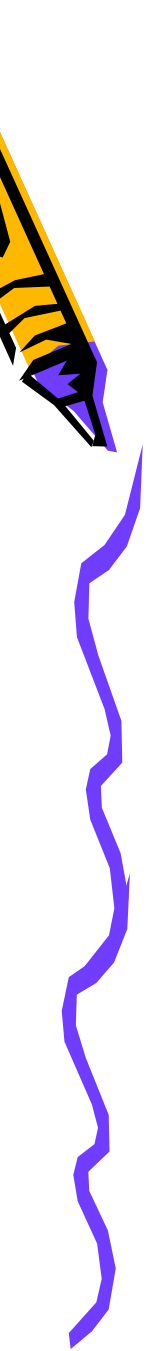
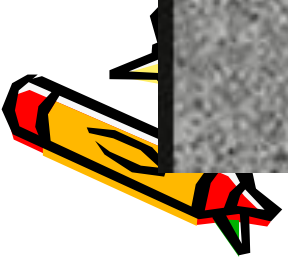




Prepare for the worst

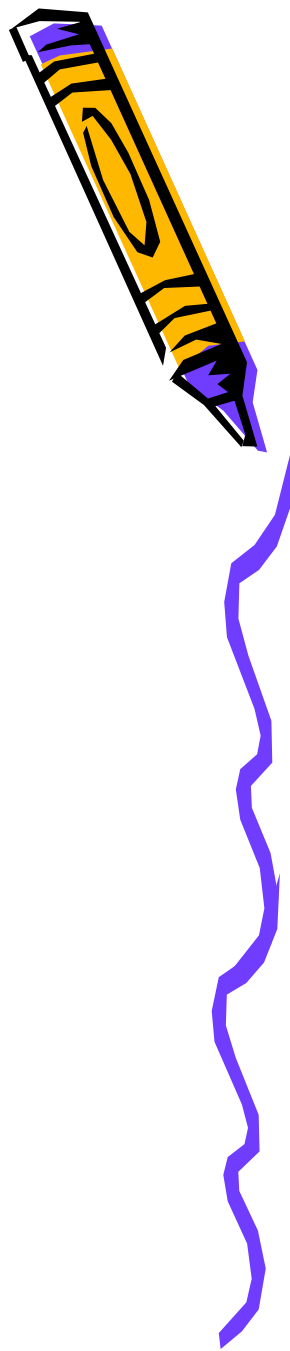
Don Thompson trained in his parents' bathroom in Middlesex: heaters pushing the temp to 49 C degrees, he'd wear a tracksuit gloves etc and exercise in the steam! and then go outside for a long training walk!





In Rome, 7 September
1960

the temperature was a 'mere'
31 degrees!



Recent student quote:



- My current students in Academic English have a ten-week course, with 2 or 3 tests of the different skills over each fortnight – so hardly three days goes by without yet another test looming on the horizon:



It's not the test..

“... the test does not make me nervous...
it is the lessons in days and weeks before
the test that are nervous! “ (“Tina”)

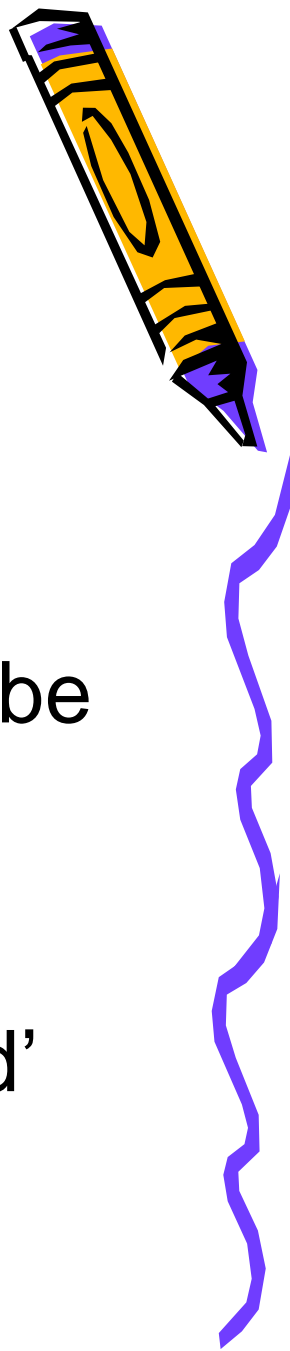
How can we make the training less
'nervous'



Some examples

We will look at some test items, test formats, with which you will surely be familiar

and try to 'turn them on their head'

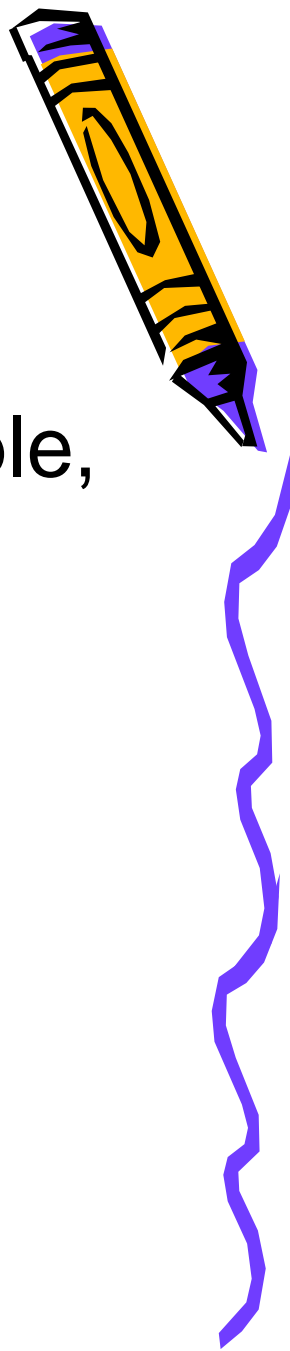


‘Distractors’

- In Multiple choice practice for example, include some ‘crazy’ distractors:

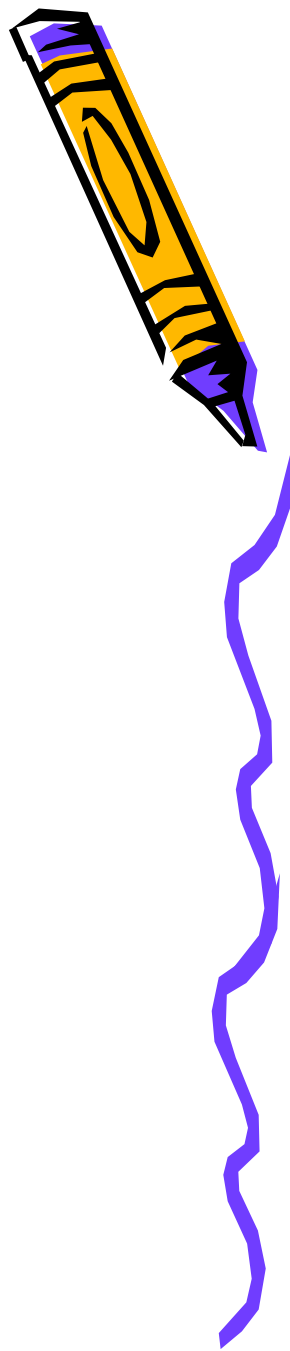
The car is

- a) red
- b) blue
- c) colourless
- d) white



distractors

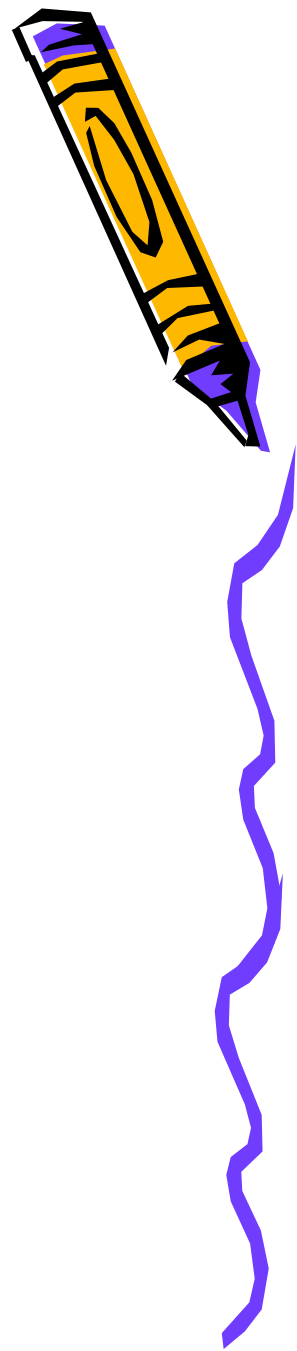
- The interviewer's shirt is
- A) white
- B) blue
- C) inside out
- D) new



