



Welcome to the sixth edition of *Reader's Choice*. In this note we present our perspective on teaching and learning, and we provide tips for using the book. We do not intend this as prescription; there are as many ways to use a text as there are teachers and classrooms. In fact, the book is designed to encourage teacher flexibility, both in sequencing and in presentation. At the same time, we do have opinions about teaching and learning that have shaped the development of these materials. We have been influenced by our own classroom experiences and by the feedback of scores of teachers and students who have used the book.

We would like you to benefit from these experiences. In the pages that follow, we outline general guidelines for creating an environment conducive to language and literacy development. First, we sketch our view of teaching; second, we provide hints for using specific exercises and readings in the book; and finally, we present a narrative of classroom practice that we hope will give you a sense of how we use the book.

Note for the first printing: On *pages 2-5*. Unit 1 introduces foundational strategies for efficient reading: skimming, scanning, reading for thorough comprehension, and critical reading. Students need to be introduced to these approaches before being asked to practice them. Please note that scanning is introduced on page 5, next to the infographic on pages 4-5. It is important for students to begin with the introduction to scanning on page 5 before they answer the scanning questions on the top of page 3.

On *pages 97-99*. The Comprehension questions on page 97 refer to the infographic on pages 98-99. It is important that students work the "Getting Oriented" activity on page 98 before they begin answering the Comprehension questions on pages 97-99.

General Guidelines

We view learning as change over time through engagement in activity. We believe that students learn a great deal in the course of classroom activity in addition to the content of the curriculum. Among the most important things learned are those that have to do with students' identities as language users and literate human beings. We believe it is important to recognize the transitions our students are negotiating, whether they are studying English in their home country, immigrants building a new life in an English-speaking country or studying for a degree to return to their home countries. For this reason, we are concerned about the atmosphere in the classroom and about our stance as teachers toward the material and toward the students. We work toward classrooms that embrace diversity and encourage students to express themselves freely.

In contrast to traditional wisdom, we do not view good teaching as virtuoso performance of method. The primary task is not to cover the material or keep up with the curriculum, nor is it to ensure that students score well on tests, although all of these are by-products of effective teaching. Rather, we view teaching as creating an environment in which the students can learn (in this case, to be effective readers), as a function of communication in the context of authentic relationships. We will be effective teachers, we believe, to the extent that we are able to forge meaningful connections with students and move them toward common goals.

We recognize that you may be teaching in a situation that does not give you total discretion in how you use materials or how you approach classroom management or lesson planning. We also know that some students are not prepared for the sort of democratic approach to instruction that we attempt to achieve. However, we will present our approach to using the book as clearly as possible, in the hopes that you will be able to adapt it to your own situation.

We believe *Reader's Choice* can be an important resource in the process of developing independent, critical readers. We have selected a wide variety of readings in an attempt to appeal to a broad range of interests and needs. The activities have been developed to encourage the students to explore ideas while developing and improving reading and language skills and strategies.

We use *Reader's Choice* as a foundation and framework for interaction with students around important topics; we hope to provoke thoughtful conversations and insightful exploration of ideas. In general, we use students' experiences as the departure point for reading the selections and working the exercises. We attempt to provoke students to bring their own experiences to bear on the topics presented in the text, and to weigh the knowledge and perspectives of the author, their teacher, and their classmates against their own. In most cases, the process is more important than the product; that is, we care less about the answers to questions than we do about the students' reasoning in arriving at the answers.

The ultimate goal of *Reader's Choice* is to produce independent readers who are able to determine their own goals for a reading task and then use the appropriate skills and strategies to reach those goals. For this reason, we believe the best learning environment is one in which all individuals—students and teachers—participate in the process of setting and achieving goals. A certain portion of class time is therefore profitably spent in discussing reading tasks before they are begun. If the topic is a new one for the students, we encourage teachers to provide and/or access background information for the students, adapting the activities under **Before You Begin** to specific teaching contexts. When confronted with a passage, students should become accustomed to the practice of skimming quickly, taking note of titles and subheadings, pictures, graphs, etc., in order to determine the most efficient approach to the task. In the process, they should develop expectations about the content of the passage and the amount of time and effort needed to accomplish their goals. In this type of setting students are encouraged to offer their opinions and ask for advice, to teach each other and to learn from their errors.

This description of classroom dynamics casts teachers and students as collaborators, rather than in more traditional roles of “knowers” and “learners.” We admit that we are not always satisfied with our own attempts in this regard, but we believe it is important to have this perspective in mind if students are to become independent, critical readers, sometimes referred to as “empowered” learners.

