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Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language

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Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (3rd Edition)

Marianne Celce-Murcia, Editor. (2001)

University of California, Los Angeles.

Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Pp. xii + 584

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Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language in its third edition, was primarily designed for use in teacher education courses. The book can also be used in other ways, for example as a reference book and handbook for teachers and a sourcebook for teacher trainers. I would select this text as the essential starting point for those who wish to gain an overview of theory and practice.

It has several features that I feel make it an excellent text for teacher trainers who want to be well-informed about predominant theories. Its main use is likely to be as a core textbook on foreign language teaching.

Throughout, it encourages teachers to reflect on issues in language teaching and learning in the field.

Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, also known as “The Apple Book”, is an edited volume where more than forty acknowledged specialists in the field provide a variety of perspectives. This volume has more contributors than the previous ones. As the editor states, “sixteen of the chapters appearing in the first edition are revised versions of chapters in the second edition¹ and the revisions have been substantial. . . ten new chapters and ten remaining ten chapters¹ appear for the first time in this edition” (vii). All these contributions, taken together, avoid the fact of socio-cultural, socio-political and sociolinguistic influences (such as “world Englishes”) which will cause them to reconsider long-held views about language and education.

The structure of the volume is straightforward and serves the reader well. All chapters of the volume are also unified by consistent underlying theoretical concerns and was previewed as a whole; each chapter has chapters related to their topic for further reading: “(see the chapter by. . . in this volume)”

The goal of the book is “to maintain a balance between theory and practice” (vii). The book provides information about present and past approaches and on the other hand, resources for teaching English as a second language teacher.

Each chapter begins with an “introductory task” which invites readers to focus their attention on the topic and concludes with, suggested activities, discussion questions and web sites for additional information. Most of these activities are based on real examples of ESL/EFL teaching contexts and can be expanded or modified. The endnotes and endnotes. The last part of the book lists useful references and ends with an index; the page number of the page on which they are introduced. [-1-]

The volume consists of five units in addition to a foreword. The editor, Marianne Celce-Murillo and Douglas Brown introduce the volume. This is followed by chapters presented as units.

- Unit 1, which regroups all of the papers dealing with Teaching Methodology: Five chapters on Teaching Approaches, CLT, ESP and Syllabus Design;
- Unit 2 which regroups those papers concerned with Language Skills: Fourteen chapters on Language Skills and Vocabulary;
- Unit 3 regroups papers which provide a perspective to Integrated Approaches: Four chapters on Integrated models and Bilingual Approaches;
- The penultimate unit regroups all of the papers that focus their attention on the Learner and Strategies, Adult Education and SL Content Teaching;
- The final unit regroups all the papers which pay more attention to teachers’ concerns: Four chapters on Cross-cultural Communication, Computers in LT, SL Assessment, Media Uses in LT

The papers included are consistently good but it is not my intention here to comment on all of them. Long, but perhaps brief comments on the chapters I consider more relevant, might help situate them in the field.

I find the first chapters, dealing with past and present approaches very clear and help the reader understand the "different approaches and methods available" (p. 9-10). Marianne Celce-Murcia, in chapter one "*Language Approaches*" points out the differences between a method, a technique and an approach. It is also very helpful. Savignon, "*Communicative Language Teaching for the Twenty-First Century*" in which Communicative Approach development is explained and also readers are introduced in the design of a curriculum model which is very innovative. Her description of the approach is accurate, fair and comprehensive and the implications for practice concerns might be related to this approach. In the last chapter of the first unit written by the author "describes and evaluates a range of syllabus types" (p. 55). In this chapter, the reader is introduced to the procedures for developing syllabuses. This chapter should be a must read for those classifying syllabuses as a part of curriculum development.

The second unit "*Language Skills*", is probably the unit in which practice is introduced more fully. In chapter nine "*Teaching Pronunciation*", by Janet Goodwin tools needed to teach pronunciation are discussed, illustrating Places of Articulation, Manner of Articulation, Organs of Speech, Points of Articulation, as well as the Vowel Chart.

Joan Morley in chapter five "*Aural Comprehension Instruction: Principles and Practices*" discusses the importance of interaction as well as she rejects "the conceptualization of listening as a passive act" (p. 72).

Chapter fourteen "*Functional Tasks for Mastering the Mechanics of Writing and Going Just Beyond*" is for children's teachers at initial stages. The author clearly outlines the mechanics of communication and a new way of looking at the mechanics of these two skills as well as the steps in the development of writing. Emotive writing tasks are also provided. "It has been the main aim of this chapter to emphasize the importance of the initial stage of learning since they help students establish a good basis in sound-spelling correspondence for the effective use of reading and writing" (p. 213) [-2-]

The third unit "*Integrated Approaches*" incorporates insights from the three authors' experience. The shift from narrow Language Teaching toward integrated approaches has been witnessed in the field. The use of language as a vehicle for teaching other content areas is discussed in chapter nineteen "*Content-Based Instruction and Foreign Language Teaching*" by Marguerite Ann Snow. She also provides examples of recent variations as well as activities, the roles of the language and the content teachers are discussed. The last part of the chapter also describes current and future trends in content-based instruction. The balance of language and content teaching" (p. 315) and the framework M. Ann Snow, Myriam Bellin, and two types of language teaching objectives.

All the chapters of the fourth unit focus on with all the aspects teachers need to know when teaching students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds¹

And finally, the last unit which I consider fundamental because states what are the skills and

professional teachers. Chapter twenty-six “*Planning lessons*” by Linda Jensen clearly outlines lesson planning as “a learning experience for both the teacher and the students” (p. 407) and includes a 50-minute lesson plan template. Patricia Byrd in chapter twenty-seven “*Textbooks: Evaluation and Implementation*” provides guidelines for selecting and implementing textbooks. A useful one for “*Textbooks in Teaching*” (p. 420) and a second one for “*Analyzing Teaching Activities for Implementation*” are at the end of the chapter.

“*When the Teacher Is a Non-native Speaker*” by Péter Medgyes is an interesting chapter because it compares being a NEST and NON-NEST teachers and its influence and differences in teaching behavior. This information is also provided. The chapter is a must read for both groups of teachers. Donna M. Brinton in chapter twenty-eight “*Materials in language teaching in chapter thirty “The Use of Media in Language Teaching” and how to incorporate media into our language teaching goals” (p. 473). Six sample lessons and a checklist are included. She introduces technology in her chapter “Computers in Language Teaching.” The author lists various ways to use technology and dispels the idea that “computers are a panacea for those trying to learn second languages’ and provides a checklist with which language can be learned more effectively” (p. 486). The last chapter “Keeping Up with the Times” by Crandall focuses on a number of strategies and resources for professional development: professional journals, clearinghouses and websites and online resources.*

Bearing in mind that to this volume has contributions from forty authors, I would like to thank them for their article.

To end up, I would recommend *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* not only to those who need to reinforce their principles when teaching ESL/EFL students but because of the research.

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Editor’s Note: Dashed numbers in square brackets indicate the page number of each page for purposes of citation.

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