

## Some ideas about planning and teaching using ECRIF

by Ruby Eichenour and Mary Scholl and some other unnamed souls.  
(Thanks!)

**ECRIF:** Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, Fluency

- It's a framework for understanding learning
- It's a lesson planning framework
- It can be used to assess where a learner is in his/her relationship to the material
- It can be used as a guide to determine what kind of corrective feedback would be useful for the learner.
- ECRIF is NOT a linear experience or framework, although at times can be used that way

### **E**NCOUNTER:

The encounter phase of learning is the first time a learner encounters new material or information. It is like when a light bulb goes off for the first time and **the learner becomes aware** that a particular word or structure or aspect of language exists. In PPU framework it is the Presentation. Very often the Encounter will be prefaced and enriched by activating the learner's background knowledge, or finding out what they already know. There are a number of techniques for helping learners encounter. Here are a few. What would you add?

- Teacher fronted/controlled deductive or inductive presentation
- Storytelling with or without realia, role play, pictures, recordings, etc. where learner hears or experiences target vocabulary or language point and then has to notice it
- Matching exercises
- Categorizing, sorting, predicting
- Students brainstorming and offering what they know about a topic
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**Little awareness and warning:** Just because a teacher gives information doesn't mean that the learner encounters it. We have to look at what happens inside the learner to make sure that the encounter happens. What can we do to help learners wake up and notice new language bits?

**Little and important awareness:** even though we have an "encounter" stage in the lesson it is entirely possible that a learner won't encounter what we intend them to

encounter until a different part of the lesson. Stay Awake! Pay attention! When you notice that a learner is encountering the vocabulary in your R or I activities you can go back and help them clarify and do a quick controlled practice to make sure they get it before diving back into the freer practice! What can we do as teachers to notice when learners are encountering language in phases of lessons that we have planned to be for remembering, internalization or fluency?

## CLARIFY:

Clarify is something that happens *inside* the learner; when the learner is actually asking questions about what is right, how to say a word, how to spell it or what it means. The learner is trying to determine, for example, that the meaning of a vocabulary word or pronunciation is that it is this not that, or that a certain grammar construction is used here not there. Teachers of course assist in clarifying, and check or assess learners' understanding of material.

There are a number of ways that teachers can try and get students to clarify language bits if they aren't already doing so. Here are a few. What would you add?

- Have students do a matching activity, but make sure there is some sort of ambiguity or extra answers in the task so that learners will have to show their understanding as well as the places they don't understand.
- Have students show what they know-understand about language by having them identify correct and incorrect answers.
- Ask students Concept Checking or comprehension checking questions (see below)
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One way that that teachers check comprehension is with comprehension checking questions, or CCQ's.

### 4 KINDS OF CCQ'S

- Non-verbal affirmation—You don't need a verbal response from the students. "Point to the supermarket."
- Positive/negative "Is this a supermarket?" "Can I buy bread at the supermarket?"
- Discrimination "If I want to buy bread, do I go to the pharmacy or the supermarket?"
- Short answer "What is the name of a local supermarket?"

Notes about CCQ's:

1. They are used to check the understanding of anything that learners have encountered or been presented: vocab, grammar, appropriateness, etc. They are also EXTREMELY handy to check if Ss understand instructions for an activity, project, or assignment.
2. It is helpful to write out CCQ's at first in your lesson plan, until using them starts to be natural.

**Little warning:** Just because a teacher asks the students questions or gives them a task that gets them to show or clarify their understanding and the learner answers, it doesn't mean that the learner is clarifying. We have to look at what happens inside the learner to make sure that clarification happens. We have to see if they are really asking themselves the question or if they are creating their own questions. What can we do to create space, attitudes and opportunities for learners to be curious about the language they encounter?

## REMEMBER:

This is the first step in committing new material to memory. It is usually characterized by repetition, drilling, and referring back to support materials such as models or prompts.