Reader's Choice was written to encourage maximum flexibility in classroom use. Because of the large variety of exercises and reading selections, the teacher can plan several tasks for each class and hold in reserve a number of appropriate exercises to use as the situation demands. In addition, the exercises have been developed to make possible variety in classroom dynamics. The teacher can encourage the independence of students by providing opportunities for work in small groups, pairs,

or individually. Small-group work in which students self-correct homework assignments has also been successful.

Exercises do not have to be done in the order in which they are presented. In fact, we suggest interspersing skills work with reading selections. One way to vary tasks is to plan lessons around pairs of units, alternating skills exercises with the reading selections. In the process, the teacher can show students how focused skills work transfers to the reading of longer passages. For example, **Sentence Study** exercises provide intensive practice in analyzing grammatical structures to understand sentences; this same skill should be used by students in working through reading selections. When communication breaks down, the teacher can pull sentences from readings for intensive classroom analysis, thereby demonstrating the value of this skill.

It is important to *teach before testing*. Tasks should be introduced, modeled, and practiced before students are expected to perform on their own. Although we advocate rapid-paced, demanding class sessions, we believe it is extremely important to provide students with a thorough introduction to each new exercise. At least for the first example of each type of exercise, some introduction is necessary. The teacher can demonstrate the skill using the example item and work through the first few items with the class as a whole. Students can then work individually or in small groups.

Specific Suggestions

Reader's Choice has been organized so that specific skills can be presented before students use those skills to tackle reading selections. Although exercises and readings are generally graded according to difficulty, it is not necessary to use the material in the order in which it is presented in the text.

Teachers are encouraged

- a. to intersperse skills work with reading selections.
- b. to skip exercises that are too easy or irrelevant to students' interests.
- c. to do several exercises of a specific type at one time if students require intensive practice in that skill.
- d. to jump from unit to unit, selecting reading passages that satisfy students' interests and needs.

Language Skills Exercises

Nonprose Reading

For students who expect to read only prose material, teachers can point out that nonprose reading provides more than an enjoyable change of pace. These exercises provide legitimate reading practice. The same problem-solving skills can be used for both prose and nonprose material. Just as one can skim a textbook for general ideas, it is possible to skim a menu for a general idea of the type of food offered, the price range of a restaurant, etc. Students may claim that they can't skim or scan; working with nonprose items shows them that they can.

Nonprose exercises are good for breaking the ice with new students, for beginning or ending class sessions, for role playing, or for those Monday blues and Friday blahs. Because they are short, rapid-paced exercises, they can be kept in reserve to provide variety or to fill a time gap at the end of class.

The nonprose activities and infographics exercises present students with realistic language problems they might encounter in an English-speaking environment. The teacher can set up simulations to achieve a realistic atmosphere.

With charts and graphs, students are challenged by the economy of presentation and the need to translate graphics and numbers into statements that accurately express the information provided. This is an especially important skill for students in technical fields.

Word Study

These exercises can be profitably done in class either in rapid-paced group work or by alternating individual work with class discussion. Like nonprose work, Word Study exercises can be used to fill unexpected time gaps.

Context Clues exercises appear frequently throughout the book, both in skills units and accompanying reading selections. Students should learn to be content with a general meaning of a word and to recognize situations in which it is not necessary to know a word's meaning. In skills units, these exercises should be done in class to ensure that students do not look for exact definitions in the dictionary. When **Vocabulary from Context** exercises appear with reading selections, in addition to providing practice in this skill, they are intended as tools for learning new vocabulary items and often for introducing ideas that will be encountered in the reading. In this case they can be done at home as well as in class.

Stems and Affixes exercises appear in the skills units and in Appendix A and must be done in the order in which they are presented. The exercises are cumulative: each exercise makes use of word parts presented in previous units. All stems and affixes taught in *Reader's Choice* are listed with their definitions in **Appendix B**. These exercises serve as an important foundation in vocabulary skills work for students whose native language does not contain a large number of words derived from Latin or Greek. Students should focus on improving their ability to analyze word parts as they work with the words presented in the exercises. During the introduction to each exercise, students should be encouraged to volunteer other examples of words containing the stems and affixes presented. Exercises 1 and 2 can be done as homework; the matching exercise can be used as a quiz.

Dictionary Study exercises, which appear in conjunction with some of the readings, provide practice using English/English dictionaries and demonstrate that some familiar words can have more than one meaning.

