

EXAMPLES OF TESTING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC
PURPOSES USING "CONCEPTS IN USE" AT THE UNIVERSIDADE FEDE-
RAL DO PARANÁ

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We have been using 'Concepts in Use' for approximately two years.

With whom? False beginners of a variety of departments at the undergraduate level; known as 'Inglês Instrumental I' (mixta).

For how long? The complete book of ten units in one semester, two hours of 50 minutes each.

Before illustrating and discussing the main subject of my talk, i.e., the way in which my colleagues have tested students at this level I felt it would be both interesting and useful to provide a rapid overview of our reaction to the book, of how we have adapted and augmented 'Concepts in Use' and include a short summary of the contents of the book itself.

CONS

1. Too easy for at least 50% of student intake at this level.
2. Heavily loaded conceptual material from the Sciences which is unsuited for students of Arts, Communication Studies, Psych. etc.
3. Insufficient reading text. Short paragraphs.
4. Extensive written activities unrelated to student needs.
5. Lack of exposure to authentic text reflecting real study situations.

PROS

1. Provides a recognisably sequential continuum.
2. Enables students to work at their own pace, with a

minimum of supervision.

3. Enables students to work at home, overcoming the difficulties created by the typical poor attendance of the average ESP student.
4. Students are at ease in dealing with the basic syntax. (Exclusively simple present (90%), simple past (10%); Barber (1962), Banks (1981), Ibrahim (1977) have found these two tenses to account for more than 60% of syntax of academic prose of their corpora.
5. Good at confidence building of students without a positive previous language learning experience.
6. Clear learning objectives: expressing fundamental concepts, recognition of paragraph construction of concepts, understanding the development and organization of information in paragraphs, extracting essential information from these simplified paragraphs.
7. Flexible for developing all four skills.
8. Testing objectives can be clearly defined.
9. Minimum of teacher preparation required.

How are we exploiting the 'Reading and Thinking' series at UFPr?

1. The coursebooks are seen as common core material for all students, providing a sound basis for all subjects, especially the Sciences. Teachers' notes (available for photocopying) include the experience of various staff members, suggestions for contextualized classroom presentation and practise, citing the difficulties Portuguese speakers have had, with suggestions for improvement; parallel listening/reading activities using the coursebook passages; supplementary exercises for those areas which have proven difficult and several ideas for oral work based on the book. Despite the mainstream drive for emphasis on the future reading requirements, many of our students (64% according to Dra. Arns' Needs Analysis'), at the undergraduate level, have asked for an oral component within the course. The average age of my ESP undergraduate students during the

last two terms has been 22. Many of these are not yet aware of the importance of reading skills for either their studies or future careers. They are concerned with now; immediately recognizable goals.

2. We are supplementing this 'common core' with material for each unit from five areas: a. Medical Science, b. Economic Sciences, c. Engineering, d. Pure Sciences, e. Communication Arts.

This supplementary material is of two types:

a) Specialist selected to integrate into the basic coursebook strategies being taught, consolidating the abilities with similar pedagogic approaches.

b) Specialist authentic materials to be read together with the 'Exercício Padrão', selected by the individual student for self-study purposes. For this latter area I have a large number of texts, single or multiple copies. They are simply left on several desks at the front of the class for the first 15 minutes of a learning session or for when individuals have completed a coursebook unit or are fed up with 'Reading and Thinking'.

3. The third area in which we have adapted and prepared our own material is in the field of Testing. This is the main subject of my paper and what I propose to say more about.

There are two criteria which seem to have guided the production of testing material:

a) Never test what hasn't been taught. (At the university this dictum has been followed with regard not only to the concepts and discourse features, but, more controversially, in the actual format of question types).

b) Students should know how and what is to be tested. (Clearly these criteria would not be acceptable to a great many test 'experts' in ESP who have stressed the need to test authentic materials in an authentic way).

Q: What are we testing in EAP at UFPr?

A: It's in the book.

Q: What's in the book?

A: Systems.

These systems 'emphasise the study of coherent groups of related components..... a basis for conceptual organization'. Fine words by Henry Widdowson in the preface to the book. What do they mean?

