

Principle for Design: Experience, Integrity, Freedom

We are language teachers. Our method is the **Graded Direct Method (GDM)** A better way for learning is here. Our teaching is with *English Through Pictures (EP)* and GDM. The better way of learning is made with our principles as GDM teachers. GDM grew out of I.A. Richards and Christine Gibson's teaching with the EP books. With **Ogden's Basic English (OBE)** and with their learners they found (EP3p100) principles for the control of growth. With good principles in control of growth we are able to make the best form possible. The principles for GDM's growth came from *within* the work of learning to use language well. (EP3p69) The form is good as long as the teachers do not let in anything from *without* to have bad effects (influence) on the growth of learning (or of the learner's mind). My feeling is that GDM has become de-formed by (it has taken on a bad form because of) influences from *without* (outside of the work at hand). The *Ideology of English Conversation* (an essay by Douglas Lummis) points to the shallow substance (talk about things of no value) in Japan's *Eikaiwa* industry. In *English Next* (A British Council publication by David Graddol) there is a discussion about English education's growth from "a largely 19th century creation" as "designed to produce failure." [DG-EN] With native speakers as the model the learner is always an outsider and never good enough: this bad effect is good for advertising (see Annie Leonard's *Story of Stuff* [AL-SoS]) it is not the sort of effect good teachers desire. Good teachers, with love for their learners, aim for good education. [BR-OE-02-080]

We will see how to make a good education in our ideas about and experiences with GDM. The EP books grew out of Ogden's Basic English. In *How to Read a Page* (1942) I.A. Richards put Ogden's words on page seventeen: "Education is the expansion of experience by experts." In *Practical Criticism* (1929) I.A. Richards wrote about bad interpretations (with no support from the actual words on the page). The bad readers were at the highest level of learning (Cambridge University). On page 232 He says "... the chief cause of ill-appropriate, stereotyped reactions is withdrawal from experience." So the learners at one of the best, or most expensive, universities in the world were not near enough to their experience to become good readers and users of language. The great writer, Nobel Prize winner in literature as well as a mathematician, Bertrand Russell also saw a need for better learning from experience. In *On Education* (1925) Russell talks about learning from life and that "one of the aims of early education" should be "to make men and women capable of learning from experience." [BR-OE-PREF] So even in the 1920s, before television and the internet put us even farther from our own experiences, it was hard for people to make good use of language, to read well and to make grounded interpretations. Using the EP books, GDM teachers are experts working for the "expansion of experience" so that learners get a good education through language.

We are making a way of education with integrity when we do GDM.

Our teaching grows out of base principles: while making minimal contrasts we go from general to specific(particular) with the words and statements in our teaching. In our classrooms our teaching goes from concrete to abstract. We make use of real things (like tables and seats) and then pictures (line drawings of the real things) and then writing (the letters that show the words for the real things). These principles make the EP books and our teaching **better** than the commercial coursebooks and classrooms of large organizations. Large organizations are not able to design books or teaching with the sort of unity (keeping together well) that I.A. Richards and Christine Gibson were able to design. Albert Camus in *The Rebel* (1954) does writing about "Rebellion and Art" and "Rebellion and the Novel." Camus put these words on page 262: "... better does not mean different, it means **more unified**". With Sheridan Baker's *The Practical Stylist* (1988) learners see how to make their writing more "coherent," which is like "unified." Baker puts these words on page 101: "Gaining coherence is primarily a filling in, or a spelling out, of submerged connections..." With our lessons learners gain coherence and get a more unified experience from the EP books. By going along With our principles we give a coherent sequence of experiences to our learners. The EP books give us a pattern, or scaffold, that we fill in and build from with our lessons. With these principles a good form of the new language is able to grow in the minds of our learners.

We put our principles to work for teaching that has integrity and is able to give pleasure to our learners. Richards put the writing "How does a Poem know when it is finished?" in his 1970 re-working of the book *Poetries and Sciences* (1926, 1935). Richards puts the words of Percy Shelley on page 106. With words from Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry* we see the importance that each lesson "contain within itself the principle of its own integrity." Richards put the words for Samuel Coleridge on the same page, (Shelley was re-working the ideas of Coleridge): "Nothing can permanently please which does not contain within itself the reason why it is so and not otherwise." The EP books and GDM keep on giving pleasure (and good use) to us because they have reason and integrity. In the lessons of good GDM teachers I see why each step is necessary, the lesson has integrity and unity like a good poem or novel.

Good lessons (like poems and living things) get their principles of growth from *within*. They keep true to their natural, organic form. Bad effects from /without/(outside) de-form growth. We must take care that school textbooks designed for wide-scale "high-stakes" testing and the English Conversation industry do not cause a deformation, a loss of unity, or coherency, in GDM teaching. If we keep true to GDM's principles we will always be re-forming our GDM lessons to be better, more unified, more coherent. The learning of a new language is a chance to make a new and better world. But the best, when corrupted (made to go bad, EP3p24), becomes the worst. The GDM teaching that gets its principles of growth from EP and Richards's work is the best, so we

must take much care not to become the worst.[COP]