Sentence Study

Students should not be concerned about unfamiliar vocabulary in these exercises; grammatical clues should provide enough information to allow them to complete the tasks. In addition, questions are syntax-based; errors indicate structures that students have trouble reading, thus providing the teacher with a diagnostic tool for grammar instruction.

Paragraph Reading and Paragraph Analysis

If **Main Idea** paragraphs are read in class, they may be timed. If the exercises are done at home, students can be asked to come to class prepared to defend their answers in group discussion. One way to stimulate discussion is to ask students to identify incorrect responses as too broad, too narrow, or false.

Restatement and Inference and **Paragraph Analysis** exercises are short enough to allow sentence-by-sentence analysis. These exercises provide intensive practice in syntax and vocabulary work. In the **Paragraph Analysis** exercises the lines are numbered to facilitate discussion.

Discourse Focus

Web work sections use extracts from web pages to introduce students to a range of approaches to reading.

Throughout the book, skimming and scanning activities are completed quickly in order to demonstrate to students the utility of these approaches for some tasks. Critical reading activities introduce the kinds of decisions students will need to make in their own research. Prediction activities are designed to have students focus on the discourse signals that allow them to predict and sample texts. The diversity of student responses that emerges during group work can reinforce the notion that there is not a single correct answer, that all predictions are, by definition, only working hypotheses to be constantly revised.

Reading Selections

Readings represent a wide variety of topics and genres. The exercises have been written to focus on the most significant characteristics of each reading.

To help students access and develop background knowledge, teachers have found it valuable to introduce readings in terms of ideas and vocabulary before students are asked to work on their own. **Before You Begin** introduces the concepts and issues encountered in reading selections. Several types of classroom dynamics have been successful with reading selections after an introduction to the passage.

1. *In class*—teacher reads entire selection orally; or teacher reads part, students finish selection individually; or students read selection individually (perhaps under time constraint).
2. *In class and after class*—part of selection is read in class, followed by discussion; students finish reading independently.
3. *After class*—students read entire selection independently.

Comprehension questions are usually discussed in class with the class as a whole, in small groups, or in pairs. The paragraphs in the selections are numbered to facilitate discussion. The teacher can pull out difficult vocabulary and/or sentences for intensive analysis and discussion. The web work activities that accompany some reading selections point students to additional web-based research. This gives you the opportunity to extend reading activities if the technology is available.

Longer Reading: Psychology

This reading can be presented in basically the same manner as other selections in the book. A typical schedule for working with longer readings is roughly as follows.

- a. The reading is introduced by discussion of the topic, vocabulary exercises, reading and discussion of selected paragraphs.
- b. Students read the selection at home and answer the comprehension questions. Students are allowed at least two days to complete the assignment.
- c. In-class discussion of comprehension questions proceeds with students referring to the passage to support their answers.
- d. Vocabulary from Context Exercise 2 can be done in class, with students working on their own. Figurative Language and Idioms can be done quickly as an oral exercise.
- e. The vocabulary review can be done either in class or after class.

“The Milgram Experiment” requires students to confront their own attitudes toward authority. The unit begins with a questionnaire that asks students to predict their behavior in particular situations and to compare their behavior with that of fellow natives of their culture and of U.S. natives. Psychologist Stanley Milgram was concerned with the extent to which people would follow commands even when they thought they were hurting someone else. Because the results of the study are surprising and because most people have strong feelings about their own allegiance to authority and their commitment to independence, small group discussions and debriefing from the teacher will be important in this lesson.

Companion Website

The **Answer Key** appears on the University of Michigan Press website (www.press.umich.edu/elt). Because the exercises in *Reader’s Choice* are designed to provide students with the opportunity to practice and improve their reading skills, the processes involved in arriving at an answer are often more important than the answer itself. For students using the eBook the answers to true/false and multiple choice questions will appear as they work the exercises. For other types of questions, we hope that students will not access the Answer Key until they have completed the exercises and are prepared to defend their answers. If a student’s answer does not agree with the key, it is important for the student to return to the exercise to discover the source of the discrepancy. You will find that the Answer Key also provides insight into our approach to teaching reading. It can be used as another opportunity to coach students in comprehension and critical reading.

Teachers will also find that the companion website, available from the *Reader’s Choice, 6th Edition* webpage (https://www.press.umich.edu/10151097/readers_choice_6th_edition), includes interactive quizzes for extra practice in vocabulary, sentence study, and reading comprehension.

Teaching Narrative: Glimpses of a Reader’s Choice Teacher

The story that follows provides a glimpse into how we have used *Reader’s Choice* in our classes. It is a fictional account of a single teacher, a composite of experiences we have had over the years. Our goal in presenting it is to give you a sense of the pace and rhythm of our teaching using *Reader’s Choice*. We do not want to imply that this is the correct way of teaching the text; we see the story as suggestive rather than prescriptive.

