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The CATESOL Journal

Title

Changing Generations: A Story for Developing Reading Skills -
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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/79g405mm>

Journal

The CATESOL Journal, 16(1)

ISSN

1535-0517

Author

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Publication Date

2004

DOI

10.5070/B5.36376

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*Effective Practices in Workplace Language Training:
Guidelines for Providers of Workplace English Language Training Services*

Joan Friedenber, Deborah Kennedy, Anne Lomperis,
William Martin, and Kay Westerfield

Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
(TESOL), 2003.

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*E*ffective Practices in Workplace Language Training: Guidelines for Providers of Workplace English Language Training Services provides a comprehensive set of guidelines and best practices for language practitioners engaged in workplace language training. Written as a result of the TESOL initiative to develop standards for intensive English programs, this book is intended to identify the necessary components of quality workplace language programs, as well as to outline the best business practices for such service providers. This text also provides valuable information to client organizations on what to expect from language-service providers and how to ensure that their expectations for quality training can be achieved.

The authors begin with a general section that introduces a key theme of the book. In their view, workplace language-training programs create a positive economic impact on the workplace for the employees' improved language abilities, job satisfaction, and career potential, as well as for the employers in terms of improved productivity, cost reductions, and increased revenues.

The book is organized into nine chapters of best practices, which are then subdivided into three to five subprocesses. One of the most valuable aspects of this book is the inclusion of a case study for each subprocess that illustrates how that practice was implemented and what the results were. Chapters 1 through 5 deal primarily with the business practices of language-training providers and are written from the perspective of a business partnership model rather than a service delivery model. Chapter 1 deals with the development of a strategic plan that describes the mission, values, and goals of a language program. The second chapter concerns the marketing of language-provider programs. The key to effective marketing is understanding the target market as well as educating the market about the potential benefits of workplace language-training programs. The third chapter focuses on build-

ing client relationships by conducting a needs assessment and developing a program proposal. A critical factor in building client relationships is understanding the client's language-training needs, which in turn relate to the company's organizational goals. Chapter 4 discusses the practice of developing staff that meet the training needs of the clients. Chapter 5 outlines the steps required to complete a comprehensive needs assessment that addresses the language skills required to meet organizations' goals. This needs assessment lays the foundation for the instructional program that will be designed to close communication/language skills gaps.

The last four chapters (Chapters 6 through 9) highlight the best practices related to the implementation of a quality program based on current language-learning theory, teaching techniques, and instructional design. Chapter 6 centers on the practice of creating a "flexible, research-based instructional design" that meets the goals of the organization and the needs of the learners. Chapter 7 outlines the process for developing materials that engage the learners in authentic work-related tasks based on data collected during the needs assessment. Chapter 8 discusses the methods and processes that engage and motivate all participants, including supervisors and other key employees. Finally, Chapter 9 discusses the program-evaluation process, which ties the training results back to the original goals and needs. Formative feedback is gathered during a program from participants and from supervisors to assess the success of the program and to determine if any adjustments are in order. Summative evaluations are made after a program has been completed to assess the effectiveness of a program in meeting its objectives and to identify any further training needs.

The authors have done an excellent job of organizing a tremendous amount of material in a very concise and logical format. They have managed to include language-teaching tips while avoiding jargon and complex theories, thereby making the material comprehensible and relevant to both providers and clients. At the same time, they have emphasized business perspectives that language-service providers must adopt to be successful in the workplace. This perspective will be invaluable in transforming language-training providers into business consultants who, through their services, can increase the effectiveness and value of an organization's workforce. Because of the breadth of topics covered in this book, it is impractical for the authors to provide the "how-to" details for each practice. However, this text does provide a road map for language-training providers. One area that could benefit from further discussion is how to gain the employees' buy-in and support. As mentioned in the book, workers come to language training with their own sets of expectations so it is important for service providers and client organizations to ensure an understanding of program objectives. Employers will want to make sure that their employees understand that language programs benefit the individual workers as well as the entire organization. Additional information regarding potential "soft benefits" would also be useful. Even though benefits such as improved job satisfaction or morale are difficult to quantify, they may lead to a reduction in turnover—a cost avoidance. Overall, this book

should be required reading for any language professional who wants to work in a business environment. It also serves as a resource guide for client organizations needing to identify quality language-training programs in order to maximize their investment.

