CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analyses include:

(1) The study of the current needs of the undergraduate-respondents

(2) The English speaking needs of the graduate-respondents who graduated from Guizhou University of Technology and have worked for at least one year

(3) The responses from the teacher-respondents

(4) The evaluation of the present material used by the first-year undergraduates of Arts and Sciences at Guizhou University of Technology.

The undergraduate-respondents' responses to Questionnaire 1 (see appendix I, p. 100) about their preferences for learning activities and techniques, and the related information are shown in five charts using the frequency distribution of the responses (see pp. 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36).

The undergraduate-respondents' responses to Questionnaire 2 (see appendix II, p.106) on their topic preferences were analyzed using the frequency distribution

and percentages of the responses (see table 3, p. 38).

The replies to two sets of open-ended questions from graduate-respondents and teacher-respondents (see appendixes III and IV, pp.107 and 108) were summarized in table 4 (see p. 40) and table 5 (see p. 43).

4.1 Analysis of Needs of the Learners

Learners' needs were discussed in terms of their preferences of learning techniques, activities and learning topics. The responses to preferences for learning activities and techniques were indicated in five charts (see pp. 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36) using frequency distribution. The responses to topic preferences were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage as the statistical treatment and the analysis was presented in table 3 (see p. 38).

4.1.1 Preferences on Learning Techniques and Activities

Questionnaire 1 (see appendix I, p. 100) is concerned with undergraduate-respondents' preferences on learning techniques. Chart 1 (see p. 32) shows that group discussion on movies and story-retelling are the most preferred learning techniques since these were both indicated by 23 out of 40 respondents. Word-for-word repetition of English dialogues was chosen by 18 respondents. The least preferred learing technique is memorizing dialogues or phrases chosen by eight respondents only.

Three respondents added their own choices—they would like to learn how to cope with different situations, that is to say, they would like to develop their

communicative competence in speaking English. Moreover, the respondents'

preferences on discussion and repetition correlate to their learning activity

preferences shown in chart 2 .
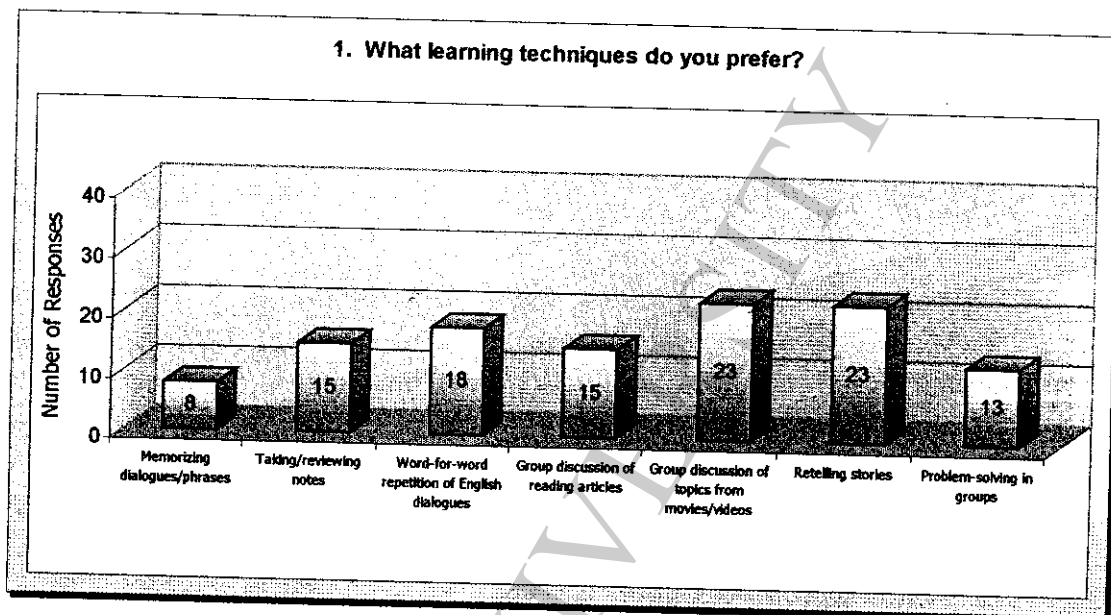
Chart 1. Learning Technique Preferences

Chart 2 indicates that the most preferred learning activity is singing songs as 28 respondents indicated. Twenty two undergraduate-respondents preferred conversation drills and discussion of videos. Nineteen respondents preferred repetition of conversations on tape and games/role-playing. Sixteen respondents preferred simulations and pronunciation exercises. The least preferred activity is grammar exercises as indicated by only five respondents.

