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The CATESOL Journal

Title

Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition: Issues in the Teaching of Writing to U.S.-Educated Learners of ESL by Ed. Linda Harklau, Kay M. Losey, and Meryl Siegal

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/656583x0>

Journal

The CATESOL Journal, 14(1)

ISSN

1535-0517

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Publication Date

2002

DOI

10.5070/B5.36429

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Grammar Express: For Self-Study and Classroom Use

Marjorie Fuchs and Margaret Bonner
White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, 2001.

Focus on Grammar: An Intermediate Course for Reference and Practice (2nd ed.)

Marjorie Fuchs, Margaret Bonner and Miriam Westheimer
White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, 2000.

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Because no grammar text is perfectly complete in its design, grammar teachers continually search for well-balanced, theoretically sound texts, and even when one is found, teachers know from experience that some supplementation will be necessary. As the quest for the near-perfect grammar text continues, Longman's two new grammar texts, *Grammar Express: For Self-Study and Classroom Use (GE)* and *Focus On Grammar: An Intermediate Course for Reference and Practice (FOG)*, are worth exploring.

While these two texts appear quite similar in organization and content, they differ greatly in terms of grammar presentations, exercises, and practical applications. In this review, the similarities and differences in these areas are highlighted and followed by suggestions for the practical use of these texts.

Organization and Content

As these texts are of similar levels and two of the authors from *Focus on Grammar* cowrote *Grammar Express*, it is not surprising that the table of contents in each are almost identical as are the appendixes, which are well organized, clearly referenced and substantial in content. Although these texts seem to contain identical units, they differ strategically in organization and content in many ways.

All of the 38 themed units in *FOG* follow a four-step approach. First, students are given the opportunity to notice the new grammar structure in "Grammar in Context," which incorporates a variety of passages, articles, and genres. This section is followed by "Grammar Presentation," "Focused Prac-

tice,” and “Communicative Practice.” These practice sections include about 10 activities per unit.

GE offers 76 four-page units, which include two pages of presentation and two pages of exercises—a total of four activities per unit. These four activities are designed similarly to the “Focused Practice” section in *FOG*. New structures are often introduced with a simple cartoon, and even though other short passages may appear in subsequent exercises, the limited context may not be enough for students who are unfamiliar with the structure. Moreover, because *GE* is designed to be used as either a self-study or reference guide, it lacks the critical “Communication Practice” sections that *FOG* offers in abundance.

FOG and *GE* successfully combine the presentation and practice of verb tenses that are often used together, such as the present progressive and the simple present tense, allowing the learner to compare and contrast how the structures differ in their form and meaning. Because the presentation and practice are condensed in *GE*, the learner has less exposure to and practice with the target forms. This text will be most helpful to students who are already familiar with the intermediate structures in this book.

The clear and concise organization of *GE*, and in particular its “Table of Contents,” makes it an excellent resource for both students and teachers. With 76 units divided into 15 sections or parts, each section is clearly outlined with well-referenced subheadings. For example, Part Three introduces the present perfect and past perfect and begins with Unit 11. Although Units 11, 12, and 13 all focus on the present perfect, they highlight different uses of this structure. While Unit 11 and 12 focus on the same tense, Unit 11 introduces the present perfect using *since* and *for* while Unit 12 focuses on the use of *already* and *yet*. In *FOG*, these structures are all presented and practiced in one longer unit, making the presentation quite lengthy.

Presentation

Because the units in *GE* are shorter and cover less content, the presentations are easier to read and process. While *FOG* and *GE* present content with almost identical charts, timelines, explanations and examples, the overall presentation in *FOG* seems overwhelming—or more thorough—depending on one’s point of view. For example, the *FOG* “Grammar Presentation” on the simple past tense incorporates 12 different charts while the same presentation in *GE* uses only three. Both texts supply a timeline, brief explanations, and examples, but because *GE* has less content to cover, the few examples are easier to process for the learner.

