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The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching
John I. Liontas (Ed.)
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I remember that as a graduate student in TESOL, one of the primary challenges I faced was trying to wrap my head around the field in its entirety—the breadth and depth of issues, theories, and contexts. *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* attempts to solve this problem as the "definitive resource for ELT and ESL practitioners, teachers, and students, by encompassing all the major research, as well as administrative, pedagogical, and professional development issues in the field of TESOL" (p. lxxxiv).

Topics in the encyclopedia are presented in a well-organized fashion in a total of eight volumes. Volumes are then broken down into "super categories," or sections. Volume I contains entries concerning *Teaching English as an International Language*—addressing issues such as language, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Individual entries synthesize research and theory for the reader. Some topic examples are "assessment norms," "English as a lingua franca," and "the role of the first language." Volume II is directed toward *Approaches and Methods in English for Speakers of Other Languages* in ESL teaching, as well as issues concerning *Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs).* Volumes III through V are primarily for the teacher and contain entries that shed light on teaching listening, speaking, pronunciation, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. These volumes inform both pedagogy and enable the reader to more deeply understand the language-learning process. *Sociocultural Aspects of English Language Teaching* and *Teaching and Technology* are covered in Volume VI. Volume VII addresses *Organizational and Administrative Issues,* for example, teacher and student motivation, school culture, and collaborative teaching, in addition to *Teacher Training and Professional Development.* Finally, *Assessment and Evaluation* are the main themes found in Volume VIII. Topics contained within individual volumes are paired well with each other, making the overall organizational structure convenient for both the teacher and researcher.

Each entry in the encyclopedia takes the form of a short academic ar-

ticle (generally 2,500-3,000 words). The entries start by "Framing the Issue," where the authors introduce the topic, make clear definitions, and give detailed explanations when needed. The framing is followed by "Making the Case" (exploration of theory and research findings) and "Pedagogical Implications" (author recommendations for teachers). Both the teacher and the researcher will find this format intriguing because each entry suggests practical applications for the language teacher, while the research and theory components appeal to a larger scholarly audience. Through the synthesis of each topic, the reader can access the very wide body of theory, empirical research, and pedagogy in TESOL in a convenient manner.

As a researcher, I have used this encyclopedia to inform two research projects. For example, in one project focusing on teaching negotiation of meaning, the entry "Negotiation of Meaning Vs. Negotiation of Form" helped me to narrow the scope of my investigation by examining only three forms of negotiation of meaning (clarification requests, confirmation checks, and self-repetition or paraphrase). Additionally, the "SEE ALSO" recommendations in conjunction with the references lists helped me gain a broader perspective of the research domain.

I have also used *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* for reference as a teacher preparing lesson plans. Though the encyclopedia is not a handbook containing lesson plans or activities, it does provide the teacher with the theoretical background needed to design effective classroom activities that target the development of specific skills. One entry I found helpful was "Communication Strategies and Teaching Speaking" by Palmer and Christison. Elaboration on communication strategies in this entry assisted in the design of short sessions of explicit instruction as well as classroom activities that help students develop specific skills, such as circumlocution and substitution, and rely less on code-switching in conversation between two nonnative speakers with a shared L1.

The encyclopedia set is not without its limitations. Considering the high price and the evolving nature of TESOL as a field, this book is better suited as reference material in the library or in a shared research center. Also, I am weary when a publication claims to be a "definitive resource" in a certain domain (p. lxxxiv). Specifically, the encyclopedia lacks discussion of its limitations in the introductory sections. Therefore, I take the descriptor "comprehensive collection," as stated in the introduction, to encompass a "wide" body of knowledge, but not a "complete" body of knowledge (p. lxxxvi). Given this, this set is a good starting point for the researcher and teacher but not the end-all reference that some of the verbose language in the introductory sections seems to suggest.

Finally, the Editorial Board members, the International Advisory Board members, and the individual contributing authors were chosen because they were "expert individuals from around the globe" in order to "ensure the

highest standards" (p. lxxxvii). The aim was to establish a globally balanced and thorough representation of issues in TESOL. While attention was given to scholars from many other countries, board members and contributing authors are heavily drawn from the US. I felt that Japan (where I teach) was underrepresented here, as there were no board members or editors associated with Japan, and only a handful of contributors actually writing from there. Japan is a unique EFL context because it is geographically isolated, has a large homogenous population with a thriving L1, and there is a wealth of research into English language education currently being conducted. A discussion of these could have offered unique insights to this encyclopedia.

This book is well suited as a go-to reference for students of TESOL, researchers, and language teachers alike. Had this collection been available when I was a graduate student, I would have begged my adviser to find a way to make it available in the university library.

A Syllabus for Listening – Decoding
Richard Cauldwell
Birmingham, England: Speech in Action, 2018.