### TYPICAL ACTIVITIES FOR REMEMBERING:

- Drilling
- Gap fill or cloze
- Information gap
- Searches
- Scrambled words, sentences
- Guessing games
- Matching
- Reading scripts and dialogues

Note about remembering: The activities for this stage of learning are also called *controlled practice*. In these activities the teacher usually controls the task and the language that is used in the task.. The learner has a lot of support, and little or no choice in how to successfully complete the activity or exercise.

## INTERNALIZE:

When a learner internalizes material, it is committed to long-term memory. After material or information has been internalized, learners no longer has to refer to support materials in order to remember because they can refer to the information that is stored in their own memory. Continued practice is needed to help internalize new language or information; the practice however differs from the remembering stage in that it now will be freer, less controlled practice with the learner making more choices in how they are using the information and relying less on outside support.

### TYPICAL ACTIVITIES FOR INTERNALIZATION:

- Guessing games
- Information gaps
- Storytelling/role play
- Short answer activities
- Projects
- Structured discussions
- Card games

Notes about how to stage activities to remember and internalize:

Learners go through a process of putting target language into short term memory and then longer term memory in order to prepare for later communication by practicing the language in various ways moving from "teacher-controlled" to "learner-initiated" activities.

<b>SAFE</b>	⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔	<b>RISKY</b>
<b>Controlled production</b>	⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔	<b>Independent production</b>
<b>More time for rehearsal</b>	⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔	<b>Less time and more spontaneous production</b>
<b>Slower production</b>	⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔	<b>Faster production</b>
<b>Shorter chunks of language</b>	⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔	<b>Longer chunks of language</b>
<b>Greater predictability</b>	⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔⇔	<b>Less predictability</b>

## FLUENCY:

In this stage of learning, learners are using new material and information fluidly, in accordance with their current understanding and internalized grasp of the material. It is the stage where they freely test internalized knowledge and spontaneously produce the target language creatively in a personal, real-life communication tasks.

### TYPICAL FLUENCY ACTIVITIES:

- Guessing games
- Fluency lines, circles
- Debates
- Role play
- Information gap
- Discussions

Note: While corrective feedback is useful at the practice stages of language learning, no corrective feedback is offered during fluency activities, because it interrupts the flow of language production.

⊙ **REMEMBER:** ECRIF is not a linear framework. Learners find themselves practicing fluency before they have internalized target language. They go back to clarify something that is not fully understood, then double back to drill or practice fluency. After learners have internalized the meaning of a structure, they encounter a new meaning or use of the same structure which again leads them to clarify, remember, etc.

Since ECRIF is not linear, the Teacher orders the stages of the lesson based upon student learning. It may be that a teacher chooses to start lessons with fluency practice, or returns to pronunciation drilling based upon the assessment of learner production in the internalization or fluency stage of the lesson.

### **FLUENCY (or USE) TASKS:**

While fluency tasks may stand alone, as a warm-ups or even as the content of an entire class period, they can't be successfully undertaken by learners unless the learners have been well-prepared for the task. If the fluency task includes new target language, then teachers must prepare students with rich, varied practice before fluency. If the fluency task includes new language outside the target language, that non-target language must be available for Ss to reference. When teachers give instructions for the fluency tasks (or any tasks) they must make both the STRUCTURE and the CONTENT of the activity clear to the learners.

#### **The Criteria for Fluency Tasks—**

- a. Learners demonstrate the ability to reach the student learning objective.
- b. The task is creative, personal and/or real-life context
- c. Communication is meaningful and authentic
- d. Accuracy and fluency both present and relevant to the task
- e. Learners are able to choose some or all of the language they use.
- f. Learners have a clear reason to listen and reason to speak to each other
- g. Visual support for target language is removed; visual support for support language is accessible.
- h. Teacher provides structure, students provide content
- i. Teacher involvement is minimal. The teacher gives instructions and gets students going and then steps out to assess students' abilities. The teacher only intervenes when there is a problem with communication or a quick question. The teacher only responds to errors or mistakes that keep the Ss from communicating.
- j. The task has an unpredictable ending.

