Figure 20.7. (from H. D. Brown 1992: p. 362)

EXERCISE 6

What does Lucy do every day? What is she doing now? Choose the correct form of the verb.

"Lucy Mendoza is a nurse. She is never bored because she is always busy. She usually (**1.** works/is working) in a hospital, but sometimes she (**2.** works/is working) in a special home for old people. Lucy (**3.** enjoys/is enjoying) her work every day, and she never (takes/is taking) a day off. She is always happy. She is never sad. Today she (**4.** doesn't work/isn't working) in the hospital. She (**5.** works/is working) in the home for old people. Right now she (**6.** talks/is talking) to a woman. The woman is very lonely because her children never (**7.** visit/are visiting)."

What about you?
What do you usually do every day?
What are you doing right now?

Please turn back to pages 104–7 in Chapter 7 and review the sequence of grammatical and communication skills of the *Vistas* series (H. D. Brown 1992). This "scope and sequence" chart is illustrative of a typical sequence of grammatical structures in a basal ESL series. In arranging the order of structures, the principles of simplicity and frequency were followed. Therefore, the more "complex" tenses and clause formations come later in the series. While one could quibble with certain elements and suggest alternative permutations, nevertheless learners' success in a course like this seems to be more a factor of (a) clear, unambiguous presentation of material and (b) opportunity for meaningful, interactive practice, rather than a factor of a grammar point presented a week earlier or later.

A "WORD" ABOUT VOCABULARY TEACHING

One of the casualties of the early approaches to CLT was a loss of a concerted focus on the lexical forms of language. While traditional language-teaching methods highlighted vocabulary study with lists, definitions, written and oral drills, and flash

Figure 20.8. (from H. D. Brown 1992: p. 361)

Lesson 2

What are you doing next week?

Preparing the students

A. Introduce future time expressions and the future with the present continuous tense. On the board, write the following sentence. Underline *is* and *-ing*:

Mark is driving to Colorado tomorrow.

Tell the students that you want them to help you continue to write a story about Mark. Write another sentence on the board:

He's leaving early in the morning, and he's taking a friend with him.

Now have the class suggest other lines for the story. Write them on the board. Finally, call on students to underline all the examples of the present continuous tense.

B. Review the word *let's* used in making suggestions or invitations. Have the students perform actions which you suggest. For example, with appropriate gestures, say "Let's stand up and stretch." (The students stand up and stretch.) Make several other suggestions and have the class carry out the actions. Be sure that you participate.

Presentation: Conversation

A. Have the students look at the picture. Establish the context—Carlos and Tetsuo are talking about a school break. Read the conversation or play the cassette. Have the students listen as they read along silently in their books.

B. Answer any questions students have about vocabulary or structures. Introduce or review the words *during, break, stay, go away, beach, vacation*, and *rest*. Then have the students close their books. Ask them questions about the conversation. For example:

Do Carlos and Tetsuo have a break soon?
Are they both staying in Dallas?
Where are they going?
Why's Carlos going to Los Angeles?
When's he leaving?
Do they think they need a rest?
Are they both going to drink a soda?
How much does a soda cost?

C. In pairs, have the students practice the conversation. Encourage them to use their own ideas by changing the names of places, times, and activities. Call on several pairs to present their conversations to the class.

cards, there was a period of time when "the teaching and learning of vocabulary [were] undervalued" (Zimmerman 1997: 5). In the zeal for natural, authentic classroom tasks and activities, vocabulary focus was swept under the rug. Further, as teachers more and more perceived their role as facilitators and guides, they became more reluctant to take the directive and sometimes intrusive steps to turn students' focus to lexical form.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, we saw a revival of systematic attention to vocabulary learning across a number of proficiency levels and contexts. Ranging from very explicit focus, such as that found in Michael Lewis's (1993, 1997)

Lexical Approach, to more indirect approaches in which vocabulary is incorporated into communicative tasks, attention to lexical forms is now more central to the development of language curricula (see Nation & Newton 1997). Research confirms that more than incidental exposure may be important for second language acquisition, with "good grounds for intervening at the metacognitive level" (Singleton 1997: 222).