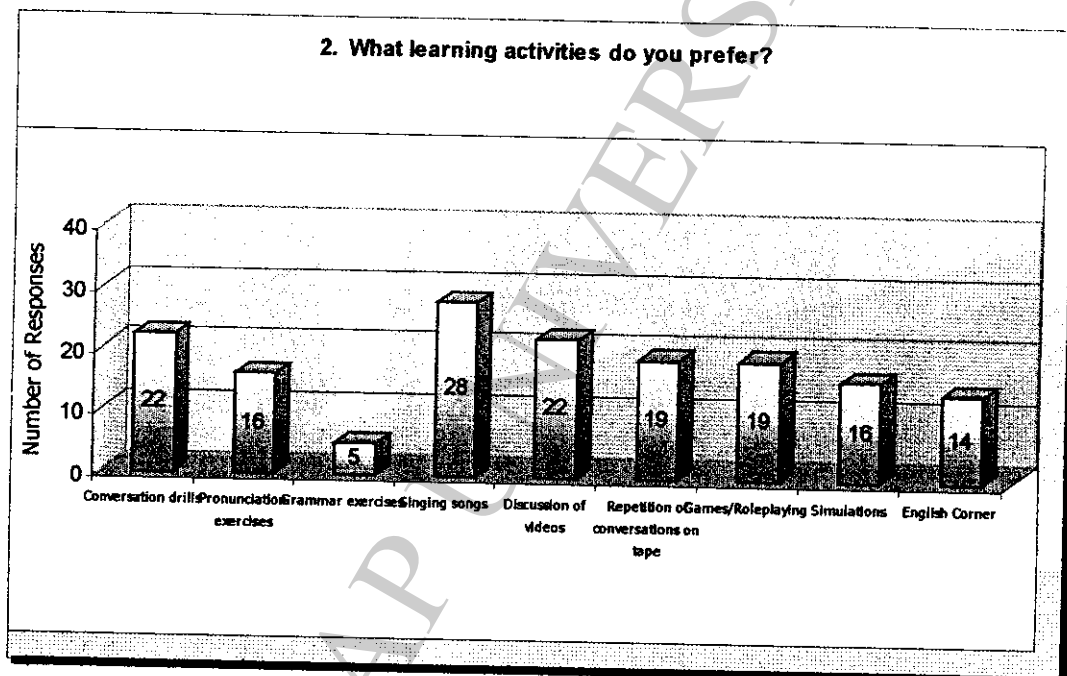## Chart 2. Learning Activity Preferences

Chart 3 shows that whole classwork was given priority by 23 respondents; learning with guest speakers comes in second as it was indicated by 19 respondents; and small group work is third with the total number of 14. It is worth noting that there is an insignificant difference between undergraduate-respondents' preference to learn from Chinese teachers of English and from native speakers of English. Thirteen respondents indicated their preference to learn from Chinese teachers of English, while 12 respondents indicated their preferrence to learn from native speakers of English.