Changing Generations: A Story for Developing Reading Skills

Fredricka A. Stoller and Nina Rosen
New York: Pearson Education, 2000.

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C*hanging Generations: A Story for Developing Reading Skills* is one of the most pedagogically sound and student-centered readers published in recent years. Intended for intermediate ESL students, the unique feature of this reader is the continuous story of Sandy, a typical American teenager. Although most ESL reading textbooks allow readers only a brief foray into various themes, this reader uses a continuing, engaging narrative to focus on the theme of “the generation gap.” *Changing Generations* also introduces other life issues as it builds general reading and writing skills.

A highlight of the text appears inside the front cover—a message to the students explaining the purpose, theme, and goals of the text. The authors tell students that this experience should be “a positive one that will prepare you for the real world” (p. xi). From this very first page, students are provided reasons to continue reading the book.

The next page is equally impressive in its understanding of student needs. A page titled “Learning About Your Book” encourages readers to build their background knowledge through questions and exercises that scaffold this knowledge, leading readers to a fuller understanding of the content and organization of the book. As students work through questions in “Learning About Your Book,” they are also asked to refer to the certificate of completion at the end of the book; the authors set high expectations for the reader from the very beginning.

Another notable feature of this reader is that it draws on current theories of second language literacy research. In line with this research, the format of the continuing narrative allows students to build not only content knowledge about the characters, but it also provides opportunities for more extensive reading.

Chapter organization in *Changing Generations* has been obviously and carefully planned with literacy research in mind. Through the organization of the text, the authors clearly show their support for both intensive and extensive reading practices. The nature of the continuing narrative implies extensive reading, while each chapter’s organization and activities support intensive reading practices. Each chapter is divided into seven sections: “Getting Ready

to Read,” “Reading Carefully,” “Reviewing What You’ve Read,” “Reading Between the Lines,” “Writing About What You’ve Read,” “Connecting the Story to Your Life,” and “Building Vocabulary.” (Some chapters also include a “Discussing What You’ve Read” section.)

The “Getting Ready to Read” section activates readers’ formal knowledge about chapter organization and prepares students for successful reading. Each chapter begins with an illustration and a title that give students a hint about the chapter contents. The accompanying prediction, skimming, and scanning activities are also useful, providing practice of these skills. After the students have done the skimming and scanning activities, they are asked to refine predictions made at the beginning of each chapter.

During the “Reading Carefully” section of *Changing Generations*, readers are guided through reading for a specific purpose. Purposes change with each chapter, keeping the student engaged and interested. Students read with a purpose but are not overwhelmed in looking for details not important to overall comprehension.

The section “Reviewing What You’ve Read” asks students to check their comprehension immediately. Students should be able to proceed relatively quickly through these exercises if they have read carefully. These activities are of varied types, including short answer, true or false, or multiple choice.

Students are asked to make inferences in the “Reading Between the Lines” section, drawing on the knowledge base just created. Whereas most reading texts stop at basic recall or literacy-level comprehension questions, *Changing Generations* brings students to the level of synthesis as they make connections and inferences about the text.

The “Discussing What You’ve Read” section provides opportunities for students to scaffold each other’s understanding of the text. Students are asked to work together with three or four peers to come up with answers to discussion questions to share with the class.

The next activity, “Writing About What You’ve Read,” demonstrates the inherent connections between reading and writing. This section prepares students for more demanding types of writing later in their academic careers. Although the intent of this section is to introduce readers to writing about reading, the authors stop short of introducing students to source-based writing. Students do learn important writing skills, such as personal writing and creative writing.

The final section of *Changing Generations* is devoted to vocabulary building. The importance of this section lies in recent research that indicates a reader’s vocabulary must be quite large if he or she is to read successfully. The authors have included vocabulary review and extension exercises to help build readers’ linguistic resources. To this end the authors have also included a word-recognition section at the end of the book. These self-timed exercises, perfect for bell-ringer exercises in K-12 education, asks readers to view a word in bold, and then to match it to one of the words in a list. As students compete against themselves for improved speed and accuracy, they may become increasingly motivated to complete these exercises. Also included at

the end of the text is a section called “The Whole Story,” which is the entire story of Sandy and her family.

