

Designing Micro-Teaching¹ Sessions for an Initial Teacher Training Course

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Abstract: *This paper deals with micro-teaching. I destine it in priority to the student teachers² who are preparing to teach English as a Foreign/Second language (TEFL/TESL) in secondary schools in the world and Francophone Africa in general and in Benin in particular. In writing it, I pursue two objectives:*

- *First, to explain the concept and practice of micro-teaching;*
- *Secondly, to design some micro-teaching sessions for the benefit of the above mentioned prospective teachers in training.*

Micro-teaching is appropriate for interactive learning. In interactive classroom, the students³ act both as the performers, taking up more of the talking-time of the class, and simultaneously as the audience: instead of students always directing their comments to the teacher, as in the traditional classroom, the students speak more to one another. The teacher joins the class as a member of the audience while also facilitating communication. The rationale for this is simple: the students are those who need the practice, not the teacher. The teacher (director of this planned, staged event that we call "class") knows that mastery of language requires frequent practice by the students. I have structured this paper around four Sections.

Keywords: *microteaching, enseignants professionnels/de carrière, formation, responsabilité, habiletés, langue.*

1. INTRODUCTION

To start with, I would like to expose my rationale for choosing to deal with training in general and with micro-teaching in particular in this paper. Since teaching, learning and training go side by side, I would like to quote Gebhard's words when he says:

Identifying what behaviours result in student learning can be so difficult that, after reviewing most of the classroom process-product research on teaching up to the early 1970 s, Dunkin and Biddle (1974) concluded that we still have very little idea about what good or effective teaching actually is⁴.

The same applies for training. In fact, how much a trainee or the trainees are affected by a training session should not be measured up in terms of the financial support involved. I strongly believe that

¹ A training concept that originated in the Stanford Teacher Education Program in the early 1960s. This model was derived from the observation and analysis of a large number of lessons across the curriculum. From the analysis, a series of fundamental skills needed by all teachers was established. These focused on the following: set induction, variation, questioning, reacting, and closure. I personally think that it is a concept that developing countries need to implement in their teacher training schools to enhance the teaching abilities of their prospective teachers for better results in the teaching/learning process.

² In this paper, I have used simultaneously and indifferently the terms: 'student teacher (s)', 'prospective teachers', 'teachers in training', 'trainees' to designate the same category of persons.

³ In this paper, the words 'students', 'learners' and 'pupils' have been used indifferently. Where they appear in singular, I have decided to use the male gender 'he or him', to avoid using the formula 'he/she' all through the work. "

⁴ Gebhard, Jerry G. 1984. *Models of Supervision: Choices*. TESOL Quarterly 18 (3). 501-512.

the effectiveness of training is a long term process, which depends on the factors that each of the participants, the trainer, the trainee, brings to it. The standard of our education, our previous training background, our understanding of the nature of teaching in general and of the English language teaching in particular, our interest in improvement, and, above all, our interest in English, its people and culture, are predominant factors that we should always consider when we approach the teaching of English. We foreigners who teach English or train English teachers, as professionals, have the heavy responsibility, as well, to help our people to have access to the English culture and civilization. Therefore, all the methods, including micro-teaching, which can make us master the language and improve our teaching abilities, should be investigated and encouraged. Preparing our trainees to become very good teachers is certainly a good strategy towards this improvement and participates in teacher education.

Teacher education for professional development/growth is an issue of vital concern to those of us who are today's practicing teachers. We believe that beginning teachers should be able to start their careers with a background of experiences which allows them to handle classroom situations comfortably. We believe also that education students in college, along with exposure to the appropriate knowledge base, should have extensive opportunities to apply their acquired knowledge and skills to classroom practice; they should spend time on practicum. Practicum refers to a period of experience in professional practice during which the students test and reconstruct the theory which they have evolved and during which they further develop their own teaching style. It provides an opportunity for them to assume major responsibility for the full range of teaching duties in a real school situation under the guidance of college personnel who are experienced in and have continuing experience with elementary or secondary teaching, and certificated, experienced personnel from the cooperating school (= "collèges d'application").