In addition to referencing the “Appendices” for spelling, pronunciation, and other useful lists, which both texts do well, *GE* strategically incorporates three “Check Points,” which actively engage learners at each stage of the presentation. When the target form is introduced in context—in a cartoon or short passage—the “Check Point” asks learners two or three questions that focus attention on the meaning of the passage. These questions come in a wide variety of forms including: true and false, yes and no, and numbering statements in the correct time order. Next, a “Chart Check” is used, which

focuses students' attention on the grammatical form introduced in the charts. These questions require students to make generalizations and brief discriminatory responses regarding the forms in the charts. These consciousness-raising activities attempt to focus the learner's attention prior to introducing the form. Finally, in "Express Check," students are given a brief opportunity to produce the form. Learners are able to get immediate feedback on their production as this book includes an answer key for all check points, exercises, and tests.

Exercises

The progression of the exercises in *GE* and the "Focused Practice" section from *FOG* are quite similar. Most exercises in both books are highly contextualized and continually require the learner to focus on both meaning and form although some exercises are purely mechanical. Initially, both texts use a discovery exercise that has learners notice the form, and often the meaning, without the pressure of production.

The exercises in both texts then follow a progression from more to less controlled and thus from less to more difficult. For example, the second exercise might involve a fill-in-the-blank activity while the third one requires the learner to create entire sentences using the targeted form. Because both texts have activities that progress rather quickly for the learner from a more to a less structured format, it is possible that students will need more practice than is offered in the text. In addition, when activities become less structured, students could successfully complete the exercises without using the target forms, but students using *GE* have the luxury of consulting the answer key to make sure they used the form correctly.

The fourth and final activity in every *GE* unit is an editing exercise, which requires students to find a number of typical English as a Second Language (ESL) errors in the context of invitations, letters, reports, etc. While following a clear model, students find or notice the errors in the passage and make corrections on the page. *FOG* incorporates many editing exercises as well and uses the same format. In both texts, grammar is often recycled or revisited to allow students to use new structures in many different contexts.

While each *GE* unit has only four exercises that focus on grammar as a product, the units in *FOG* have eight to 10 exercises that split the focus between product and process activities: Product activities develop the learner's knowledge of how grammar is structured while process activities allow learners to use that knowledge in spontaneous communication. The "Communicative Practice" section in *FOG* is well structured and, like the "Focus on Grammar" section, provides activities that progress from more controlled to less controlled. The first communicative task is always a listening task. Learners are exposed to a myriad of formats from conversations and radio announcements to interviews and phone recordings. After each focused listening activity, students are actively engaged as they complete a task requiring them to focus on both form and meaning.

Just as this section always begins with a listening component, it always ends with a writing task in which students are asked to use the new form. In

the beginning of the book, the writing tasks are easier and have a personal focus, but as the book progresses, the tasks become increasingly difficult. For example, an early writing task requires students to write two short notes asking for permission, while a later task involves writing two comparative paragraphs with a partner. This progression of difficulty is also present in the listening activities.

Other communicative activities include role playing, taking surveys, problem solving, discussing solutions, and completing information gaps. While most of these communicative activities are structured enough to actively engage students in sustained conversation, some simply ask learners to discuss a topic. These activities, while open-ended, do not provide a sufficient basis to facilitate a conversation.

Practical Application

FOG provides learners with product and process activities, recycles grammar, includes supplementary components, and follows a test format similar to the Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). While all these components make this text extremely attractive, learners who are being introduced to these intermediate structures for the first time will benefit most from the well-balanced product and process activities in this text. However, once students have been exposed to these structures, *GE* would be an excellent reference and review and could be used either in the classroom or as a self-study guide, as recommended by the authors. It would be possible and quite effective to use *GE* as the main classroom text and supplement communicative activities. A teacher could select the best communicative activities from *FOG* or other sources and use *GE* as the main text. In addition to having superior organization, *GE* covers more content, including the passive, the conditional, adjective clauses, and indirect speech.

In conclusion, either text from this comparative review could be used as the main classroom text, and both would be equally effective, although the *GE* would need substantial supplementation. The communicative focus of *FOG* and, in particular, the listening and writing components provide a complete, well-balanced, and theoretically sound text.

Talk It Up: Listening, Speaking and Pronunciation (2nd ed.)

