
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE ARTS AND COMMERCE

Reducing English Communication Apprehension in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom

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Abstract

This paper explores the adaptation of relaxation conditioning techniques to the learning English as a Foreign Language context. After a brief general orientation to trigger response conditioning for deep relaxation and the use of psychological anchors in language learning, the paper will be structured around presenting and demonstrating techniques that can be readily adapted to the language classroom. Specifically, the methods discussed and demonstrated include the following: simple relaxation, guided imagery, relaxation for communication apprehension relief, deep relaxation trigger response conditioning (DRTRC), and interactive language processes. In particular, the paper explores how creating deep relaxation trigger responses through conditioning and guided imagery can reduce English Communication Apprehension. Students who participate in DRTRC sessions are more likely to have less apprehension about learning and using English than those who do not.

Keywords7: Communication Apprehension, Trancework, English as a Foreign Language, Guided Imagery, DRTRC, Trigger Response Conditioning, Relaxation.

1.0 Introduction

Guided imagery, relaxation, and trancework techniques have long been adapted to the EFL classroom and to individual language learning – from the formalist approach of Lozanov’s approaches in Suggestopedia and Total Body Response to the interactive visualization methods found in numerous grammar, writing, and oral training texts that employ images/options. creative visualization methods, and response to meditative guided imagery. This paper discusses the author’s adaptation of various of these approaches to the language classroom in Taiwan, particularly for developing confidence/competence in language use while decreasing levels of English Communication Apprehension (ECA).

2.0 English Communication Apprehension

English Communication Apprehension is related to more generalized Communication Apprehension in that most people with high levels of CA also have high levels of ECA (or CA for whatever foreign language they are being tested in). The caveat to this is that competence also seems to affect levels of CA for a foreign language, specifically English CA, or ECA. Students who may have low levels of CA in their native language may experience more pronounced levels of ECA partly due to competence factors and perception of competence. However, when low-competence students have lower levels of ECA, they tend to improve more quickly than comparable students with higher levels of ECA, partly due to the tendency on their part to seek out situations in which to practice their new language skills.

One way to measure English Communication Apprehension is to administer various Communication Apprehension Scales adapted for the target language (see Appendix 1). Of special note and usefulness is the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA24) which is readily adapted to foreign language contexts and provides a reliable indicator of ECA.

Once we identify students with high levels of ECA, we can provide them with activities and exercises designed to increase confidence while improving competence. As ECA levels lower, interest in pursuing opportunities to use English increases and fluency grows.

3.0 Relaxation Conditioning

When applying guided imagery and relaxation methods in an educational context, it is important to plan based upon methods that have stable history in application. While there is a great deal of information within the folklore on how to increase confidence or lower apprehension for communication, much of it is hearsay and basically old wives tales. Memorization, avoiding eye contact, notes, and distraction through pain have all been suggested at one time or another as a remedy for communicative fear and all of these so-called solutions share one essential characteristic . . . they are all wrong. . . . at best they are temporary solutions and at worst they either delay apprehension episodes, penting them up for later stronger release, or they make the condition worse. The strongest evidence for improving confidence and lowering apprehension is through simple relaxation conditioning and progressive desensitization.

Basically, apprehension (English or otherwise) is manifested as physical and mental stress or tension. When we are relaxed, we cannot experience stress. Tighten your arm so that the arm, hand, and fingers are tense, make them very tight, then attempt to relax the arm while maintaining that stress. It cannot be done. The opposite is also true.

In relaxation conditioning, the subject is taught to physically relax. Often this is done through a simple induction set as well as a trigger response – sometimes as simple and as subtle as the use of the word “relax” or more overt and complex as trigger response suggestions attached to a keyword. Just as Pavlov’s dogs learned to drool whenever they

heard a bell ring, people can fairly quickly and easily train themselves to relax with a trigger or “anchor” response – as long as they consent to and follow through with the process.

A brief orientation to a process akin to this is that of anchoring (conditioned trigger response). Close your eyes for a moment and imagine a time when you felt pleasant, really feel the feelings, and as you feel them press the thumb and forefinger of the right hand together and tell yourself that as you press them the pleasant feelings become more powerful. Stop pressing and open your eyes. Close your eyes again and repeat the process with another time you felt the same kind of pleasant feelings, once again pressing the thumb and forefinger together. Repeat this microprocess five times. Then, test the anchor to make certain it is there by looking at a neutral object and firing the trigger (pressing the thumb and forefinger) without the setup visualization. For most people, they immediately feel the pleasant feelings.