2. SECTION ONE: THE CONCEPT AND ADVANTAGES OF MICROTEACHING

2.1. The Concept of Micro-Teaching

Micro-teaching is a teaching experience that provides the student teacher with the opportunity to:

- Experience and be more aware of some of the problems a learner has to face and try to solve when learning a second language. In fact, finding oneself in a completely foreign environment, one has to function in English; besides, communicating with one's peers can be found as a rewarding challenge.
- Get involved in a totally different teaching context, sharing, to some extent, the daily professional life of his colleagues, in the classroom.
- Try to be useful to his peers.
- Observe and closely study:
 - The setting up of the whole Teaching Practice;
 - The role of the tutors;
 - The assessment procedure of the teacher trainers' work;
- Deal with and solve EFL problems such as:
 - The students' lack of motivation;
 - The use of the first language in the classroom;
 - The students' personality factors and their influences on teacher's behaviour and on learning;
 - The learners' errors and how to handle them;
- Find out that opinions differ from one tutor to another one as to what strategies can be used for learning to take place in the best suitable ways.

All these advantages have been pointed out and summarized by Morris A. Grubbs (2009) as follows:

Micro-teaching offers the student teacher an opportunity to practice skills useful beyond the classroom (e.g., presenting at a conference, job interviewing, speaking with the public about your research). It offers him a set of the best practices to

follow (or at least consider) when teaching students. It is a teaching-simulation exercise that provides him with immediate supportive feedback as through practicing it, he will see that his peers share with him many of the same struggles, the same weaknesses, the same strengths. Microteaching is a way for you to hone your skills in a supportive peer-learning environment. It is a Learner-Centered Experience.

3. SECTION TWO: THE PRACTICE OF MICRO TEACHING

The Sample Lesson Plan of a Micro-teaching session generally lasts eleven to twelve minutes and comprises three parts:

Part I: Opening (2 minutes)

Part II: Body (5-7 minutes)

Part III: Closing (1-2 minutes) Draw to a close by reasserting the two conventional colon usages your students have learned:

The sessions I'm going to design in this paper aim at showing the trainees an approach to a **'text exploration'** practice. This notion involves an integration of:

- (1) Vocabulary teaching;
- (2) Grammar teaching;
- (3) Exploration (with reading, listening and speaking).

3.1. Vocabulary Teaching⁵

The literature on vocabulary teaching has elicited various techniques that can be used to teach difficult lexical items during a reading lesson. This series of micro-teaching sessions recalls them to our attention and dwells at length on some of their practical applications. Some of these techniques are listed below:

- 1.1. Explanation (by using simpler English).
- 1.2. The use of dictionaries, a practice which the learners should get familiar with as soon as possible.
- 1.3. Inferencing (from context) = helping the learners to make educated guesses at the meanings of the words.
- 1.4. Cognation (the study of cognates = items descended from a common ancestor, especially linguistically akin, or items similar or identical in nature).
- 1.5. Matching.
- 1.6. Forming one word from another (Example: mother→motherly)
- 1.7. Gap filling.
- 1.8. Multiple choices.
- 1.9. Crossword puzzles.

Through this kind of practice, the teacher shows students how the context often offers clues. For instance, in an exercise on forming nouns ending in **-er** from verbs, students are given incomplete sentences like the one below in which they are asked to fill in the gaps.

The sentence: *Many people watch football on television although a lot of these...1...are not football...2.....themselves⁶.*

Students must make a suitable noun ending in **-er** for each gap, choosing an appropriate verb, e.g. walk, climb, view, buy, admire, play, sell. The word **watch** is a synonym of view and therefore an important clue. The word football often goes with player and is another clue.⁷

⁵ I have devoted some other papers to the teaching of vocabulary, given the importance of this aspect of the language. In fact, as stated by Wilkins (1972: 111): "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed."

⁶**Proposed answer:** Many people watch football on television although a lot of these viewers are not football players themselves.