Joan Rishel Kozyrev

New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

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Pronunciation instruction is at times absent from the second or foreign language (L2) classroom due to conventional beliefs that pronunciation is not important, can be “picked up” by learners, and is difficult to teach. These beliefs are being questioned and pronunciation instruction has increasingly been recognized as a critical component of the L2 classroom. However, it is still difficult to find textbooks that integrate pronunciation with other language skills. Teachers who have been struggling to find such books might appreciate *Talk It Up*, a textbook designed to teach listening, speaking, and pronunciation for low intermediate learners of English.

The book is organized into eight chapters, each of which contains two cycles of activities following the sequence: (a) brainstorming, (b) listening, (c) pronunciation, (d) speaking, and (e) listening. With each chapter, the level of complexity increases. The introduction and the first two chapters must be covered in sequence, so the learners have access to important foundations of pronunciation (e.g., the English sound system, the phonetic alphabet). For the other six chapters, the teacher can decide on the most appropriate order of presentation, keeping in mind the students’ needs and the curriculum priorities. Each chapter ends with a class project and self-evaluation activities for pronunciation and fluency.

The topics in *Talk It Up*—such as calling for help, making business and personal phone calls, shopping—are relevant for English language learners. Each chapter deals with a different topic consistently, connecting it with real life situations. For example, the topic “Asking for Help” refers to three possible real life situations: calling the emergency number to report a domestic accident, reporting a theft to a police officer, and calling toll free numbers.

The listening passages consist mostly of scripted dialogues, but with approximate natural-sounding speech. Each chapter contains three listening activities with a warm-up section. The warm-up section lays the ground for the topic by having students work individually, in pairs, or in small groups

discussing issues related to the topic, sharing personal and cross-cultural information, and brainstorming target vocabulary.

A listening activity introduces vocabulary and cultural information related to the listening passage. At this stage, the students perform tasks such as expressing opinions, predicting, and matching. The second stage consists of listening and identifying (e.g., the context of the conversation, people's feelings, the sentence that best summarizes the conversation). The students listen to the conversation again to identify the supporting ideas, answer comprehension questions, make inferences, etc. The next activity requires the students to listen to part of the conversation again and improvise responses. Finally, there is a postlistening section that includes activities such as group discussion, role playing, and retelling.

A pronunciation section follows each of the first two listening activities. These sections start with a description of the targeted feature, followed by listening discrimination, controlled practice, and sometimes communicative practice. The integration of the pronunciation features with listening and speaking is achieved in two ways. First, in designing the perception and production activities in the pronunciation section, the author uses extracts from the listening passages. Second, some pronunciation sections include communicative practice activities linked to the general topic of the chapter. Unfortunately, the pronunciation sections of some chapters lack communicative activities.

Initially, the book presents basic tools to facilitate systematic work with pronunciation—the phonetic alphabet, vowel and consonants charts, and illustrations of speech organs. Although the book focuses on pronunciation features at the segmental level (vowel and consonants), some suprasegmental features are also incorporated (e.g., intonation, stress, linking, and contractions).

The speaking activities are preceded by descriptions about the form and usage of the targeted language item. For instance, the activity on how to start a conversation and keep it going presents some typical structures to accomplish both. After presenting and exemplifying form and usage, the book offers the learners an opportunity to plan speaking tasks. A variety of speaking activities are included: interviewing, reporting, making invitations, presenting dialogs, giving instructions, and role playing.

The speaking sections include individual presentations, pair-work, and group work activities. For some of these activities, selected students present their ideas to the whole group while their peers listen and complete a task that requires paying attention or evaluating the speaker. In addition to peer evaluation, the author includes self-evaluation activities in which the learners work independently. The purpose of these activities is to have students identify and practice their individual pronunciation difficulties, as well as assess and evaluate their pronunciation and fluency development.

The book comes with an audiocassette and a CD. The instructor's manual contains notes on precourse evaluation and grouping, an answer key for the listening activities, comments and suggestions for the implementation of each chapter, and tape scripts. Furthermore, the initial pages of the student's

book contain a list of strategies for pronunciation development, as well as fluency and pronunciation pretests.