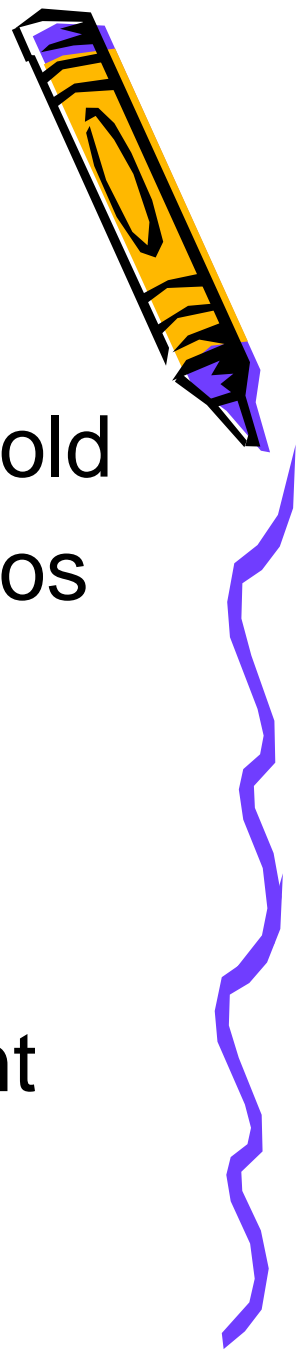
Text based questions

Put the Cart before the Horse:

- Give out / post 10-12 multiple choice questions: students in pairs then write their own texts based on the answers they find most interesting....



Example:



- 1 a) blue b) expensive c) cheap d) gold
- 2 a) \$50 b) £600 c) free d) 200Euros
- 3 a) smiling b) serious c) angry
d) puzzled
- 4 a) coat b) trousers c) skirt d) hat
- 5 a) nurse b) banker c) pilot d) student
- 6 a) Rome b) Dunedin c) Hanoi
d) Barcelona

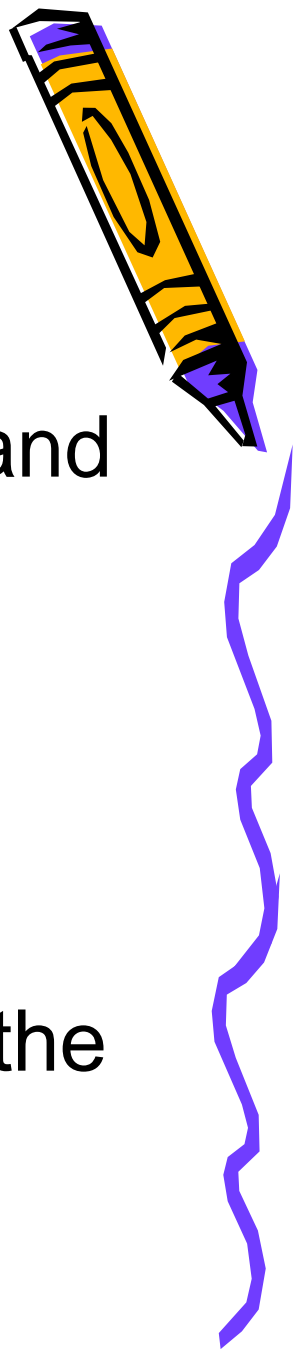


The 'real' text

Learners write their own text in pairs, and then share them across the class...

Until.... finally...

....teacher supplies the 'real' text with the same questions



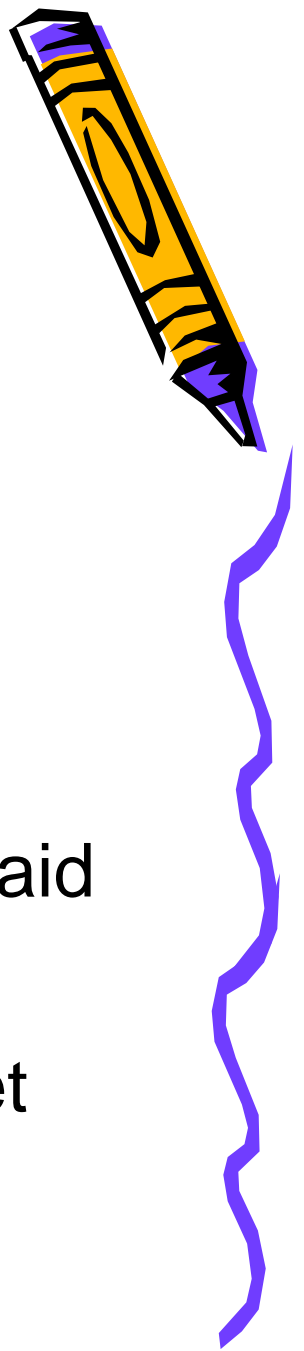
Choose your answers!

The a) dog b) crocodile c) girl d) man
was foolish

The river was a) deep b) wide
c) shallow d) cold

The crocodile was a) huge b) young c) afraid
d) happy

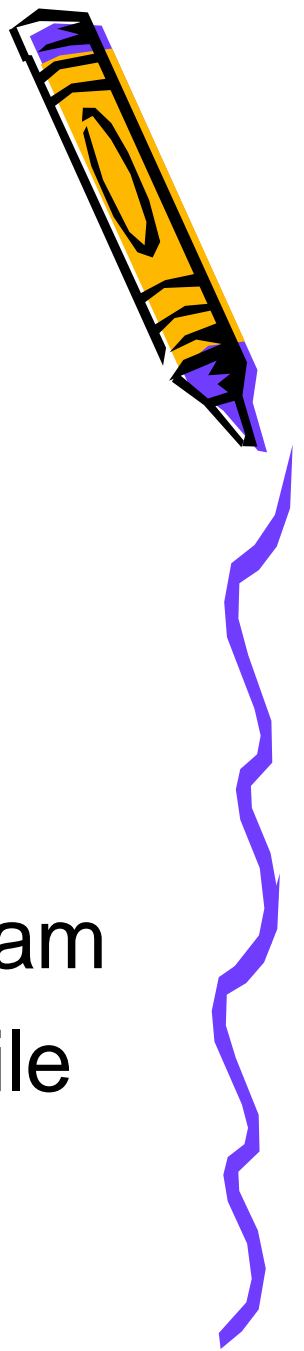
The man was walking a) home b) to market
c) alone d) with a friend



Choose your answers!

