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*Becoming a Language Teacher: A Practical Guide  
to Second Language Learning and Teaching (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*

Elaine Kolker Horwitz

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2012.

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Novice and experienced K-12 language teachers alike are always in search of ways to improve their teaching practices to reach the diverse group of students they teach. The second edition of *Becoming a Language Teacher: A Practical Guide to Second Language Learning and Teaching* provides a comprehensive approach to help scholars in their pursuit of becoming effective language teachers. It also offers insightful information for novice and experienced language teachers who are seeking to further their understanding of second language acquisition theories and language teaching.

Divided into four parts, the book consists of 11 chapters, each addressing a fundamental question related to language-teaching methodology. It also contains three appendices, a glossary, and an index. Part 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3) answers the general question “What Do Language Teachers Think About?” Chapter 1, “What Should I Know About Language Learners and Language Teaching Settings?” focuses on types of learning settings: the difference between a second language setting and a foreign language setting, learner characteristics, and language learning strategies. Chapter 2 focuses on second language acquisition theories and Chapter 3 focuses on language teaching methodologies. An extremely helpful feature in Chapter 2 is the summary of key concepts of each second language acquisition theory presented as an introduction before each theory is discussed. The summaries are helpful because they include activities to implement in the classroom based on each second language acquisition theory. One such activity has the students organize a list of cultural events to expose them to opportunities for social and cultural interaction.

Part 2 (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), “How Do You Teach a Language?” describes teaching strategies to teach listening, speaking, reading, and

writing. Each communication skill is presented with an overview of how it relates to second language acquisition theories. Furthermore, it provides practical approaches to test and assess students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. In addition, it has samples of rubrics to assess speaking and writing skills that teachers can readily use or adapt.

Part 3 (Chapters 9, 10), "How Do I Know What to Teach?" explains various ways to assess language learning. It gives detailed information on the different issues in language testing, such as reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback. Washback refers to the effect that tests have on teaching and learning. Moreover, it explains several ways teachers can assess their students' learning. Horwitz contrasts two types of language tests, nonintegrative and integrative. Nonintegrative tests evaluate language in discrete units, whereas integrative tests evaluate the language as a whole. One salient feature of nonintegrative tests, such as standardized tests and tests that require the test takers to complete a sentence with the correct form of a verb given, is their reliability. They yield accurate information about what the students know and do not know. However, regardless of their reliability, this is not necessarily the best language-testing approach because it does not rely on the production of authentic language. On the other hand, integrative testing, as its name indicates, compels students to integrate all aspects of language when they answer a question or write a composition. Some examples of integrative tests are dictations, cloze tests, grammatical judgments, and elicited imitation. This section is quite valuable because it provides the teacher with multiple means for evaluating students' knowledge.

Last, in Part 4 (Chapter 11) "Where Do I Go From Here?" Elaine Horwitz encourages teachers to continue improving and keeping up-to-date by being open to new trends in language and language teaching. To this end, she recommends engaging in action research and participating in professional development. She provides a list of language journals that teachers might subscribe to, including the *TESOL Journal* and *ELT Journal*, and recommends becoming a member of a language organization such as the International Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESOL).

The appendices contain three questionnaires. In Appendix A, the questionnaire inquires about second language learning beliefs. In Appendix B, the questionnaire assesses a learner's anxiety when learning a foreign language, while Appendix C assesses an instructor's anxiety when teaching a foreign language. The glossary provides an excellent list of definitions of terms related to language pedagogy.

Finally, the list of resources at the end of each chapter is helpful for teachers if they want to delve further into a specific topic.

The second edition improves upon the first in that it includes additional information about sociocultural approaches to second language acquisition. For example, the output hypothesis, which was developed by Merrill Swain, states that comprehensible input is not sufficient to develop grammatical accuracy. Learners need to produce language in order to notice differences between the language they produce and what native speakers produce. When teachers allow for this type of contrastive analysis, learners reflect on how language works and are more likely to communicate more accurately. It also includes an overview of the “sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP),” which is an approach to teaching language and content simultaneously.

An attention-grabbing feature of the book is that each chapter presents several authentic scenarios called “Voices From the Classroom,” examples of situations teachers might find in a classroom. For instance, Chapter 1 presents the following scenario related to learner anxiety. “A middle school student confided to his ESL teacher, ‘I should make American friend, but the cafeteria is scary. I am afraid to talk to anyone. I eat at “foreign” table’” (p. 11). Horwitz invites teachers to think how they might help students who suffer from anxiety because they are scared to communicate in a new language. She posits two questions: (a) If students do not tell you about their anxiety, what are some nonverbal clues you could look for? (b) What can you do to help your students feel more comfortable communicating in their new language?

The text also provides an excellent repertoire of speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities to help English learners develop their language skills. For example, “Can You Figure It Out?” is a speaking activity for intermediate students. In this activity, the students are divided into groups and are asked to find as many as possible answers to the question “What can you do with a toothbrush besides brushing your teeth?” This activity develops problem-solving skills, allowing students to use their creativity and look at things from a different perspective.

*Becoming a Language Teacher* contains everything a scholar, a novice instructor, or an experienced K-12 teacher needs to know about language learning and teaching to help English learners. Each chapter provides a section titled “Finding Your Way,” where teachers can reflect upon and put to use what they learned from each chapter. This section includes the following: (a) reflections, (b) planning for your classes, (c) journal entry, and (d) teaching checklist. This section

is essential because it gives teachers the opportunity to analyze their teaching practices and make necessary changes depending on what they have learned from the book.

One area in which the text falls short is in the Appendix. Appendix A contains “The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory” (BALLI), which is a questionnaire that scholars should answer before reading the book to determine their own beliefs on language learning and then reevaluate how their beliefs might have changed after they have read the book. Unfortunately, the questionnaire is lengthy and not organized in a way that lends itself to helpful analysis. Shortening the list and dividing the questions into categories such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and culture could give scholars and teachers a clearer picture of their beliefs regarding language learning.

Overall, graduate scholars and practitioners will find the text very informative and easy to understand. Its comprehensive approach provides language teachers with everything they need in a single place. The compilation of SLA theories, teaching methods, classroom scenarios, language activities, assessment approaches, and professional-development opportunities make this book a must-have. Its relevant content and logical organization allow all language teachers who use the text to make forward progress in their journeys toward becoming better language teachers.

### ***A Course in English Language Teaching (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)***

Penny Ur

Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

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**P**enny Ur’s *A Course in English Language Teaching* is one of the best references and teacher-training texts available at present. Preparing teachers to teach well is an onerous task that not only benefits the teachers but also thousands of students in the long run, and this book provides a solid foundation for both new and experienced teachers. The focus of this pedagogical book is on English teaching to ESL learners of all levels and backgrounds. The second edition improves upon the first (1996) by using more recent research and including teacher and teacher-trainer feedback.