1.10. Inferencing

1.10.1. The “Davagened”⁸ example.

I consider the following sentence that I have made up just for the purpose of writing this paper: **Once upon a time, a king was (1) ‘davagened’ by (2) ‘tchakatou’⁹ and (3) died. Inferencing** consists in helping the learners to guess the meaning of (1), knowing the meanings of (2) and (3). Since there is obviously a cause/effect relationship between (1), (2) and (3), since the causative element/item/lexical item, (2) ‘tchakatou’ is known, it is then easy for the learners to guess (1) ‘davagened’ and come up with a rich list of possible meanings for this word ‘davagened’ as follows: attacked, injured, shaken, beaten, hit, hurt, burnt, etc. It is important to point out that ‘Inferencing’ is guided by strict rules. In fact, not any item should be accepted. In my example for instance, ‘Killed’ should be rejected as a possible meaning, because ‘killed’ already implies (3) died.

1.11. The “contrast” example.

Sometimes, words which follow one another are either (a) synonyms, (b) antonyms or (c) express the same idea or the consequence of a prior idea. Examples¹⁰:

- (a) You should **co-operate** with people in a cause for the **common** good.
- (b) Conversely, on the contrary, in contrast.
- (c) I’m now very **sick** and **tired**.
- (d) Life **is wrong, funny and full** of ironies.
- (e) I’m an **uneducated** farmer and can say **plain, boring** things.

1.12. The “grouping” example.

Words may be grouped by:

1.12.1. Topic: Fruit (or types of fruit), clothes, furniture, rain (shower – drizzle – tornado)

1.12.2. Meaning: a) Ways of walking (limp – tiptoe – amble-stride, march, etc)

b) Ways of looking: (peer – peep – squint – glance – glare – gaze – etc.)

1.13. Items which form pairs: **old/new; buy/sell; lend/borrow; pull/push; I’m not sad; I’m happy; don’t tell people all about your disappointments and your successes; life is too slippery for anyone to know who is getting on for good or ill; you can take or reject them.**

1.14. Items which connect discourse (discourse markers)

1.14.1. In listing: to start/begin with; first of all; in the second place; last of all, etc.

1.14.2. Items which impose some form of condition: **unless** (I won’t go to school, unless you buy me the books); **otherwise** (You have to give me the money; **otherwise** (I won’t be able to go to the restaurant); **provided that** (I will become a very good teacher, provided I keep learning)

A particular point to focus on while teaching vocabulary is the necessity for the teacher to realize that the different senses of a word as listed in the dictionary most often shade into one another instead of being clearly distinguished. Therefore he needs to teach vocabulary in context, as the meaning of a word is mainly determined by the other words in the context, that is, by collocation. Besides, he should aim to make his pupils run the grammatical patterns of the language through their mind at the same time as the collocations.

It goes without saying that, in dealing with vocabulary teaching, the teacher will see that the subtle differences existing between the words be highlighted to the pupils. Otherwise, the latter will get confused and go on using one item for the other. Besides, it is important that collocation and selection

⁷ I have used this example in another paper entitled: ‘Letting the students do the work’.

⁸ I have coined this word just for the purpose of writing this paper.

⁹ Witchcraft devices used by people in some African regions to kill their enemies.

¹⁰ Taken from the text: ‘A dying father to his children’, in Amu Djoletto. 1975. *The Strange Man*. Heinemann Educational Books

restrictions of vocabulary items be brought to the pupils' awareness. This precaution will help them to avoid making mistakes like:

- (1) 'Sour coffee' as in contrast with 'sweet coffee' or 'he is a **large minded** man', on the basis that **large** is a synonym of '**broad**' and therefore could be used in lieu and place of '**broad**'.
- (2) It can also be pointed out that the earth **revolves** and not **circulates around** the sun.

By pointing out the differences like these to the pupils, they will expand the bulk of their vocabulary and will use lexis appropriately and will avoid using more general and quite vague words such as 'cry', 'turn', 'walk', etc.

To sum up, it is useful to tell the learners that unless specified otherwise, English words identical in nature with French words have the same meaning. Therefore, they should be taught how to draw the parallel as much as possible in order to facilitate their reading. We should not forget that there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use. In fact, knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and, conversely, language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge. To this effect, Zihon states: "without a sufficient vocabulary, students cannot communicate effectively or express ideas. Having a limited vocabulary is also a barrier that prevents students from learning a foreign language." The knowledge of every new item gives a new idea that opens the way to related ideas. Yang (2001) shared the same view when he said: "Enlarging the learner's vocabulary has been one of the objectives of reading classes...using context clues to infer or deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words is an effective way to develop students' vocabulary and increase their reading comprehension" (p. 39)

4. SECTION THREE: DESIGNING THE MICRO-TEACHING SESSIONS

These sessions involve 10 teachers. Each has to teach during seven minutes, in the following conditions.