The crocodile a) grabbed b) ate
c) thanked d) swam away from
the man

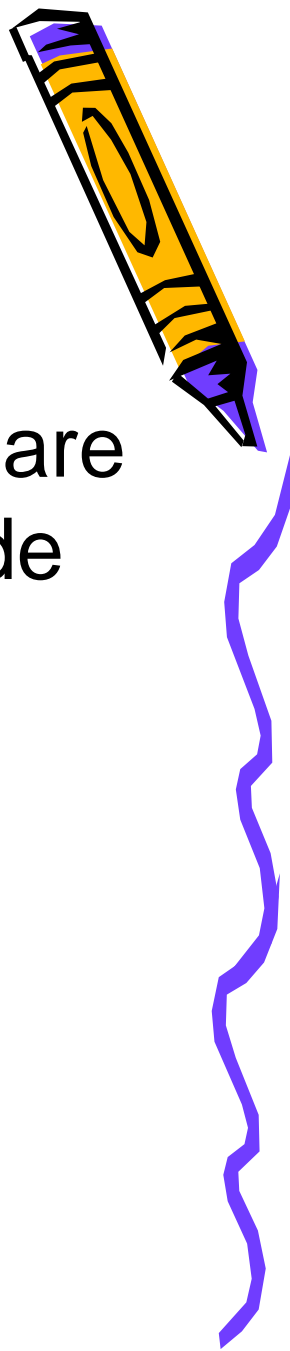
The dog a) laughed b) jumped c) swam
across the river d) ate the crocodile



Part One

Madagascar is a country where there are not many bridges, so people often wade across the rivers on foot.

One day, a foolish man was returning late from market, and took a short cut through the forest to get home more quickly.

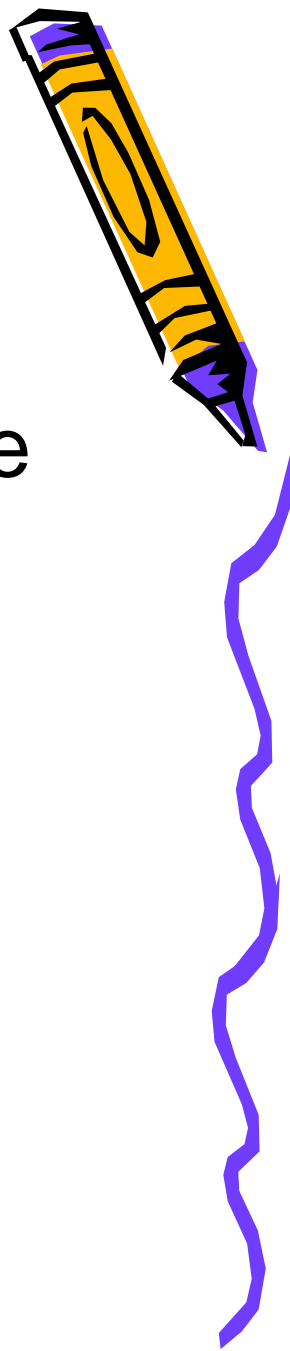


Part 2

He decided to cross the river at a place where there are lots of crocodiles.

He stepped off the bank into the river, and started walking through the water.

Halfway across, he was grabbed by a crocodile!



Part 3

The crocodile started to pull the man towards his hole under the river bank.

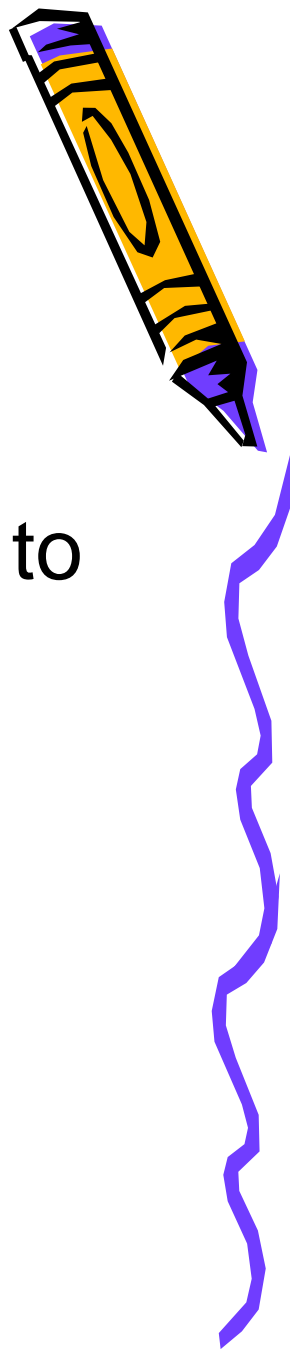
The man screamed: “Help! Help!” but of course there was no one around to hear him.

The man was heavy, and it was hard work for the crocodile because he was quite young and not very big.



Part 4

A dog was running through the forest,
and heard the man screaming. He ran to
see what was happening.



Creative writing: what happens next?

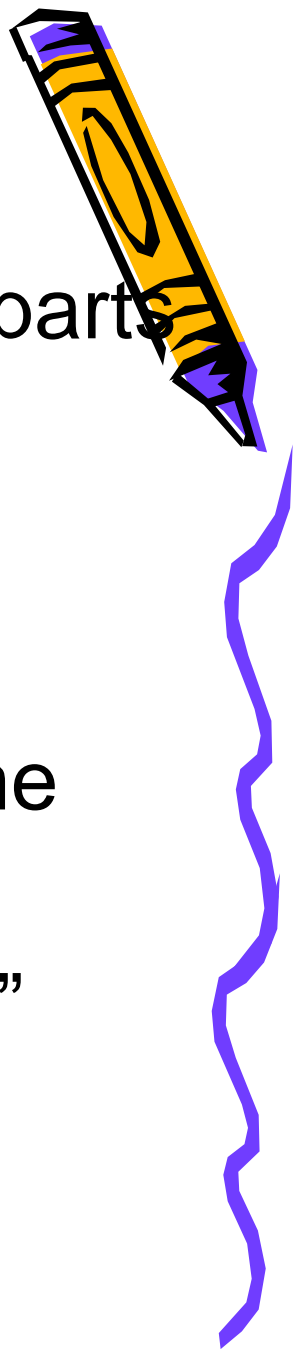
Learners discuss and make up the next parts
of the story and write...

...then.....

Homework:

Google: (or if we have time, I'll tell you the
ending!)

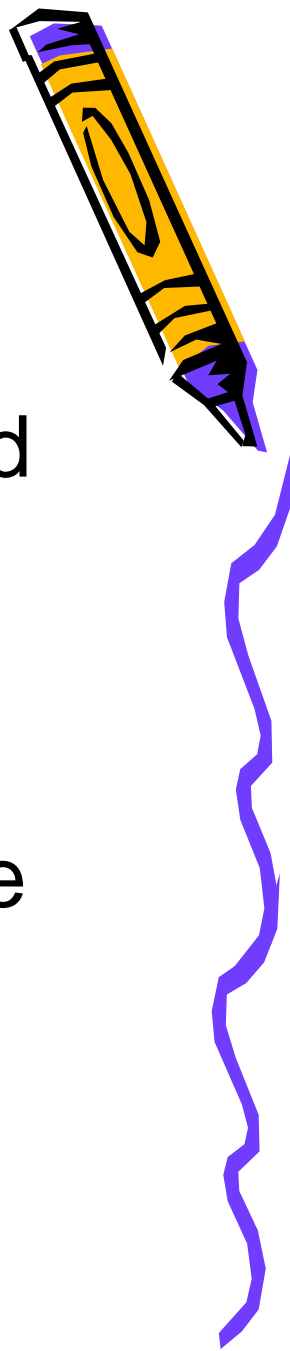
“The Crocodile, the Man, and the Dog”
(a traditional Malagasy story)



The second half: 1

He saw the man and the crocodile, and shouted: “Hey , Mr Crocodile, I’ll come and help you. Then we can share that delicious meal!”