When treating ECA, subjects are taught to relax and then are asked to imagine situations that formerly caused them stress in which the relaxation trigger is used, desensitizing the former stressor conditions.

4.0 Deep Relaxation Trigger Response Conditioning - DRTRC

Since students may experience English Communication Apprehension in a number of contexts, particularly when outside the controlled environment of the classroom, is beneficial to teach them methods that allow them to relax when faced with a situation where ECA is more likely to occur. A valuable and effective approach is to introduce the students to a form of conditioning toward relaxation based upon a trigger-response mechanism that the student can self-employ at appropriate times.

In Deep Relaxation Trigger Response Conditioning (DRTRC), subjects are taught to relax through a system of conditioning processes – live and recorded. The primary conditioning protocol is intended to condition the subjects to relax whenever they focus on a
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As response to imagery is very individualized, the primary conditioning recording is longer than most and comprises four separate induction styles to maximize the chance that at least a portion of the recording will be particularly appropriate for any listener. Once the primary conditioning has begun, students may select any of four subconditioning recordings, each in a different style: fractionation relaxation, autogenic progressive relaxation, creative visualization, and eye fixation induction.

While the present author uses a method of trigger word conditioning for deep relaxation, others use less overt methods. Maureen Garth’s series of guided meditations for children uses instead of a trigger word an anchored staging area for her scripts (see the bibliography for references). Each of her pieces begins with the same general induction which includes an

imagery of a garden, this sets the stage and becomes part of the conditioning process for relaxation.

As with other relaxation conditioning methods targeted at foreign language acquisition, the DRTRC approach hinges upon the use of concentrated relaxation and positive reinforcement of language use. The primary goal of the method is to lower levels of ECA, which it consistently does. Comparisons of ECA scores of classes exposed to DRTRC and those of classes unexposed to DRTRC show significant difference in ECA improvement. Over time, both types of classes tend to have lowered ECA – in part due to increased exposure and competence – but improvements are greater in classes exposed to DRTRC techniques. Scores on standard suggestibility and imagination tests are also higher for students who have been conditioned to DRTRC than those who have not. This is in keeping with current studies discussed by Murdock and Ahsen that demonstrate ESL classes exposed to guided imagery and other relaxation techniques tend to have significantly higher skill performance than comparable students at the same level in more traditional classes.

5.0 Related Methods

There are a number of alternative methods beyond straightforward relaxation that can be used to assist students in dealing with or overcoming English Communication Apprehension. With or without relaxation conditioning using a method akin to DRTRC, students can also derive benefits from guided imagery or similar processes. Recent reports in sports psychology and medicine show conclusively that visualization alone can have positive benefits beyond relaxation, a great deal of evidence points to accelerating progress in skill improvement as well as actual positive physical changes in some areas – albeit, the latter is not of direct interest to us here.

Guided Imagery can be very useful for language classes, both for the lowering of apprehension and the increase in motivation as well as for the skill improvement opportunities. When introducing imagery, it is important to signpost to students that although the method is termed “imagery” or “visualization” one should not be overly concerned with “seeing” things but in “imagining” them. About twenty percent of the population is capable of untutored visualization, that is they see things very clearly when imagining, others can improve the skill through practice and some studies do seem to link accelerated progress with visualization skills but for our purposes reminding students to simply imagine is sufficient. One way that this author has used to demonstrate this is through an imagination exercise of having the students close their eyes and then imagine themselves standing at a bus stop waiting for a bus, then getting on the bus, taking it for a short ride, exiting, and then watching the bus round a corner out of site. Once the students open their eyes, the instructor asks them, “What color is the bus?” When students give their answers, then ask them how they know. Some will have actually visualized the bus but others will only “know” the color from past experience. Reminding the students that when the imagery scripts ask them to see or visualize something they can just “imagine” it will keep the pressure off them – since many imagery scripts that are available to have a bias towards visualization, it is important to key in other modes such as kinesthetic, auditory, olfactory, and as wide a range of sensory experience as possible . . . this helps connect the listener to the experience. Ahsen’s procluid