The narrative takes place in an urban setting, in an English language program where the students attend 50-minute classes. What follows is a narrative of the first five days of the course. You will need to flip back and forth between the narrative and the activities discussed in the text to fully understand the suggestions we are making.

Day One

I enjoy teaching advanced reading. The students tend to be serious about their studies, and they are operating with high enough English language proficiency and reading skills that I am able to involve them in active decision making about the content and the dynamics of the class. The text, *Reader’s Choice*, provides just the right amount of structure and flexibility—a good supply of interesting readings and a wide variety of exercises.

I arrive a few minutes before the first class and arrange the desks in a circle. I push the teacher’s table against the wall and arrange the handouts where they will be handy when I need them later. I

decide to sit in one of the student desks near the board, in case I want to use it during class, and I put blank name tags on all the desk tops. I peruse the class list as I wait for the students to arrive. Fifteen students are registered this term. My class roster lists country of origin and native language: four students each from Mexico, and the Arab Emirates, two each from China and Korea, and one student each from Argentina, Japan, and Russia.

Japan: Shinya

Korea: Jee-Wha, Taek

Mexico: Carlos, Ana, Hector, Maria

UAE: Jassim, Mohamed, Mahmoud, Jamal

Russia: Svetlana

China: Xuan, Jingjing

Argentina: Rachel

I know Shinya and Jassim from previous semesters. I will be able to count on them to help me introduce activities and approaches that might be new for some of the students. I notice that I have four students who are here on immigrant visas—Svetlana, Carlos, Hector, and Maria. The rest are on student visas.

As the students enter, I ask them to take a seat and fill out their name tags. I pass out an information sheet that solicits basic information—living situation (whether they live with their own family, with a host family, or with other students), hobbies, contact information, etc. I ask about their educational and career interests and their goals for this class. One item is a request for them to give their email address, including an estimate of the amount of time they spend surfing the web, and if they are on social media, and so on. Another item is a request for them to list the kinds of reading they do and titles of recent books or journal articles they have read. The last item is a request for suggestions on making the class work for them.

I tell the class to browse through *Reader's Choice* and to begin reading the student section of the Introduction when they have finished with the information sheet. Maria asks if I want to collect the information sheets, and I tell them to hang on to them in case they think of additional things they want to mention in the course of the class session.

It is time for introductions. We begin with the syllabus for the course, which doesn't take long. Basically, all I expect of them is that they do the reading and participate in class discussions. I have built in some incentives—tests and the “assignments” so that if they become distracted I can get their attention. But my intent is to orchestrate events in such a way that they become active, thoughtful participants in literate conversations. I tell them that the only certain requirement is that they read and write every day.

Next, I tell them we need to become acquainted. I have organized an icebreaker that will give them a chance to talk to each other and provide me with a sense of who they are and what their interests are. I tell them that we are going to be working together this term and that we will need to get to know each other well. I lead off with the introductions, telling a little about me and my family, our travels and interests, my education and my hobbies. I turn to Rachel, who is seated to my left, and we proceed around the circle with brief introductions. I take notes as they talk and interrupt only to remind them to speak up or to ask for more information if their introduction seems too brief.

When we have finished, I tell them to take out a piece of paper and make a seating chart that includes everyone's first and last names, and one fact or piece of interesting information about each person. This is some- thing of a surprise for them, I think. They are used to doing quick

introductions and then not worrying about remembering anybody's name, much less details about each other's lives.

This is the first hint they have that in this class they will not be able to coast along in neutral when other students are speaking. I give them time to work, and after a few minutes, tell them all to stand up, move about the room talking to each other as if they were at a reception or party, and to complete the task in ten minutes.

I remain seated and take notes. I am interested to see how they interact with each other. I try to watch them all, but I am especially mindful of the quiet ones. Luckily, all goes well on this, for some, the first excursion into communicative language learning in a reading class; no one hangs back, no one offends anyone else, and there are no political blowups. I ask them to return to their seats. They are to keep the seating charts with them; if they did not finish getting all the information, they need to do this before class tomorrow.

The next task is to become familiar with the textbook. I initiate a session of "Say Something," a round-robin reading technique that I use a lot in my classes. I begin, by giving them a model to follow. I read a paragraph or two aloud while they read silently. When I stop, I say something about what I've just read (hence the name for the technique). I might summarize it, I might ask a question about a concept or vocabulary item, or I might disagree or elaborate on a point in the text. Then the floor is open to the rest of the class for comment or question.