Chart 3. Learners' Preferences on Teaching Techniques

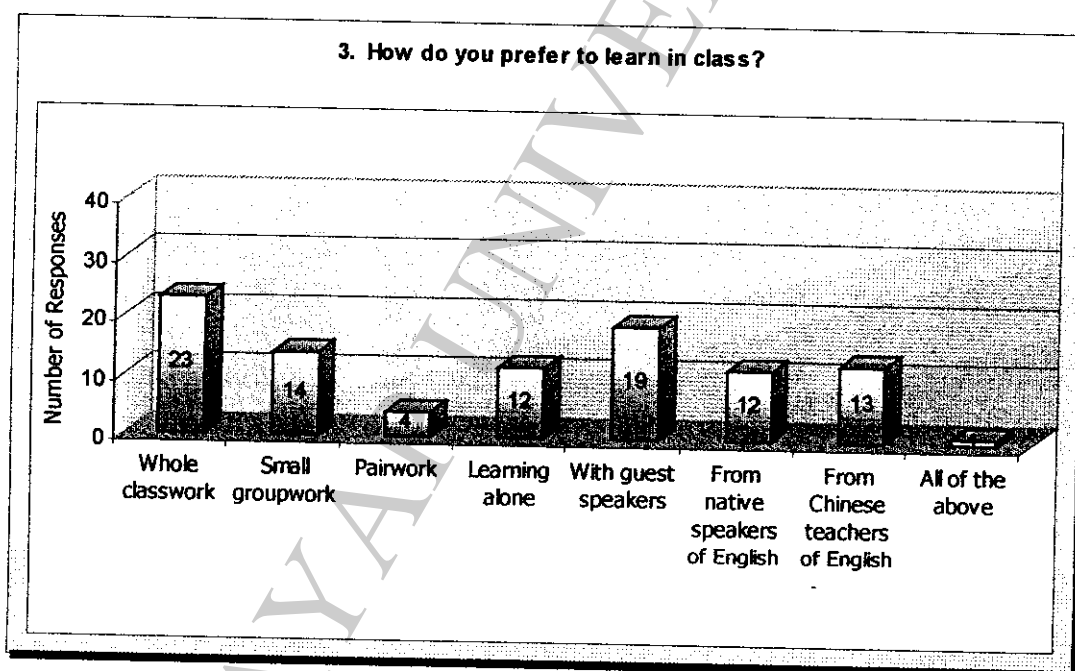3. How do you prefer to learn in class?

Chart 4 shows that the choice "Immediately but anonymously" is the most preferred way of receiving correction as chosen by 21 out of 40 undergraduate-respondents. Seventeen respondents indicated that they would like to be corrected immediately in front of the whole class. Eleven respondents chose "Right after class while nobody chose "Not to be corrected." When asked to add other ways, one respondent had a good suggestion: "Teachers summarize or review a lesson by pointing out the mistakes that students have made without mentioning their names."

Chart 4. Preferences on Ways of Receiving Correction
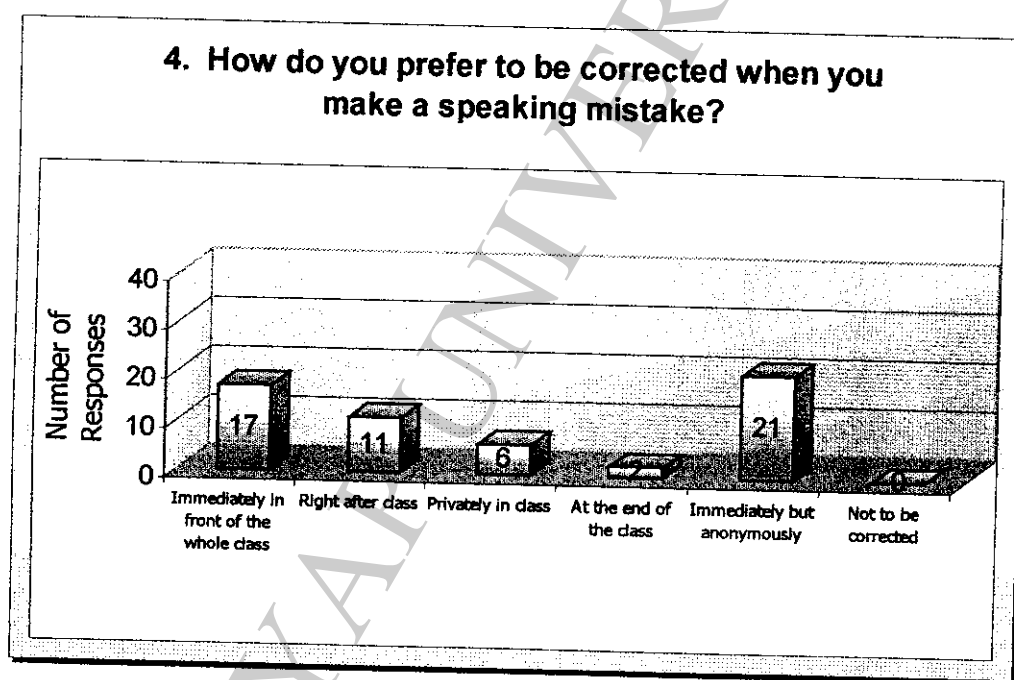
As to the ways of receiving feedback (see chart 5), 12 out of 39 undergraduate-respondents (one respondent didn't answer this question) indicated that they liked all the ways suggested: test scores, instructor's personal comments and peer assessment. Twelve students preferred to receive feedback from test scores only. Ten respondents preferred to receive feedback from instructor's personal comments. Five respondents preferred to receive feedback from peer assessment. When writing their own opinions on the way of receiving feedback, four students preferred self-evaluation while one student preferred impromptu speeches or role-playing.