With GDM, our lessons were great while in the classroom.[fn-great] But now we (sometimes) have to do our teaching on-line. The principle of going from abstract to concrete is not possible when using the screen. We cannot do our learning in the same way as when we are together in the classroom. Looking at a screen and seeing people and things through the internet is abstract. Our learners are not getting concrete experience from which to do their learning. What sort of teaching and learning is possible on-line? We will have to give much thought to this question. For now it is important to keep near to the principles that make our lessons coherent (unified) and let us work with integrity. To see why EP/GDM is better than coursebooks and other methods I look for principles in the books of Edward Tufte. I will keep away from the "design for failure" that David Graddol writes about in *English Next*. [DG-EN] Maybe we can get learning from Richards's *Design for Escape* and, with Free Software,[fn-FSedu] make discoveries for a *Design for Freedom*. I did this writing with a Free Software **editor** called *emacs*. And the writing will be on a Free SNS called *hubzilla*. [fn-hub] My hope is that GDM teachers will be able to do work together with integrity and with the aim of helping our learners's growth toward becoming free persons.

Endnotes

- [fn-great] GDM lessons are great, they have integrity, to the extent that they are free from the school rules that are corrupted by wide-scale testing and decisions from *without* (outside the work of the learners and teachers in the classroom). GDM lessons are great as long as they keep to their own principles of growth are not de-formed in the way of *corruptio optimi pessima*. [COP]
- [fn-FSedu]
 - <https://www.gnu.org/education/education.en.html>
 - <https://www.gnu.org/education/education.ja.html> 自由ソフトウェアと教育
- [fn-hub] <https://tiksi.net/wiki/bsmall2/GDMWiki/Integrity-Experience-1>

Background: Sources and Quotes

- [DG-EN] <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/english-next>

EFL, as we know it today, is a largely 19th- century creation, though drawing on centuries of experience in teaching the classical languages. EFL tends to highlight the importance of learning about the culture and society of native speakers; it stresses the centrality of methodology in discussions of effective learning; and emphasises the importance of emulating native speaker language behaviour...

The target language is always someone else's mother tongue. The learner is constructed as a linguistic tourist—allowed to visit, but without rights of residence and required always to respect the superior authority of native speakers.

DESIGNED TO PRODUCE FAILURE

...

Although EFL has become technologised, and has been transformed over the years by communicative methods, these have led only to a modest improvement in attainment by learners. The model, in the totality of its pedagogic practices, may even have historically evolved to produce perceived failure. Foreign languages, in many countries, were largely learned to display social position and to indicate that your family was wealthy enough to have travelled to other countries...

- pp 82-83

- [AL-SoS] <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/>

We each see more advertisements in one year than a people 50 years ago saw in a lifetime.⁵⁶ And if you think about it, what is the point of an ad except to make us unhappy with what we have. So, 3,000 times a day, we're told that our hair is wrong, our skin is wrong, clothes are wrong, our furniture is wrong, our cars are wrong, we are wrong but that it can all be made right if we just go shopping.⁵

- [BR-OE-02-080] <https://russell-j.com/beginner/OE02-080.HTM>

The teacher should love his children better than his State or his Church; otherwise he is not an ideal teacher.

教師は、子供を国家や教会よりも愛さなければならない。さもなければ、理想的な教師とはいえない。

- [BR-OE-PREF] <https://russell-j.com/beginner/OE-PREF.HTM>

... to make men and women capable of learning from experience should be one of the aims which early education should keep most prominently in view.

... 成人した男女が経験から学ぶことができるようにすることは、幼年期の教育がとりわけ目を離さないでおく(心に留めておく)べき目標の一つでなければならない。

- [COP] I.A. Richards's essay *Emotive Meaning Again* is in the book *Speculative Instruments*. In the essay we see *corruption optimi pessima*

which is an important idea from the writings of Ivan Illich and E.F. Schumacher also.

- Ivan Illich on Universities and *corruptio optimi pessima*
 - http://www.davidtinapple.com/illich/1991_text_and_university.PDF

For years I've been striving to make a suitable translation of the Latin adage, *corruptio optimi pessima*. ...

The tradition of *ecclesia semper reformanda*, a community that can purge itself of the worst, which is the good corrupted, is one of our great western heritages. In the belief of my revered teacher, Gerhart Ladner, it is of early Christian origin, even in its most secular forms. Why should we not aim at resurrecting this ancient tradition, under the guise of a reformation of learned reading? Why not let the sense of the Latin phrase be Englished with the words of Shakespeare, the words that end his ninety-fourth sonnet:

For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

What I would like to stand for today is the preservation of what is in good taste - enjoyable reading, embodied reading, with an attitude before the book that echoes in the inner senses. I seek a reading that nourishes, which strengthens when well digested...

- E.F. Schumacher on Education and *corruptio optimi pessima*.
 - <http://www.fearofnature.com/small-is-beautiful-economics-as-if-people-mattered-schumacher>

The problems of education are merely reflections of the deepest problems of our age. They cannot be solved by organization, administration, or the expenditure of money, even though the importance of all these is not denied. We are suffering from a metaphysical disease, and cure must therefore be metaphysical. Education which fails to clarify our central convictions that are in disorder, and, as long as the present anti-metaphysical temper persists, the disorder will grow worse. Education, far from ranking as man's greatest resource, will then be an agent of destruction, in accordance with the principle *corruptio optimi pessima* ["corruption of the best is the worst"].