dreaming process attaches emotional context to visualization and imagery, albeit his focus on the difference between maternal and paternal emotion-sets within an imagery experience, while interesting, make the complete process of less use for the language learning context. In addition to beneficial results inherent in the use of Guided Imagery, the activity can also be used as a springboard for listening-speaking activities as well as writing. Obviously, when students listen to the teacher read or a recording of a Guided Imagery, it is a very specific listening activity. If students are encouraged to create their own pieces or discuss what they have imagined during the activity then the speaking component is brought into play. A writing component can include student-created pieces as well as student-written reactions of feedback for pieces. Some writing and discussion courses are now designed with imagery as a component, acting as a springboard for discussion or writing.

6.0 Creating Your Own Guided Imagery

It is particularly helpful for students (and teachers) to create their own visualization materials as part of a self-motivated program toward relaxation and imagery which can have very beneficial effects toward lowering English Communication Apprehension.

Guided Imagery, also known as Creative Visualization, Scripted Meditation, Experientials, Mediated Metaphors and a seemingly endless parade of names, is basically a scripted scenario in which the guide creates a general baseline experience through the use of descriptive language with specific details of the experience filled in by the listener's inner mind. This technique, when used appropriately, can be a very useful tool in the language teacher's toolbox. Guided Imagery has been shown in a number of studies to be very effective in the educational setting and other locales where the use of formalized trancework may seem inappropriate.

It is important that the imagery be general enough that the subject can get a handle on the experience and specific enough with positive wording that the resulting experience is both personalized and positive. It is very important that the author determine which sorts of imageries are inappropriate for a particular subject so as to avoid negative experiences or abreactions when they are not part of the course agenda. For imagery sessions, it is very important to use keywords that set the stage for the experience in a positive frame – words such as *comfortable, pleasant, enjoy, positive, pleasure, bliss, happy*, and the like help to create an expectation for positive circumstances and results. With subjects who have preconditioned themselves to a keyword or trigger through DRTRC or similar means, one can use the trigger as a deepening process within the imagery.

For those who might be unfamiliar with how to put together a Guided Imagery of their own, this is a brief primer with one format. It is only meant as an aid in getting started . . . as you see more examples by others and practice your craft, you will eventually discard this format in favor of one that best fits your own needs. Since any particular language course may consist of a variety of approaches ranging from direct or indirect imagery, affirmations, and covert or indirect language patterns, and whatever approach seems best indicated by student

circumstances and response, the simple Guided Imagery is yet another tool that a teacher has in the resource toolbox, ready for use when appropriate.

The form of simple directed Guided Imagery discussed here seems to be one of the easiest for most beginners to understand and begin using immediately (albeit, in the hands of a skilled artisan, the craftsmanship behind a Guided Imagery can be very sophisticated).

This is neither the only nor the best way to approach Guided Imageries but it is a simple and direct method. You can create a simple Guided Imagery for others to listen to and enjoy (a good basic length can be anywhere between 300 to 500 words, although there are many fine examples of longer or even shorter pieces). Since you may wish to concentrate on the Imagery section of the Guided Imagery, feel free to use the standard formats presented here for the other parts. Each Guided Imagery of this type should have three main parts: the Induction or relaxation portion, the Imagery, and the Emerging (or, Return to Awareness). We should note that the Induction and Emerging sections are abbreviated here as the session concentrates on the imagery rather than depth of relaxation. Naturally when using Guided Imagery of this type within a more complicated session with specific trancework goals, one would use more sophisticated induction and emerging techniques – however, most classroom use of Guided Imagery would be of the shorter simpler type. The author suggests that one would do well to include positive suggestion within the emerging process as well.

Each of these three sections of a Guided Imagery may have subparts. The following is an outline of a simple Guided Imagery of the type recommended for most language classes.

6.1 Part One: Induction

An induction, or relaxation procedure, will often have two chief components.

6.1.1 Components

1. Eye Closure – Ask the listeners to close their eyes. This is usually done with a big breath in and on the exhalation, the listeners should close their eyes and begin relaxation exercises. Eye closure is used partly so that the listener can relax more readily but also as a means of shutting off distractions within the environment. As a listening exercise, it is excellent as the student must rely upon listening comprehension solely to understand the imagery instructions.

2. Breathing = Relaxation – Start deep breathing exercises and make certain that the listeners give themselves the suggestion that with each breath out they will become more and more relaxed.