The second edition features an improved layout, illustrations, listening materials, and directions for the exercises. Further advantages of the revised edition are activities that require independent work and self-evaluation, as well as group projects. *Talk It Up* is the first book of a three-volume series. However, a revised edition of books two and three is not yet available.

Talk It Up provides listening, speaking, and pronunciation practice from a communicative perspective, with a balance of fluency and accuracy. It is particularly appropriate for teachers working in an English as a Second Language (ESL) context, since some tasks would be hard to implement in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (e.g., calling telephone information systems, interviewing native speakers, watching special television shows). Nevertheless, a creative teacher could make *Talk It Up* suitable for EFL as well. Finally, it is important to note that the book is most likely to be successful if used with adult learners who accept sharing the responsibility for their learning with the teacher.

English in Today's Research World: A Writing Guide

John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak

Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2000.

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Swales and Feak strike again! Have you seen the sequel? Do you use Swales and Feak's 1994 *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (AWGS) in your English as a Second Language (ESL) writing course for graduate students? Do you find its organization and general rhetorical approach to teaching writing to future nonnative English professionals useful and effective? Perhaps you are like some instructors I know who have used this text for years and are unaware that the authors came out with a sequel in 2000, *English in Today's Research World: A Writing Guide* (ETRW). There did not seem to be as much hype about this release as the latest Harry Potter book, but in comparing the two textbooks I found there *is* reason for excitement. While both texts offer genre-based approaches with a strong emphasis on rhetorical consciousness-raising, *ETRW* goes further by motivating students to become actively engaged in constructing their own learning.

Swales and Feak explain that their follow-up volume is in response to users' requests for "more" in which, "we essentially continue where we left off in *AWGS*" (p. 1). Indeed, users of *AWGS* who felt they were left hanging after completing the final activity on conference abstract writing, can rejoice that in *ETRW* they are reunited with this topic in Unit Two. The authors expect the reduced attention to purely linguistic aspects of research English will attract a wider audience for their sequel. The new text may be just as useful for graduate students with English as their First language (L1) and bilingual or bidialectal graduate students as nonnative or international graduate students. No supplement, like *AWGS' Commentary*, has been made available because the authors expect more readers of *ETRW* to use the text for self-study or individual reference. The notes and comments section at the end of each unit fulfills a supplementary role by including some answers and offering occasional teaching hints. The new book itself is larger and so are the fonts. Headings and figures are more prominent and frequent, and the "Languages Foci" now appear in text boxes. Cartoons, which introduce each unit, contribute to the overall "lightness" of the book.

Like its precursor, *ETRW* follows a similar 8-unit organization. The first unit opens with the positioning of the research writer, which should be familiar for users of *AWGS*, and includes such topics as writing strategies, genres, cross-cultural differences, and academic naming practices. Units 2-6 cover the main types of texts researchers and scholars need to construct, which include the conference abstract, the conference poster, less and more complex literature reviews, and dissertations. The last two units contribute indirectly to research writing by discussing academic communication in support of the research process and career, such as writing submission letters, completing fellowship applications, and constructing CVs.

Within the units, “Tasks” are still interspersed throughout the informational material but are more visible thanks to the improved headings and are better organized without the random appearance of the “Language Foci.” *AWGS*’ range of 11-25 tasks per unit is more balanced in *ETRW*, which offers 14-23. As mentioned, the “Language Focus” sections have been reduced from a maximum of six per unit to a maximum of three, and these remain relevant to each particular unit’s content. With regard to examples of research writing, there seems to be an increase in using student samples to foster awareness and discussion. In addition to involving their students, the authors also incorporate themselves into examples, referring to “John” or “Chris,” thus creating a sense of camaraderie and personal appeal.

The authors acknowledge that they expect most instructors using these texts to have considerable expertise in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Consequently, in *ETRW* the authors occasionally offer a “teaching hint” rather than provide an accompanying instructor’s manual. The text supports instructors by introducing research findings about research English, such as naming conventions in academia. Some users reportedly found the applied linguistic material in *AWG*’s units devoted to “Critiques and Constructing a Research Paper” helpful in structuring their own research. Instructor-researchers McChesney & Rylance (2001) reported using *AWG* in the classroom and for investigating rhetorical and linguistic variation in discussion sections of cross-disciplinary research papers. Other users, who were less enthusiastic about this section, may find that *ETRW* lives up to its promise of a reasonable compromise between content expertise of instructors and their students.