Not all the criteria will be present all the time, however, it is essential that Ss have a clear reason to speak and a clear reason to listen for in order for it to a fluency task.

ONE OF THE KEYS to assuring the success of any game or activity is to try it out in advance on coworkers or friends. This way the teacher knows if he/she understands the game or not, and if it works according to his/her understanding of it.

### **SOME GAMES, ACTIVITIES, ETC. THAT CAN BE USED FOR FLUENCY TASKS:**

#### **THE NEVER ENDING BOARD GAME**

The never ending board game is a non-competitive board game that has no end—players just go around and around the board.

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE GAME:** Use a version of the following game board (one copy of the game for each pair or group of players), a die for throwing numbers to indicate how many spots to move, and markers to move (one for each player or players can share a marker for the board.) Players throw the die, then they enter the board wherever they want to start. Next they answer questions or follow instructions which are written on the squares where they land.

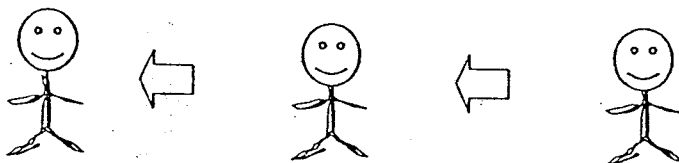
	<p>NEVER ENDING BOARD GAME</p>						

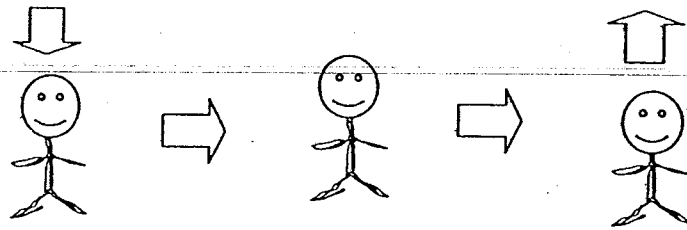
**CONTENT OF THE GAME:** The teacher prepares the board with content relating to the lesson; it could be anything from grammar and vocab or a unit or course review, to literary discussion. By designating some squares as "Pick a blue card" for example, the teacher can expand the content covered by the game (because the cards will have more questions or instructions.)

**NOTE:** This game can also be a practice game. Remember to make it a fluency game you need have a reason to listen structured into the game.

### MINI DEBATES

Debaters stand in two lines facing each other. Between each pair is an object (a toy or a pencil for example.) The teacher will call out a debate theme: "Rice is a better food than potatoes." Whoever is the first to grab the object claims that particular point of view to debate. The other person has to debate the *opposite* opinion. (Potatoes are a better food than rice.) After a certain amount of time (perhaps one minute) the teacher calls time, and everyone rotates one place to the right. Then the teacher calls the next topic.





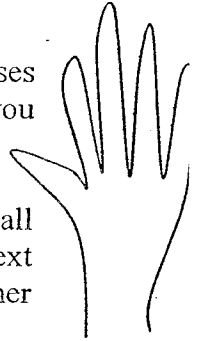
**ROTATION OF SPEAKERS**  
(Handy for all kinds of fluency tasks)

## I HAVE NEVER.....

This is not only a great fluency task but a great party game.

**STRUCTURE OF THE GAME:** Everyone sits in a circle and holds up their hand. Each finger is worth one point and every player starts with 5 points. When a player loses a point, you lower a finger. The last person with points wins. You lose a point when you **DISAGREE** with the speaker. When you are out of fingers, you're out of the game.

**CONTENT OF THE GAME:** First player says, "I have never..... (been to a baseball game) Anyone who **HAS** been to a baseball game has to lower a finger. Then the next person takes a turn, etc. Of course, the content can be modified to other grammar, other situations, and other levels.