6.1.2 Standard Induction

The following is a typical induction script which can be used to begin most simple Guided Imageries of this type:

This is a guided imagery. So let's begin. Go ahead and let yourself go into a deep level of relaxation, take a nice long breath, fill up your lungs, real good, breathe all the way in, and hold it for a second. And as you breathe out, close your eyes down, and let a wonderful wave of relaxation flow through your entire body.

Keep your eyes closed and follow your breathing. Take a few deep breaths, releasing any tension that you carry in your body as you breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out, and relax. Breathe in, breathe out, and relax. Really let yourself go loose, limp, and relaxed. Breathe in, breathe out, and relax. (Pause) Good. Now give yourself the suggestion that with each time you breathe out your body becomes more and more relaxed. Just let yourself feel like you're relaxing down, down, down each time you breathe out.

6.2 Part Two: Imagery

The actual imagery section of any Guided Imagery, rather DRTRC-based or freeform, is the main section of the piece. It should be specific enough to guide an experience and open enough to allow leeway for individual imaginative response.

6.2.1 Components

1. *The Image* – The main image should guide the listeners into a beautiful, relaxing, playful, and positive scene. Your images should always be fun and positive. Never use negative images for your Guided Imagery (or for any Guided Imagery as it is immoral and potentially hazardous as it can lead to negative abreactions in some participants – while some may be intrigued by the idea of fully associated vicarious experiences related to violent fantasy and the like, it can be overwhelming for most and is best avoided, particularly in an educational setting). Always use terms like “comfortable,” “positive,” “relaxing,” and the like and avoid any sequence that might be uncomfortable for a particular subject (when possible, if you are creating recordings for general use then make certain that there is adequate description of the content for potential listeners to make an informed choice – what may seem relaxing to you may be terrifying to others – it is wise to use positive reinforcement words as well as to inform students that at any time they can control the imagery to move it into more pleasant associations whenever they wish). For classroom purposes, you should create imagery appropriate to a general and family audience – not *your* family, but think of the most conservative family you can possibly imagine and write with them in mind. Even in non-classroom settings, erring on the side of conservatism is a good rule of thumb. For recreational purposes, create pieces that fit the interest and values of the participants. There are many wonderful books with playful guided imagery for small children which adults can also find stimulating and entertaining if you would like to consult them for models. There are fewer resources for adult material of this type, but they do exist. See the bibliography for some examples.

2. Pause for Silence – In general, always provide your listeners with a few minutes in which they can let their imaginations run wild. This is often setup in an image with a statement along the lines of, “You will now have three minutes of clock time to explore which is all the time you will need. You may begin now.” This allows the listener’s inner mind to participate more directly in the process, helping to create imagery metaphors that can aid therapy or provide relaxation and imaginative stimulation. Once again, when creating imagery you can’t accurately predict what will work well for a particular listener and so by using your positive words along with the image setup and then sitting back and letting the listener’s inner mind provide the images (not the conscious mind, but the subconscious) you can better be assured of a successful session tailored to that client’s needs.

6.2.2 Example Image

The following is an example image script utilizing associated time progression which has been written by the present author and can be used to model most simple Guided Imageries of this type (see the bibliography for more resources):

As you continue to breathe deeply and relax, imagine that you are drifting through time and space to the future, just a few short weeks, just a short time after the end of this academic semester. As you breathe in and out and relax, drift and see something very interesting. Float through the clouds and notice something calling to you. Allow yourself to relax more and more as you drift closer to discover . . . yourself. It may be daytime or nighttime, you may be inside or outside, but notice how different you look, so full of much more confidence, so relaxed so poised, so competent. Notice you are standing with a group of foreigners, people you have never seen before, they look like visitors from America, in Taiwan for fun or business . . . you know them. You have met them and have made friends with them. Breathe in, breathe out and relax. Notice how comfortable you are. Notice how easily you speak English with them. Notice how much your English has improved in just a few short weeks. Breathe in, breathe out, and relax. Notice how it really makes you feel wonderful to know that in a few short weeks your English will improve so much, that your confidence and ability will improve so much too. Breathe in, breathe out and relax. Imagine that your future leaves the group of good friends from America and turns to you, taking you to a private corner. Notice how good you look, how wonderful you feel. Really feel great about the improvements you make in just a few short weeks. Notice how you enjoy listening and reading English, that it is more pleasure than work to you, that you eagerly learn more words and practice practice practice at every opportunity, perhaps even speaking English in many of your university literature and linguistics classes to allow yourself more opportunity to practice and improve, taking every opportunity to read, listen, or speak English, enjoying the experience of learning and mastering the language.