4.1. Teaching Conditions¹¹

4.1.1. **Class:** Intermediate level, that is 4th year secondary school (bearing in mind that in the teaching situation of some countries, English is taught from the first year secondary school).

4.1.2. **Teaching Material:** Books are available or handouts are provided.

4.1.3. **Trainees' Teaching Time:** Depending on the number of the trainees, some may have to teach up to two sessions.

4.1.4. Skills to be acquired:

- i- Teaching vocabulary and grammar in context;
- ii- questioning pupils;
- iii- asking higher order or lower order cognitive questions;
- iv- engaging pupils in communicative activities;
- v- using educational media when appropriate and available, or making them.

4.2. Plan of a Session

4.2.1. Aims: The pupils will:

- i- Be able to know the meaning of some lexical items in context;
- ii- Be able to use these items appropriately in sentences of their own;
- iii- Be able to use grammatical patterns appropriately in sentences of their own;
- iv- Be able to read a passage, understand it and answer questions on it.

¹¹ The difficulty the student teacher mostly faces in carrying out this kind of activity is how to choose a topic. The mini-Lesson Topic should be broad enough to cover effectively within the scope of eight to ten minutes. It can be either a lesson that requires multiple technical terms and jargon; or a subject more appropriate for your peers in graduate school; or a paper you've written for a conference or finally a section from your thesis.

4.2.2. Materials

Pictures whenever possible.

4.2.3. Method

Step One: Presentation of the new item (by the trainee).

Step Two: Drill (Repetition by the Pupils)¹².

Step Three: Teacher writes the new item on the board.

Step Four: Drill (Pupils' model sentence)

Step Five: Communicative practice (Teacher gets the pupils to ask and answer questions in a chain round the class, like this:

i- Pupil One with pupil Two

ii- Pupil Three with pupil Four

iii- Pupil Five with pupil Six

Step Six: Time for the pupils' to ask questions.

Step Seven: Written consolidation (the pupils write down in their copybooks the new item(s) and model sentence(s).

5. SECTION FOUR: THE MICRO-TEACHING SESSIONS IN PRACTICE¹³

5.1. Micro Teaching Sessions

5.1.1. Vocabulary (See Appendix One on page 67 for attached text: "The entrance examination")

Trainee N°1 (T1) starts the sessions.

T1: (Review of previous lesson) Last time, I said that our hero had to struggle for a specific purpose. Which one?

Pupil: (Answer)

T1: Good. (Then, the class proceeds on and starts dealing with the day's lesson).

T1: Today we are going to see how he studied and what happened to him. So, listen to me, class!

Step One: Who is Cristiano Ronaldo?¹⁴

Pupil: Cristiano Ronaldo is a football player.

T1: Very good. Is he a good one?

Pupil: (Answer)

T1: Does he practice once every month?

Pupil: No. He practices every day.

T1: Yes! He practices every day, he practices regularly; and he practices unremittingly.¹⁵
Unremittingly. Class: repeat

Step Two: Pupils repeat chorally and individually.

T1: Very good. You all know Coffi the farmer.

¹² Drills are more or less mechanical exercises in which the students practice the sounds or grammar of the language, without having to think much, until (in theory) the language becomes automatic. A drill helps the learner to master some of the basic forms of the language with a reasonable degree of accuracy, before using it to communicate effectively.

¹³ The development in this Section show examples of the content of the trainee's lesson sheet/plan.

¹⁴ The teacher may vary the name according to the sport environment of the learners.

¹⁵ This approach of introducing a new lexical item is called "the programmed approach "

Pupil: Yes.

T1: What can you say about him? Does he work every day on his farm?

Pupil: Yes. He works very hard every day on his farm.

T1: Yes. That's what everybody says. He works unremittingly; he does unremitting hard work on his farm. **Unremitting hard work.** Class: repeat.

Step Three: T1 writes the item on the board or makes one student write it.

