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Pursuing Professional Development: The Self as Source

by Kathleen M Bailey, Andy Curtis and David Nunan
Heinle & Heinle 2001
0-8384-1130-4

Teaching is usually an individual activity, and teacher development very much a case of individual self-development: setting your own goals, making your own decisions, monitoring your own progress, drawing your own conclusions, finding your own way. However, and this is a paradox referred to more than once in this book, it is likely to be most effective if approached as a cooperative venture.

There is a growing literature reporting on the received knowledge of the subject and the experiences of teachers in pursuit of professional development. This book is an accessible and valuable addition to that literature, which will not only give teachers a wealth of practical ideas for individual and cooperative work through which to 'illuminate the inner work of teaching', but also make them feel part of a wider virtual community of like-minded colleagues.

The chapters cover: self-awareness and self-observation, reflective teaching, using case studies, language learning, teaching journals, videotaping, action research, peer observation, team teaching, mentoring and coaching, and teaching portfolios.

There are three main strands in the text:

- *Teachers' voices* - in which a variety of teachers, including the three authors, speak directly about their own experiences.
- *Frameworks* - in which the authors summarise, report on and quote from research and theoretical writing on teacher development.
- *Investigations* - in which readers are invited to interact with the text and engage in practical activities in the context of their own teaching.

Each chapter concludes with helpfully annotated *Suggested readings*, drawing on the literature of education generally, and not just ELT.

The summaries of published academic work in the field are valuable,

but the most engaging and telling parts of the book are the first-person stories of teachers working in different settings and teaching different age groups, in which they recount their own investigations, doubts, frustrations and successes. These could act as points of departure or comparison, and above all they hint at the kind of insights teachers can arrive at by telling their own stories.

Pursuing Professional Development is a reference manual and practical guide for teachers seeking to connect practice, theory and research. Of course, 'paper is flat, but teaching and learning are three-dimensional' and there's plenty of inspiration and practical advice here for lifting the ideas off the page and making them work for you.

English Phonetics and Phonology (A practical course) (3rd edition)

by Peter Roach
CUP 2000
0-521-78613-4 (book)
0-521-79798-5 (set of 2 cassettes)
0-521-79799-3 (set of 2 CDs)

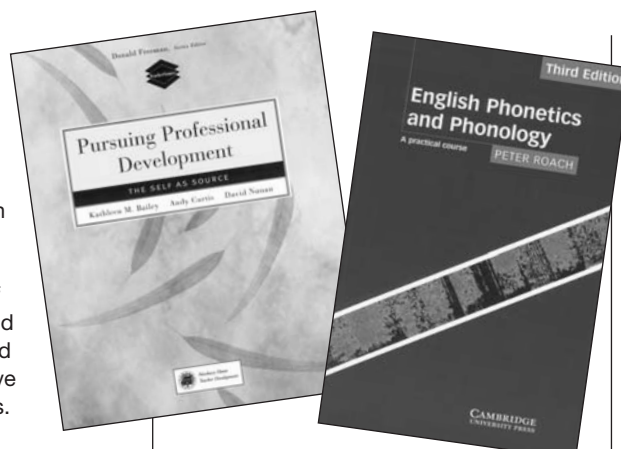
This well-established course, first published in 1983, now enters its third edition and third decade. The changes from the second edition are not enormous: the recorded material remains the same (though it is now available on audio CD as well as cassette), while, in the text, there has been revision and updating of the treatment of word stress and intonation in particular, and the recommendations for further reading have been substantially revised. The typeface is much more reader-friendly than in the second edition.

As the subtitle indicates, this is a practical course, to be followed in the order presented, with or without a tutor. The 20 chapters deal with the production of sounds, the nature of English vowels and consonants, the syllable, word stress, features of connected speech, and intonation. Each chapter has recorded and written exercises, with answers printed at the end of the book. In some chapters there are also notes for

teachers, which are primarily for teachers of phonetics and phonology using this course, but are often relevant to other teachers of English. Elsewhere, too, throughout the text, there are helpful comments about classroom application. For example, the suggestion that analysing syllable structure is helpful for a systematic awareness of exactly what types of English consonant clusters are problematic for particular learners (rather than a general impression that clusters are difficult); or the references to the importance of the receptive side of pronunciation – on learners being able to recognise weak forms and elision, for instance, even if they are not expected to produce them.

Such points add to the attraction of this course for English language teachers, but it does not attempt to be a pedagogical guide to teaching English pronunciation. Teachers will find it invaluable as a thorough and accessible grounding in the linguistic knowledge they need in order to teach pronunciation, with the standard British variety as a model – but not necessarily as a goal, as the author points out – and to understand and make effective use of published pronunciation-teaching material and recommended activities. Many teachers, and perhaps especially native speakers with no experience of studying this field, may find the book hard to get to grips with, but the material is presented and explained very clearly, with appropriate simplifications, while the notes on problems and further reading for each chapter indicate some of the complexities which have of necessity been glossed over.