Current practices in teaching vocabulary, however, are not simply a rebirth of the same methods of half a century ago. Rather than viewing vocabulary items as a long and boring list of words to be defined and memorized, lexical forms are seen in their central role in contextualized, meaningful language. Learners are guided in specific ways to internalize these important building blocks of language. Below are some guidelines for the communicative treatment of vocabulary instruction.

1. Allocate specific class time to vocabulary learning.

In the hustle and bustle of our interactive classrooms, sometimes we get so caught up in lively group work and meaningful communication that we don't pause to devote some attention to words. After all, words are basic building blocks of language; in fact, survival level communication can take place quite intelligibly when people simply string words together—without applying any grammatical rules at all! So, if we're interested in being communicative, words are among the first priorities.

2. Help students to learn vocabulary in context.

The best internalization of vocabulary comes from encounters (comprehension or production) with words within the context of surrounding discourse. Rather than isolating words and/or focusing on dictionary definitions, attend to vocabulary within a communicative framework in which items appear. Students will then associate new words with a meaningful context to which they apply.

3. Play down the role of bilingual dictionaries.

A corollary to the above is to help students to resist the temptation to overuse their bilingual dictionaries. In recent years, with the common availability of electronic pocket dictionaries, students are even more easily tempted to punch in a word they don't know and get an instant response. It is unfortunate that such practices rarely help students to internalize the word for later recall and use.

4. Encourage students to develop strategies for determining the meaning of words.

Included in the discussion of learning strategies in Chapter 14 are references to learning words. A number of "clues" are available to learners to develop "word attack" strategies. Figure 20.9 provides a detailed taxonomy of such strategies with examples.

5. Engage in "unplanned" vocabulary teaching.

In all likelihood, most of the attention you give to vocabulary learning will be unplanned: those moments when a student asks about a word or when a word has appeared that you feel deserves some attention. These impromptu moments are

Figure 20.7. (from Kruse 1987: 315–16)

A PROGRAM FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

1. *Goals*
   a. To improve the reading vocabulary skills of ESL students.
   b. To teach ESL students word-building skills.
   c. To teach ESL students to guess word meanings from context clues.
2. *Word building*
   a. *Suffixes:* It may be a good idea simply to give a list of these to the student for memorization. Roots used for this section should be familiar.
      (1) Practice in suffix recognition, i.e., simple exercises in isolation of suffixes:

      good*ness* famili (ar) (ly)

      (2) Lesson and practice in noting grammatical changes effected by suffixes. Word tables might be very useful here.

      Adj. (good)+ness=N (goodness)
      Adj. (gloomy)+ly=Adv. (gloomily)

      (3) Practice in word *formation* through exercises in which the student adds and subtracts suffixes. Again the word table is useful. The student fills in the appropriate forms of a word by manipulating suffixes. It is of great importance to group words by the way they form variations so that all words being studied at one time add the same suffixes in the same manner and regularity of change can be emphasized.
   b. *Prefixes:* These are more varied and less regular and therefore should not be presented until after suffixes have been mastered. A list of these can also be memorized.
      (1) Practice in prefix recognition.
      (2) Lesson and practice in meaning changes resulting from the use of prefixes, e.g., *in* + *formal* = not formal=casual. This is fairly difficult. The examples used should be straightforward in the early stages. Here again, the groupings must be of words that add the same prefixes in the same manner to achieve the same type of meaning. Groupings like *un* in *untie* and *un* in *unfair* must be avoided. As these are mastered, more difficult items requiring progressively higher degrees of interpretation may be introduced.
      (3) Practice in word formation:
         (a) Addition of prefixes. These exercises should progress in difficulty. E.g., Make a word meaning "not natural" (*unnatural*).
         (b) Addition of prefixes and suffixes.
   c. *Roots*: These are quite difficult and should not be taught at all unless the student is fairly advanced and flexible in his approach to word forms. For a good list of Latin and Greek roots, refer to Dechant (1970, Ch. 12).
      (I) Recognizing roots. Isolation of root forms.
      (2) Effect of prefixes and suffixes on root forms.
3. *Definition clues*
   a. *Parentheses and footnotes* X (Y); $X^{*}{}_{y}$
      (1) A lesson would first be given on these two types of clues, stressing their physical structure and how to read them correctly.
      (2) Practice in recognizing these clues. E.g., Draw a line under the words in parentheses: *The panther* (a large black animal related to a cat) *is very dangerous and deadly.*
      (3) Practice in using the clue. Here exercises of the following sort are useful:

The principal (main) *reason for wearing clothes is to keep warm.* What is the meaning of *principal* in the sentence?

b. *Synonyms and antonyms*: Most students have studied and enjoy learning words with similar and opposite meanings. The task is to get them to recognize the definitional role these often play.