Chart 5. Preferences on Ways of Receiving Feedback

5. How do you prefer to receive feedback?
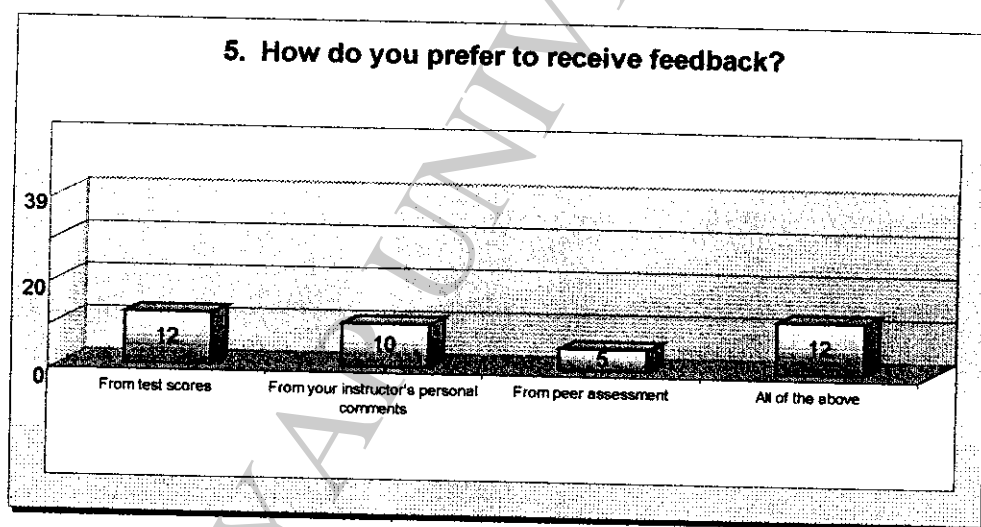
Based on the information from Questionnaire 1 (see appendix I, p. 100), repetition, discussion, role-playing, singing songs, whole group work, learning with guest speakers, and small group work are preferred as learning activities and teaching techniques. The respondents preferred their errors or mistakes in English speaking to be corrected by teachers immediately and anonymously, while they would like to receive their feedback on their progress through test scores, self-evaluation, instructor's personal comments and peer assessment.

4.1.2   Preferences on Topics

Forty undergraduate-respondents were asked to choose five topics that they would like to learn from 11 topics from Questionnaire 2 (see appendix II, p. 106). The five choices would be the topics used for the supplementary speaking material. Because of the limited time that could be allocated for the supplementary speaking material, only five topics could be included. The information from Questionnaire 2 (What Do You Want To Learn from Your Speaking Class? see appendix II, p. 106) was analyzed by using the frequency distribution and percentages of the responses (see table 3, p. 38).

Table 3 (see p. 38) shows the frequency distribution and percentage of responses on the choices of topics. *Buying Things, Greeting & Responding to Greetings, Invitation, Expressing Agreement & Disagreement* and *Telling Stories* are the five topics that the undergraduate-respondents preferred to learn first.

To illustrate, the topic *Buying Things* was the most popular choice since it was the choice of 27 or 67.5% of the 40 respondents. The topic *Greeting &*

Responding to Greetings occupied the second place as it is the choice of 26 or 65% of the respondents. Twenty one or 52% of the 40 respondents chose both *Expressing Agreement & Disagreement* and *Invitaion* as their favorite topics. The topic *Telling Stories* was the fifth choice as chosen by 19 or 47.5% of the respondents.

Table 3. Undergraduate Respondents' Topic Preferences

Topics	Responses (N: 40)	Percentage
Buying Things	27	67.5%
Greeting & Responding to Greetings	26	65%
Expressing Agreement & Disagreement	21	52%
Invitation	21	52%
Telling Stories	19	47.5%
Complimenting & Responding to Compliments	18	45%
Apologizing	17	42.5%
Expressing Appreciation	14	35%
Telling Time& Direction	13	32.5%
American Slang	11	27.5%
Leave-Taking	10	25%

Legend: Precentage is obtained by dividing the number of responses by the total number of the undergraduate-respondents (40).