He dived in, swam over and helped the crocodile to pull the man to the other side..



Second half: 2

When they had reached the other side, the crocodile opened his big jaws to say “Thank you” to the dog.

But quick as a flash, the man jumped out of his jaws, and ran off into the trees.

He was followed by the dog, who laughed and barked back:

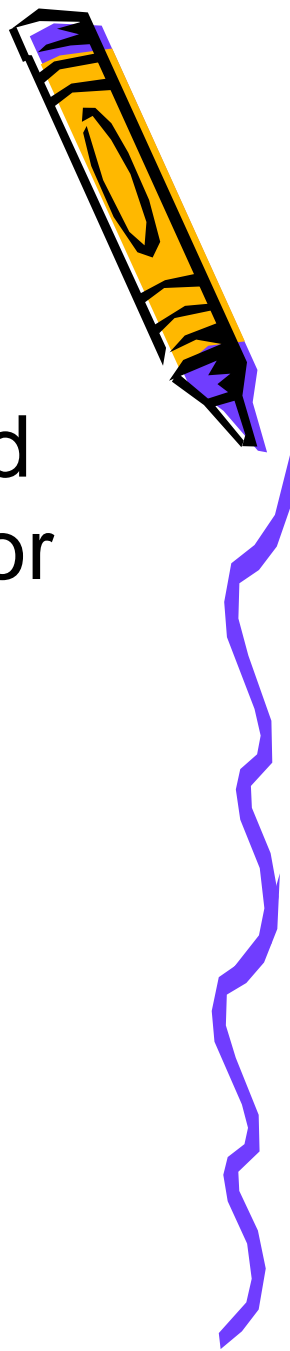
“Stupid Crocodile!!”



Second half: 3

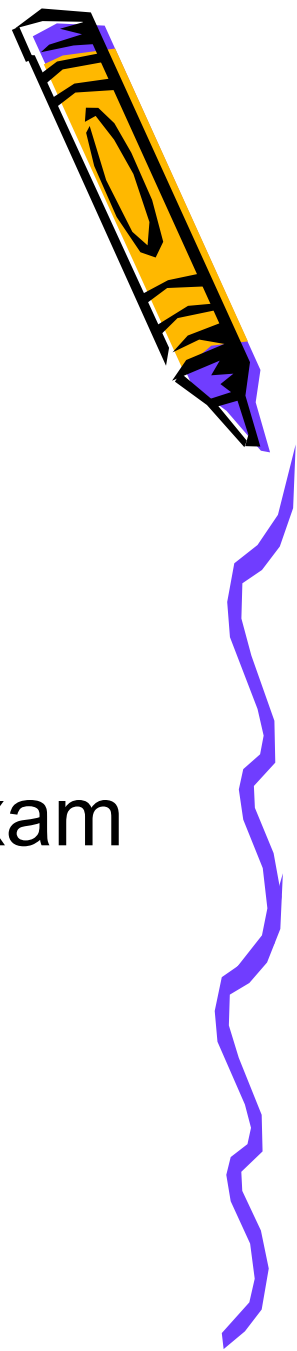
The man took the dog to his house and gave him a good dinner to thank him for saving his life.

And ever since that day, Man and Dog have always been the best of friends.

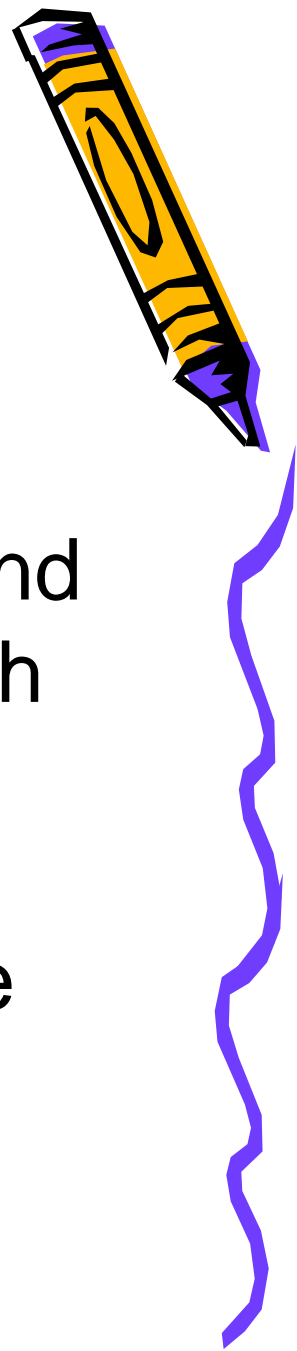


This approach can be done

- With different levels
- Different genres (GE / AE)
- Using texts from the 'text book' or exam practice book



Involve the learners

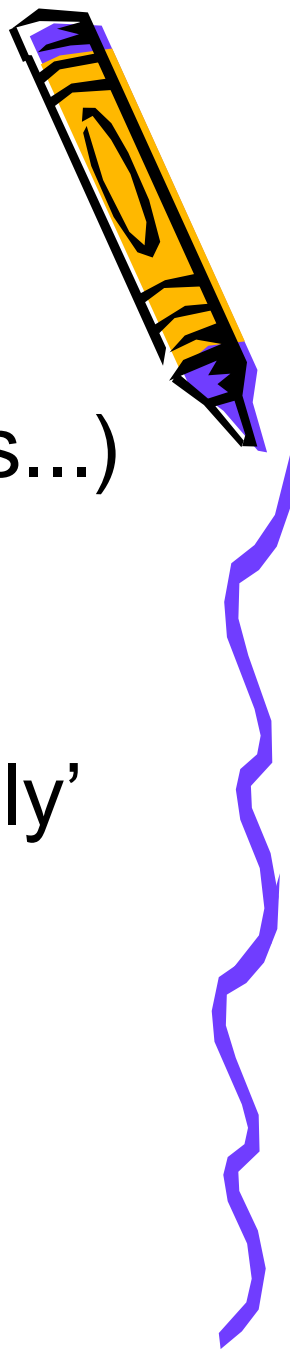


- By involving them in the test items and the manipulation/subversion/play with language, they often feel more confident when it comes to an actual test - they have worked 'beyond' the test



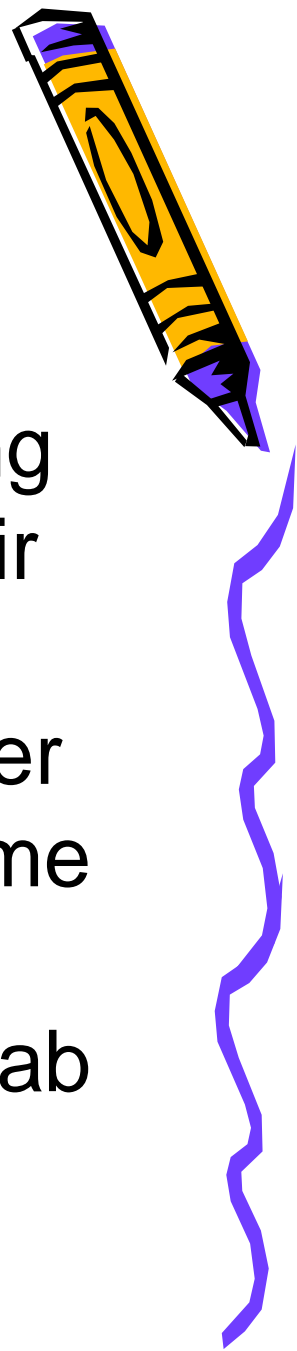
“Fake News”