(1) X *is* Y; X, *that is*, Y. Students can be taught that an unfamiliar word is often defined in a sentence using the copula *be* and a synonym.

(a) Clue recognitions, both of signal words and synonyms. E.g., Underline the signal word is or that is: *A birthday party is an observance,* that is *a remembrance of someone's day of birth.*

(b) Practice in using the clue. Again exercises in producing or recognizing a synonym are useful.

(2) X—Y—; X, *which* is Y; X. *or* Y; X, Y. Appositival constructions. This can be approached in essentially the same manner as the *is* and *that is* clues were.

4. *Inference clues*

These types of clues require a higher level of analytical skill and practice than previous types dealt with. They should be approached slowly, moving from obvious answers to increasingly vague exercises. The ESL student should never be expected to do the same kind of inferring that a native speaker could do, but should be encouraged to go as far as possible as long as the guessing is not allowed to become wild. For all three types of clues (example, summary, and experience) the same method of practice in (i) recognition of clue elements and (ii) obtaining meaning from the elements can be followed.

a. *Example*:

(1) Specific clues: X, *e.g.*, Y; X, *i.e.*, Y; X, *for example*, Y

E.g., *Iran is trying to* restore *many of its ancient monuments. Persepolis, for example, is being partly rebuilt by a group of Italian experts.*

(2) No physical clue.

E.g., *Roberta Flack, Aretha Franklin, and Olivia Newton-John are popular female* vocalists.

b. *Summary:*

(1) Restatement

(a) With a physical clue: . . . X. This Y . . .; . . . X. X is Y.

E.g., *Many products are sold to stop* perspiration. *This wetness that comes from your body whenever you are too warm, work very hard, or are afraid, usually doesn't smell very good.*

(b) Without physical clue.

Either: The same meaning. X, Y. E.g., *He's a really good* athlete. *He plays sports well.*

Or: Opposite meaning. X. (neg) Y. E.g., *He's* bound *to win. He can't lose.*

(2) Information. E.g., *The* forsythia *was covered with the golden flowers that bloom early in the spring.*

c. *Experience:* The reader must decide from his own experiences what is probably meant by a word. E.g., *The old dog* snuffled *and* moped *as he slowly walked from the room.*

very important. Sometimes, they are simply brief little pointers; for example, the word "clumsy" once appeared in a paragraph students were reading and the teacher volunteered:

T: Okay, "clumsy." Does anyone know what that means? [*writes the word on the board*]
Ss: [*silence*]
T: No one? Okay, well, take a look at the sentence it's in. "His clumsy efforts to imitate a dancer were almost amusing." Now, was Bernard a good dancer? [*Mona raises her hand.*] Okay, Mona?
S1: Well, no. He was a very bad dancer, as we see in the next sentence.
T: Excellent! So, what do you think "clumsy" might mean?
S2: Not graceful.
T: Good, what else? Anyone?
S3: Uncoordinated?
T: Great! Okay, so "clumsy" means awkward, ungraceful, uncoordinated. [*writes synonyms on the board*] Is that clear now?
Ss: [*most Ss nod in agreement*]

Sometimes, such impromptu moments may be extended: the teacher gives several examples and/or encourages students to use the word in other sentences. Make sure that such unplanned teaching, however, does not detract from the central focus of activity by going on and on, ad nauseam.