Moreover, in Questionnaire 2 (see appendix II, p. 106), when the undergraduate-respondents were asked to write other topics which were not listed in the questionnaire, six respondents wrote they would like to learn about sports, music and movies; two respondents mentioned their interest in English literature; two were interested in learning telephone conversations and one wanted to have communicative competence, but this respondent wanted to learn useful expressions on routines first.

4.2   Analysis of the Needs of the Graduate-Respondents

Questionnaire 3 (English-Speaking Needs of Those Who Graduated from Guizhou Univerisity of Technology, see appendix III, p. 107) which was replied by the graduate-respondents is composed of eight open-ended questions. The researcher mailed out the questionnaires to 20 graduates who graduated and have worked for at least one year, 14 people returned the questionnaires through mail. Among those 14 graduate-respondents, four were secretaries of foreign-owned companies; six were chemical product factory sales managers; one was a salesperson of an insurance company; two worked at telecommunication equipment companies, and one worked at a Sino-US tobacco company. The responses from those 14 graduates are summarized in table 4 (see p. 40).

The graduates indicated that they needed to speak English when they worked. They indicated some particular situations in which English was spoken, and such

situations suggested the functions and notions of English that needed to be covered in the content of the supplementary material. For example, at a company's reception, the function of greeting and the notions of number, size, taste would possibly be used.

Table 4. Summary of Questionnaire 3 on Graduate-Respondents' English Speaking Needs

Questions	Responses
1: Opportunities for Speaking English	Many (9 respondents); not many (4); none (1)
2: People to speak English to	American, British, Brazilian, German, Zimbabwean, Japanese, Korean colleagues and sometimes, Chinese friends as well
3: Situations	Working; company's receptions
4: Conversational topics	Weather; family; food; movies; social and political issues
5 & 6: Problems/Difficulty	Inadequate cultural information; vocabulary; insufficient knowledge of the target culture; lack of self-confidence
7. & 8: Suggestions on the content of and activities for a speaking class	Content: culture; vocabulary; Activity: debate; discussion; improvised speech or talk; group work; persuasion; role-playing

4.3 Analysis of the Information About the Teachers

Questionnaire 4 (General Information about Teachers, see appendix IV, p. 108) was given to 10 Chinese teachers of English who were teaching *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* to the first-year undergraduates of Arts and Sciences at Guizhou University of Technology. The questionnaire consisted of 13 open-ended questions. Eight teachers answered the questionnaire.

According to the information in table 5 (see p. 43), all eight teacher-respondents have taught for more than two years, and six teachers found that speaking skills were the most difficult of the four skills for their students because they were given little or no exposure to doing so.

To assist the teachers in estimating the proficiency level of their students' speaking, the researcher provided the teachers with Foreign Service Institute Oral Proficiency Interview Scale (see appendix V, p. 109), which was cited in Brown (1994, 269). Seven teachers evaluated their students' speaking skill at Level 0+, which means that the learner is "able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances" and one teacher evaluated the skill at Level 1, which means the learner is "able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics." Using the same scale, all the teachers interpreted "basic speaking skills" from the curriculum (see p. 52) as Level 1+, which means that the learner "can initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands."

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that the teachers read very similar journals. For example, among eight teacher-respondents, three teachers read journals. Those three teachers all read *Foreign Language Teaching and Research* (see table 5, p. 43). The reason was that the journals indicated by the three teachers were the only journals available at the Foreign Language Department library of Guizhou University of Technology.