While *AWGS* focuses on published research, *ETRW* encourages graduate students to do some exploring themselves. It asks students to conduct minianalyses of language and discourse in their fields and share their findings with others. For example, in Unit 2 users are asked to find out how far in advance conference abstracts are usually submitted in their field of study, typical acceptance rates, whether abstracts are blind reviewed, etc. Later, users are asked to compare conference abstracts in their field to the example provided and list qualities review committees should be looking for in evaluating abstracts. Finally, users write their own conference abstracts based on their present research.

The limitations of *ETRW* are the same as for any academic writing text in that it cannot capture the cross-disciplinary differences in genre writing. Regardless of their use of a variety of disciplinary sources for the genre

illustrations, the authors express that it is the disciplinary-specific course instructors' responsibility to supplement and even challenge and correct the materials. Interestingly, in heterogeneous groups this "limitation" is the element that drives students to explore the language of their own discourse communities through their interactions with others outside their field. In *AWGS*, Swales and Feak successfully guide users through the process of writing in a classroom or university setting with the goal of publication. Now with *English in Today's Research World*, these authors have struck again with a text that redirects students' attention to the greater audience of their own "real" disciplinary world, while they learn to "position" themselves in the types of texts and written communications that are most critical to their ultimate success.

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I Read It, But I Don't Get It

Chris Tovani

Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishing, 2000

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Students can be masters of “fake reading” (p. 1). In her book, *I Read It, But I Don't Get It* (Stenhouse, 2000), Chris Tovani boldly describes how many young readers find effective ways to be successful in school without knowing how to read. With both literacy and content area teachers in mind, Tovani depicts the “realities of reading” (p. 13) in our schools, provides a philosophical rationale for the modeling of specific strategies, and offers practical plans for the implementation of specific comprehension activities.

The first chapter begins with a glimpse into the all-too-familiar high school classroom. Tovani humorously records the first day of class, describing her responses to the emotions and comments of her teenaged low readers. She warns of the uselessness of book reports, dispels myths students often hold on to in attempts to justify their lack of comprehension and calls for the overt teaching of reading skills necessary for academic success. Learners and teachers must identify expected learning outcomes together so that reading expectations are clearly established.

A student remarks, “Some kids are born good readers, and some kids aren't. I've always been a bad reader and I always will be” (p. 7). Tovani, a self-described poor reader until her thirties, recalls how joining a book club helped her realize that developing good reading skills is not synonymous with understanding literary terminology. In this way, she works to “disarm the defenses” (p. 9) so students are willing to become active participants in classroom activities.

Creating meaning together is a primary objective of Tovani's reading class. In order to facilitate this goal across the curriculum, she advocates staff development for content teachers who often claim they lack the expertise to step into the role of “reading teacher” (p. 64). Helping all teachers develop an awareness of the strategies used by successful readers will enable their students to draw greater meaning from subject texts.

Nearly all teachers are guilty of allowing poor readers to get through class without completing the assigned reading. Tovani boldly depicts this folly in our practice through the following illustration:

Lisa readily admits that she doesn't do school reading. How can Lisa pass her courses without reading? I ask her how she does it.

"It's easy," she says. "I sit in the back of the classroom and wait for one of the smart kids to answer the teacher's questions."

"What if no one knows the answer?" I ask.

"It doesn't matter," says Lisa. "If no one talks, the teacher gives us the answer" (p. 14).

Teachers should never feel obligated to digest information for their students when assignments have been disregarded. Too often teachers end up "feeding" reluctant readers information instead of holding them accountable for learning. Thus, instructors enable students to pass courses with minimal effort.