Unfortunately, professional pendulums have a disturbing way of swinging too far one way or the other, and sometimes the only way we can get enough perspective to see these overly long arcs is through hindsight. Hindsight has now taught us that there was some overreaction to the almost exclusive attention that grammar and vocabulary received in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. So-called "natural" approaches in which grammar was considered damaging were overreactive. Advocating the "absorption" of grammar and vocabulary with no overt attention whatsoever to language forms went too far. We now seem to have a healthy respect for the place of form-focused instruction—attention to those basic "bits and pieces" of a language—in an interactive curriculum. And now we can pursue the business of finding better and better techniques for getting these bits and pieces into the communicative repertoires of our learners.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (I) It might be useful to review the section on form-focused instruction and error treatment in *PLLT*, Chapter 8, where background research and terminology are explained.

2. (G) Sometimes grammatical knowledge isn't sufficient to understand "hidden" or implied meanings of what people say or write. Tell pairs to look at the following:
   a. "Oh! That's just great!"
   b. "Good to see you again, Helen. You've lost some weight, haven't you?"
   c. "Brrrr! It's sure cold in this house."

   The "surface" grammatical meaning differs from potential "deep" structure meanings. Ask the pairs to identify those meanings, and, if possible, to think of other examples. Then have them devise a few techniques that could be used to teach such pragmatic aspects of English, and share their ideas with the rest of the class.
3. (I/C) Observe a class in which the teacher uses some form-focused instruction. Evaluate the effectiveness of the class using the five criteria on page 363. Share your observations with the whole class.
4. (G) Assign a separate, different grammar "point" to every *two* pairs and have them do the following: one pair figures out how to teach that point with a deductive approach and describes students for which such an approach is justified; the other pair is directed to do the same with an inductive approach. Pairs then present their suggestions to the whole class for comparison.
5. (C) On page 365, an example of a teacher's intervention is given. Discuss the following as a whole class: Was the teacher's interruption warranted? What are some rules for interruption? (See the section on error treatment in Chapter 17.)
6. (C) On pages 366–67 some justifications are offered for separate grammar classes. Ask the class if they agree with all the reasons. Do they know of any institutions that offer such courses? Do they follow all the criteria listed here?
7. (I) Review the section on error correction in Chapter 17 (pp. 288–94). Observe a class and try to determine if all the principles of error correction were followed. How, specifically, did the teacher treat grammatical (as opposed to vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.) errors?
8. (G/C) A number of grammar-focusing techniques are illustrated at the end of the chapter. Tell groups or pairs, each assigned to one technique, to demonstrate (peer-teach) that technique to the rest of the class. Ask the class to offer collective critiques of what worked well, what didn't, and why.
9. (G/C) Ask pairs to look back at the grammar sequence chart in Chapter 7 (pp. 104–107) and decide if all the grammatical items are in an appropriate sequence. Which items could be placed significantly earlier or later in the course without posing undue difficulty for the students? Pairs will then share their thoughts with the rest of the class.
10. (G) Direct pairs to review the sections of Chapters 14 and 18 that deal with vocabulary acquisition. Then, referring to Kruse's taxonomy (Figure 20.7), tell them to figure out what word-attack skills are appropriate for a context with which they are familiar.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Doughty, Catherine and Williams, Jessica. 1998. *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Coady, James and Huckin, Thomas. 1997. *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: A Rationale for Pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Both of these anthologies offer chapters by different authors, each of whom writes on an aspect of research on, in the first book, classroom focus on form, and in the second, vocabulary learning. They offer excellent overviews of issues with some practical implications for teaching as well.

Nation, Paul (Ed.). 1994. *New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Another in TESOL's useful and practical New Ways series, this volume offers many varieties of vocabulary teaching techniques, each indexed for its appropriateness for proficiency level. It also instructs teachers on the process of lexical acquisition and on strategies for vocabulary learning.

McKay, Sandra. 1985. *Teaching Grammar: Form, Function, and Technique*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Ur, Penny. 1988. *Grammar Practice Activities: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne and Hilles, Sharon. 1988. *Techniques and Resources in Teaching Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

All three of these practical teacher's resource books demonstrate how to combine grammar teaching with a communicative approach. These collections of dozens of lively and motivating techniques are enhanced by the specification of general guidelines for effective teaching toward grammatical points.

Taylor, Linda. 1990. *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.

Allen, Virginia French. 1983. *Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

These two handbooks are collections of numerous techniques for teaching vocabulary. Both give the teacher some background on the place of vocabulary teaching within communicative frameworks.