The organization of the book is one of its strongest aspects; each unit leads to the next with various subjects, providing teachers with a thorough explanation of what they need to know to become bet-

ter teachers. Each unit starts with a helpful overview of the content. Many thought-provoking questions, referred to as “tasks,” appear throughout each unit and ask readers to relate what they have read to their personal experiences, such as thinking back on their own experience while learning a second language and analyzing what strategies they used as students, and what successful or unsuccessful methods their teachers used to teach them. By making these connections, not only can teachers understand the presented concepts better than they would have but they also can relate to their students and the difficulties they might have while learning a new language. At the end of each unit are some review questions that can be used for different purposes, such as group activities for teacher-training courses or just as a comprehension checklist for individuals. Furthermore, the language of the book is very easy to understand for new teachers and at the same time not boring or unprofessional for more experienced teachers. Almost all of the terms are explained in the units and also in the glossary at the end of the book.

In Unit 1, the author gives an overview of today’s issues in teaching English in general, language acquisition theories, and teaching methodologies—a glance at the world of English teaching’s past and present. It also reminds more experienced teachers of some of the important factors that they still need to consider in teaching, such as the place and time for using L1 and the importance of culture and literature. Unit 2 presents insight into what lessons are and what a teacher’s role might be in different lessons. It introduces various kinds of interaction patterns, such as teacher to the whole class (T-Ss), pair work (S-S), and group work (Ss-Ss), emphasizes the significance of lesson preparation, and provides sample lesson plans.

Unit 3 describes English learner texts and how they can be used most effectively in class. A very useful part of this chapter is the “Practical Tips” section, which offers in detail some advice and creative tricks that teachers can use to make sure that students learn the material—for instance multiple ways to engage students’ minds and prepare them for the lesson as well as useful guidelines for dealing with different levels of proficiency. Unit 4 is about tasks and activities that can be used in class. A unique part of this chapter is the presentation of some ineffective scenarios followed by explanations about what to avoid.

Units 5 through 11 are devoted to teaching vocabulary, grammar, error correction, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These chapters include statistics, facts, and figures gathered by experienced teachers and researchers in the field that help pave the way for new teachers. Cases for and against each type of teaching strategy are sup-

plied with no predisposition, letting teachers decide which one is more appropriate for their classes and teaching style.

Units 12 through 20 go into more detail about assessment, syllabus, materials, teaching content, classroom interaction, classroom discipline, learner age differences, teaching heterogeneous classes, and finally teacher development. Practical teaching skills such as different types of grading, designing tests and syllabi, finding the right course book, supplementary materials, and many more are discussed. In Unit 17, possible classroom-management techniques are provided for potential classroom incidents. This could be particularly beneficial as a group activity in teacher-training courses so that teachers can share their ideas and learn from one another.

Unit 18 points out a very controversial issue in language teaching that gets little attention in the literature: differences between younger and older learners and how to teach each age group. The author provides excellent practical guidelines for teaching children, adolescents, and adults, some of which include how to deal with discipline problems and ways to make students interested in lessons. Unit 19 discusses differences between individual students in a heterogeneous class by explaining to teachers which factors they need to consider about each individual learner and his or her personality. Finally, in Unit 20, Ur ends the book by arguing that teacher development happens only through active reflection—techniques such as observing other teachers' lessons, getting feedback from other teachers, observers, or students, taking courses and so forth; she emphasizes that teaching is an ongoing journey of learning.

Overall, this book can be viewed as a practical summary of the most important topics in English teaching that are necessary to prepare future teachers for what they will encounter in their teaching careers. In addition, experienced teachers can use this book as a reference to find more creative activities and strategies to use in their classes and improve upon their old methods. One very important characteristic of this book is that it gives a thorough description of methods, strategies, and ideas without implying that one method or strategy works better than the others, leaving teachers to decide what works best for their classrooms.

*ACTIVE Skills for Reading 3* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)

Neil J. Anderson

Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2014.

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**A**CTIVE *Skills for Reading 3* is an ideal reading textbook for English language learners in secondary and postsecondary settings. It offers students numerous techniques for improving their reading skills in addition to demonstrating real-world skills for students to use outside the classroom. The texts are engaging and are presented in a well-organized, visually appealing manner. One strength of the book is that it teaches and gives ample practice in bottom-up, interactive, and top-down reading strategies, all of which are necessary for student success.

The text is geared toward intermediate-level ESL and EFL students in secondary and postsecondary settings. It is part of a four-book series written by prominent reading specialist Neil J. Anderson that ranges in skill level from low-beginning to high-intermediate. ACTIVE is an acronym that reflects the methodology of the books: *activating* prior knowledge, *cultivating* vocabulary, *thinking* about meaning, *increasing* reading fluency, *verifying* strategies, and *evaluating* progress.

*ACTIVE Skills for Reading 3* consists of 12 units, with each unit consisting of two chapters. Each chapter focuses on a single reading selection that is well supported with effective pre- and postreading activities. Chapters begin with the crucial component of activating the readers' schematic knowledge, followed by the presentation of a reading strategy, such as scanning or making inferences. Reading skills are displayed in text boxes where their importance and use are explained to the learner. These text boxes are found in the margins, alongside a corresponding activity intended to allow the students to practice that skill. For example, in Chapter Two of Unit 11, students are introduced to the reading skill of scanning. Beside the text box where scanning is described, students are given five questions for which they must scan the text for information.

The next item in each chapter is the reading selection itself; most selections consist of various types of informational texts, such as adaptations of news articles and entries in reference materials. The reading selections provide appropriate and appealing content, covering engaging topics such as travel, fashion, and comics. However, a serious drawback of the text is its lack of authentic texts, which are more



beneficial than manufactured and highly constrained passages in ESL and EFL classrooms. For example, Unit 11 uses two controlled texts to discuss the topic of memory, which are used as the basis for the exercises throughout the unit.

After each reading, students encounter effective postreading questions focusing on reading comprehension, critical thinking, vocabulary building, and vocabulary skills. The vocabulary-skill exercises are similar to the reading-skill exercises presented in the pre-reading section in that they present an appropriate skill to cultivate, such as looking at prefixes and word families, alongside opportunities to practice those skills. In addition, Anderson includes motivational tips, such as encouragement to read for pleasure or to reflect on goals. These tips are designed to help engage and motivate learners. The combined pre- and postreading exercises create an effective sequence of activities that is likely to improve reader efficiency.

Each unit includes a section called “Real Life Skill,” in which students practice a strategy or skill that can be transferred to their daily use of language. For example, Unit 10, “The Future of Education,” covers the practical skill of identifying common academic abbreviations; Unit 5, “Celebrations Around the World,” discusses accepting and declining invitations, an important aspect of communicative competence. Other real-life practice activities focus on language-development skills such as using spelling rules and using dictionaries efficiently.

A “Review Unit” after every third unit serves two purposes: to review the topics covered in that section and to introduce additional reading skills. In these review units, Anderson introduces a reading-fluency strategy such as KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) or SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), followed by an opportunity to practice that strategy. The final tasks of each review include two timed readings that aim to measure students’ fluency. Students time themselves as they read through the articles and then answer reading-comprehension questions. At the back of the book, students record their reading speed and score from the reading comprehension in a “Reading Rate Chart,” which determines students’ fluency by tracking their progress with meeting a reading speed goal of 200 words per minute with a 70% comprehension rate. Reading speed is often overlooked in textbooks; however, it is an essential component of students’ reading efficiency that is appropriately addressed in the book.