UNIT	CONCEPT	DISCOURSE FEATURES
1. Systems	Class-members	listing members of a class
2. States of Systems	measurable and general properties	listing parts and enumerating properties
3. Structures (1)	structural relations of location	spacial relations
4. Structures (2)	structural relations of space	comparing members of a system
5. Systems in Action (1)	the function and conversion of active relations	describing the behaviour of a system
6. Systems in Action (2)	ability, capacity, necessity, cause of ability	addition, equivalence, contrast
7. Processes	means; temporal relations, prediction, consequence	describing cycles, causal relationship
8. Interactions	cause-and-effect, prevention, simultaneity	describing cycles
9. Evolution of Systems	past time; sequence	chronological development, historical description

We have therefore constructed our testing programme according to these concepts and discourse features. We have also followed the pedagogical approaches adopted in the course:

Information transfer

- (a) Extracting information from a linear text in order to label diagrams;
- (b) Extracting information from linear text in completing tables which summarize the essential information;
- (c) Extracting from tables of non-linear information for the completion of gapped (clozed) text.
- (d) Extraction of information from diagrams for the completion of gapped linear text.

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO PARANÁ - S.C.H.L.A. - DELEM -
Língua Inglesa Instrumental I - 1ª Teste

Student's name _____ Date _____

1) Use information in the table to complete the statements:

	symbol	atomic number	atomic weight
Mercury	Hg	80	200.59
Molybdenum	Mo	42	95.94
Neodymium	Nd	60	144.24
Nickel	Ni	28	58.71
Platinum	Pt	78	195.09

- a) has an atomic number of 78.
- b) The of is 144.24.
- c) The symbol of Mercury is
- d) has an of 58.71; its symbol is
- e) The of is 42.
- f) has an of 200.59.

2) Use information from the table to complete the statements:

	length	width	height	depth
Kosciusko			7,316 ft	
Darling	1.702 miles			
Paroo		60 miles		
Pacific Ocean				average 13,215 ft

- The Pacific Ocean has an depth of
- The of the Darling River is
- The Paroo River is wide.
- Mount Kosciusko is high.
- is 60 miles.
- The Darling River is long.
- The of the Pacific Ocean is

3) Correct these statements:

- The Darling River is 7,316 ft long.
- The Pacific Ocean is 60 miles wide.
- The Paroo River is 13,215 ft deep.
- The average depth of the Pacific Ocean is 1,702 miles.

Form Y

4) Use diagram A to complete the following passage:

- The source of the Danube is in Germany. b. The river flows along the northern part of _____ . c. It runs across _____ and passes through northern _____ .
- Then it passes between _____ and _____ . e. On its way it flows past _____ to the _____ sea.

5) Use the information to complete the diagram.

Structure of a turbojet

A turbojet consists of three basic parts. They are the air

compressor, combustion chamber, and a turbine wheel. The compressor is in the front. The combustion chamber is a cylinderlike part that is located between the compressor and the turbine wheel. The turbine wheel is attached to a shaft which revolves the compressor.

- a. Read the passage and label diagram B
- b. Complete the table:

SYSTEM	MAIN PARTS	LOCATION
Turbojet		

6) Use diagram C to complete the following passage:

- a. Mount Everest is _____ the Tropic of Cancer.
- b. It is located in Asia. c. Ben Nevis _____ in the United Kingdom. d. It is above the _____ of _____.
- e. Mount Kosciusko is _____ the Tropic of Capricorn.
- f. Mount McKingley and _____ are _____ above the _____ of Cancer. g. Pico da Neblina is situated _____.
- h. Mount Logan _____ in Canada. i. Mount McKingley and _____ are _____ in North America.