Table 5. Summary of Questionnaire 4 Administered to Teacher-Respondents

Questions	Responses
1. Years of teaching	6-10 years (six teachers); 2-3 years (two teachers)
2. The number of students in each class	Over 40 (eight teachers)
3. The material being used	*College English Intensive Reading, Vol. One*
4. Whether the material integrates the four skills well	No (eight teachers); speaking is not included
5. Attitudes towards the material	Not a very good book (seven teachers); Do not know (one teacher)
6. The most difficult skill for your students	Speaking (six teachers) Listening (two teachers)
7. The average proficiency level at which your students are	Level 0+ (seven teachers) Level 1 (one teacher)
8. Interpretations of "basic speaking skills" from the curriculum	Level 1+ (eight teachers)
9. Having been to TEFL or TESOL workshop	Never (eight teachers)
10. Having Taken TEFL or TESOL courses	Yes (three teachers) and only one teacher specifying the course as Applied Linguistics
11. Reading TEFL or TESOL journal	No (five teachers); Yes (three teachers) and one teacher reading *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*; one teacher reading *Foreign Language Teaching and Research* and *Foreign Language World*; one teacher reading *Foreign Language Teaching and Research.*
12. The best way your students can learn	Independent study (one teacher); Teacher correcting students' homework (one teacher); Giving students opportunities to use what they have learned (three teachers); Making students active in class (one teacher); No answers from two teachers
13. Ways of handling silence of students during question time	Doing games (three teachers); Giving clues (one teacher); Calling out students' names (one teacher) Nudging students (three teachers)

When asked how teachers could make students active in class, one teacher said she used games and three teachers said they used language games to handle the silence of the students, but they all reported that playing games was not very effective because the students remained very passive. When asked further what games they played and how these games were played, the teachers seemed reluctant to give the researcher any details. The other three teachers handled silence of their students by "nudging students" (see p. 43), that is to say, teachers would single out some students to answer questions through non-verbal gestures or signals. Again, the teachers did not tell the researcher how their students felt about the "nudging."

On the whole, the questionnaires yielded important background information on students' language proficiency level, and at the same time, they provided material designers (like this writer) insights into the kind and amount of the supplementary materials that should be prepared for teachers and their students.

4.4 Analysis of The Material Being Taught

College English Intensive Reading, Volume One is the existing material used by the first-year College students of Arts and Sciences in most of the universities in China. Along with the *Intensive Reading,* students are given *Extensive Reading, Fast Reading and Listening* books.

College English Intensive Reading, Volume One was developed by the College English Teaching Department of Shanghai Fudan Univeristy, the most prestigious comprehensive university in China. The chief developers of this book are:

Professor Zhai Xiangjun, Professor Zhang Zenjian, et al. One British expert and two American experts helped in the final editing. This textbook was first published in 1990 in Shanghai, China. It won the Special Prize in the Second Contest of Outstanding Teaching Materials for Nationwide Institutions of Higher Learning, and the First Prize in the Second Contest of Outstanding Teaching Materials for the Ministry of Education in 1993.

In Guizhou, *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* is the core material for the first-year College students of Arts and Sciences and is taught four class hours a week, 60 hours per semester. *Extensive Reading, Volume One, Fast Reading, Volume One* and *Listening, Volume One* are given to the students for their self-study. Considering the regular time and attention on intensive reading, *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* shall be examined in detail.

A copy of the actual table of contents of *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* (1992, 1-3) is presented (see appendix VI. p. 110). In order to discern the strength and weakness of this text clearly, the writer reformated the contents into a mapped form that links the skills with particular structure and vocabulary (see chart 6, p. 46).

Chart 6. Map of *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One*

Unit	Structure	Vocabualry	Skills
Unit One: *How to Improve Your Study Habits* Page 1	Imperative clauses; conjunctions of adverbial clausese (e.g. *so that, as well as*); noun suffixes; inflectional words	Verbs and verbal phrases on study habits	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: skimming and scanning Writing: using connectives to combine two sentences
Unit Two: *Sailing Round the World* Page 16	Simple past tense; *what* clauses as subjects and objects; Reduction of clauses to phrases or words; inflectional words	Adjectives on Nature; adverbial phrases; verbs and propositions which go together	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: skimming and scanning Writing: Contraction: reducing clauses to phrases or words using gerundial phrases, infinitives and participal phrases
Unit Three: *The Present* Page 30	Simple past tense; adverbial conjuctions (e.g. *too... to, not... until)*; noun & verb suffixes; inflectional words	Words on events; unit words (e.g. bunch, packet)	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: reading in thought groups Writing: subordination
Unit Four: *Turning Off TV: A Quiet Hour* Page 45	Modal auxiliary verb: *might* for possibility; intention: *would like to*; present subjunctive mood; simple past vs. present perfect tense; words of more than one part of speech; inflectional words	Synonyms and antonyms	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: using context clues for word meaning (I) Writing: contraction: avoiding redundancy