Next, I ask Jassim to begin because he is familiar with the technique; he was in my class last term. Today there is not much discussion because the technique is new to most of the students, so I prod and prompt after Jassim finishes reading, before I ask Shinya to read. We continue in this fashion until we have completed the student section of the Introduction.

I like this technique for balancing control and initiative in a reading lesson. It gives everyone a chance to participate with minimal risk, and it gives me a chance to assess their oral reading and to probe their comprehension. It also often leads to class discussion that otherwise would not surface. It is a regular feature of my classes. Today the activity goes reasonably well. The students seem to have sufficient language and reading skills for the kind of class I want to teach, and they seem amenable to interactive classroom activities.

I give them a few minutes to identify the type of exercise they expect to find most helpful and to locate an example of that type in the text. For most of them, in spite of their advanced language proficiency, the idea of approaching reading selections from a variety of angles is a new idea. As they begin flipping through the book, I walk around and talk quietly with individual students. Xuan, whose language does not have Greek or Latin roots, has focused on the **Stems and Affixes** exercises. Jee-Wha, it turns out, likes literature; she is impressed by the fact that we will read a Pulitzer Prize-winning author.

I get their attention, and we go around the room. The students identify the exercise types they think they will find the most helpful this term. As questions arise about the different types of exercises, we turn to examples in the book and discuss why it is important to approach different kinds of reading tasks differently. I have them turn to the subway map in Unit 1 and simultaneously find selections on genetic engineering in Unit 6 (p. 149). It has been my experience that some students view realia like the subway map to be a waste of time, while others are intimidated by technical reading. I decide to nip these objections in the bud by making explicit the importance of being able to shift gears depending on the nature of the reading.

"How do you read these two types of text?" I ask. "Where would you be reading them? What would be your purpose?" The conversation turns to their preferences and reading habits. I encourage them to voice their opinions about the type of reading they want to do in the class and the kind of classroom dynamics they believe to be the most important. I tell them that my goal is to make sure that we accommodate everyone's preferences, and I point out that this will require them

to speak up, and that it will also require a certain amount of tolerance for differences of opinion and style.

My goal here is to get them thinking analytically about how we spend our time together in the class. I want them to see that they have choices and that I am interested in shaping the class to meet their needs. This is just the first example of the pattern of interaction that I will use to connect the work we do in class with their lives outside of school.

Time is running out; we have about ten minutes left in the period. I ask them to take out a piece of paper or their laptops/tablets and make a journal entry for the day on the course LMS (Learning Management System, such as Canvas or Blackboard). When I am teaching in contexts without digital access, we use pen and paper. The journal is a way of encouraging reflection and extending comprehension. It is also a way of helping them consolidate lessons learned during the class period. Some days I ask them to reflect on what they have read or to respond to comprehension or composition questions. Today, I keep it simple, suggesting that they jot down new words they have encountered, perhaps with brief definitions and sample sentences. I also suggest that they indicate aspects of the class that they like and that they provide suggestions for future classes. I tell them that I will collect approximately a third of the journals each Friday to read over the weekend. I use the journals as a way of monitoring students' learning and their attitude toward the class. They are graded only on the number of entries; I encourage them to be frank in their assessments.

I collect the information sheets as they leave for their next class.

Day Two

I begin the day with the first exercise in the book: **Discourse Focus: Reading for Different Goals— Infographic and Web Work.** I write the following words on the board: *skim, scan, thorough comprehension, critical reading*, and ask people to volunteer definitions. We talked on Day One about choosing the best strategy for different kinds of readings, so this is not new, but I want to give them a chance to review the different terms and to become comfortable with the notion that we will use different strategies depending on the reading task that we are focused on.

I have them pair up for the first exercise. I make it clear that I have paired them up so that they can teach each other as we go, and I encourage them to ask questions, no matter how foolish they may think they will appear.

I have them look at the infographic for *The Great Pacific Garbage Patch*, and I read the skimming questions aloud. They confer with their partners and arrive at conclusions together. I stroll among the desks and monitor their conversations, asking and answering questions as I go. As the partners finish with a set of questions, I open up the discussion for the whole class, encouraging them to respond to each other and express their own opinions.

The introduction to scanning appears on page 5. I make sure this is introduced interactively. I read the Scanning column out loud, stopping often to pose questions. Partners then work on their own, doing the scanning questions on page 3.

