

The teacher's roles

In a traditional approach, the teacher is seen as the central figure in the classroom, the focus of the learners' attention and the source of everything there is to know about the English language. This may well have been your own learning experience at school and, possibly, college or university. There is a sense of reassurance in an arrangement of this sort – the learners are there to be filled with knowledge, and the teachers are there to provide it.

Research, however, indicates that there is more to *learning* than the mere reception of information, no matter how well organised and well delivered it might be. Many people believe that the teacher should strive to be more than simply a provider of knowledge, although this is one role that you will have to fulfil. However, there are others.

- **Organiser:** much of what you will have to do in the classroom involves the careful organisation of tasks and activities that the learners are to be engaged in. You will need to give clear, unambiguous instructions as to what is required, and direct the learners in the roles and tasks they will undertake.
- **Guide:** having organised the activity and instructed the learners as to their roles, you will remain discreetly on hand to act as a guide in case some learners do not fully understand the exercise. With many of the older methods and approaches the activities were repeated so often that they became predictable whereas in today's classroom the breadth of activity types is much greater.
- **Motivator:** you may find that some learners are resistant to the type of learning that you would like them to engage in. This means that you will be sometimes called upon to motivate the learners and to get them interested in the activity.
- **Monitor:** the correction of errors is now not always of *immediate* concern, so the teacher will often have to act as monitor, storing up overheard mistakes for *later* corrective action.
- **Needs analyst:** the content of language courses is nowadays much more flexible than in the past. As a result you may find it necessary to take on the role of needs analyst – deciding what the learners need to learn and then adjusting the course content.
- **Materials producer:** you will sometimes find that the material in the course book is not quite what is required, so you will have to create more appropriate material for a lesson, or series of lessons.