Chart 6—*Continued*

Unit Five: *A Miserable, Merry Christmas* Page 62	Modal verbs: *ought to/could* for obligation; must for logical conclusions; attributive infinitive phrases; subject compliments; compound adjectives	Nouns about parts of a horse and house furnishing; adjectives about feelings	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: using context clues for word meaning (II) Writing: Review: combination, contraction and subordination
Unit Six: *Sam Adams, Industrial Engineer* Page 86	Negative prefixes; parenthesis phrases; the usage of the words *spend, used to, except* and *except for;* tag questions	Words on factory's setting and management	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: reading for the main idea (I) Writing: combination using subordination and conjunctions
Unit Seven: *The Sampler* Page 103	Unreal conditional sentences using *as if/though*; suffixes *-ful, -less, -er, -or, -ar*	Words on people's appearance, personality, food, taste	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: reading for the main idea (II) Writing: contraction: ellipsis
Unit Eight: *You Go Your Way, I'll Go Mine* Page 118	Past simple tense; suffix *-ly* to form adjective or adverbs; inflectional words; distinguishing *hear/hear of* and *fault/mistake*	Words on people's emotions and behavior	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: recognizing important facts or details Writing: contraction:brevity

Chart 6—*Continued*

Unit Nine: *The Brain: the Most Powerful Computer in the Universe* Page 136	Simple present; passive voice; emphatic sentences; distinguishing *heart/mind* and *find/find out*	Words on general science	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: looking for topic sentences Writing: combination: appositive
Unit Ten: *Going Home* Page 149	Compound adjectives: adverbs+past participles; adjective suffix *-y*; words used both as nouns and verbs, e.g. *knight, fall*; independent adverbial clauses	Words on emotions and appearance	Speaking: sense groups and sentence stress Reading: reading for full understanding Writing: review of combination

4.4.1 A Description of the Content of the Present Material Used
(*College English Intensive Reading, Volume One*)

College English Intensive Reading, Volume One consists of ten units for the first semester of the first academic year. Each unit has six parts: *Text, New Words, Notes, Study & Practice, Reading Practice* and *Writing Practice.*

Texts are either taken or adopted from various sources. For example, in Unit Three, the text entitled *The Present* is adopted from *New Horizons English Six* edited by Lars Mellgren and Michael Walker. The text of Unit Eight entitled *You Go Your Way, I'll Go Mine,* is taken from *The Human Comedy* written by William Saroyon in 1943. In Unit Nine, the text entitled *The Brain--The Most Powerful Computer in the Universe* is taken from *BBC Modern English* (January 1981) by Hugh Corrigan.

Each unit begins with a text. The text with a heading is then followed by a vocabulary section, *New Words,* which provides both Chinese and English glossary and phonemic transcriptions in phonmic bars (e.g. *medal /medl/*). A list of *Phrases & Expressions* from the text is followed by *Notes,* which gives background information about the text and explains selected grammatical points. An exercise section called *Study & Practice* consists of *Reading Aloud, Comprehension of the Text, Vocabulary, Word Building, Structure, Cloze* and *Translation.* The last two sections for each unit are *Reading Practice* and *Writing Practice.*

A closer look at some exercises of this book will reveal that *Reading Aloud* exercises mark "sense groups" with a slash bar (/) and "sentence stress" with a

primary stress ('). For example, in the text entitled *The Present* (Unit Three), the *Reading Aloud* exercise is:

> The 'old 'lady was 'eighty to'day. / /She had 'put 'on her 'best dress. / / Per'haps--⬜ Per'haps 'Myra might come. / / After 'all, / 'eighty was a 'special 'birthday, / a'nother 'decade 'lived or 'endured / 'just as you 'chose to 'look at it. / / (*College English Intensive Reading Vol. One*, 1992, 35).

In *Comprehension of the Text*, open-ended questions sometimes along with multiple choices are used to check how well students understand the text. Most of the open-ended questions are information questions. For example, information questions such as "*What was the special day?*" and "*How old was the old lady?*" are asked in *Comprehension of the Text* exercise of Unit Three.

In *Vocabulary*, exercises use matching format and filling in the blanks with words or expressions given in a table. *Word Building* deals with affixes and compound words.