We continue section by section. They bend to the task, and the room is filled with the pleasant buzz of collaboration. We proceed through the four types of reading, and I am pleased with the camaraderie, but I know that the range of learning is broad.

We turn next to what is, in my opinion, one of the most important skills students will acquire in my class— learning to read with only an approximate understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary. I begin by asking them what they find most difficult in their study of English and,

predictably, they say “vocabulary.” I ask what they do when they come to words they do not understand, and a lively discussion breaks out as they all brandish their favorite dictionaries. Several have state-of-the-art apps on their devices with dictionaries they can use to hear the pronunciation of words and phrases.

I amuse them with an ostentatious yawn at their electronic wizardry and assert that the most important skill they will learn in my class is to make wild guesses about the meanings of unfamiliar words. I tell them that I am proud of my ability to travel in a wide variety of countries without the benefit of dictionaries. (I do confess, under some pressure, that my partner is an inveterate dictionary user, however, so I am not totally a free spirit.) I have them open their books to page 11, **Word Study: Context Clues**. I read the introduction aloud while they follow along, and after a brief exchange to make sure they are tracking the argument being made, I ask them to turn to the example exercise. I read the directions to them and give them three minutes to fill in the blanks on their own. When they have a guess for each blank, we go around the room, reading the sentences and volunteering answers. I keep this light, encouraging all guesses and refusing to arbitrate or give answers. It is the spirit of guessing, I tell them, that will serve them in this enterprise. After we have finished the seven items, I have them go to the next page and read the explanation silently. When they have finished, we work through it together, comparing their answers with the ones offered in the book. I underscore the strategies and the linguistic clues, encouraging them to use the whole range of textual supports for gleaning the meaning of the text.

I ask them to continue with the exercise on page 13. They work on their own for about five minutes, and then I have them compare answers with their neighbors. I walk around the room eavesdropping on the conversations and encouraging them to guess, guess, guess—to write down whatever word comes to mind.

“To require perfection is the greatest imperfection,” I proclaim. I work hard during this portion of the class. I want them to become comfortable with ambiguity and to grow in their confidence that guessing is, in fact, a productive strategy. With about five minutes left in the class I convene the group to hear each other’s answers. We go in order around the room, each student in turn reading an item aloud and giving the answer and the rationale. Because I am interested more in the strategy than the definitions, we do not finish the exercise before time is up.

I say we will finish the exercise on Day Three, and I remind them to make journal entries tonight. Next week I’ll spend portions of several class sessions working on the journal entries. For now, it is sufficient to remind them that I expect them to write something in their journals every day.

Day Three

We begin the day by finishing up with the **Context Clues** exercise, and then I tell them we are going on a field trip to New York City. “Turn to page 8,” I tell them, “and read along with me.” I read the introduction to the Subway Map and give them a few minutes to consider the map. “Have any of you been to New York,” I ask? A few raise their hands but I sense some hesitation, as if they are worried they might be asked to demonstrate more knowledge than they’re able.

“Okay,” I say, “you all can supply your own experiences as we proceed.” I read the directions to **Scanning** to them as they follow along. I give them a few minutes to scan the map to find the common destinations for visitors. I saunter up and down the room to monitor their progress. When most have finished I draw their attention to the T/F questions in the Getting Oriented box and tell them they have five minutes to answer the questions, reminding them that this is a scanning exercise. I call on different students to answer the questions and pause to allow debate if there are differences of opinion.

I announce that they have seven minutes to work individually on the **Comprehension** questions on page 10. As they work I circulate and discuss items with individuals, asking questions, providing scaffolding for their efforts, encouraging them to work quickly.

I tell them to confer in small groups if they have finished working. When everyone has finished, we discuss the answers using what will become a familiar format: A student reads the question and gives an answer. If no one disagrees, we move on. I keep moving around the classroom, and if I suspect that students disagree but haven't spoken up, I encourage them to voice their opinions. If there is disagreement, I choreograph discussion and encourage all points of view. In the event that the class cannot agree, I call for a vote. On occasion, I leave the issue hanging without a definitive answer, telling them that this is just like life—there are no final answers out there.

I give them a few minutes to work individually on the **Critical Reading** questions. I tell them to scribble notes-to-self in the margins of the reading or in their notebooks and to be prepared to support their answers. I give them a few minutes to compare answers with their neighbors, and then I launch into a bit of roleplay as we work through the questions. I cast myself as a fellow traveler as I paraphrase the questions and prod for answers. I play for laughs, but I am careful to make sure they understand the answers that their peers give, and I press them for details.