## BAMBOOZLE

It's worth it trying to figure out these instructions because it's a fun game. The game goes by many names: here is a version called **HOT SEAT** posted on the Internet by *Callum Robertson*:

### Hot

This is a good activity for getting your students going in the morning. It is also excellent for reviewing vocabulary.

- First, split your class into different teams (two is best, but if you have a large class, any number could be used).
- Sit the students facing the board.
- Then take an empty chair - one for each team - and put it at the front of the class, facing the team members. These chairs are the 'hot seats'
- Then get one member from each team to come up and sit in that chair, so they are facing their team-mates and have their back to the board.
- As the teacher, have a list of vocabulary items that you want to use in this game.
- Take the first word from that list and write it clearly on the board.
- The aim of the game is for the students in the teams to describe that word, using synonyms, antonyms, definitions etc. to their team mate who is in the hot seat - that person can't see the word!

- The student in the hot seat listens to their team mates and tries to guess the word.
- The first hot seat student to say the word wins a point for their team.
- Then change the students over, with a new member of each team taking their place in their team's hot seat.
- Then write the next word...

Note: This can also be done non-competitively. Group members can choose their own word from the review list to quiz their classmate on. Or one person can choose the word and several can be in the hot seat. Etc.

## BLIND POKER

This is similar to Bamboozle.

**STRUCTURE:** In small groups or pairs there is a stack of cards in the center of the table face down. Without looking at what's on the card, a student draws a card and holds it face out on his or her forehead, or above his or her head where he/she can't see it. The other people try to get the person holding the card to say the word or phrase on the card without mentioning any part of the word or phrase.

**CONTENT:** The cards have vocabulary words, idioms, or phrases on them. Clues can be definitions, mimes, prompts, explanations, descriptions (it's a short word that rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_), etc.

## QUESTION MINGLE

There are tons of uses for mingles in fluency exercises. The structure of this one is easy to learn.

**STRUCTURE:** Each Ss has a question on a card or slip of paper—one they wrote or the teacher wrote. They ask someone their question, and they answer that person's question. Then the two exchange papers and find another partner. That way, even if you talk to the same person several times, you are always answering a different question.

**CONTENT:** Again, there are tons of possibilities; the questions (or commands) can relate to anything you're studying at any level. It can be review of material, getting to know you questions, using functions (example regret: what is something you regret doing or not doing?), practicing superlatives (what was the best/worst date you ever went on?), miming vocabulary (headache, playing basketball), eliciting dialog responses, etc. etc. Used in reading a novel, Ss can write 2 or 3 comprehension questions on a card for homework, and they can do this activity as a warm-up. It really helps to get everyone on the "same page" and Ss help each other clarify so they can be more successful moving forward in the reading.

## QUESTION TABLE GAME

**STRUCTURE:** Groups of 6 or less. Ss write 2 or 3 questions on pieces of paper or cards. Q's are shuffled and stacked in the center of the table face down. In turn Ss draw



a card and read the question. Then they choose who will answer randomly: roll a die (each player has a number), or choose a name of a bag (to which everyone has previously contributed a piece of paper with his/her name.) It's important that the Q is asked first and there is a random way to choose who will answer to build in a reason to listen. If Ss then have to ask follow-up questions of the speaker, there is yet another opportunity to listen and speak.

CONTENT: As above, anything will work: Review, getting to know you (GTKY), conditionals, various types of question formation, etc.