Jonathan Marks
Leba, Poland



Communicative Business Activities

by Marjorie Rosenberg
öbv&hpt 2001
3-209-03353-6

It is so refreshing when a resource book for teachers exemplifies good teaching! It's good, too, that Austria has produced such an internationally useful book. *Communicative Business Activities* is extremely practical. The situation cards, role cards, questionnaires, games, etc are all there, ready-made as photocopy masters, and the lesson plans couldn't be clearer or easier to follow.

It is thorough and comprehensive. The 'map' of the book enables you, the teacher, to find classroom activities (for one-to-one or group teaching) whatever vocabulary, grammar, function, skill, topic and level you require. The lessons and materials also demonstrate and fulfil the requirements of your learners' different learning styles.

Effectively, this book creates a 'pick and mix', multi-level course where your learners not only become more effective at communication in English, but also become more skilled communicators in general. This is because Marjorie Rosenberg enables you to help your learners to explore their strengths and learning styles, and to become more self-aware. In doing this, they will develop their strengths and become more effective in all spheres of their studies and professional lives.

Teachers can also use this book to develop their own awareness and skills, become more effective in the classroom and become creators of materials themselves.

Jim Wingate
Aberystwyth, UK

Planning Lessons and Courses

by Tessa Woodward
CUP 2001
0-521-63354-0

Tessa Woodward brings a wealth of knowledge about what actually goes on in the classroom to her latest book, a step-by-step guide to planning sequences of language work. It is pleasantly accessible, with the chapters organised around the sorts of questions

that teachers, both new and experienced, are likely to ask when starting to plan a lesson or a course. Full answers to these questions are provided, often by using a practical activity as an illustration. The text is also punctuated by lively personal anecdotes and tips (from the author herself and other practising teachers), and one charming feature is the summary, based on the metaphor of gardening, which concludes each chapter, flagged in the margins by a small flower icon. Frequent use is made throughout the book of mind maps and other visual summaries to orientate the reader and act as a reminder of what has been said.

The eight chapters cover such topics as what we need to know about our students and how we can get that information; the structure and timing of lessons; content; how people learn and what the implications of this are for the way we teach; materials and stimuli; ways to plan and prepare; and how to deal with the constraints and the freedoms that individual teaching contexts can produce.

For the experienced and inexperienced alike, this is both an inspirational and a practical book that will make a valuable addition to any teacher's collection.

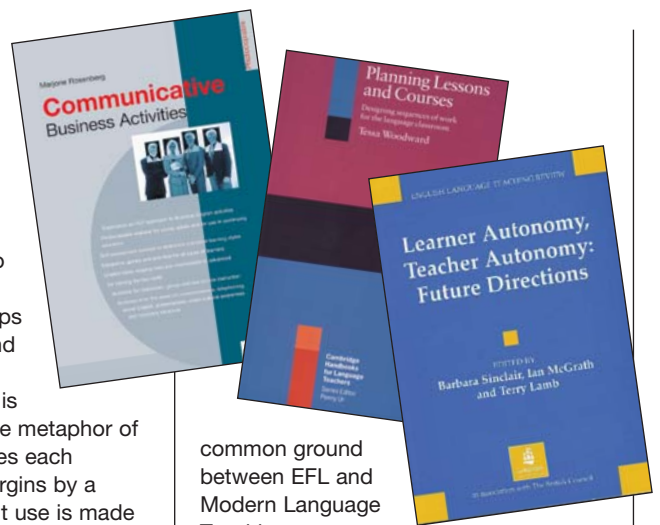
Melanie Halton
Milan, Italy

Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions

by Barbara Sinclair, Ian McGrath and Terry Lamb (Eds)
Longman in association with the British Council 2000
0-582-42963-3

This is a selection of 11 papers, taken from an international colloquium held at the Centre for Research into Second and Foreign Language Pedagogy at the University of Nottingham in April 1998.

It features papers by a number of well-known names, including Barbara Sinclair, Leni Dam, Gail Ellis, Ian McGrath and Phil Benson, but what is more important is its attempt to find



common ground between EFL and Modern Language Teaching.

Almost inevitably, this discussion takes place in a particularly British context, with McGrath citing Breen and Mann, who suggest that at least part of the growing interest in learner autonomy may come from teachers whose own autonomy has been restricted by the imposition of a national curriculum.

Widening the discussion, Terry Lamb points out that 'schools have traditionally adopted approaches to disaffection which locate the problem in the pupils themselves'. Only recently have ML teachers begun to appreciate the futility of using vocationally-oriented texts with pupils who live in unemployment black-spots, or of using topics like holidays and travel to motivate children living in poverty. This is an argument which has relevance to those who have criticised the uncontroversial, consumer-dominated values of many EFL textbooks.

Coyle, Dam and Ellis demonstrate that both EFL and ML students are capable of developing and applying metacognitive awareness. Terry Lamb takes this as an established fact, and offers a list of proposals in 'Future directions for learner autonomy – critical learner autonomy' and 'Future directions for teacher education – critical reflection'.

The applicability of these recommendations will depend on teachers' individual situations, but this is a thought-provoking book, and a most useful contribution to the literature on learner autonomy.

Neil McBeath
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