My strongest reservation about *ACTIVE Skills for Reading 3* is that the texts may be above an intermediate-level student’s ability, namely in regard to the frequency of unknown vocabulary items. When ana-

lyzed with Vocabulary Profiler ([www.lex tutor.ca](http://www.lex tutor.ca)), some texts showed a higher number of off-list words than some intermediate students may be able to easily work with. However, the scaffolding, strategies presented for increased comprehension, and explicit vocabulary exercises help to offset this challenge.

Despite its weaknesses, *ACTIVE Skills for Reading 3* presents an extremely attractive option for ESL and EFL literacy educators seeking a well-designed reading-skills textbook. The text provides appealing, engaging texts along with pre-, while-, and postreading activities that will no doubt increase students' comprehension and improve their overall reading skills and abilities. I would recommend *ACTIVE Skills for Reading 3* for ESL and EFL classrooms in secondary and postsecondary settings. Anderson ensures that learners are given multiple avenues for learning and improving their skills, and strategies are presented in a straightforward way that promotes reading development.

### ***Interchange 1* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)**

Jack C. Richards (with Jonathan Hull and Susan Proctor)  
New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

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*Interchange* is one of the most popular ESL series for adults and young adults. A new edition now incorporates digital components to support the text while retaining the sound methodology that has made it successful.

*Interchange 1* (4th ed.), the second book in the four-level series, is intended for learners of high-beginning proficiency. It is an integrated-skills text, which covers the four basics, although listening and speaking receive more attention than reading and writing. Additionally, new grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation tips are introduced in each unit. The authors aim to help students develop both fluency and accuracy. They believe the best way to learn language is to use it to communicate meaningfully. Their pedagogical approach is both communicative and functional.

The book follows a topic-based syllabus, although grammar and functions are also organizing principles. The 16 units are organized around common themes from everyday life, such as food, families, and health. Each unit is further divided into two cycles, each with its own topic and grammar point. A typical cycle would include: a "Snapshot" introducing the topic, a model conversation, a grammar explanation, a discussion, a listening activity, and either a vocabulary

or pronunciation exercise. Some cycles include writing; Cycle 2 always ends with a reading. Each unit is augmented by an “Interchange,” a communicative activity such as a survey or board game.

After each set of two units is a “Progress Check,” in which students fill out a questionnaire to assess whether they have learned certain skills “very well,” “OK,” or “a little.” Practice exercises are provided so that students can work on weaker skills.

Teachers who have used *Passages* (2nd ed.), the Cambridge series that follows *Interchange 3* (the last book in the *Interchange* series), will recognize the new “Grammar Plus” feature. Instructors can use this section at the back of the book to supplement the main text. Each “Grammar Plus” page expands on one of the previously presented grammar points and provides additional practice. For example, Unit 10 “Grammar Plus” supplements the presentation of the present perfect tense with explicit rules about the use of “yet” and “already,” words that often accompany the present perfect.

The student book comes with a self-study CD-ROM, which affords learners the opportunity to work outside the classroom. The disk provides video and skills practice.

The interleaved, spiral-bound teacher’s edition includes the workbook answer key and a one-page language summary for each unit, but some features that appeared in print in the third edition are now digital components. “Games” and “Fresh Ideas” are available as downloads in the “Teacher Resources” section of the *Interchange* website, while assessments are on a CD-ROM in the teacher’s edition. Additionally, there is no fourth edition of the teacher’s resource book; that material is now available on downloadable worksheets.

Students have a wealth of supplemental materials to draw on. For example, the workbook is available in print and online versions. And, at the *Interchange* website, students can access an online dictionary, all the audio tracks for the student book, and an “Interchange Arcade,” which provides free interactive practice activities for each unit.

Supplemental materials for teachers include, in addition to class audio CDs, class videos and “Presentation Plus.” There is one class video per unit, and each is accompanied by a four-page worksheet, which incorporates previewing activities, during-viewing activities, postviewing activities, and a language close-up section. The impressive “Presentation Plus” software can be used with a computer and projector, or an interactive whiteboard to project onscreen the student book, workbook, class videos and video worksheets, and “Interchange Arcade.” This helpful tool allows the instructor to circle, highlight, post notes, and otherwise emphasize important points electronically.

Instructors who want to use several of the components together

might consider *Interchange 1, Full Contact*, which includes the student book, workbook, video worksheets, and a self-study DVD-ROM in one volume.

Several strengths of this text are worth noting. First, the large number of components makes *Interchange 1* (4th ed.) highly adaptable. A class with a small budget, little computer hardware, or limited classroom hours could be conducted with just the student book, the teacher's edition, and the class audio CDs. A class with more money, more hardware, or more classroom hours to fill might opt to include the videos and "Presentation Plus."

A second strength is the approach of the authors, and they have wisely retained their core syllabus. The text is organized around topics as well as grammar and communicative functions, such as expressing an opinion or extending an invitation.

A third strength is the attractive format. Ample new and colorful graphics draw the learner in. A balance of white space and carefully placed text results in visually pleasing pages that contribute to engagement in and understanding of the text.

Two weaknesses bear mentioning. One concerns the listening passages. Mendelsohn (2004) says an authentic response to listening is doing something with what we have heard. Listening activities should reflect real-life responses, but many in this book do not. For example, after listening to people talk about their daily schedules, students are simply asked to complete a chart. An experienced instructor might know to expand this to make the activity more authentic by having students use the chart to arrange a meeting that all can attend. Unfortunately, many of the listening activities need to be modified in a similar way to be more purposeful.

A second weakness is that the new digital-only components may not be accessible to certain users. For instance, EFL teachers in some settings might have no computer. While they may be able to use a photocopyable option, they cannot open a PDF. And then, some teachers still are not comfortable incorporating technology into their lessons. They, too, would be better served by having a photocopyable option.

Overall, *Interchange 1* (4th ed.) provides adult and young adult learners with rich and engaging material to aid in the development of the four basic skills. The new digital components provide teachers with varied options and modernize the series. This fourth edition should ensure *Interchange's* continued success.

## Reference

Mendelsohn, D. J. (2004). *Learning to listen: A strategy-based approach for the second-language learner*. Carlsbad, CA: Dominic Press.

## *50 Ways to Teach Them Writing: Tips for ESL/EFL Teachers*

Maggie Sokolik

Eugene, OR: Wayzgoose Press, 2012.

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After hours of grading, the last thing teachers want to do is sift through pages of thick texts and lofty pedagogy. Instructors require something relevant and easy to use. Thankfully, author Maggie Sokolik's 99¢ Kindle e-book *50 Ways to Teach Them Writing: Tips for ESL/EFL Teachers* is both.

Sokolik's book is a fast and easy read that offers practical activities for today's mainstream academic writing classroom. As the title implies, the book is a numbered list. It is most appropriate for the high school level; however, the lessons are easily adaptable from grade school to entry-level college courses. Written primarily as a supplemental book for "teachers who are new to ESL/EFL, new to teaching writing, or simply looking for more creative, engaging writing activities" (p. 3), the book is a windfall for those looking to spice up their writing courses.