Step Four: T1: Class: when do you work unremittingly?

Pupil: I work unremittingly when I have to sit for an exam.

Step Five: T1: Very good. Now ask your neighbors some questions with the new lexical item.

Pupil One: Sossou, why do we have to work unremittingly?

Pupil Two: (Answer)

Pupil Three: Codjo, say two things which can happen to a person who does unremitting hard work.

Pupil Four: (Answer)

Pupil Five: Mensah, how do you feel when you fail your exam after you've studied unremittingly?

Pupil Six: (Answer)

Pupil Seven: Assiba, how many persons do you know in the school who do unremitting hard work?

Pupil Eight: (Answer)

T1: Very good! Now do you have any questions to ask?

Pupils ask questions if necessary.

T1: Now, take notes in your copy books.

(Pupils take notes, including some sentences from their communicative practice, written by themselves on the board.)

Trainee N°2 (T2).

T2: (Review of the previous lesson) I understand that you have been talking about Cristiano Ronaldo.

Pupils: Yes, teacher.

Step One:

T2: Right. How does he practice then?

Pupils: He practices unremittingly.

T2: Good. Usually, do football players practice alone?

Pupils: No. They have someone who teaches them.

T2: Fine. We say that someone **coaches** them. They are coached. They are coached. Class: repeat!

Step Two: (Pupils repeat chorally and individually)

Step Three: Pupils write on the (black) board the item being studied

Step Four: T2: How are you coached when you have a basketball competition?

Pupils: (Answer)

Step Five: T2: Now ask your neighbors some questions with the new lexical item.

Pupil One: Assiba, who coached you when you were preparing your first certificate?

Pupil Two: A friend of my father's did¹⁶

Pupil Three: Afia, do you need to be coached for sleeping?

Pupil Four: No, I don't need to be coached for that.

Pupil Five: Frank, enumerate three activities you need to be coached for.

Pupil Six: Cycling, swimming and studying are three activities I need to be coached for.

Pupil Seven: Vincent, what happens if you are not coached properly for a competition?

Pupil Eight: If I am not coached properly for a competition, I don't win.

T2: Very good. Now, make a last sentence with 'to be coached'.

Pupil Nine: Last year, Robert refused to be coached for his exam because he trusted his charms and ju-ju. Of course, he failed.

T2: Good, now tell me class: do you have any questions to ask?

Pupils: (ask questions if necessary)

T2: Now take notes in your copybooks.

Pupils: (take notes)

Trainee N° 3 to Trainee N° 6 continue with the same procedure to make sure they explain six (6) most difficult items or expressions in the text, for instance: **to treasure, a spur, ripe fruit, to curse, to gorge oneself with**¹⁷.

5.1.2. Grammar

Then **Trainee N° 7** goes on to teach grammar, should it be a handicap for the pupils to understand the text (See Appendix One for attached text: 'The entrance examination'). It is at this stage that the teacher has to deal with what is called '**the grammar of vocabulary**', meaning that some vocabulary items bear in themselves their own grammar. This is true when dealing with synonyms and antonyms. For instance, the teacher will do well to point out to his pupils that to '**say**' and to '**tell**' are synonyms and yet that they cannot be used in the same grammatical environment since '**say**' agrees with an **indirect complement** while '**tell**' goes with a **direct** one.

Examples:

- a- He **said to me** that I was right to propose this paper for the benefit of (prospective) teachers of English as a foreign language.
- b- He **told me** that I was right to propose this paper for the benefit of (prospective) teachers of English as a foreign language.

Similarly, it can be pointed out that:

- c- '**to be able**' goes with '**to**' + **infinitive** (He is able **to** teach English)
- d- '**to be capable**' goes with '**of + gerund**' (He is capable **of** teaching English). '**Able to**' and '**capable of**' are synonyms.
- e- '**Dependent**' agrees with '**on**' while '**Independent**' agrees with '**of**' (Antonyms)

In general it is easy to tell the learners that once readers are familiar with the function words and common verbs, and have recognition of some additional basic vocabulary, they can usually work out the meaning of most of the remaining words in a passage by intelligent guesswork or Inferencing. Therefore learners should be taught to reason in this way about the probable meanings of words with which they are not familiar, instead of rushing to look them up in a dictionary.