Breathe in, breathe out, and relax. Feel yourself step into the body of your future self, notice how good it feels to be so wonderfully improved in your English ability. Notice how easily you can communicate well and realize how you get to this point. How with each new day you enjoy working a bit more with English, enjoy playing more and more in English. Enjoy reading English stories, novels, magazines, books, everything . . . for pleasure. Knowing that while your English improves, your ability improves, so does your confidence and your knowledge. Think of your hobbies and interests and notice how much more information is available to you to enjoy in your special interests because you also enjoy using English. Notice how you are ahead of others who can only use Chinese media to learn about the latest trends or information while you have both worlds freely open to you, Chinese and English. Breathe in, breathe out, and relax. For the next few moments, allow yourself to experience these wonderful feelings of using English more and more at a better ability with each day. Allow yourself to walk in your future self's shoes, knowing that in just a few short weeks you will become that self, with pleasure allowing yourself to improve, knowing that in just a few short weeks after that point you will improve even beyond that level, knowing that with continued practice and enjoyment your fluency will become as good as even your American friends. See yourself using English more and more. Enjoy these wonderful feelings for the next few moments, allowing yourself to experience these feelings completely . . . knowing that you take these positive experiences and feelings back in time back to you to the present . . . knowing that your improvement increases with each and every day.

6.3 Part Three: Emerging (Return to Awareness)

The emerging is merely the termination of a session. However, so as not to be too abrupt, it is best to signpost the end of the session prior to asking the students to stop their imaginary session and open their eyes. By giving the listener a chance to re-orient to the environment, a successful and positive experience is more likely.

6.3.1 Components

1. Signpost – Be sure to let the listeners know when their moments of silence are about to finish and signpost that you will begin helping them exit the imagery and return to full awareness. This is often done by saying something along the lines of “I will now count upwards from one to five, and at the count of five you will return to full awareness, open your eyes, and notice how alert and relaxed you feel.”

2. Eyes Open – Count up to whatever number you set for the Signpost and tell the listeners to open their eyes. They should now be ready to share their experiences! That is, when appropriate. It is possible to setup self-discovery sessions for yourself or clients that are intended for the imaginer only.

6.3.2 Standard Emerging

The following is a typical emerging script which can be used to begin most simple Guided Imageries of this type:

(After three minutes) Now gently bring your attention back into this room. It is time to bring yourself back to full awareness. In a moment I will count to five. At the number five, your eyes open, you are fully aware, alert, and feeling great, remembering all of your wonderful experiences. One, two, three, four, and five. Eyes open, feeling wonderfully refreshed.

6.4 Guided Imagery Resources for Adaptation

Please note that you need not write an original *Induction* or *Emerging* for your Guided Imagery unless the circumstances call for it – such as when publishing or recording material for distribution. You can feel free to use the standard format for these. You should write the central Imagery part. Naturally, if you are publishing the material, you should write your own but for normal session work, feel free to beg, borrow, or appropriate from others what seems to work best for your circumstances – eventually you will find your own voice. The bibliography of this paper includes several sources for Guided Imagery scripts that are appropriate for young people and adults studying English as a Foreign Language (as well as other contexts).

7.0 Recording MP3s and CDs for Distribution to Students

While trancework or imagery methods are best introduced to students in the classroom, it is also possible to prepare recorded sessions for students to listen to at home on their own (repeated habitual listening is obviously ideal for effective conditioning of the sort previously discussed).

As classtime is best used for actual language practice, teachers are encouraged to record simple Guided Imagery or DRTRC type material and to make it available for students to listen to at home. This can be done through distribution online or on audio CD.

Online distribution of MP3s is fast and easy. Be certain to tag the files and webpages with “Educational Resource” titles and disclaimers letting the students – and others – know that the pieces are original, and legally available freely to students for educational purposes. Since the music industry began aggressive anti-piracy suits, some students and their teachers have become wary of putting mp3 material online – just remind the students that they can download material you have made available to them for class that you have created. You may not distribute work by others without specific consent or permission but this does not apply to your own work which you can distribute any way you see fit.