- (sadly, all too fashionable these days...)
- Anecdote re British Council pre-session course – morning ‘assembly’ each day



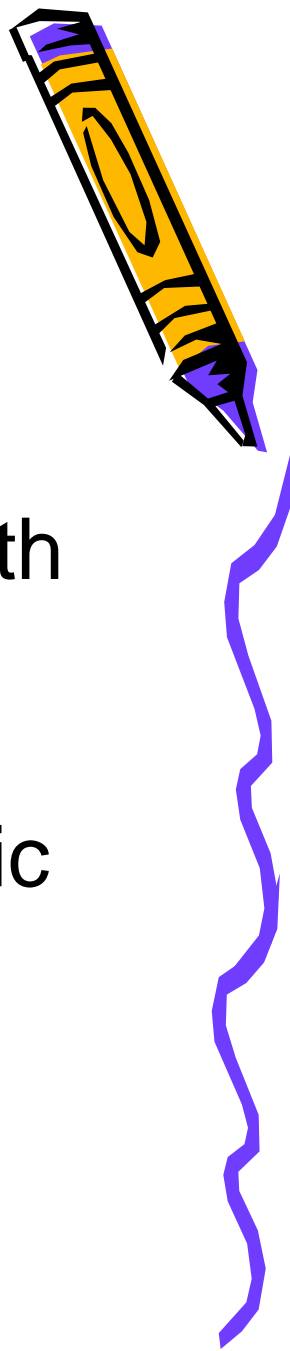
Home-Made Questions

- Learners write questions on a reading or listening text themselves – for their peer group / same level, or a higher level class make questions for a lower level group. They should use the same range of item types as in their ‘real’ tests. Good revision of grammar/vocab



Collaborative writing

- This works well in my experience, strange though it sounds. I began with 'creative' writing classes in General English but adapted it to exam preparation (IELTS e.g) for academic English writing



Collaboration

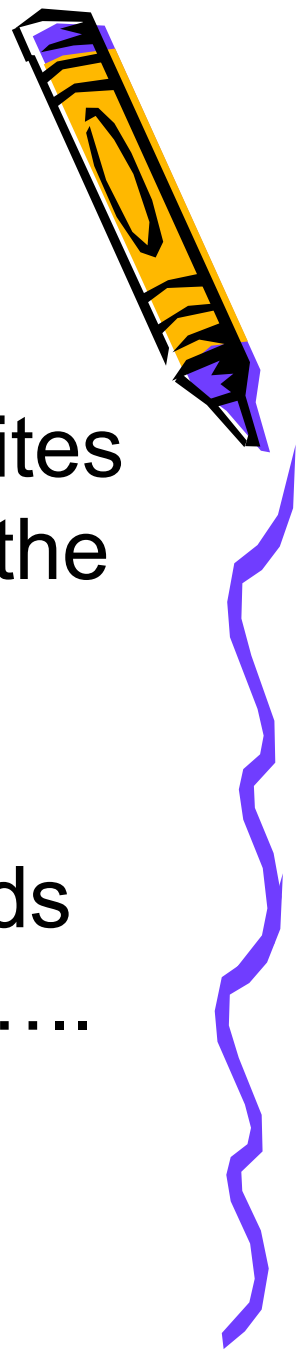
Give out / post a range of typical test essay titles – ‘compare and contrast’ ‘discuss’ ‘describe’....etc

Set a time limit for each stage – I typically give 10-15 minutes depending on the level

Student 1 writes the Introduction...



collaboration



- ...and passes it to Student 2 who writes the Paragraph 2...following on from the Introduction
-passes this to student 3 who reads 1 & 2, then writes the 3rd paragraph..... then passes on to student 4



collaboration



- ...who reads the three paragraphs and writes a final conclusion...

finally, the texts are passed round for the whole class to read. The audience is the students' own peers and as in many of our own 'Writing Games' this provides a

different sense of purpose!



Choose the Worst Answer



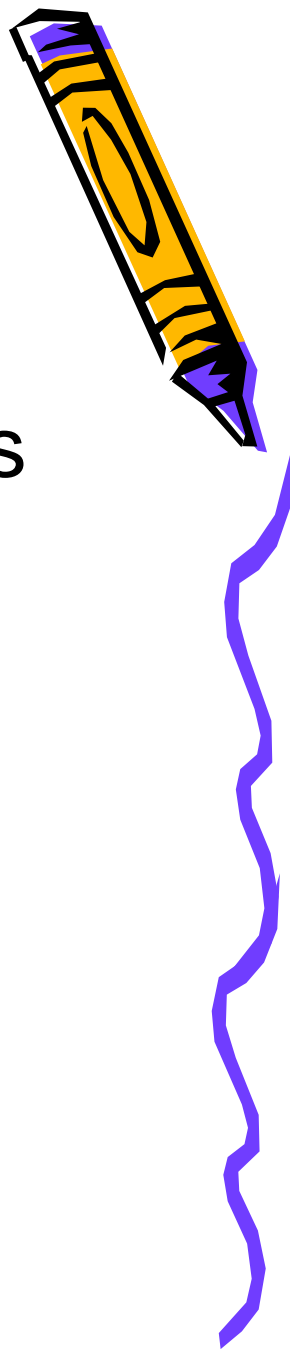
- Learners have to choose from several very nearly identical answers – only 1 is correct, there is a spelling or grammar error in the others: this is what most M/C items do, but here we have turned it on its head – learners should (fairly comfortably) see the correct answer – but which is the ‘least correct? – and why?



Best / Worst answer?

It is wonderful that Bella won the chess tournament because

- a) she is not very old
- b) was not very old
- c) she's the younger in our school
- d) she's youngest in the school

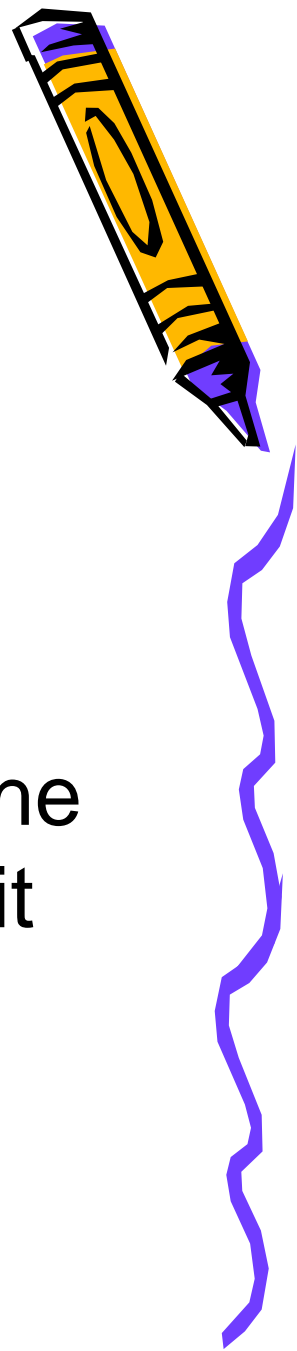


Learner power

Learners create their own 'dumb' irrelevant questions

Similar to the previous activity where the teacher creates 'crazy distractors' but it empowers learners to do this as well...similar to some of Mario