I intend to move on to **“How We Sleep”** on page 29, but I want to approach the text through their own words. I ask, “How much sleep do you get every night? Do you think there is an optimal/best amount of time that we should sleep?” A bit of a buzz develops with a smattering of laughter and I wait with ostentatious patience, demonstrating, I hope, that the rhythm of the classroom is as much their responsibility as mine.

Gradually an exchange develops -- someone comments, someone responds—a question, an opinion, a counter-opinion—and we gradually attain the rhythm of a conversation. I let them do most of the talking, nodding and rephrasing, asking questions, prompting and encouraging, asking for clarification, holding the floor as a student searches for the right word, but basically indicating by word and gesture that this discussion is their responsibility.

I have them turn to **Vocabulary from Context**, Exercise 1 (p. 31), and we work through the first paragraph together. I read the paragraph and solicit guesses as to the meanings of the italicized words. I have my eye on the clock and move them along at a brisk pace while trying to hear as many guesses as possible for each item. I am concerned about running out of time so I tell them to work the next two paragraphs on their own. When it looks as if most have finished the nineteen items, we go through the remaining items in a procedure that will become familiar to them – fixed order around the classroom, the designated student reading the sentence in which their item is located and supplying an answer. I encourage others to chime in if they disagree or have elaborations to offer. I then have them turn to the article (p. 29) and I read the first paragraph aloud as they follow along. We discuss the assertions of the paragraph and the apparent direction of the article.

We have run out of time. I ask them to arrive tomorrow with the article read and the **Comprehension** questions answered. They pack up and head out of the classroom.

Day Four

I begin promptly at the appointed hour with **Stems and Affixes** on page 14. I read the introduction aloud as they follow along. I know that the Spanish speakers will find this easier than the students whose native languages do not have as many Latin and Greek roots, so I am alert to ways of using them as experts in the lesson. I tell them to get into five groups with a Spanish speaker in each group, and as we proceed I encourage them to talk among themselves. I remind them to not jump in too quickly with answers—to give each other time to guess. We go through the

chart and Exercise 1 in a rambunctious whole-group conversation with the smaller groups conferring as we go. My main goal is to make sure that everyone understands the answers. I then give them ten minutes to complete Exercise 2 (page 16) individually. I tell them when they have finished to work within their groups to confirm the answers. I circulate to monitor progress and respond to questions, usually by deferring to others in the group or by opening the conversation to the floor.

We spend the rest of the lesson on “How We Sleep.” Here is what happens.

I ask students to get into five clusters based primarily on a goal of mixing native languages.

Shinya (J)	Jee-Wha (K)	Taek (K)	Xuan (Ch)	Jingjing (Ch)
Jassim (A)	Mohamed (A)	Mahmoud (A)	Jamal (A)	Svetlana (R)
Maria (Sp)	Rachel (Sp)	Ana (Sp)	Hector (Sp)	Carlos (Sp)

I tell them that they are to compare their responses to the **Comprehension** questions on pages 30, and to arrive at agreement on the best answer. As often happens, some students have done a more careful job of preparing than others, and it turns out that many students need to read the selection more carefully to arrive at an understanding of the author’s point of view. I adjust my expectations slightly and allow more time than I had planned to get through the exercise. I spend some time asking them about their own sleep habits and encourage them to exchange stories about their experiences.

I bid them good day as the students file out.

Day Five

We begin Day Five with a quiz-like presentation of **Stems and Affixes**, Exercise 3 (p. 17). I tell them that I hope they will take time every night to review vocabulary they have learned, and that they will arrive each day ready for brief comprehension checks of this sort. I give them five minutes to complete the exercise and then check their answers with the person sitting next to them. I ask if there are questions, but everyone seems to have answered whatever questions they had, so we push on.

I want to end the week with a combination of substantive work leavened by a sense of familiarity and success. I have them turn to **Paragraph Reading: Main Idea** on page 23. By this point in their academic careers they are used to having to summarize what they have read, so this activity will be familiar to them. However, the approach in *Reader’s Choice* provides an opportunity to sharpen this skill with explicit elaboration of the process and examples for practice. Plus, from a time management point of view, the paragraphs permit me to stop at any point and to return to the activity on another day.

I read the explanation on page 23 aloud as they follow along in their books. I use this technique frequently, even though I recognize that some of the students could do the work more quickly on their own. However, I want to make sure that we are all on the same page, literally, when a new activity or a new approach to a familiar activity is introduced. Also, I recognize that, in this case, it is the end of the week, and I know that it is easy for one’s mind to wander to more enjoyable activities than finding the main idea of a paragraph. This approach is my attempt to split the difference between the real and the ideal.