Though presented as an easily readable list of 50 activities and tips, the book organizes these 50 ways thematically, based on the process approach to writing. In keeping with the process approach to writing, activities and tips are grouped in the following three categories: prewriting and planning; writing topics and strategies; and editing and revising. Although the three categories appear in chronological order within the book, Sokolik cautions that the writing process involves revisiting each category, and teachers are encouraged to adapt materials to the needs of individual students and classes. This process-oriented approach echoes the sentiments of writing authorities such as the National Council of Teachers of English and the National Writing Project.

In addition to the 50 lessons offered, the book also offers additional resources in the form of eight ready-to-use printable materials, accessible at <http://anglofile.com/50ways/>. Of particular interest is the selection of printable, blank comic strips, designed to be used with Tip 24: "Blank Comics." The ready-to-use comic strips save teachers the time needed to find and alter comic strips appropriately for use in this activity.

By far, one of the most enticing qualities about this book is that its content is easy to access, navigate, and reference again and again. Downloadable from Amazon.com for a mere 99¢, the e-book can be viewed on most computers, Kindles, or smartphones.

Activities are presented in a well-organized numbered list, and each activity is followed by a short—usually one paragraph or less—description. If you want to share a favorite activity with a colleague, you can just say, “Flip to Number 4.” If you can not remember the number, it is no problem; activities are aptly titled. If you are looking for the activity that has students writing perspectives on a cube, look for the activity titled “Cubing.” Another time-saver is that almost all of Sokolik’s activities can be implemented with little or no prep time.

While *50 Ways to Teach Them Writing* may be easy to use, the veteran teacher may still be skeptical whether it is relevant. In fact, some suggested activities, such as “Writing From a Model,” “Use Transitions,” “Paraphrase,” and a few others, are likely already part of traditional writing curriculums. Sokolik suggests that teachers choose no more than a handful of tips to put into practice in an effort to focus on only those activities most relevant to their particular needs. With the plethora of innovative activities that are offered in this book, gleaning “five or six” appropriate ideas to apply to the classroom is easy to do.

The activities speak directly to the new Common Core curriculum. Activities such as “Map Stories” (#15), “Write Instructions” (#17), and “Comparison” (#18) correspond with the Common Core’s emphasis on writing different text types for different purposes. Particularly strong is the connection between Sokolik’s book and the Common Core anchor standards related to the production and distribution of writing. In fact, the book offers an entire section on editing and revising and includes numerous opportunities for collaboration such as “Reverse Outlining” (#43), “Prepare for Peer Review” (#48), and an activity called “Writing on the Wall” (#42), which asks students to display their writing on the wall next to a blank sheet of paper on which their classmates will offer feedback.

*50 Ways to Teach Them Writing* also strengthens the critical-thinking skills needed to engage in the Common Core’s emphasis on research, analysis, and evaluation. Through activities such as “Idea Analysis” (#7), “Cubing” (#4), and “Dictacomp” (#16), Sokolik offers fresh ways that students can paraphrase, summarize, analyze, evaluate, and “consider a topic or writing prompt from six different angles” (p. 7). In addition, many activities lend themselves to interdisciplinary instruction; “Interview” (#28) could be paired with a history lesson, “Conduct a Poll” (#29) with a math lesson on graphs and statistics, and “Write a Proper Email” (#31) could be used as part of any number of authentic, interdisciplinary projects.

With its relevant content, stellar organization, and incredibly low price, *50 Ways to Teach Them Writing* is every writing teacher’s dream. Activities are easily modified for various levels of EFL/ESL students

and native-speaking writing students alike. Students benefit from the relevant instruction and fresh, engaging activities. Teachers benefit from the book's ease of access and time-saving ideas. The book is best used as Sokolik suggests: Teachers should "read through all the tips without stopping. [...] Then read through the tips again. Choose five or six that you think might work for your class" (p. 2).

Maggie Sokolik's *50 Ways to Teach Them Writing* is guaranteed to offer the two qualities teachers need most in professional materials: relevance and accessibility. This book is a fast and easy read, and practicing teachers can begin using it in their classrooms immediately.

***Learning English for Academic Purposes:  
LEAP: Reading and Writing (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)***

Julia Williams

Saint-Laurent, Quebec: Pearson, 2012.

**MAURICIO GONÇALVES**

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*L*earning English for Academic Purposes: *LEAP: Reading and Writing* (2nd ed.) initially attracted me for two reasons: It was recently published in 2012, and it combines two skills, reading and writing, necessary for students learning English for academic purposes (LEAP). Because the book is well written, has a great aesthetic, and is very well organized, *LEAP* would be a great addition to most intensive English programs (IEPs).

The book is divided into eight chapters, each containing three reading assignments that are related to one common theme. For example, Chapter 1 has three engaging readings on "Elite Athletes." The readings are relevant and always challenging to students who may not be familiar with the given topic. Chapter 5, one of my favorites, explores "Philosophies of Medicine" around the world. The chapter is incredibly up-to-date in all its facts and statistics, and it provides reliable, well-researched information.

Each chapter starts with a clear list of objectives that are clearly highlighted in the first page of the chapter. The chapter then begins with "Gearing Up" questions, a type of prereading activity. These questions appear at the beginning of each chapter and they help to activate the students' schema on the eight different themes the book explores. Next is the first reading assignment followed by vocabulary-comprehension tasks. All the paragraphs and lines are nicely numbered throughout the book. This is a simple yet helpful tool for both

teachers and students. The tasks that follow are presented with three main strategies: Guess the meaning from the context, guess the meaning from root words, prefixes, and suffixes, and keep reading without knowing the meaning of every word. There are several exercises to help students use each of these strategies. Besides the reading and vocabulary activities, each chapter has an academic survival-skills session, which deals with relevant and important academic situations that students will face in their university classes, such as using citations and references, asking questions using correct word order, and learning independently. Activities for “Readings Two and Three” are usually done in preparation for the writing tasks: “Reading Two” usually involves short answers and small reports about the reading, and “Reading Three” usually has longer writing assignments such as designing surveys, short essays, and extended reports. As the chapters progress the writing assignments become longer and more academically focused. The book teaches and has extensive practice in several types of essays, summaries, paraphrasing, and other writing tasks.

A very attractive feature of *LEAP* is its interactive online features, including a helpful link to Longman dictionaries. Moreover, individual exercises supplement the book’s chapters. Most of the online exercises focus on practice and production, and the best part is that they are automatically corrected with the click of a button. Also, there is a further-reading practice if needed, supplementary teacher and student resources, and a grade book for teachers to use to track students’ progress. One of the drawbacks of these features is that the access code is valid for only five months from the date of registration. The book also cannot be returned if the access code, which is found on the first page, has been used or the sticker uncovered by the teacher or the student.

One of the potential weaknesses of the book is the lack of a common theme among the eight chapters. While the articles are interesting, there is no in-depth look at any particular academic or subject area, making this text a bad choice for use with a sustained-content approach. On the other hand, its diverse themes make this text a good pick for instructors looking for variety and flexibility. Topics include “Vaccines,” “Risk Perception,” “A Fitting Education,” and others.