Imagine, instead, a class in which students are asked precise, subject-specific questions they must answer from the assigned reading. Instead of providing a review at the beginning of every class, teachers focus on reinforcing reading strategies while forcing students to gain contextual awareness of content themes. Using strategies discussed in *I Read It, But I Don't Get It*, a science teacher might ask students to draw inferences from a passage or determine the main idea of a chunk of text. Encouraging the use of semantic and schematic cues also helps students understand and organize new information.

In "What Works," a section found at the end of every chapter, concrete activities with a rationale will help a teacher of any subject reinforce skill-building techniques for gleaning information from texts. Tovani suggestions include using double-entry diaries, modeling, recognizing the six signals that indicate confusion, predicting and visualizing, rereading, and implementing fix-up strategies.

While content area instructors are called upon to teach reading, language arts teachers are encouraged to connect learning opportunities across the curriculum. Tovani asks teachers to rethink their instructional roles, and no matter the subject taught, focus on building upon students' previous experiences as an introductory activity to reading nonfiction material. The author includes suggestions for such subject integration. She says, "The good news is that questioning is a strategy that can be taught in connection with any subject, to students of all abilities" (p. 81). For instance, no matter if someone is teaching math or social studies, asking students what they "wonder" reinforces the concept that good readers ask questions all the time. Encouraging students to engage in probable outcomes and inferential thinking empowers teachers to discourage students from relying on others for answers.

The way to improve reading is through practice; therefore we need to give our students ample time to use specific reading strategies. When students are exposed to reading comprehension tools school-wide throughout the day, reading abilities are going to improve. To facilitate this goal, this practi-

cal text includes samples of usable double-entry diaries, comprehension constructors, and coding sheets.

Academic literacy instruction will be greatly influenced by this professional support book. The ideas presented can be used to improve comprehension and retention across the subject areas. Being able to access such invaluable materials and understand how to implement strategic reading makes *I Read It, But I Don't Get It* a necessary addition to any teacher's bookshelf.

Educating New Americans: Immigrant Lives and Learning

Donald F. Hones and Cher Shou Cha

Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999.

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How can the lives of immigrants and their education experience in the United States be made more tangible? Through the story of one immigrant, the struggles and challenges of all immigrants with the American education system and the formation of an American identity become easier to understand. Donald F. Hones, the interviewer and coauthor of *Educating New Americans: Immigrant Lives and Learning*, provides insights into the immigrant education experience through the research method of narrative inquiry. Coauthor Cher Shou Cha, a Hmong immigrant to the United States, is the informant for the research, providing a life story rich with history, tradition, crisis, change, and vision, from which educators, administrators, and students can all learn.

Part One, entitled “Immigrant Identity in School and Society” describes the formation of identity in light of the history of immigration and education policy. Excerpts from two autobiographical works of immigrants, Richard Rodriguez and Leonard Covello, both educated in the United States, serve to illustrate differing views of identity formation with regards to education. In contrast to Covello’s community-oriented view, Rodriguez values the individualism he was taught to pursue. Both agree that education is a bridge to the formation of a public identity through which one can succeed in society, but which often estranges immigrant students from their own families in the process.

Part Two, “A Hmong American Life History,” portrays the life of Shou Cha against the backdrop of Hmong history. The reader follows Shou Cha’s story from his ancestors in China to his childhood in Laos, from his escape to Thailand after the Vietnam War to his journey to America, and from his early adventures in the United States to his current life with a family of seven children in Michigan. Through the conversation and commentary that ensues, the reader becomes more intimately connected to the issues related to the life of an immigrant in America.

Issues related to education include the lack of communication between immigrant communities and the schools, and the generation gap between

immigrant students and their parents. Shou Cha seeks to overcome the former barrier through his job as a bilingual aide and community liaison for a multicultural elementary school, where he works with students in the classroom and facilitates communication between the school and the Hmong community. However, Shou Cha confesses that the generation gap between himself and his own children in the areas of values, expectations, and identity is not as easily bridged.

Part Three, "Learning from a Life," reveals what can be learned from Shou Cha's life in terms of the formation of an American identity. The values of resourcefulness, relationships, and respect are noted as strengths in both Hmong and American traditions, and serve as points of unity between the two cultures. Hones suggests that narrative inquiry can enlighten policy makers, researchers, and educators and explains how educators can utilize community members as resources who act as liaisons to promote the value of one's own culture.