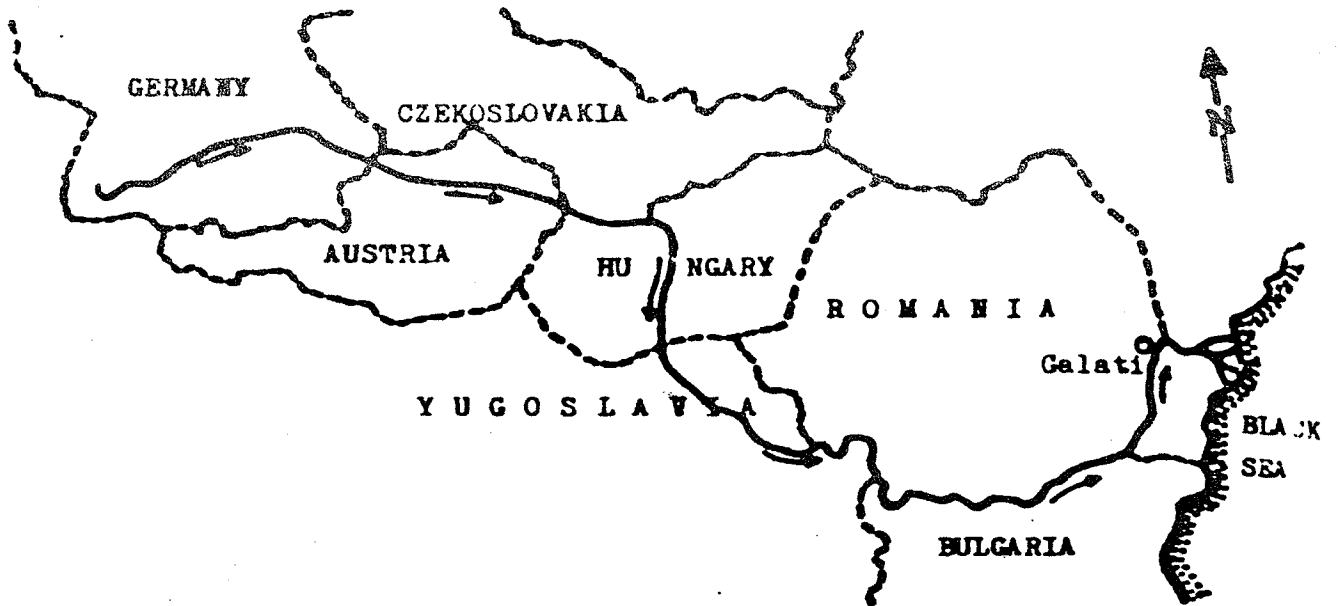


DIAGRAM A THE DANUBE RIVER

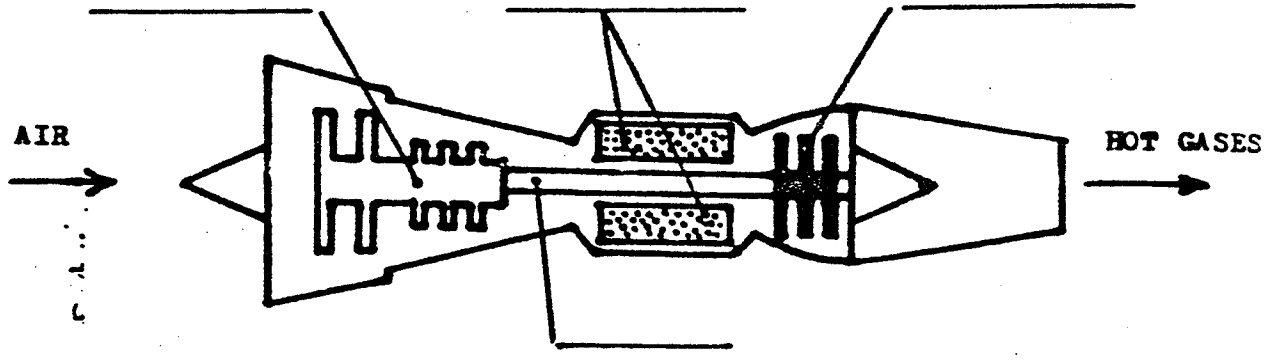


DIAGRAM B TURBOJET

**HIGHEST MOUNTAINS
IN THE WORLD**

1. Mount McKinley
2. Ben Nevis
3. Mount Logan
4. Mount Kosciuszko
5. Mount Everest
6. Pico da Neblina

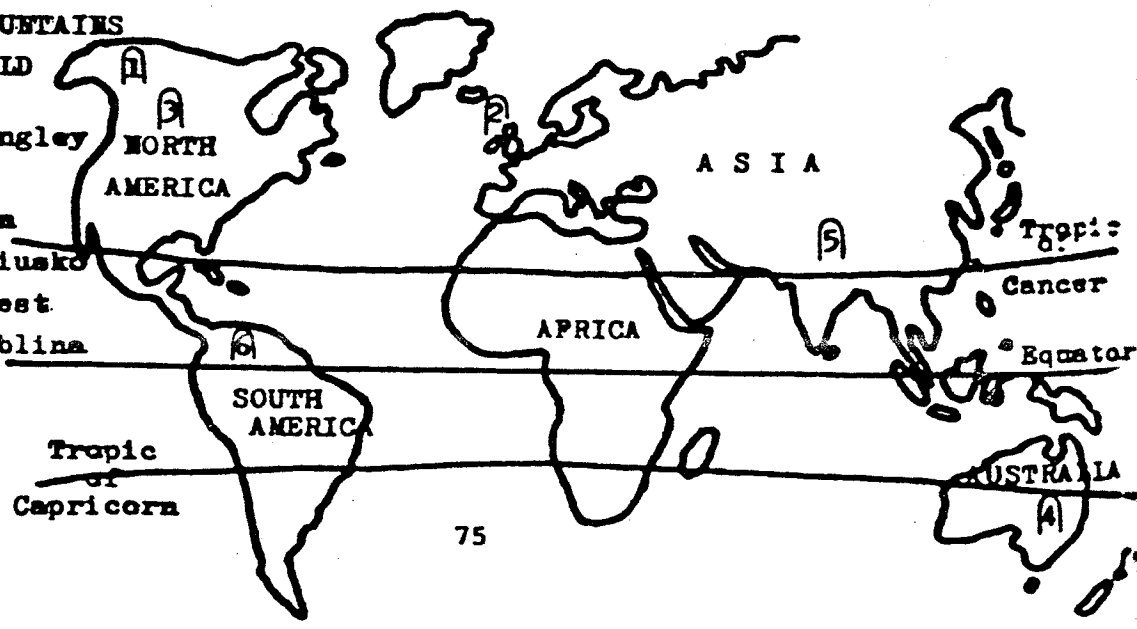


DIAGRAM C

7) Read the text below and complete the tables in Portuguese or English. Use a dictionary if necessary.

HOVERCRAFT

From *Science Today*, Pelican, 1978

The hovercraft is one of the most interesting forms of transport that have been developed since the war. It is called a "hover-craft" because it hovers, that is, it does not rest on the ground or on the water, but on a cushion of air. Jets of compressed air lift the hovercraft off the ground, and flexible skirts around the craft retain the air cushion, and help to keep it stable. Because the hovercraft does not touch the surface, it can travel over land or water. The British Army used these amphibious crafts in military operations in Borneo. They have also successfully tested the same type of machine, the SR.N 5, in the desert of Lybia, and they say it is a particularly useful form of transport for country which is too difficult for other vehicles.