Pinvolucris's Anti
Grammar activities

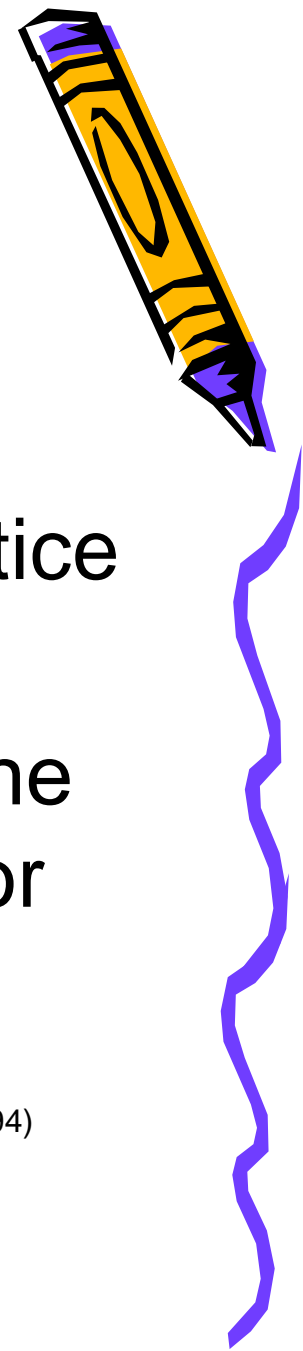


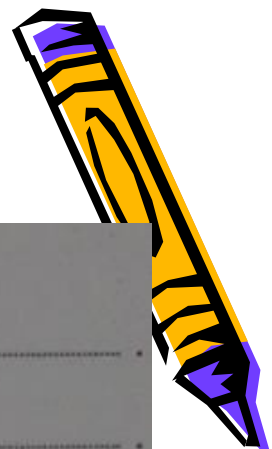
Exploiting the text

The next couple of slides are of pages from a very well-known grammar practice book....

...with a partner, try to work some of the sentences into a single coherent text or story....

With apologies to: Raymond Murphy, *English Grammar in Use*, Cambridge (1994)





97.1 Make one sentence from two. Complete the sentences with an -ing clause.

1 A bell was ringing. I was woken up by it.

I was woken up by a bell ringing.

2 A man was sitting next to me on the plane. I didn't talk much to him.

I didn't talk much to the

3 A taxi was taking us to the airport. It broke down.

The broke down.

4 There's a path at the end of this street. The path leads to the river.

At the end of the street there's a

5 A factory has just opened in the town. It employs 500 people.

A has just opened in the town.

6 The company sent me a brochure. It contained the information I needed.

The company sent me



e sentence from two. Complete the sentences with an -ing clause.

was ringing. I was woken up by it.

woken up by a bell ringing

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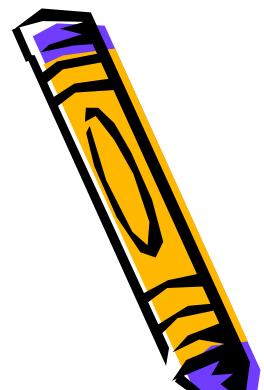
ory has just opened in the town. It employs 500 people.

..... has just opened

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mpany sent me





107.2 Write a new sentence with the same meaning.

- 1 Richard is younger than he looks. Richard isn't as old as he looks
- 2 I didn't spend as much money as you. You spent more money than me
- 3 The station was nearer than I thought. The station wasn't
- 4 The meal didn't cost as much as I expected. The meal cost
- 5 I go out less than I used to. I don't
- 6 Karen's hair isn't as long as it used to be. Karen used to
- 7 I know them better than you do. You don't
- 8 There are fewer people at this meeting than at the last one.
There aren't



5 I still feel quite tired, but I felt a lot more tired yesterday.

I don't

6 Our neighbours have lived here for quite a long time, but we've lived here longer.
Our neighbours haven't

7 I was a bit nervous before the interview, but usually I'm a lot more nervous.
I wasn't

107.2 Write a new sentence with the same meaning.

1 Richard is younger than he looks. Richard isn't as old as he looks

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There aren't

107.3 Complete the sentences using as ... as + the following:

bad comfortable ~~fast~~ long often quietly soon well we

1 I'm sorry I'm late. I got here as fast as I could.

2 It was a difficult question. I answered it I could.

3 'How long can I stay with you?' 'You can stay you like

..... let me know possible

Exercises

Unit 97

97.1 Make one sentence from two. Complete the sentences with an -ing clause.

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A has just opened in the town.

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The company sent me

97.2 Make one sentence from two, beginning as shown. Each time make an -ed clause.

1 A boy was injured in the accident. He was taken to hospital.

The boy injured in the accident was taken to hospital.

2 A gate was damaged in the storm. It has now been repaired.

The gate has now been repaired.

3 A number of suggestions were made at the meeting. Most of them were not very practical.

Most of the were not very practical.

4 Some paintings were stolen from the museum. They haven't been found yet.

The haven't been found yet.

5 What was his name?

Vocabulary items

- Land / cityscape photos in trios - one S tells other words from his/her picture, S2 and S3 write them down...and vice versa.... Then they 'draw' the picture they think it could be.



From a hotel



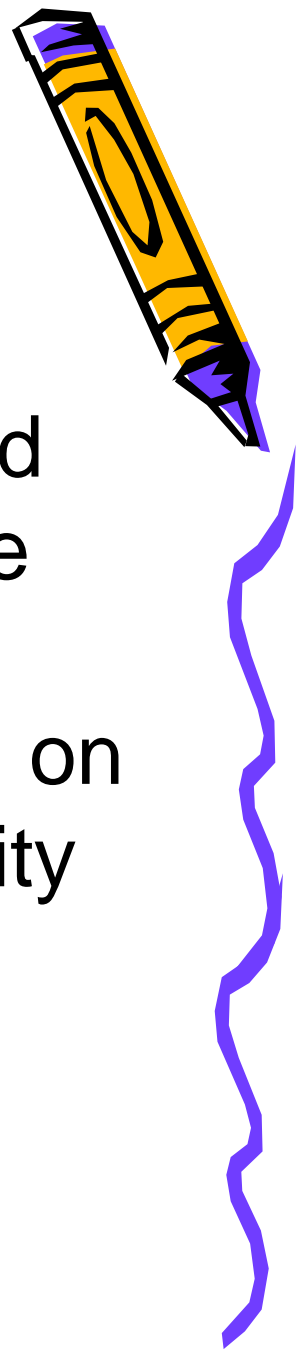
From the air



From a hill



Room with a view



- If the classroom or school has a good view, get Ss in pairs to look and write down a list of all the things they can see . I worked in an inner-city school on 14/15th floor, with great view of the city centre below and out across the suburbs, port, hills in background:

Corner windows facing at 90 degrees were ideal!!



Para-phrase-sketch-tableau



- Paraphrase – after reading a text, or listening, Ss make a paraphrase/summary – or do a sketch based on it, or a ‘tableau’ (idea from Alan Maley’s Drama Techniques book). Māori tales, or folk tales such as the Madagascar one, are ideal. And see