An excellent basic software for recording original material is Goldwave. The software is easy to use and is very powerful. It is shareware with a fully-functional trial version at <http://www.goldwave.com> – while the trial version is free and will allow you to record all you like, the professional version is inexpensive enough that you might consider purchasing it

anyway. With the proper support software, Goldwave can produce excellent MP3s as well (the freeware MP3 support is on the Goldwave website).

8.0 Conclusion

Obviously, this paper has not covered the subject completely but it is clear that there are a number of effective and worthwhile protocols that can help students overcome English Communication Apprehension. While it certainly should not comprise the main thrust of a language program, DRTRC conditioning can be excellent for reducing English Communication Apprehension. When coupled with Guided Imagery, the process can also be very beneficial for accelerated skill improvement as well.

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COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION SCALES

Appendix

The following series of statements refer to talking with other people. In the blank provided, write the number of the degree to which each statement applies to you:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Strongly Agree | (The statement describes you very well.) |
| 2 | Agree | (The statement somewhat describes you.) |
| 3 | Undecided | (You are not sure if the statement describes you or not.) |
| 4 | Disagree | (The statement is a poor description of you.) |
| 5 | Strongly Disagree | (The statement is a very poor description of you.) |

There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and record your first impression.

Part One: Verbal Activity Scale (VAS).

- _____ 1. I enjoy talking.
- _____ 2. Most of the time I would rather be quiet than talk.
- _____ 3. Other people think I am very quiet.
- _____ 4. I talk more than most people.
- _____ 5. Talking to other people is one of the things I like best.
- _____ 6. Most of the time I would rather talk than be quiet.
- _____ 7. I don't talk much.
- _____ 8. Other people think I talk a lot.
- _____ 9. Most people talk more than I do.
- _____ 10. I talk a lot.

Part Two: Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA).

- _____ 1. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
- _____ 2. I have no fear of facing an audience.
- _____ 3. I talk less because I'm shy.

- _____ 4. I look forward to expressing my opinions at meetings.
- _____ 5. I am afraid to express myself in a group.
- _____ 6. I look forward to an opportunity to speak in public.
- _____ 7. I find the prospect of speaking mildly pleasant.
- _____ 8. When communicating, my posture feels strained and unnatural.
- _____ 9. I am tense and nervous while participating in a group discussion.
- _____ 10. Although I talk fluently with friends, I am at a loss for words on the platform.
- _____ 11. I have no fear about expressing myself in a group.
- _____ 12. My hands tremble when I try to handle objects on the platform.
- _____ 13. I always avoid speaking in public if possible.
- _____ 14. I feel that I am more fluent when talking to people than most other people are.
- _____ 15. I am fearful and tense all the while I am speaking before an audience.
- _____ 16. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I speak before an audience.
- _____ 17. I like to get involved in group discussions.
- _____ 18. Although I am nervous just before getting up, I soon forget my fears and enjoy the experience.
- _____ 19. Conversing with people who hold positions of authority causes me to be fearful and tense.
- _____ 20. I dislike using my body and voice expressively.
- _____ 21. I feel relaxed and comfortable while speaking.
- _____ 22. I feel self-conscious when I am called upon to answer a question or give an opinion.
- _____ 23. I face the prospect of making a speech with complete confidence.

- _____ 24. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
- _____ 25. I would enjoy presenting a speech on a local television show.

Part Three: Personal Report of Communicative Fear (PRCF).

- _____ 1. Talking with someone new scares me.
- _____ 2. I look forward to talking in class.
- _____ 3. I like standing up and talking to a group of people.
- _____ 4. I like to talk when the whole class listens.
- _____ 5. Standing up to talk in front of other people scares me.
- _____ 6. I like talking to teachers.
- _____ 7. I am scared to talk to people.
- _____ 8. I like it when it is my turn to talk in class.
- _____ 9. I like to talk to new people.
- _____ 10. When someone asks me a question, it scares me.
- _____ 11. There a lot of people I am scared to talk to.
- _____ 12. I like to talk to people I haven't met before.
- _____ 13. I like it when I don't have to talk.
- _____ 14. Talking to teachers scares me.