Structure highlights grammatical points from the texts. For example, in Unit One, the *Structure* exercises ask students to complete sentences by translating clauses in the brackets from Chinese into English using *so that, and...as well* or *as...as one can*, like:

1. I took an English book with me (以便有空可以读一下).

9. (请尽快把这本书看完). I have to return it to the library tomorrow afternoon. (College English Intensive Reading, Volume One, 1992, 9)

Students are supposed to translate these two clauses from Chinese to English respectively as *so that I could read it when I was free* and *Please finish this book as*

soon as possible. In Unit Four, the *Strucuture* section asks students to rewrite a few sentences after the given models, like:

Model 1: *They walked together.*

They took a walk together.

Model 2: *He returned to his native village after the war ended.*

He returned to his native village after the war came to an end.

After the models, students are asked to re-write sentences like:

2. *Our manager will visit France this winter.*

6. *Nathan Hale looked for the last time at his beautiful country and said that he only regretted that he had but one life to lose for his country* (1992, 54).

Translation requires students to translate a few sentences from Chinese into English. *Reading Practice* teaches students some basic reading skills, such as skimming, scanning and reading for topic sentences.

Writing Practice gives practice on the skills such as contraction, subordination and combination. For example, students are asked to use subordination to combine two sentences into one in Unit Three (*College English Intensive Reading, Volume One*, 1992, 44), like:

1. *I went to visit the American author.*

He wrote a number of books about China.

5. *She will be here.*

It doesn't seem likely.

10. We are badly in need of something.

It is raw material.

4.4.2 Evaluation of the Material

Dubin and Olshtain (1990) suggested six guidelines, namely expertise, compatibility, alternative, integration of the four skills, authenticity and attitudes towards material for evaluating existing materials. *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* was developed by the College English Teaching Department of Shanghai Fudan Univeristy, the most prestigious comprehensive university in China. The chief developers of this book are: Professor Zhai Xiangjun, Professor Zhang Zenjian, et al. One British expert and two American experts helped in the final editing. The developers are experts who are familiar with China's educational system and Chinese college students. In this regard, this book has therefore met the first criterion.

However, the book is not compatible with the English curriculum for non-English majors in that while the goal of this book (mentioned in the preface) is to carry out the requirements of the curriculum, which are stated in Chinese, but when translated into English, it would read: "to equip students with very good reading skills, fairly good listening skills and basic writing and speaking skills." The curriculum is ambiguous over the key terms "very good," "fairly good" and "basic," which indicates a historical problem noted by Cowan, et al. "There appeared to be no

standard English curriculum for those majoring in the arts and sciences" (Cowan, et al, 1979, 468). Despite the ambiguity of the curriculum, obviously, most of the exercises, such as substitution, combination, cloze and translation, are for reading and writing, not for oral communication. Only a small number of the exercises are on "sense groups" and "sentence stress," which are not communicative tasks but mainly pronunciation practice (see chart 6, p. 46).

In terms of provisions for alternatives to materials/activities, Dubin and Olshtain suggested: "Alternatives may be provided in terms of learner-tasks, learning styles, presentation techniques, expected outcomes, etc" (1990, 29). An examination of this book (see chart 6, p. 46) would reveal that reading comprehension, substition drills, combination and translation are the main tasks. Rote memorization and grammar translation do not give alternatives to suit both teachers' and students' preferences and needs.

With regard to integrating the four language skills, the material covers reading and writing skills with little attention to "sentence stress" and "sense groups." Practice on "sentence stress" and "sense groups" in the material does not give meaningful contexts for real-life communication. It is not surprising that those eight teacher-respondents all indicated that speaking skills were not included in the material (see table 5, p. 43).

Furthermore, Dubin and Olstain suggest: "If a textbook contains only re-written, watered-down stories that were adapted for the particular text, students using that material may never have the opportunity of encountering authentic text" (1990,

30). In the light of such a suggestion, the reading texts in this book has therefore met the criterion of authenticity because the texts are adopted or taken from autobiographies, novels and other forms of literature written by English native speakers, which students will be likely to encounter outside the classrooms or outside China. However, the graduate-respondents indicated that they need to know some information about the target culture since they feel their background of the target culture is inadequate (see table 4, p. 40). Realistically, any authetic English material or discourse is embedded in English culture.

The last guideline is about the attitudes that teachers and students have towards the materials they are using. According to the responses from Questionnaire 4: General Information about Teachers (see table 5, p. 43), eight teachers reported that the material did not integrate speaking skills well and seven teachers indicated that the material was "not a good book." Thus, it is not surprising that of the four skills, speaking was found to be the most difficult among their students.