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The author is not a preacher, and yet he does deliver a kind of sermon here. Who is his audience? Interestingly, his audience is your teachers of Advanced English as a foreign language. The author seeks to help them in their difficult task of teaching advanced students, their task of leading their students to a higher level of ability and fluency. Does it encourage you to know that you are not the only one who is struggling at this level of language acquisition? A Kind of Sermon by W.S.Fowler It is probably easier for teachers than for students to appreciate the reasons why learning English seems to become increasingly difficult once the basic structures and patterns of the language have been understood. Students are naturally surprised and disappointed to discover that a process which ought to become simpler does not appear to do so.来源：www.examda.com It may not seem much consolation to point out that the teacher, too, becomes frustrated when his efforts appear to produce less obvious results. He finds that students who were easy to teach, because they succeeded in putting everything they had been taught into practice, hesitate when confronted with the vast untouched area of English vocabulary and usage which falls outside the scope of basic textbooks. He sees them struggling because the language they thought they knew now appears to consist of a bewildering variety of idioms, cliché and accepted phrases with different meanings in

different contexts. It is hard to convince them that they are still making progress towards fluency and that their English is certain to improve, given time and dedication. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that some give up in disgust, while others still wait hopefully for the teacher to give them the same confident guidance he was able to offer them at first. The teacher, for his part, frequently reduced to trying to explain the inexplicable, may take refuge in quoting proverbs to his colleagues such as: "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. It's the way that you say it." His students might feel inclined to counter these with: "The more I learn, the less I know."来源 : www.examda.com Of course this is not true. What both students and teachers are experiencing is the recognition that the more complex structures one encounters in a language are not as vital to making oneself understood and so have a less immediate field of application. For the same reason, from the teachers point of view, selecting what should be taught becomes a more difficult task. It is much easier to get food of any kind than to choose the dish you would most like to eat on a given day from a vast menu. Defining the problem is easier than providing the solution. One can suggest that students should spend two or three years in an English-speaking country, which amounts to washing one's hands of them. Few students have the time or the money to do that. It is often said that wide reading is the time or the money to do that. It is often said that wide reading is the best alternative course of action but even here it is necessary to make some kind of selection. It is no use telling students to go to the library and pick up the first book they

come across. My own advice to them would be: "read what you can understand without having to look up words in a dictionary (but not what you can understand at a glance). read what interests you. read what you have time for (magazines and newspapers rather than novels unless you can read the whole novel in a week or so). read the English written today, not 200 years ago. read as much as you can and try to remember the way it was written rather than individual words that puzzled you." And instead of "read", I could just as well say "listen to."来源 : www.examda.com My advice to teachers would be similar in a way. I would say "Its no good thinking that anything will do, or that all language is useful. Its no good relying on students to express themselves without the right tools for expression. Its still your duty to choose the best path to follow near the top of the mountain just as it was to propose a practicable short-cut away from the beaten track in the foothills. And if the path you choose is too overgrown to make further progress, the whole party will have to go back and you will have to choose another route. You are still the paid guide and expert and there is a way to the top somewhere." 100Test 下载频道开通 , 各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com