This textbook is an admirable and successful attempt at integrating current reading research into a user-friendly and student-centered reading textbook. For those looking for an intermediate ESL reading textbook, I highly recommend *Changing Generations*.

***Reading, Writing, and Learning in ESL:
A Resource Book for K-12 Teachers (4th ed.)***

Suzanne F. Peregoy and Owen F. Boyle
New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2005.

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As the number of K-12 ESL learners continues to grow in California, preparation of future teachers for nonnative English-speaking students has become an important part of teacher training. Peregoy and Boyle’s *Reading, Writing, and Learning in ESL: A Resource Book for K-12 Teachers (4th ed.)* is an informative textbook for a TESL teacher-preparation course. This book introduces future teachers to fundamental ESL learning/teaching concepts and provides specific teaching ideas in a reader-friendly fashion. I have used the previous edition of this book, and my own and my students’ responses to the previous edition were very favorable. This new edition enhances the value and usefulness of the book because it adds more up-to-date resources and addresses important issues lacking in the previous edition.

As the title of the textbook indicates, the intended audience is future K-12 teachers. The text adequately addresses important issues related to second language learning and teaching for prospective teachers. It presents information on language-acquisition theory, classroom culture and organization, teaching strategies/suggestions, and assessment procedures and tools. The book presents theories and research related to second language learning and teaching (e.g., L1/L2 acquisition theories, L1/L2 similarities and differences, history of L1/L2 research and literacy instruction). Each chapter starts with a short summary and guiding questions and then presents ample teaching/assessment examples, strategies, and suggestions. At the end of each chapter, the book lists suggestions for further reading and topics for classroom discussions and possible research projects.

This 10-chapter book is presented in a well-sequenced progression. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to English learners’ backgrounds, including cultural issues. Chapter 2 introduces an overview of first- and second-language acquisition, and Chapter 3 describes a general model of ESL instruction, addressing sheltered instruction, group work, thematic instruc-

tion, scaffolding, and assessment. The subsequent chapters present teaching/assessment strategies for oral language development (Chapter 4), early literacy development (Chapter 5), process writing (Chapter 6), reading and literature instruction (Chapter 7), and content-based reading and writing (Chapters 8 and 9). The final chapter (Chapter 10) discusses reading assessment and instruction.

This book's most striking strength is its vivid and detailed descriptions of what it is to be a teacher in a classroom of nonnative speakers. The book presents many examples and stories from experienced ESL instructors' classrooms. Teaching ideas and suggestions are unambiguous and level-specific. As the authors suggest, the book could "open a window on classrooms in which English learners are actively involved in learning about themselves, their classmates, and the world around them" (p. xiii). This is particularly valuable to prospective K-12 teachers who have little or no exposure to ESL learners.

New features of this edition are particularly valuable as they successfully capture issues that have been the focus of discussion in my classroom. The sections added or expanded in the fourth edition cover: current policy, standards, and assessment (Chapter 1), issues related to language and power/social standing/personal identity (Chapter 2), error correction in student writing (Chapter 6), and reading comprehension, metacognition, and extensive reading (Chapter 7). Additionally, new material (e.g., secondary school examples) and information on using technology (e.g., Internet resources) increase the resources available in the book.

While there is no doubt that this textbook is an informative pedagogical resource, I personally would like more in-depth information about language-acquisition theory. This book is more effective when another text on language acquisition (e.g., Lightbown & Spada, 1999) is used as a supplement. Such supplemental materials should include not only the history of and different perspectives on first- and second-language acquisition but should also address issues traditionally recognized as important in second-language acquisition research, such as interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), and factors of second-language acquisition.

Another potential weakness of this textbook is its targeted grade levels. Even though Perego and Boyle have added some secondary-level material to this new edition, the majority of the examples and case studies still come from lower-grade classrooms. Readers are left with the impression that the teaching examples and ideas are aimed only at teaching the lower grades. In a classroom of prospective K-12 teachers, this may become a concern to some readers. While the majority of the readers interested in teaching grades K-5 are satisfied with the suggested teaching ideas, those who intend to teach higher grade levels may think that some of the suggested activities are not applicable. One solution is the use of target-level discussion groups. In these groups, students interested in similar grade levels (e.g., K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) are grouped together and discuss grade-specific issues and modifications necessary for implementing activities for their grade levels.