The textbook is clearly meant for an advanced ESL classroom. The readings are difficult and extremely academic. A good solution the author found to make the challenging readings more manageable for students was to have smaller readings in each chapter, usually no more than a page long, which works well. The reading activities are well marked and well organized into pre-, during-, and postactivities. My favorite component of this book is its critical-thinking compo-



ment. Each chapter is scoped and sequenced to have at least one critical-thinking activity. For example, in Chapter 2 students are taught to gather data for a report and design their own survey. Again in Chapter 4, students are challenged to use reading strategies to write a persuasive essay. Despite the importance of such skills in EAP courses, few books have such activities so well defined in their core. This is one of the main strengths of this text.

Overall, *LEAP* is an interesting, well-organized, and resourceful textbook for advanced EAP students. Though meant for the ESL classroom, because of its interactive Internet features and additional resources, the entire program could also be used in an EFL setting. The lack of a specific theme throughout the book makes it flexible for use with a variety of cultures. Most of the topics are relevant and up-to-date, making it easy for teachers to prepare and teach such lessons.

If you have a diligent group of students preparing to enter university-level classes, you should consider this book. It is published by Pearson, a well-known publishing company, and it is readily available. Most of all, *LEAP* is classroom ready and teacher friendly.

***Answers May Vary: Essays on Teaching English as a Second Language***

Dorothy Zemach

Wayzgoose Press, 2012.

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Benjamin Franklin once said, “Experience is the best teacher, but a fool will learn from no other.” In the case of language instructors, we value the wisdom and experience of those who have braved the ESL and EFL classrooms before us. If we could take one experienced “veteran” in our field and record some of her most valuable classroom experience, we would have a book just like *Answers May Vary* by Dorothy Zemach. A collection of 25 essays originally published in the “From A to Z” column in the TESOL magazine *Essential Teacher*, *Answers May Vary* brings Zemach’s TESOL experiences and insights together into a single enjoyable and informative volume for ESL instructors.

Though the book is written primarily for teachers of English as a second language, educators of all fields may relate to her teaching experiences and value her suggestions. Her anecdotes are instructive and humorous. New teachers will certainly find a plethora of innovative ideas and sound advice for the classroom. Those who are more seasoned in the field can reflect on and relate to their own experiences while possibly learning something new.

The 25 essays in this work cover various topics in the ESL/EFL classroom, addressing everything from visual learners and reading fluency to grading papers and teacher burnout. Reading and writing instructors will most appreciate the essays “Read to the End” and “The Process of Learning Process Writing.”

A few notable essays are on the management of cheating, using analogies to gain perspective on personal goals, and the benefits of storytelling in the classroom. Another helpful chapter, Zemach’s initial essay, “u’ve got mail!,” discusses an area of instruction that seems often overlooked in textbooks—email etiquette. She recommends instructors teach students the appropriate ways to open and close an email and check for grammatical and spelling errors. For Zemach, it is a question of register. Students should keep an air of formality in all areas of interaction with professors. It is important, after all, for learners to know that those students who write more professionally are commonly seen as better students by their instructors.

Another notable essay in the book deals with teacher burnout. Almost all teachers can relate to feeling overworked. Zemach, like a doctor would, diagnoses the causes and “prescribes” remedies. In general, she claims that teachers will likely burn out if they make themselves available 24/7 to their students and take on extra committee work. She suggests a four-part solution for the worn-out educator: Recharge yourself by eating healthily and staying fit, reduce your workload, reconnect with people, and recycle previous lessons that work well. Moreover, Zemach gives an honest assessment of the salary and workload for an average ESL educator and warns that the service of teaching should never be a “disservice” to the teacher.

Another informative essay on culture shock helps instructors better understand this four-phase process: the honeymoon, the crash, acceptance, and assimilation. Students arrive in their new country usually in cloud-nine euphoria, where everything is new, majestic, and “better” than their own. Yet through time, this experience fades and students begin to criticize their new environment. After students begin to accept the new culture, the people, and the practices, they may assimilate into the culture—though this may take a long time.

Overall, *Answers May Vary* is not only an informative work based on years of experience by a well-known TESOL professional but also a highly entertaining read. Zemach’s anecdotes are wholesome and witty. For instance, readers with any ESL teaching experience will easily relate to Zemach’s experiences of trying to determine how much of a foreign language may be used in the classroom. She recounts her initial conviction of “Only English” during class with potential consequences to those who disobeyed. This policy changed, however, after

a challenging language-learning experience in Morocco. While trying to learn Arabic, Zemach found herself on the other side of the desk, frantically speaking in English with her classmates in an attempt to make sense of an instructor who simply left her lost in translation.

I highly recommend this book to any teacher for both professional development and leisure reading. The book covers a rich variety of important TESOL topics, making it a valuable read for seasoned and new teachers alike.

***Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)**

Linda Lee and Jean Bernard

Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2011.

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When teaching an intensive reading course, language teachers need a pedagogically sound sourcebook that is effective both in engaging learners during the course and helping them learn strategies for reading beyond it. With its high-interest topics and wide variety of reading strategies, *Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2nd ed.) by Linda Lee and Jean Bernard is such a resource.

*Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* is the final book in Oxford's four-book *Select Readings* (2nd ed.) series, which is quite user friendly. Although the ideal audience is not explicitly stated, this series is most appropriate for university-level English language students based on the ages of the people in the images throughout the book and the topics it addresses, such as careers and Internet dating. Each book consists of 12 topic-based chapters, each of which features a primary text, a secondary text, a focal reading skill, and a vocabulary-building component. Pages at the beginning of the book, "Contents," "Scope and Sequence," and "Series Overview," clearly explain and outline the best ways to use the book.

That the authors intentionally included texts on current high-interest and culturally relevant topics is one of the many strengths of *Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2nd ed.). Some examples of chapter topics include "The Youngsters Behind YouTube," "Your Negative Attitude Can Hurt Your Career," and "What Is Creative Thinking?" These chapters are nicely laid out with enough white space on the page that the text is not overwhelming and allows room for annotation. Appealing, realistic, modern images enhance comprehension.

Overall, *Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2nd ed.) is firmly

anchored in current pedagogical theory. It provides readers with a relatively wide variety of textual genres that they will likely encounter beyond the classroom, including articles from well-respected online and print magazines such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *New Internationalist* and excerpts from contemporary and classic books such as Mignon Fogarty's *Grammar Girl* and Lin Yu Tang's *The Importance of Understanding*. These various readings are either reprinted directly or minimally adapted from their original sources; they are thus generally authentic.

Furthermore, each chapter is carefully structured to enable students to build on their previous knowledge and focus on one particular reading strategy at a time. For instance, a strategy such as scanning, summarizing, or making inferences is first explained and then practiced with the primary text. Readers subsequently apply the strategy to a shorter secondary reading. Written exercises, such as writing summaries, allow students to integrate their language skills. Some chapters teach skills that naturally build upon one another. Chapter 2 focuses on supporting main ideas, while Chapter 1 focuses on identifying main ideas.

Chapter 2 also includes the newly featured section "Apply the Reading Skill," wherein students apply the strategy learned—in this case, that of supporting main ideas—to another, shorter text. This section is an excellent addition to the text as it asks students to apply their strategies to not just one but both of the reading passages in the chapter, giving much-needed practice in processing texts on a deeper level.