The amphibious hovercraft has a number of disadvantages. It is propelled forward by airscrews, or propellers, which are very noisy. It does not travel very far above the surface, and so the smaller machines run into trouble when the sea is rough and the waves are high. Nevertheless, it is already in use in many places around the coast of Britain as a passenger carrier. For example, the SR.N 6 in service between Portsmouth and Cowes carries thirty-eight passengers, while the SR.N 4 - a much larger craft in service between Dover and Bolougne - can carry 254 passengers and 30 cars. The SR.N 4 can cross the English Channel in about thirty-five minutes and can make up to seven trips in each direction every day during the busy tourist season. The time taken for this crossing by boat is one hour and twenty-five minutes.

A non-amphibious type of hovercraft, the HM 2, carrying sixty passengers, is also in service between Portsmouth and Ryde. Instead of a flexible skirt, the HM2 has side-walls which stay in the water, and the air cushion is between them. The makers claim that air-cushion craft with side-walls are easier to handle than the type with a flexible skirt. Moreover, they are also quieter as they are not driven by an airscrew. Instead, they are propelled by a traditional type of

propeller, although this may be replaced in the future by water jets. Most sea-going hovercraft services operate in the summer only, but not when the sea is rough. The HM 2 service between Portsmouth and Ryde can operate all year round, as this craft is easier to handle in rough seas.

Table I

System	Characteristics	Functions

Table II

System	One advantage	One disadvantage