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Richard Cauldwell's new book *A Syllabus for Listening – Decoding* is essential reading for teachers of English as a second language (ESL), teacher trainers, and textbook writers. It can help open readers' ears to hear spoken English as their students hear it—incomplete, distorted, and inconsistent. It also offers classroom activities and resources to help build students' ability to decode authentic oral input.

A major contribution of this book is Cauldwell's embrace of the auditory messiness found in authentic speech. Rather than ignore or paper over this messiness, he approaches it with curiosity and advocates for bringing it to the attention of both teachers and learners. He introduces a variety of charming terminology to support this approach. For example, rather than *pronunciation,* he refers to the *soundshape* of words and phrases. Rather than *mishearings,* he speaks of *reasonable* or *alternative* hearings. He describes the *drafting phonomena* (rather than *disfluencies*) common in spontaneous speech, and he writes about *streamlining processes* that create blurred sounds. All of these terms have a positive valence, reflecting the book's positive attitude toward the realities of aural decoding.

The book is drawn from Cauldwell's own experience as a teacher and a listener, supported by the research literature. In four parts, the author argues

for a new perspective on L2 listening and helps teachers begin to implement this new perspective. In addition, audio recordings of the words and phrases analyzed in the text (along with other supplemental materials) are available for download at the author's website, www.speechinaction.com.

Part 1 covers key definitions, helping the reader understand Cauldwell's perspective. He defines three styles of speech, the *Greenhouse*, the *Garden*, and the *Jungle*. In the Greenhouse, words are spoken individually and carefully, using the pronunciation given by a dictionary. In the Garden, words may connect into fluid phrases, but they are still pronounced fully and carefully, as in the careful speech of an ESL pronunciation course. The Jungle, however, is the domain of fluent, authentic speech. In this style, sounds are changed, syllables are dropped, and words are squeezed together to create new and unexpected sounds. Cauldwell argues that most spoken language is in the Jungle style, but expert listeners often fail to notice it. Because they automatically decode for meaning, expert listeners often believe they have heard careful forms of words that were not present in the aural input.

In Part 2, Cauldwell critiques current listening instruction, which often ignores the Jungle characteristics of authentic speech, focusing only on careful speech styles. This can leave learners unprepared to understand more than the gist of what they hear. There is a fairly broad consensus in the literature that recent listening instruction has focused too much on making students give the correct answers for comprehension questions, with a lack of activities to help students learn *how* to listen (e.g., Field, 2008; Siegel, 2014; Vandergrift, 2004). Developing students' aural decoding skills is one aspect of teaching them *how* to listen, but in order to do this teachers must be able to recognize the sounds their students are hearing.

To help teachers hear what their students hear, Part 3 describes the processes by which fluent speech is often distorted, streamlined, and blurred. Cauldwell analyzes samples of authentic speech, showing how common phrases are distorted, how specific sounds are dropped or blurred, and how syllables blend with each other or disappear. Reading Cauldwell's descriptions while listening to the recorded phrases without surrounding context can help teachers escape the illusion of clear and complete words in the aural input. You may be surprised to discover how far the sounds actually diverge from what you might have initially perceived.

Part 4 offers suggestions for instruction in aural decoding, beginning with a shift in mind-set for both teachers and students. Cauldwell suggests that we need to appreciate the unpredictable challenges posed by authentic speech rather than hiding from them. To this end, he describes a variety of activities to help students build their oral decoding skills and gives excellent tips for making better use of authentic aural recordings in the classroom. I was impressed by several of the activities, in which students listen to iden-

tify challenging bits of input and understand the relationships between the sounds they hear and the meaning conveyed. The key to these activities is using audio extracts of 10 seconds or shorter and focusing attention on the sounds as well as the meaning.

A Syllabus for Listening – Decoding proceeds in brief chapters with a focus on introduction, summary, definition, and repetition to make everything very clear. This allows readers to navigate the book easily and read those parts of the book they choose to focus on. I found the arguments for a new approach given in Parts 1 and 2 exciting and inspiring; I have often noticed the problems with listening instruction that Cauldwell describes, and I liked his perspective and terminology. On the other hand, the descriptions of auditory phenomena in Part 3 became tiring and repetitive for me, with many examples of similar processes. Yet I believe this part is important; it did develop my ear for the processes described, and it is a good resource to look up features of spoken language when needed. Reading the fourth part of the book, I was excited to implement many of the suggested activities and skeptical about a few of them. Given the lack of well-known activities for aural decoding, I believe they are all worth a try. Finally, I was pleasantly surprised by the usefulness of the chapter on Internet resources toward the end of Part 4—there were tools I was unfamiliar with even after years of focus on listening instruction along with detailed descriptions of features and suggested uses for each resource.