Part Four: The Receiver Apprehension Test (RAT).

Read these instructions CAREFULLY. The following series of statements refer to listening to other people. In the blank provided, write the number of the degree to which each statement applies to you:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Strongly Disagree | (The statement is a very poor description of you.) |
| 2 | Disagree | (The statement is a poor description of you.) |
| 3 | Undecided | (You are not sure if the statement describes you or not.) |
| 4 | Agree | (The statement somewhat describes you.) |
| 5 | Strongly Agree | (The statement describes you very well.) |

There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and record your first impression.

- _____ 1. When listening to people in authority I always find it easy to put together exactly what was said.
- _____ 2. I occasionally have difficulty listening in a group discussion because I am worried about adjusting and adapting to the ideas.
- _____ 3. I sometimes have difficulty concentrating on what others are saying.
- _____ 4. I find it easy to concentrate on what is being said.
- _____ 5. At times I have difficulty concentrating on instructions others give me.
- _____ 6. It is sometimes difficult for me to make sense out of what others are saying.
- _____ 7. I sometimes feel uncomfortable when listening to other's ideas.
- _____ 8. I almost never have difficulty understanding test items that I have to read.
- _____ 9. It is at times hard to listen or focus on what other people are saying unless I know them well.
- _____ 10. At times I feel tense when listening as a member of a social gathering.
- _____ 11. Receiving new information sometimes makes me feel somewhat afraid.
- _____ 12. I have no fear of misunderstanding what I read.
- _____ 13. My thoughts occasionally become confused and jumbled when reading important information.
- _____ 14. I am sometimes afraid that I will misread instructions.
- _____ 15. I have no fear of listening and adjusting to others' views.
- _____ 16. I am sometimes afraid that I will not completely understand what is said.

Scoring Methods:

Part I: VAS

To obtain your VAS score, complete the following steps:

- (1) Add your scores for the following items: 2, 3, 6, 7, and 9.
- (2) Add your scores for the following items: 1, 4, 5, 8, and 10.
- (3) Add 30 to your score for step 1.
- (4) Subtract your score for step 2 from your score for step 3.

Your score should be between 10 and 50. If your score is above 38, this indicates you are more verbally active than most people. If your score is below 22, this indicates you are more quiet than most people. If your score falls between 22-38, you're within the normal range in your verbal activity.

Part II: PRCA

To determine your PRCA score, complete the following steps:

- (1) Add up your scores for items: 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 17, 18, 21, 23, and 25.
- (2) Add up your scores for items: 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, and 24.
- (3) Add 84 to the total for step 1.
- (4) Subtract the total for step 2 from the total for step 3.

Your score should be between 25 and 125. If your score is between 62 and 88, you fall within the normal range of communication apprehension. If you score above 88, you have a high level of communication apprehension. If you score below 62, you have a low level of communication apprehension.

Part III: PRCF

To obtain the score for the PRCF, complete the following steps:

- (1) Add the scores for the items: 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 12.
- (2) Add the scores on the items: 1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, and 14.
- (3) Add 42 to the total of step 1.
- (4) Subtract the total of step 2 from the total of step 3.

The score should be between 14 and 70. The normal range on the PRCF is between 28 and 47. Students scoring above 47 are probably highly communication apprehensive. Those scoring below 28 are very low in communication apprehension.

Part IV: RAT

To obtain the score for the RAT, complete the following steps:

- (1) Add scores for items: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16.
- (2) Add scores for items: 1, 4, 8, 12, and 15.

(3) Complete the formula: $\text{RAT score} = 66 - (\text{Total 1}) + (\text{Total 2})$

Students with scores above 62 are probably suffering from receiver apprehension. Students with scores between 53 and 62 have a moderate level of receiver apprehension.

Author Biography

Brian David Phillips is a lifelong educator, academic, and more. He has taught in higher education in Taiwan for forever and a day – well, over thirty-one years in the English Department at National Chengchi University. His doctorate in Comparative Literature is from National Taiwan University where he worked in Interactive Drama for his doctoral research. Dr. Phillips is a Certified Hypnotherapist and over the decades has taught trancework methods as a guest lecturer in several countries around the world. He is the founder and organizer of the Taiwan Virtual Reality Meetup which encourages developers and members of the public to explore and develop new ways to employ the new media of virtual reality in new and exciting ways.