Another strength of this book is its excellent pre- and postreading activities. These activities elicit readers' prior knowledge of the topic, build on that knowledge, and help them determine the purpose for reading a specific text. Moreover, several of these activities use graphic organizers such as charts and diagrams, which can further help students prepare to read. Before reading "The Colorful World of Synesthesia" in Chapter 4, for instance, students are presented with a prereading stage that requires they fill in two graphics organizers, one that elicits students' knowledge about the five senses and the other that helps students predict the topic of the reading.

The postreading stage involves even more activities than the pre-reading stage, which is outstanding, as this latter stage is vital for the evaluation and extension of what readers have learned from the text. Each chapter's postreading stage involves extensive and well-written comprehension checks using a multiple-choice activity, vocabulary building, reading-skill development, and content-discussion activities.

Finally, this book has a variety of helpful supplementary materi-

als for both the student and teacher. This second version provides the reader with downloadable audio files for each chapter's primary text, recited in standard American English. Also, a mini Oxford American dictionary is provided at the back of the student book. Finally, a CD-ROM containing chapter tests with extra readings, student-book answer key, and midterm and final exams styled after the TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS provides valuable resources for instructors.

Although *Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2nd ed.) is an exceptional resource overall, it is important to note a few shortcomings. One weakness is that while *Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2nd ed.) provides ample support in the pre- and postreading stages, the during-reading stage lacks explicit instructions and strategies. Even though it offers vocabulary glosses, numbered lines, and downloadable audio files to help students, this book does not provide any written guidelines to encourage them to be active readers. Strategies that good readers apply during a reading, such as highlighting texts, writing questions, and taking notes, must be taught separately by the teacher.

In addition, this book is inconsistent in providing the original source information for its adapted and reformatted texts. Although these sources are listed in microprint under the "Acknowledgments" section of the copyright page, it would be better to have this information available on the page where the text appears to be used as a class discussion point about text genres and authors. This book also lacks references to the original sources of all secondary texts.

Nevertheless, *Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2nd ed.) is effective and comprehensive. Teachers and students will appreciate its clear directions, user-friendly and appealing layout, and of course, its high-interest topics, the latter of which may help in promoting students' motivation to improve their literacy skills. Teachers will be pleased with how *Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2nd ed.) enables their students to meaningfully interact with a variety of texts while developing reading strategies that can be used beyond the classroom. It is an indispensable resource for EFL/ESL instructors teaching intensive upper-intermediate-level reading courses at a college or university.

*College Writing Skills With Readings* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.)

John Langan

New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2014.

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Imagine that you have been asked to teach an advanced developmental English seminar designed to help nonnative English-speaking students develop the vocabulary, reading, writing, and grammar skills necessary to succeed in the undergraduate course work they are taking concurrently at a state university. These are “ESL” students, to be sure, but most of them have not taken ESL courses. Most are freshmen, freshly graduated from high school in their respective countries, and thrust into courses with hundreds of American classmates. These students need academic help, and under the circumstances, no ESL reading/writing textbook that you have used seems up to the task of preparing them.

Enter *College Writing Skills With Readings* (9th ed.) by John Langan. This is the textbook prescribed for these students in an American Language Program at California State University. In a student survey of the textbook at the beginning of the semester, students gave it high marks for its multicolor format, colorful diagrams, photos, and color-coded pages—which coincided, of course, with low marks for the cost of the textbook. Students also rated it an average of a 6 out of 10 in terms of apparent difficulty level, and they gave mixed reviews on the essay and reading topics in the book. Student remarks included “some topics seem easy; others look really hard,” and “it’s kind of interesting and kind of challenging.” In fact, it turned out to be a *very* challenging textbook for the primarily Arabic-speaking, science-majoring students in the course, but by the end of the semester, it proved to be an invaluable resource, thanks to the range of essay patterns, process writing and grammar skills, authentic model essays, and practice activities the book offers.

This 800-page book could easily be used over two semesters. For either one or two semesters, though, the amount of material, as well as the diversity of activities and “Teaching Tips” in the annotated instructor’s edition, offer a rich smorgasbord of resources for instructors and students alike. The instructor’s edition includes not only exercise answers, but also additional examples, pointers, and questions to present to students. In addition, the accompanying online resources on the McGraw-Hill webpage for the textbook are invaluable. On the student version of the page are general links to “Career Consideration”

tools with other links to résumé writing and job-search resources and interview tips, diagnostic tests, a glossary of key terms in the textbook, “A Guide to Electronic Research: Using the Internet,” “Plagiarism and the Internet,” a “Learning Styles Assessment,” and a “Study Skills Primer,” which offers helpful tips for avoiding procrastination, creating a schedule, reading textbooks, and taking exams. Each chapter also has its own links, which include learning objectives, key terms, quizzes, and a variety of interactive exercises depending on the chapter, varying from crossword puzzles to exploring publications such as *The New York Times* and *Salon*.

The textbook itself is divided into five parts: In Part 1, “Essay Writing,” the chapters outline five major steps: prewriting, drafting the first draft, revising and reorganizing content, revising at the sentence and word level, and editing for a final draft. Not only does Langan walk students through process writing and other skills, from keeping a journal to forming arguable thesis statements, but he also illustrates each phase with authentic student examples. In addition, each chapter is packed with macro- and microlevel activities. In every chapter, students brainstorm major points for an essay, fill in the blanks with appropriate transitions, and do other activities that lay the foundation for writing their own essays.

Part 2, “Patterns of Essay Development,” covers the various rhetorical styles in separate chapters: description, narration, exemplification, process, cause and/or effect, comparison and/or contrast, definition, division-classification, and argument essays. Like Part 1, Part 2 begins with an introductory chapter overview of the section, followed by chapters packed with explanations, activities, and examples of student academic and job-related writing samples. The array of essay patterns in this section allows the instructor to select those patterns students are most likely to need in their respective major classes or to focus on those that students find more difficult and that therefore require practice.

Part 3 discusses “Special Skills” or writing situations, including essay exams, summaries, reports, research papers, and résumés/cover letters. The distinction of these writing situations from other essay assignments in Part 2 can help students to prepare for non-English classes and work situations in which the rhetorical style and expectations may differ from more traditional essay types. This section is also a helpful resource for students wanting to self-study for specific writing situations outside of or beyond the course.

Part 4, a “Handbook of Sentence Skills,” is divided into four sections covering grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and word use. Assignments from this part can be individualized. Alternatively, the in-

structor might assign chapters to all students, or even have students or groups of students “teach” the class from these chapters. Most activities in this part are short-answer, fill-in-the-blank, or error-correction exercises, which can fuel a more competitive/gamelike approach to practice. One chapter in Part 4, “ESL Pointers,” reviews common ESL trouble spots such as articles, subject-verb agreement, and prepositions. Instructors can have students diagnose their typical problem areas in English based on the individual feedback they have received on their writing and select the relevant chapters in this section for additional practice. Instructors can have students work on specific chapters—such as sentence structure, word choice, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling—on their own, or they could assign certain chapters to the class as a whole.