Hones incorporates excerpts from three other immigrants' autobiographies to further illustrate various perspectives of American immigrants, thus enabling the reader to better understand the collective struggles and similar themes underlying immigrant lives in general. Though each story and point of view is unique, together the stories enable the reader to come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the education of immigrants in the United States and to value the opinions, views, and circumstances surrounding the lives of immigrants in general.

Though reading about the lives of immigrants can be beneficial for numerous reasons, this is not the "cure-all" for understanding, implementing change, and bridging the gap between generations. Nothing supersedes personal experience and relationships with immigrant communities. It is, however, an excellent place from which to start in order to gain more knowledge about the issues related to "immigrant lives and learning." I recommend this book for all who teach new Americans.

Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition: Issues in the Teaching of Writing to U.S.-Educated Learners of ESL

Edited by Linda Harklau, Kay M. Losey, and Meryl Siegal
Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999.

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By the time you finish this issue of *The CATESOL Journal*, you will certainly be familiar with the term *Generation 1.5*. This growing population of students stands out in our ESL classes. Their strong oral fluency and comfort level with American customs make them unique by traditional ESL standards. If asked to define what life in their native country is like, as so many ESL textbook writing assignments do, they might very well raise their eyebrows and ask, "Are you trippin'?" This *is* my native country!" Not exactly the response our standards based textbook was asking for, but valid nonetheless. These are our Generation 1.5ers. According to Rumbaut and Ima,

the key difference [marking members of the 1.5 generation] involves those youths whose age at arrival was pre-puberty versus those who arrived post-puberty [or roughly younger than 11 or older than 15 at arrival in the United States]. The older students [post-puberty at arrival] are more handicapped by language deficiencies, and they have had less time to 'learn the ropes' of the new system (p.103).

But a definition does not give us the answer to our pressing question about how best to educate this population. The book *Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition* attempts to open up a dialogue on the issue and delve into the seldom-researched question. Editors Linda Harklau, Meryl Siegal, and Kay M. Losey choose to address this by editing a collection of articles that examines this population in high schools and universities across the United States. Harklau, Siegal, and Losey do not attempt to wrap up the topic with this collection, but rather encourage conversation by offering educators who are trying to piece together the puzzle suggestions for to how to teach these students effectively.

This book is divided into three sections: the students, the classrooms, and the programs. The opening section highlights the characteristics and experiences of Generation 1.5 students, most of whom are U.S.-educated. In the second section, four different essays depict the classroom settings that these

students are experiencing across the country. Finally, different college-level programs that work with this specific population are described. This review will focus on the section concerning how educators deal with students.

In the first article of this section, "Preparation for College Writing," Beth Hartman and Elaine Tarone of the University of Minnesota examine multiple teachers' perspectives on writing with their Southeast Asian population. Hartman and Tarone look at writing across the disciplines in ESL, mainstream, and content courses. The reader is left with a multifaceted view of the writing needs of these students as well as a sense of the responsibilities for teaching them as they move through high school and college.

In the article, "Classroom Instruction and Language Minority Students," Linda Lonon Blanton of the University of New Orleans discusses her concerns about today's ESL textbooks, which narrowly define our students. She sums up the frustration of Generation 1.5 students and their teachers by looking at failed instructional practices as well as giving the reader insights into how to begin to accomplish the goal of teaching good writing.

The article, "One Size Does Not Fit All" by Dana R. Ferris at California State University, Sacramento, continues this conversation by opening with a description of the differences between our vaguely labeled L2 populations. She moves on to a critical look at feedback teachers give ESL students on their writing and how students react to that feedback. The article concludes with Ferris's findings as to what types of feedback are most helpful and the implications for instruction.

Overall, the advantage of teacher and student interviews found in this text cannot be underestimated. The authors provide a subjective look into ESL classrooms that so closely mirror our own. This collection of information on students, their classrooms, and programs available at our nation's colleges and universities is a joy to read. The text describes how to not only tailor a curriculum, but also begin a dialog with colleagues in order to promote an unified approach to educating Generation 1.5 students.

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