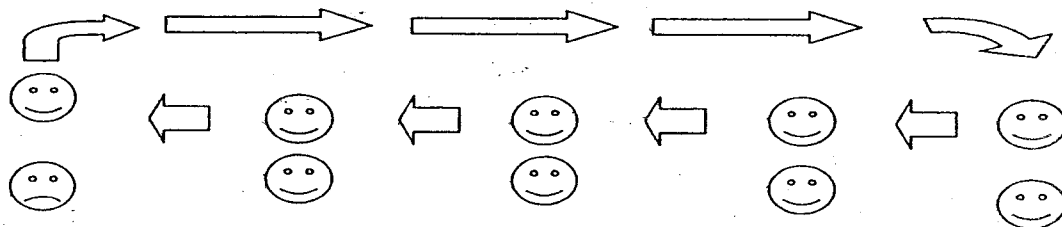
NOTE: Using questions like this can be combined with the Never Ending Board Game.

## INFORMATION GAP INTERVIEW

Interviews can be used in many ways (mingles, fluency lines, etc.) and for many reasons (GTKY, fluency, practice, brainstorming, review, etc.) This particular form is designed so that Ss are initially left without all the information they need.

STRUCTURE: 2 lines facing each other—either two straight lines or a doughnut (concentric circles with inner circle facing partners in outer circle who are facing in.) Ss fill in the names of all classmates (in their particular group if the class is divided) on their interview rubrics. They proceed to interview each classmate in the opposite line, then they have to continue the interview with the last person in order to find out from each other the info they are still missing (Ss do not get to personally interview the Ss in their own line.)

This time, only one line moves one person to the right on each rotation. If you are using 2 straight lines, the person on the end must rotate to the head of the line each time.



Fluency line rotation: One line moves, other line stands still

CONTENT: Anything you can put into an interview: personal info and family, preferences; short answers, yes and no questions. Ex. What's your favorite color, food, book, TV show? How many brothers/sisters do you have, where are you from, what languages do you speak, what do you want to study in college?

## GOSSIP

~~STRUCTURE:~~ Everyone has some information, a strip of news or a rumor on a slip of paper. They memorize their info, then share their tidbit of info with classmates in a mingle. Students then reconstruct what they know by collaborating to create a whole story, a whole character profile, a whole event, etc.

CONTENT: May work best at high levels with open content related to a theme or topic, or with a style of storytelling as narratives; however, it can work at lower levels with creating simple characters and descriptions: for example describing a character with likes and dislikes, describing a room, describing a town, etc.

## RIVER TALKING

River talking is talking like a river; it is the verbal equivalent to freewriting (or river writing.) When you talk like a river, you just keep talking as a river keeps on flowing or a brook keeps on babbling. As in freewriting, if you don't know what to say (or write) you say that, "I don't know what to say," or repeat the topic, "Family family family, ok, I have a brother..."

STRUCTURE: While river talk can be used for other parts of ECRIF, when it is used for fluency, there has to be a reason to listen. Therefore, the structure for fluency has to include a listening component. The speaker is given a topic. At the end of a designated amount of time (the teacher may call time at 1 or 2 minutes), the listener then asks 2 follow-up questions, or asks to know more about 2 things they heard. Ex. "What did you mean when you said your brother was a jerk?" Or, "Tell me more about your pet ferret." Then partners switch.

CONTENT: Again, river talk may seem to be geared to higher levels, but at low levels Ss can talk about family, friends, and interests, for example. River talk also can be used for review, to prepare for a presentation, etc.

## TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

This is another great game for the classroom or for parties with friends.

STRUCTURE: In a fluency line or circle each S tells a partner 3 "facts" about him/herself; one of the statements is a lie. The partner then asks follow-up questions about each of the "facts" to encourage their partner to elaborate on the stories. The partner then guesses the lie. Rotate partners.

CONTENT: At high levels the content can be open, at lower levels it can be more controlled; likes and dislikes, facts about family, events that happened in past, "I have never...", etc.

## OTHER FLUENCY CONFIGURATIONS

1. Ss sit back to back—good for find the differences, information gaps, and giving instructions as in drawing a picture or locating something on a map.

2. Face to face pairs and small groups—giving instructions and following instructions—for example Ss may ask each other to build a structure; they may ask their partners to move an object on a map or through a maze, etc.