¹⁶ This answer is very good answer, but for the purpose of consolidation of the new lexical item, the trainee doing the micro-teaching should insist that the new lexical item or expressions are **systematically repeated in every sentence** produced by the learners. So, the most appropriate answer should be: '**A friend of my father's coached me.**'

¹⁷ Those lexical items are written in **bold** in the passage appearing in Appendix One, on page 67.

Function words: Examples: Articles (the, a, an)

Prepositions: Examples: (in, by, of)

Pronouns: Examples: (they, it)

Conjunctions: Examples: (and, but, where).

5.1.3. Text exploration

Reading:

Trainee N°8 (T8)

T8: You have been learning lexical items and grammar to study a text, or more exactly, to try to understand a text. Today, we are going to read a portion of this text.

Instructions:

- 1- You listen to me as I read the text [Pupils do not have copies of the text][Trainee N° 8 may read the text once or twice depending on the average level of the pupils.]
- 2- Then you repeat after me as I read it again [Pupils still do not see the printed words]
- 3- Now take your text and read it again after me (chorus and individual repetition)[Trainee N° 8 moves around the class to help the slower pupils]
- 4- Now you read on your own (group reading, smaller group reading, individual reading, silent reading and reading aloud)
- 5- Then follow the text silently as I give a further and continuous reading.

Trainee N°9 (T9)

T9: You have already read the first portion of the text. We are now going to read the second portion.

Instructions: Same procedure as in 4.3.1. above.

Explanation (or exploration of the text, integrating listening and speaking skills)

Trainee N°10 (T 10)

T10: You are now quite familiar with the text. Now, let's explain it. [T.10 asks comprehension questions of the following types:

- Information from the reading sufficient for the answer is contained in the question itself.
- Answerable with information quoted directly from the reading of the text.
- Answerable from inference or implication from the reading of the text.
- Answerable with information acquired from the reading of the text, but not by direct quotation from a single sentence.

All the questions should lead to social behaviour and to communication practice. The communication activities designed through this series of micro-teaching focus more on fluency than on accuracy. Language drilling¹⁸ requires quite a lot of teacher-control. In contrast, in communication activities, the teacher gives the learner more freedom to communicate. They will probably make some mistakes, but that is not important at this stage: for at least, they will also be gaining competence and confidence in using the language independently.

I cannot bring this paper to an end without mentioning that there has been some criticism against micro-teaching. In fact, pointing out some of the drawbacks of micro-teaching, Ken Crippwell and Marion Geddes (1982) have written:

As many researchers have found, it is extremely difficult to determine how micro-teaching affects a teachers' subsequent classroom behaviour. However, judging from the very large number of institutions around the world where student teachers undergo series of micro-teaching exercises based on these

¹⁸ Please, see Note 13 on page 62.

fundamental skills, there is obviously widespread conviction that the effects are highly positive.

While these general educational skills are important to most teachers, they are not necessarily the most important skills for a foreign language teacher to acquire. The skill of questioning, for example, is a particularly difficult one to interpret for the foreign language teacher. In micro-teaching programs it is usually divided into a number of sub-skills involving "higher order", "middle order", and "lower order" questions. (p. 232)

Despite these difficulties, we professional teachers have the duty to try every method likely to bring our student teachers to develop, above all else, organizational skills, which are precisely the type of skills which can be practiced in micro-teaching without requiring peers to stimulate pupils.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to address teacher education in general and the training of prospective teachers of English as a foreign language in particular, focusing on explaining the concept of microteaching. It has also proposed a series of micro-teaching sessions as part of the implementation of their study program. At the end of this development, it is useful to make some recommendations. Thus, student teachers should be involved in various activities likely to help them get field-based experiences. They should have opportunities to observe when and where appropriate: An individual student; Small groups of students in a variety of settings; Total classrooms at many levels; Parent-teacher conferences; Parent meetings; School board meetings; Activities at the state education agency.