Part 5 reprints and invites analysis of “Readings for Writers” by names such as Bertrand Russell, Martin Luther King Jr., George Orwell, and Chief Seattle. Eye-catching titles in Part 5 include “Shame,” “A Hanging,” and “Sleeping Your Way to the Top.” These professional writing models, from classics to modern pieces, are followed by questions on comprehension, writing technique, critical reading, and related writing assignments. This section can provide a source of essay exam writing assignments or stimulate lively discussion and authentic writing responses. A “Reading Comprehension Chart” at the end of Part 5 helps students to track their own comprehension, fostering autonomy.

The book’s design for freshman college students offers a challenging but rich teaching and learning tool for ESL instructors and their students. Clearly, the fact that only one out of the 45 chapters in the first four parts of the book is dedicated to ESL suggests that the book is not, in fact, for ESL learners. Like many developmental education books, this one conflates nonnative speakers with underprepared native speakers of English and struggling Generation 1.5 students.

However, this conflation works. It helps to enculturate international students to academia and issues in the US. Students benefit from authentic texts, clear instructions, and the high expectations that they will encounter in non-ESL classrooms—exactly what *College Writing Skills With Readings* (9th ed.) provides.



***Tips for Teaching Culture: Practical Approaches to Intercultural Communication***

Ann C. Wintergerst and Joe McVeigh

White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman, 2011.

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In a field where language and culture interact in myriad ways, Ann Wintergerst and Joe McVeigh's *Tips for Teaching Culture* offers English language teachers a clear guide to understanding and interacting with culture in English for speakers of other languages classes here in North America or abroad. Written to help teachers consider not only what research says but also what they can do in the classroom, this book is well organized, clearly written, and provides many ways for ESL/EFL teachers to help their students build cross-cultural understanding and develop intercultural competence.

After the preface, this book has eight chapters, two appendices, a glossary, bibliography, and name and subject indexes. Each chapter starts with a photo and several reflection questions for readers to consider, followed by an introduction and a list of "tips" that are then expanded on, usually along with charts and visuals that help focus or elaborate upon the discussion within each chapter. A significant strength of the book is the way that class activities are spread throughout chapters to help teachers apply the issues and ideas introduced to classes they teach. Each activity has a specified level, connection to one of the tips in the book, and provides steps to follow with relevant teaching notes. In essence, these are lesson-plan outlines that teachers reading the book can adapt for their own contexts. The book is thus obviously written for busy teachers, who the authors recognize will want to apply the principles and techniques they discuss. One wonderful way they have made this possible is by including an "Overview of Tips and Activities" at the beginning of the book (pp. xi-xii) as a quick reference with the names and page numbers for each of the tips.

Chapter 1 addresses exploring culture in the classroom, expanding on six tips: having students discuss their definitions of culture, bringing culture to a conscious level, pointing out potentially hidden aspects of culture, showing how cultures may value the same things differently, helping students understand how culture works, and building awareness of the stress that may result during cultural adjustment. The authors briefly introduce each tip and then comment on "what the research says" and "what the teacher can do" to incorporate the tip into their classroom teaching (pp. 6-7). As a reader I

appreciate the charts, graphs, photos, and other visuals Wintergerst and McVeigh have incorporated into their easy-to-follow narrative. Each chapter ends with a summary conclusion, followed by a bulleted list of reminders.

Chapter 2 introduces eight tips on the language and culture connection, including exploring the concept of face, communication styles and registers, and differences between spoken and written language. Chapter 3 discusses seven tips related to cultural and nonverbal communication, including time, space, and gestures, while Chapter 4 puts forward six tips connecting culture and identity. Chapter 5's five tips include recognizing stages of culture shock, countering its effects, and examining one's own cultural style, and Chapter 6 introduces eight traditional ways to teach culture, such as using the arts, literature, role-plays, and holidays and festivals. Teachers will appreciate Chapter 7's emphasis on culture and education, which expands on six tips, such as investigating how learner and teacher expectations may differ across cultures, as well as Chapter 8's six teaching tips for exploring culture and social responsibility, which incorporate principles of multicultural education, create respect for diversity and difference, and manage controversial issues that may arise in class. Appendix A is a go-to resource, as it incorporates photocopiable handouts for use with many of the activities from the book. These include critical issues for discussion, tables and charts for students to complete, discussion questions for partners or small groups to consider, and a number of reflection and self-evaluation rubrics students can use. Appendix B lists different types of movies that teachers might use in class to introduce various aspects of intercultural communication.

If I sound excited about this book, it is because I am. I teach an Intercultural Communication for Teachers course in which I use several texts to introduce and expand upon key concepts in this area. I have used *Tips for Teaching Culture* successfully, and my undergraduate and graduate students all responded positively in evaluating it as a textbook. I believe this is largely because there are clear teaching applications on virtually every page, which helps readers apply the discussion of intercultural communication to their students and courses. For example, yet another way the authors reach out to readers is through occasional "Voices From the Classroom" vignettes by practicing teachers, most of whom are working in varied contexts here in the US, although a couple are from Japan and the West Indies.

At times I wondered about the potential oversimplification of such a complex reality as culture. Much of the research the book discusses is well established but also somewhat dated, with the most recent reference being 2008. These potential areas for improvement

aside, the current edition is a marvelous resource for teachers who wish to move beyond stereotypes and think carefully about culture and its role in their ESL/EFL courses. I, therefore, highly recommend it. Teachers who add this resource to their library will find much food for thought as well as ready-to-use activities for their classes.

***50 Ways to Teach Them Speaking: Tips for ESL/EFL Teachers***

Janine Sepulveda

Eugene, OR: Wayzgoose Press, 2012.

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Many ESL and EFL textbooks are brimming with lesson plans and teaching materials but contain very few practice exercises and activities. In *50 Ways to Teach Them Speaking: Tips for ESL/EFL Teachers*, author Janine Sepulveda meets this need with 50 activities that can supplement class textbooks or stand alone and be used for any teaching context or language level. Each activity encourages students to put lessons into practice, and her communicative approach encourages all students to participate actively in their own learning. The book comes from the *50 Ways to Teach Them ...* series, which uses a holistic approach to practicing English that empowers students to communicate in a variety of ways that strengthens their proficiency.

This book contains eight icebreakers/warm-ups/games, 33 fluency and focused-practice activities, and nine tips for making activities more effective for students. Many activities, such as one teaching conversation patterns of initiation, response, and follow-up, seek to engage students in meaningful conversation with their classmates, while others have a strong focus on specific language areas such as stress, pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures.

The warm-ups and fluency-practice activities offer creative ways to get students communicating more comfortably and confidently. One, for instance, has students learn and sing a song to practice their pronunciation and intonation. The variety—from situational skills such as exploring the nuances of English, initiating conversations, and being understood over the phone to more discrete language skills such as minimal pairs, verb tenses, and adverbs—is impressive.

A unique feature of this book is that it also contains activities specifically designed to address the perceived intimidation that shy students feel when speaking in front of their peers. For example, one

activity gives these quiet students the opportunity to shine by using resources such as Voki, Audacity, and ANVILL to record themselves speaking on a given topic in the privacy of their homes or elsewhere. Teachers can then review the audio file to assess their students' speaking abilities when in a less anxiety-ridden environment.