To meet the needs of our students, modifications are always necessary regardless of the variety of activities suggested in textbooks. Having made this essential point clear to my students, I can argue that this is a good textbook for an introductory TESL course for K-12 teacher preparation. This book equips our future teachers with important language-learning theories, pedagogical principles, and teaching ideas. Many of my former students have decided to keep the previous edition as a resource for their first year of teaching. I believe that this new edition is even more valuable and useful in teacher preparation. As the title of the book correctly indicates, it is an excellent “resource book for K-12 teachers.”

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Amazing Stories to Tell and Retell 1

Lynda Berish and Sandra Thibaudeau
Boston: Houghton Mifflin College, 1998.

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Amazing Stories to Tell and Retell 1 by Lynda Berish and Sandra Thibaudeau is a collection of true stories published in newspapers and magazines. The authors interviewed most of the people in these stories to ensure their accuracy and authenticity. The authors chose these stories and designed the exercises with the goal of reading comprehension in mind.

The 10 carefully organized units in the book each contain two thematically related stories and the degree of difficulty increases with each unit. All the units follow a consistent format that provides a variety of activities for readers of varying levels of English competency. The book is especially effective in a multiskills classroom environment.

Each unit is divided into five segments. “Let’s Get Ready” introduces the main theme of the unit and helps students learn new vocabulary and techniques for grasping important points while reading. “Before You Read” motivates students to discuss the themes of the stories and to become more familiar with the vocabulary. In the “Reading Skills” section, students work in pairs or in groups on reading comprehension, sentence study, and sharing opinions. The “Put It Together” section contains several summary activities covering both stories. A diversity of activities in this section combine all the materials

introduced in the unit. The main purpose of “Put It Together” is to get the readers to “tell” the stories in their own words. The students practice telling the stories to each other in the classroom; they are then encouraged to go outside of the classroom to tell the stories to practice their speaking skills. This communicative approach reinforces the learning of a new language through repetition and social interaction. The “writing option,” or “Tell the Stories” section, is suggested at the end of each unit. Students can practice writing with their newly gained knowledge and vocabulary.

Amazing Stories to Tell and Retell comes in three volumes. As the level of difficulty increases, the stories and activities in the texts become more challenging and complicated. These stories teach the readers both practical and academic lessons. To be a good reader, a person must use certain specific skills. *Amazing Stories* helps students combine textual information with their own schema to create the type of interactive reading that is conducive to learning a second language. In *Amazing Stories*, the skills for reading integrate well with the exercises in each chapter to ensure students’ comprehension of the material.

Reading is fundamental for learning English as a second language because it provides the building blocks for learning vocabulary, grammar, and cultural values. Reading has never been a simple subject to teach since each individual comes with his or her own unique background and interests and reads for different purposes, so it is crucial that teachers choose a reading text that is both motivating and effective. *Amazing Stories to Tell and Retell 1* is an adult reader for students at the high beginning and intermediate language levels for which teachers of intermediate ESL will be grateful.

English: No Problem—Literacy Book

Elizabeth Minicz and Marcia Taylor

English: No Problem—Book 1

Trish Kerns and Patty Long

English: No Problem—Book 2

Bill Koonce and Maria Koonce, Ph.D.

English: No Problem—Book 3

Jennifer Santamaria and Mary Myers-Hall

English: No Problem—Book 4

Kathryn Cole and Donna Korol

Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press, 2004.

MANUEL SENNA IV

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When I first stepped into an Adult Community-Based English Tutoring (CBET) classroom, I wondered if there was a way to simplify all of the standards I was expected to meet in my lesson plans. Fresh out of a MA

TESOL program, I was more worried about making sure that my lessons engaged the students, that I had well-structured classes, and that I would not buckle under the pressure of such acronyms as CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System), EFF (Equipped for the Future), and SCANS (the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills). How was I to create lessons that would meet these requirements?