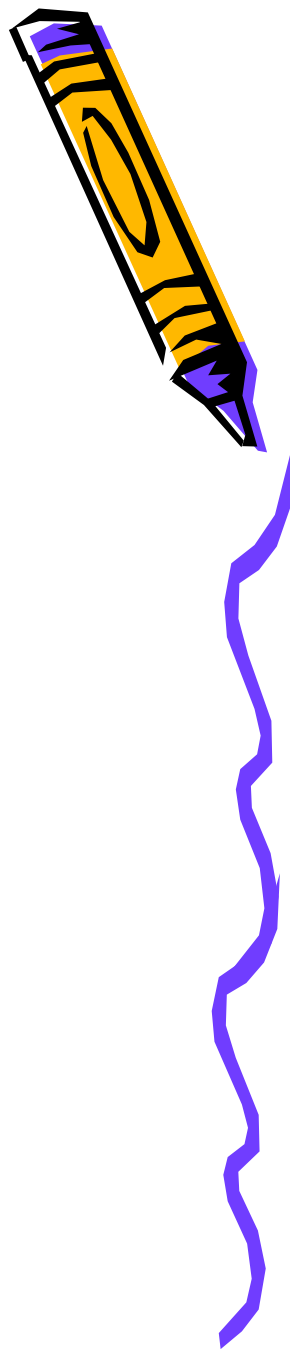
David

Heathfield (Exeter) books/ideas



Peer marking

- learners marking/correcting each other's work

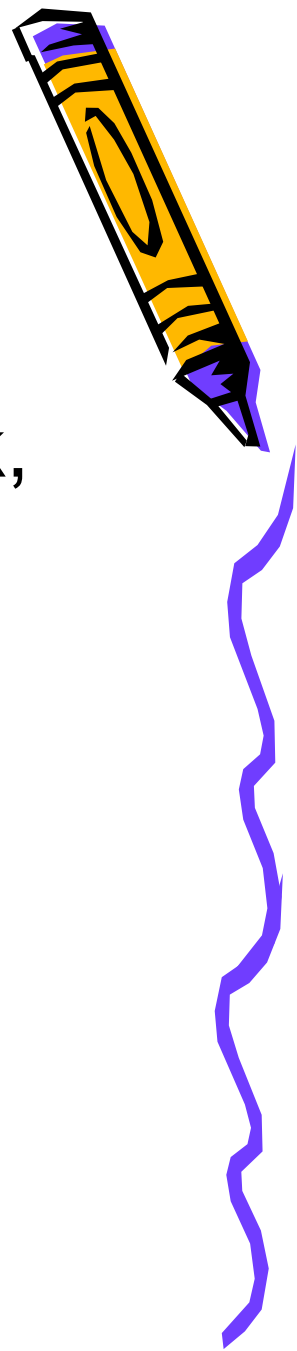


Project Work

Integrated skillsgroup or solo work,
individuals contributing to a group.

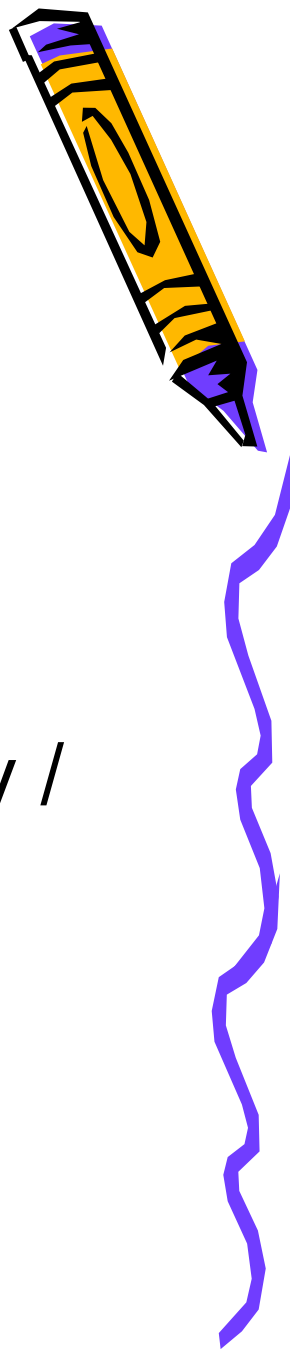
Portfolio production solo

Eg: Trinity College *London* ISE suite

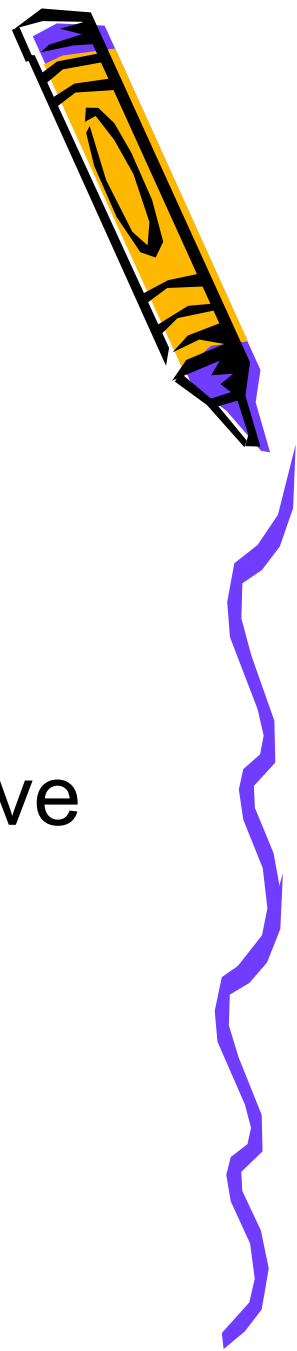


Personalise

- to get away from the 'standard' test formulae, make testing more interactive and communicative.... My / our next big challenge.



Home-made tastes best

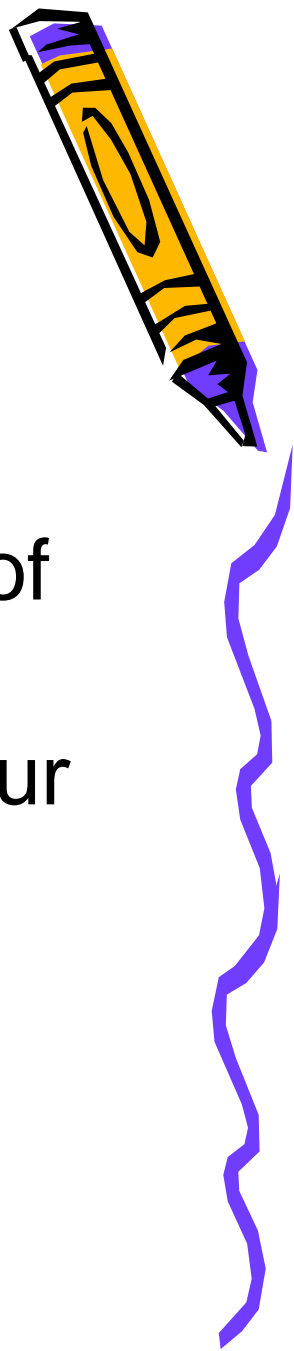


- Home-made internal tests vs international standards.....
- some of the most interesting work I've done revolved around 'internal' tests....where we 'created' our own

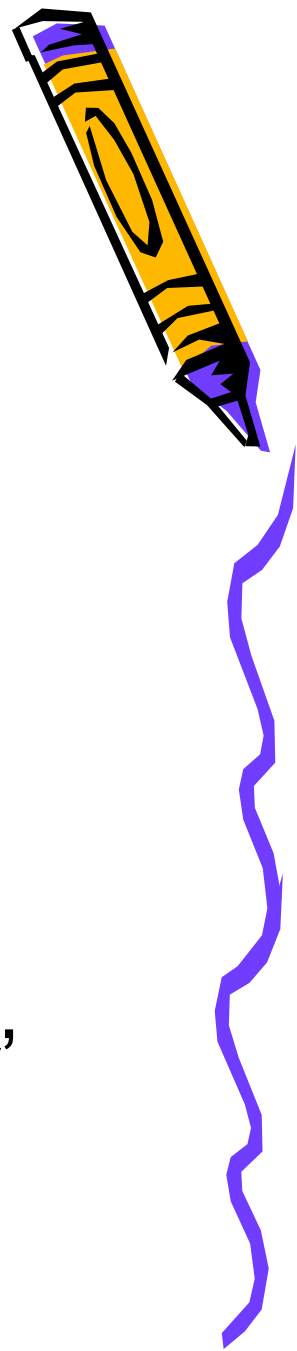


Technology

With software such as QUIZLET a lot of new and exciting developments are possible.... Maybe subject of my or your next presentation!! 😊



Creative tension



- The 'best of the test' + 'less stress'
- Train 'beyond' the test....