Moreover, they should be videotaped teaching small groups of students and an entire class in a variety of situation, e.g.: presenting a lesson; dealing with students; changing from one activity or class to another. Finally, for the scope of this study, they should have opportunities to learn about instructional technology – current and emerging – how to use it, and the relationship between curriculum and instruction. I said in the Abstract that how much a trainee or the trainees are affected by a training session should not be measured up in terms of the financial support involved. I added that the effectiveness of training is a long term process, which depends on the factors that each of the participants, the trainer, the trainee, brings to it; it is all the more so for the teacher and the trainer who is expected to be well informed in the areas in which he teaches. He is expected to be able to communicate information needed for background, enrichment, and motivation, and on many occasions to explain relationships to children.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE (See Reference Note 18 above on page 12): **to treasure, a spur, ripe fruit, to curse, to gorge oneself with.**

TEXT: THE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

The months between my arrival in Sagresa and my sitting the entrance examination to my secondary school were ones of unremitting hard work. I was coached intensively for the examination in a manner which would thoroughly disgust the modern educational theorist.

Ill advised or not, the coaching was certainly effective, and I passed the examination easily enough. When my father received my message informing him of my success, he sent me a letter which I have always **treasured**, not only as the first letter I ever received, but also as something which for many years afterwards served as a **spur** to my ambitions and a strengthener of my determination to make good. Written in the small, careful hand of a teacher at my old school who doubled as our village letter-writer, the letter first brought me the congratulations of my father and all my family on my success. Then my father went on to remind me that I had now started to climb a palm tree which was high and difficult to climb; that many were watching my progress, and much **ripe fruit** was awaiting me on the successful conclusion of my climb. He ended with the warning that if I failed to reach the top, those watching me, both living and dead, would **curse** me for failing them. On the other hand, if I reached the top in order simply to **gorge myself with** fruit, I would surely become sick and fall to the ground and die. But if I returned to my people to share with them the fruit of my labours, then all would sing to my praise and thank me and honour those who had brought me to life.

Before receiving that letter, homesickness and a general sense of loss of security had made miserable the moments when I was not engaged in my lessons or my reading. I knew that I wanted to pass this examination; but beyond that I was not really sure of the direction in which I was travelling, or of the purposes which were to be achieved. But my father's first letter to me gave me an aim and an objective, and helped me to forget my misgivings. To know that my whole people would not hesitate to reject and scorn my success if it were not applied to their advancement, this was the link I was searching for between the happy security I had known in the past, and the half-seen promise which lay ahead of me now.

William Conton. *The African*.

APPENDIX TWO: Text: A Dying Father to his Children

"I've one or two things to tell you, my children. Though you may not see or know it, I'm now very sick and tired but I'm not afraid to go. I'm not sad; I'm happy. I'm an uneducated farmer and can say plain, boring things; but I believe in them, otherwise I won't waste time and the little strength I have in saying them. You can take or reject them; but I, as your father, would strongly urge them on you all. Are you listening to me my children? Though I've been poor, I'm not in debt; I've no grievance. I've no malice against anyone and I've never expected anyone to work my ruin. I'm grateful to all for everything. Note this point, my children: never make friends. Never make friends. People are more often ruined by their friends than by their enemies. You have to be nice to people ; you should cooperate with people in a cause for the common good ; but withdraw when people want to be too close to you and start telling you everything about themselves. Don't tell people all about your disappointments and your successes; they like the former and are alarmed by the latter. Try to do good for its own sake. If you've nothing to offer to charity, don't go and borrow to impress people; charity

becomes taxation if you do that. If you have, give freely but never expect any reward. If you do, you'll get disappointed with people and if you're constantly disappointed, you'll become bitter and see the world in terms of the unpleasant and negative... Always attempt what you think you can do well and not what everybody is doing but which you can't do. Take pride in your own loneliness and comfort in the happiness of others. Never think about those who are supposed to be getting on in life. Life is too slippery for anyone to know who is getting on for good or ill. Don't advertise yourself and never take anyone seriously. Nurse no ill-will. My children, life is wrong, funny and full of ironies. You may achieve happiness by getting what you never really worked for desperately. If you get it, thank your stars and keep quiet. You're supposed to believe in God, but if you happen to be unable to do as He wishes, you may end up in hell. What I have said is all I wish to say. It is all I offer you"

Amu Djoletto (Ghana). *The Strange Man*.

Porto-Novo, 04 Décembre 2016

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