In addition to audio-recording programs, the activities also include recommended resources such as video clips and songs that are available on YouTube and ideas for using Jazz Chants by the well-known Carolyn Graham. One activity recommends *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss for practicing stress and intonation by way of poems and limericks. These recommendations prove very useful, especially for the new teacher who is still unsure which resources to use.

On the final pages of the book, the nine tips for making classroom activities more effective are insightful and speak to the years of experience the author has had teaching English in both ESL and EFL settings. One recommended technique is to have students stand during conversation since most daily conversations are held in this manner. These tips help teachers to maximize their materials and class time to create the most effective learning environment possible. Sepulveda's unique perspective encourages the teacher to think innovatively about how to plan relevant and meaningful activities for his or her students.

The author rightfully recognizes that no two classrooms are alike. She recommends that teachers read through all the activities and mark a few they think might benefit the students in their classes. She suggests ways to adapt the activities to fit learner needs and recommends that teachers try them out a few times, taking note of which ones work well and which do not. After trying a few activities, teachers can work their way through the book again, finding new activities to keep students engaged.

Each exercise requires little preparation and few to no materials; at just 99¢, the book is affordable for teachers on any budget. However, since the book is available only electronically, this may be a drawback for some teachers who lack an e-reader or prefer hard copies for making notes.

Though the activities are creative, fun, and cover a wide scope of speaking skills, nothing is that extraordinary about them individually. Instead, what makes the book truly special is that all of these ideas are brought together in a single resource accompanied by additional recommendations for how to adapt them. *50 Ways to Teach Them Speaking* is a must-have for both the experienced ESL/EFL teacher looking to spice up the classroom as well as the new teacher just entering the field.

***Discovering Fiction: A Reader of American Short Stories, Book 2***

Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen

Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

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Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen are lovers of language. Their carefully selected authentic texts offer a panoramic tour of Americana, pointing to the greats such as Ernest Hemingway and showcasing the lesser knowns such as Francisco Jimenez. In Book 2 of *Discovering Fiction*, they attempt to marry literature and grammar study with mixed results. Written for high-intermediate to advanced students, the volume presupposes a familiarity with prominent American authors and literature, making the text best suited for university students in writing or reading courses.

*Discovering Fiction's* units are arranged thematically, including topics on life lessons, family relationships, and meeting challenges; the reading difficulty level remains relatively the same for each. Each chapter contains vocabulary and grammar exercises, comprehension questions, discussion points, and writing prompts framed around an authentic short story. This second edition is comparable to the first; a bit of reorganizing and fleshed-out explanations heighten the accessibility, such as the learner-friendly graphic organizers in the "Analyzing the Story" section of each chapter.

A helpful section titled "Summing Up" ends each unit. Herein lies the textbook's primary opportunity for assessing what students have learned. Students are instructed to compare and contrast themes between two stories within the unit. Some prompts are surprisingly contemplative and inspire the reader to draw on real-life knowledge and experiences to analyze content. For example, one prompt in the third unit on irony has the student reflect on two reading selections: "Cruelty is a theme in [Ray Bradbury's 'All Summer in a Day' and Kate Chopin's 'Desiree's Baby']. Describe the cruelty. Who inflicts the cruelty? Who are the victims?" (p. 151). A self-reflection free-writing activity follows: "For fifteen minutes write about people or situations that make you angry and the ways you deal with your anger" (p. 151). By asking learners to engage with the same themes in the texts but to use language for a personal application, they will become better writers and sharper readers. Next is a section called "Words Frequently Confused," which surveys common lexical and syntactic errors relevant to the stories in the preceding chapters, such as inserting "bored" and

“boring” appropriately in a cloze task. A spelling lesson and review test round out “Summing Up.”

Each chapter begins with a few productive and engaging pre-reading activities. The first, “Think Before You Read,” is an exercise in schema activation. Readers must reflect on their own opinions and knowledge about subjects, employing a top-down strategy in preparation for a more thorough reading. Each chapter then introduces a literary term used in that particular story. In “Thank, You, Ma’m,” the authors highlight the sociolinguistic concept of regional dialects and provide a few glosses. The authors next offer a straightforward gloss of select words and phrases in “Idioms and Expressions.” It seems that the criterion for selecting these words and phrases is whether they are likely to pose a potential challenge to the reader rather than whether the words occur frequently in the text. The instructor’s manual encourages teachers to use their discernment with this lexical apparatus. This simple gloss can be reviewed before reading the text, afterward, or both. The final prereading activity gives the reader a biography of the author and a note on the cultural context in which the text was written.

Following the reading selections, which vary in length, is a collection of postreading activities. These activities call for creative and critical thinking and consist of comprehension questions and a vocabulary exercise, the form of which differs from chapter to chapter to keep the learner interested.

*Discovering Fiction’s* primary weakness lies in the next section—the lengthy grammar treatment. The most striking feature of this section is its abruptness. The exercises are framed around the story, but they appear to be thematically disconnected from the surrounding activities. As the authors explain, their goal is to combine the study of literature and grammar in the introduction, but it is a shame the two are not more deftly intertwined. Moreover, the grammar explanations themselves are often decontextualized, relying heavily on metalinguistic analysis and leaning uncomfortably toward the outdated present-practice-produce model of grammar instruction. Still, some chapters prove to be exceptions. For example, the section on verb tense uses a bottom-up strategy that is more focused on function than form as it calls attention to the way in which the author subtly shapes meaning by shifting verb tenses. The use of more contextualized examples such as this would improve the text by giving readers a healthier appreciation for when to use particular grammatical structures. As it stands, the grammar sections are mistakenly focused mostly on form, inappropriate especially for this level of student.

Though *Discovering Fiction* is weak in its grammar presentation, the literary-analysis exercises are solid and engaging. A series of questions titled “Discussing the Story” asks readers to discuss and analyze narrative structure and authorial motives. More interesting are the plethora of writing-task options, which integrate bottom-up and top-down strategies. One example of a bottom-up strategy embedded in a writing prompt follows Ray Bradbury’s “All Summer in a Day.” Students are asked to underline the text’s sight and sound words and to discuss how they create “an intense atmosphere of rain and wetness” (p. 136). In the same list of prompts, students can draw on real-life knowledge, and a top-down strategy, to answer this question: “Why are some people cruel and discriminatory toward other people?” These activities reflect a nuanced understanding of reading comprehension and require a fairly deep engagement with the text. Readers must think critically about how the author has used language, narrative, and shared knowledge of everyday life to create a specific perspective.

Kay and Gelshenen pay unusually thoughtful attention to L2 learners. There is an argument to be made that the focus on learners comes at the expense of the teacher (the instructor’s manual is little more than an answer key). Teachers who appreciate flexibility in lesson planning will not be bothered by the loose structure. The grammar instruction is given unexceptional treatment, but if supplemented to make up for this, *Discovering Fiction*’s strengths outweigh its weaknesses. The authors strive to spark a love of literature in its readers, inviting readers to “savor the richness of the words, images, and characters you will meet.” Learners who use this text are likely to value the diversity of texts and authors, and, as a result, may begin to develop a literary voice of their own.