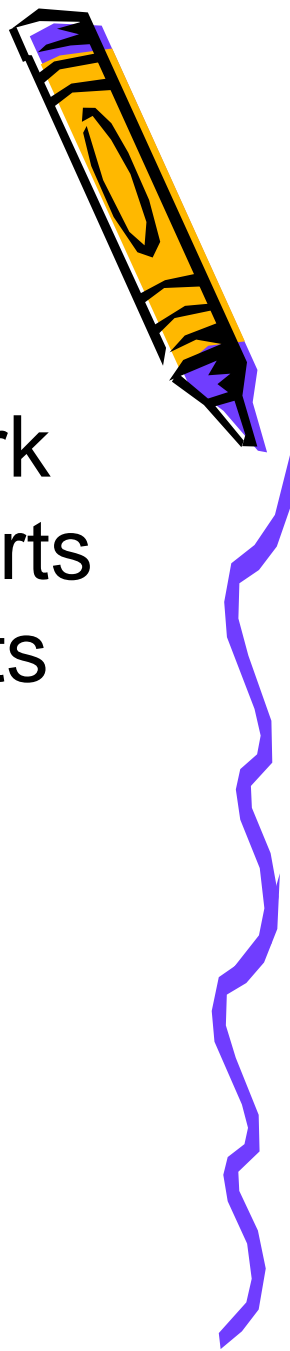
....on the day, it will appear 'easier'



Other disciplines

How does assessment /evaluation work in disciplines such as the performing arts –dance, music, drama – or creative arts such as painting?

My personal quest from now on!

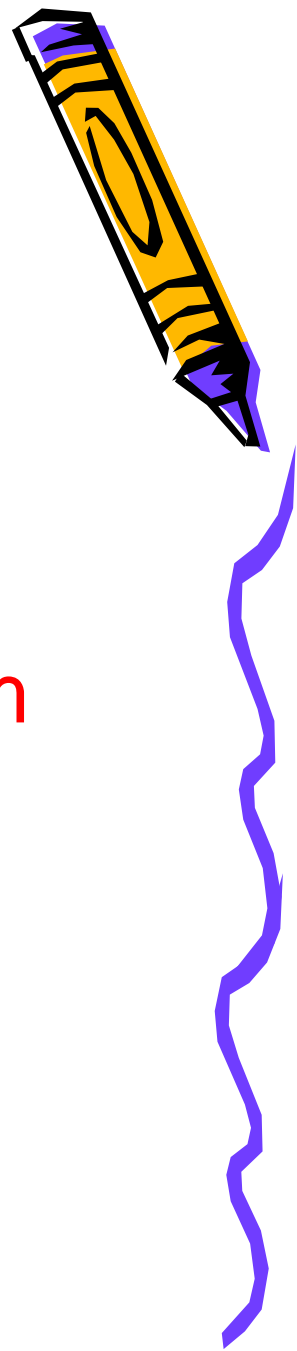


contact me

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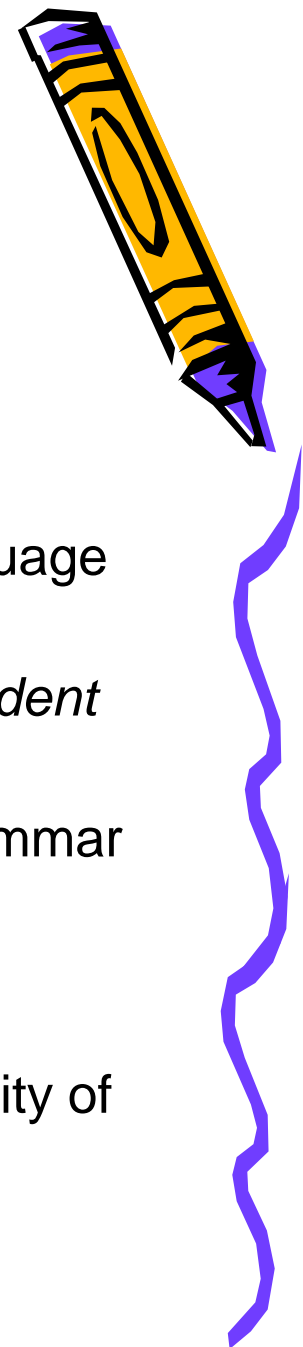
Thank you for coming !



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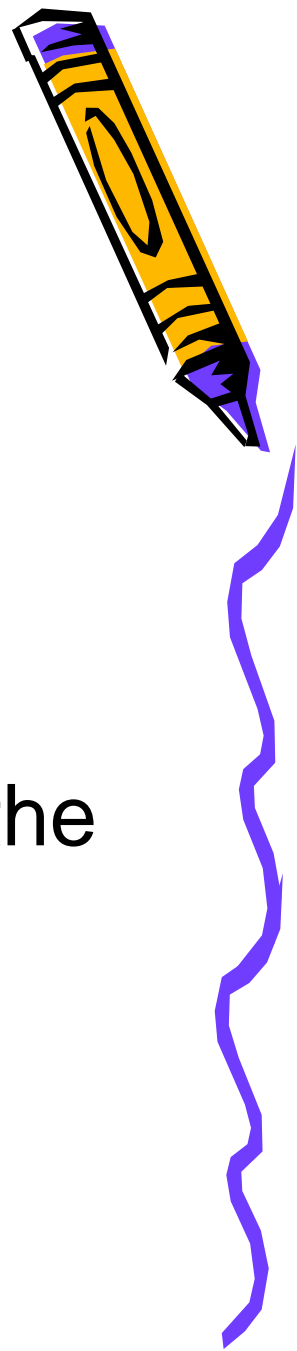
FIN

THE END

But remember, this is the first day of the
rest of your life !!



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Haere rā!

au revoir

do svidanya

auf wiedersehen

zài jiàn

sayonara

hasta luego

see ya

arrivederci

t+

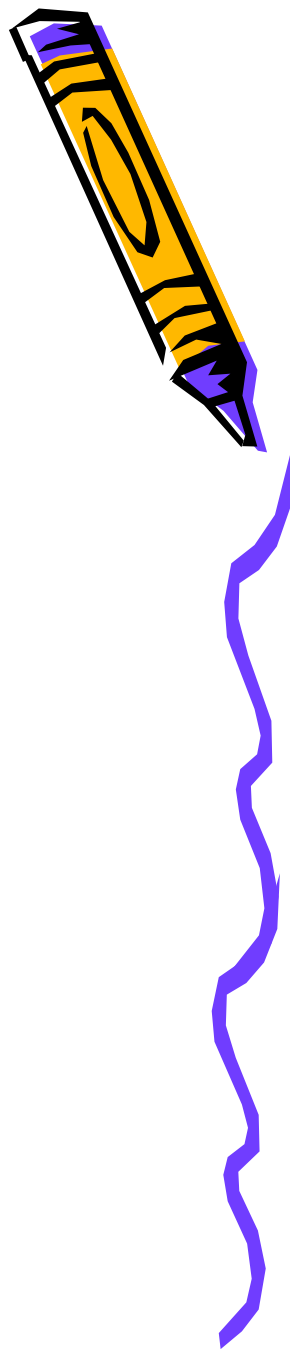
té mais

ciao

tchau

cheers

laters !



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Two favourites of mine:

- Heraclitus (c 535-475 BCE):
 - ‘ a wonderful harmony arises from joining the seemingly unconnected’
- Koestler (1964)
 - ‘bisociative thinking .. the creative leap which connects two previously unconnected frames of reference’