I pause when we arrive at the **Example Paragraph** at the bottom of the page. “We are going to work this example together,” I say. “I’ll read the paragraph aloud while you read it silently, then you will select the answer that you believe expresses the main idea.” I proceed as promised

without alerting them to the fact that the correct answer and the shortcomings of the distractors are explained on the following page. When they have all made their selections, I call their attention to this fact and give them time to read the explanations. I ask if there are any questions or confusions about the activity and when no one responds, I tell them to push on with the paragraphs that follow.

As is always the case, some students work more quickly than others, but I want to end the session, and our first week together, on a collaborative note, so when I notice that everyone has completed at least two of the paragraphs I get their attention and we proceed together. I call on Jee-Wha, who is one of the stronger readers, and ask her to read Passage 1 aloud. When she has finished, I ask for a show of hands to indicate their choice for main idea as I read each of the four statements following the paragraph. I then indicate the correct answer (d) (students with the ebook will already know this) and give them a chance to ponder. I am hoping that the students whose answers initially differed from the correct one will ask for clarification, but they all seem satisfied, so we continue. It is, after all, only the first week, but I'm confident that as we continue the term together, they will learn that I want them to speak up when their understanding of a reading differs from that of others.

We work a few more paragraphs together in this fashion, and as the period comes to a close I ask them to finish the paragraph exercises at home and I encourage them to review vocabulary over the weekend.

Discussion

This is a fictionalized (and somewhat idealized) narrative, of course, but it represents the spirit in which we have written *Reader's Choice*, and it illustrates the approach we take to teaching and learning. Let us examine some of the attributes of the classroom just described.

Creating Connections. The teacher has provided a safe environment for authentic relationships, in which everyone is encouraged to make connections with each other, with the readings, and with the authors of pieces they read. There is a respect for diversity of experience and opinion, and there is an opportunity for people to thoughtfully develop the identity they present to others. Everyone—teacher and students—is encouraged to learn from everyone else.

Reflection and Decision Making. Literacy is presented here as an active, problem-posing, and problem-solving process, one in which there is a variety of answers to every situation. The reading task shapes the approach that teacher and students take. The subway map is treated as a tool for getting around in a big city, and web pages as tools for getting information; the article on how we sleep is used as an opportunity for exploring personal habits in light of historical research. Vocabulary and grammar work are treated as tools for comprehension, rather than solely as ends in themselves.

Teamwork and Collaborative Problem Solving. Reading and writing are explored as an interactional process, one in which individual decision making is negotiated with others, and in which meaning is emergent in the discourse, rather than existing “out there” to be discovered. Classroom dynamics change to fit the task, and everyone is assumed to bring something to the table. That is, the teacher may be the most proficient English speaker in the room most of the time, but everyone is an expert on something, and everyone has areas of ignorance. Literacy is treated as a social as well as a psychological phenomenon, one that occurs inside individuals' heads but is mediated by interpersonal interaction. Meaning is emergent in the process, always being constructed, rather than lurking beneath the words to be discovered.

Student Choice and Engagement. The class is presented as an opportunity for people to bring their interests and concerns to the table, a place where everyone has a say in tasks and topics.

Comprehension occurs when individuals bring their knowledge and experience to bear on the task at hand.

Shifting Roles and Responsibilities. Teaching and learning in this class are responsibilities, not roles. Everyone is an expert on something, and everyone is ignorant and willing to learn about something else. As teachers, it is our responsibility to organize time and orchestrate interaction. Sometimes the best role for this is the one of teacher as conventionally understood—standing at the head of the class explaining a language point at the board. As facilitators, we make possible a range of interaction and learning. At other times, we make an important contribution to our students' learning when we assume the role of participant, contributing our two cents' worth along with everyone else. And there are times when we put ourselves in the position of learner, submitting to students' superior knowledge on matters where they have more expertise.

Textbook as Tool. The text is a tool for learning—sometimes a lens for looking at the world, sometimes a lever for getting something done. We shift from focused language skills to reading skill development utilizing the exercises that are most appropriate for each. If we see that a particular selection does not seem to be going anywhere, we drop it and go on to something else. We keep our eye on the progress students are making and adjust our work accordingly. The book lends itself to mixing and matching readings and language exercises. With the exception of the **Stems and Affixes** work in skills units, we do not worry about doing exercises in order; we jump around according to what kinds of skills and strategies seem to be required by the classroom context. We integrate skills exercises and readings, working back and forth between units to vary the pace and maintain interest. We remember that we are teaching people, not covering material.