Enter *English: No Problem (ENP)*, an adult ESL text structured around adult ESL standards. The series comes with a remarkable amount of material; each of the five levels contains a student text, a teacher's edition, a student workbook, a set of blackline reproducible masters, audiotapes/CDs, an optional placement test, and blackline vocabulary cards (the intermediate low and intermediate high levels do not have vocabulary cards).

Student Materials. Each unit is divided into an introduction, three lessons, and a cumulative project. Each lesson designates an EFF role: adult as a lifelong learner, worker, family member, and community member. SCANS and EFF skills are the focus of activities in each lesson so that statewide requirements for learners are met through the overall themes of the units.

Each unit begins with an opener in which the students orient themselves to the new theme. The opener consists of a list of the goals of the unit and is followed by a series of critical-thinking activities revolving around a photograph and salient vocabulary. In the higher levels, the opener effectively introduces the learners to language and vocabulary needed in subsequent lessons. These opener activities set up a reoccurring protagonist who takes center stage throughout the unit; this way, the learners can see one person taking on multiple EFF roles. Even though the focus of the role of the learner switches across lessons, the individual lessons keep to the theme of the unit. Also, this protagonist faces challenges similar to those our adult students might face, thus allowing students to connect the lessons to their daily lives.

Each lesson involves reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities that are constructed with an adult classroom in mind. Since attendance is sporadic from day to day, lessons cannot span multiple days; the lessons are short and can reasonably be completed in a single session.

The lessons begin with some sort of stimulus: a reading or listening passage or a graphic (a picture story at the literacy level), which is followed by comprehension questions. The lessons progress to various activities that introduce and practice language salient to the theme. The progression of the activities in each unit is very smooth, with schema-building and listening activities before the students produce oral or written language. The output activities vary from lesson to lesson, but they always occur after practice with grammar and pronunciation. The unit project is a chance for the learners to apply all that they have learned from the three lessons and it includes individual, pair, and group activities. The projects all contain links to technology.

A rather ingenious addition to the student texts is the use of "one-step-up" activities, which are suggestions for the more advanced students to move beyond the activity and apply higher-level language skills to the topic. This is useful since some students can move at a faster pace than others.

The literacy-level book is different from the other four; it first provides learners plentiful practice in recognizing and writing the alphabet and numbers, and then it moves to basic, fundamental vocabulary (i.e., colors) within a context relevant to the students' lives.

Also available to the students is a workbook that provides extra practice. Most of the workbook activities are to be completed individually, but they can easily become group activities with a small amount of ingenuity on the part of the instructor. References in the teacher's edition note appropriate workbook pages. The workbooks, like the main text, also contain "one-step-up" activity extensions.

Teacher's Materials. The teacher's edition provides many resources for teachers to draw upon in lesson planning and guiding students through each page of their books, and it provides links to appropriate workbook pages, vocabulary cards, and reproducible masters. Additional "one-step-up" suggestions that do not appear in the student texts are included in the teacher's edition, along with a chart that denotes which EFF and SCANS skills are met by each unit, as well as links to technology.

The teacher also has the option of using supplementary materials such as vocabulary cards and reproducible masters. A set of blackline reproducible flashcards assist in teaching the new vocabulary words in each unit; the blackline reproducible masters are both unit-specific and generic for games, handouts, vocabulary worksheets, graphical organizers, and much more.

Other tools may be found on the *ENP* Web site (www.enp.newreaderspress.com). There teachers will find pdf files outlining the CASAS and California state standards. The Web page also includes free graphic organizers and vocabulary lists. However, perhaps the most useful aspect of the site is the ability to create customized lesson plans centered on the *ENP* texts. This is an incredible time-saver for the novice instructor.

Summary. The *ENP* series is not without flaws. The presentation of grammar in each lesson is rather brief and the specific grammar points are rarely revisited in subsequent chapters. Instructors who think that their students would benefit from more grammar instruction would most likely need to supplement, especially for higher-level students who are competent enough to handle formal grammar instruction. The books do have practice activities following the grammar presentations; however, these activities are very open-ended. Students might need more controlled practice before trying to use the language communicatively.

While the series is appropriate for single-level classrooms, it might be difficult to implement in multilevel situations—often the reality of the adult ESL classroom. Despite a similar theme throughout each unit across levels, it would be challenging to use this series in a multilevel classroom because the specific topic addressed by each level is not consistent. Because of the variations in each level's overarching theme, it may difficult to use multiple levels of the text in one classroom.

In June of 2004, the Association for Educational Publishers presented the series a "Distinguished Achievement Award for Excellence in

Educational Publishing.” This accolade is well deserved as the series covers topics and language appropriate for the adult ESL classroom. Adult-education programs looking for a text-centered curriculum would do well to take a look at *English: No Problem*. While no series is perfect, program developers would be hard-pressed to find anything better that addresses many of the standards and student’ interests and needs.

Closing the Achievement Gap:

How to Reach Limited-Formal-Schooling and Long-Term English Learners

Yvonne S. Freeman and David E. Freeman with Sandra Mercuri
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.

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In American public schools, limited-formal-schooling and long-term English learners are two unique types of English language learners who have drawn increasing attention from ESL educators. What are the characteristics and needs of these older English learners? What does research say about effective approaches to helping them succeed? How can these approaches be effectively implemented in classroom settings? *Closing the Achievement Gap: How to Reach Limited-Formal-Schooling and Long-Term English Learners* captures these very issues facing educators throughout the country and presents up-to-date perspectives, practical suggestions, and successful examples of how to help these English learners close the achievement gap.

Written “for teachers, program directors, resource personnel, and administrators who are attempting to meet the needs of older struggling English learners” (p. xi), the book owes its particular strength to the numerous real-life cases presented in each chapter. Readers meet real students and classroom teachers to whom they can easily relate. Theoretical principles and recommended practices are demonstrated with extensive and detailed examples of strategies drawn from the classes of successful teachers. In addition, “Professional Extensions” after each chapter provide thought-provoking questions that help readers apply various strategies to their own teaching situations.

The authors differentiate three types of older English learners: new arrivals with adequate schooling, new arrivals with limited formal schooling (LFT), and long-term English learners (LTEL). The last group is defined as those who “have been in U.S. schools for seven or more years” but who “have not developed high levels of literacy in either their first language or in English” (p. x). The book focuses on students in the last two groups, for they face “greater challenges in trying to succeed academically” (p. 6). The first two chapters discuss in detail the characteristics of these learners in terms of their language and cognitive development and the challenges they face as they

struggle for school success. While similarities between the two groups of learners are emphasized, some significant differences between them are also addressed with implications for the classroom. These analyses and discussions are illustrated with case studies of more than a dozen English learners who fit one of the two categories. Based on Cummins's notion of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), the authors pinpoint developing academic language and concepts using students' sample work and then they propose four keys to success. They also introduce three classroom teachers who have successfully found ways to reach these learners.

The rest of the book consists of a detailed discussion of research-based best practices for these older struggling English learners and demonstrates how these research-based effective practices can be implemented in classroom settings. Chapter 3 elaborates on the four keys to success outlined in Chapter 1 with the support of an extensive review of recent research on older English learners and effective school practices. Recommended as the first key is engaging students in a challenging, theme-based curriculum. The importance of a theme-based approach is emphasized for its value in helping these older English learners develop content concepts and academic language. Chapter 4 describes the content and procedures of a successful theme taught by one of the effective teachers. Several other successful themes used by other teachers are also introduced. Throughout the discussion, the authors emphasize the importance of drawing on students' background—their experiences, cultures, and languages, which is the second key recommended by the authors, who demonstrate how effective teachers develop and implement theme-based curricula. Closely related to the first and second keys are the third key—organizing collaborative activities and scaffolding instruction to build students' academic English proficiency—and the fourth key, creating confident students who value school and value themselves as learners. Chapters 5 and 6 provide the audience a detailed description of the daily routines and various strategies of three effective teachers who scaffold instruction to enhance learning and create confident learners.

The increasing number of struggling older English learners poses a significant challenge to educators. *Closing the Achievement Gap* is a timely response to this challenge. The authors have done an excellent job of informing readers of recent research and effective practices for educating these learners. Like their other texts, this book is written with teachers and for teachers. It is informative, practical, and easy to read. Though the book focuses on older struggling English learners, the ideas and strategies discussed can be adapted to other language classes. Classroom teachers will find the book not only a valuable source of practical ideas for effective teaching but also a source of inspiration.