Cauldwell's key insight, the heart of the new perspective that informs his book, is that listening teachers should notice and embrace the messiness inherent in spontaneous speech and teach their students to do the same. I heartily recommend *A Syllabus for Listening – Decoding* to anyone teaching or designing courses for ESL contexts. EFL teachers might consider whether the needs of their students include spontaneous oral communication with native speakers of English. As Cauldwell mentions, learners who will use English as a lingua franca may have different listening needs. At the very least, this book provides a valuable opportunity to listen to oral English with new ears, and it will interest anyone who has been concerned about the state of listening instruction in ELT.

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Keep It R.E.A.L.!: Relevant, Engaging, and Affirming Literacy for Adolescent English Learners
Mary Amanda Stewart
New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2017.

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K*eep it R.E.A.L.!: Relevant, Engaging, and Affirming Literacy for Adolescent English Learners* by Mary Amanda Stewart makes a convincing case for bringing culturally responsive literacy education into secondary classrooms with adolescent English learners (ELs).

In a captivating, empowering manner, Stewart fills this 156-page book with true classroom stories, up-to-date research, and generous guidance and tools for teaching, advocating for relevant, engaging, and affirming literacy (R.E.A.L.) as a student-centered approach to literacy education. Considering today's classroom environment with continued standardization despite increasing student diversity, this book provides teachers with an applicable framework to keep literacy education real and make a lifelong impact on students.

Keep it R.E.A.L. is a well-organized, easy-to-read book with six short chapters of about 18 pages each. The first two chapters define and explain R.E.A.L. instruction and illustrates R.E.A.L.'s three purposes (i.e., literacy development, second language development, and bilingual development) and five simple rules (i.e., "I Learn, You Learn"; "I Teach, You Teach"; "I Read, You Read"; "I Write, You Write"; and "I Care About You, You Care About Others"). Chapters 3 and 4 delineate how teachers can plan and carry out R.E.A.L. reading and reader response activities in classrooms. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss two particularly important topics relevant to R.E.A.L.: cultural sensitivity and biliteracy development. Considering its short length yet surprisingly comprehensive content, this text is an ideal professional-development book for busy classroom teachers.

Stewart's R.E.A.L. instruction is a powerful reminder for literacy educators to eschew the deficit perspective of ELs. The author asks us to embrace ELs, particularly adolescent ELs, from an asset-based perspective, to honor and leverage ELs' home language and culture, and to learn from and with them in a literacy classroom in a way that is relevant, engaging, and affirming. For literacy teachers who are faced with challenges such as ELs' achievement gap, slow progress, or low motivation to read literature, R.E.A.L. brings much-needed awareness to transform the literacy classroom into a place that joyously celebrates the power of multiliteracy.

Challenging teacher beliefs is not easy. This book, however, sends out its message loud and clear. Each chapter starts with thought-provoking stories

of adolescent ELs in various literacy classrooms. These culturally relevant stories, such as "A teenage girl Valeria's escape from El Salvador with coyotes (human smugglers)" or "Tenth grader Carlos from Puerto Rico who used to be the most reluctant reader in class," set the tone for each chapter and remind readers how R.E.A.L. instruction can have real-world and possibly lifelong impact on ELs. From there, the author prepares a robust theoretical foundation for readers by discussing key terminology, theory and issues in the fields of adolescent literacy, second language acquisition, and bilingualism.

This is truly a book written for practitioners of literacy education looking to put research-based ideas and activities into action. Stewart offers readily applicable classroom activities and reading lists, along with recommended readings, websites, and other resources. In addition, one salient feature of the book is the "Action Time box" that concludes each chapter. This section takes the form of a checklist, suggesting specific actions readers can take to initiate R.E.A.L. instruction. The author encourages readers to exercise reader agency and to attempt putting into practice at least one new activity suggested in each chapter before moving on.

Even though the book ostensibly focuses on adolescent ELs, it can appeal to a wide audience of English as a second language (ESL) or English language arts educators. The theoretical knowledge and tactical guidance provided is adaptable by pre- and in-service teachers, instructional specialists, and literacy coaches in various instructional settings from a secondary school reading class to dual-credit, honors, developmental, or credit-compensation classes to after-school book clubs or summer literacy courses. R.E.A.L. instruction as a framework grants flexibility for either teaching a homogeneous or a multileveled group of ELs, or a mainstream class mixed with ELs.

For a reader who teaches adolescents and adult ESL classes daily and reads literacy-related research frequently, the chapter sequence and content were easy to follow; I found myself nodding numerous times at the insightful instructional principles and strategies that the author proposed based on her extensive professional experience as a literacy teacher and teacher educator, such as creating a classroom literacy community, using artistic visuals and text as reader response, and sanctioning a space for translanguaging. I also enthusiastically tried a selection of the Action Time suggestions in my own ESL writing class (e.g., having students respond to texts by drawing, asking students to write in all languages on the same topic and present/exhibit their writing, etc.) and found them pleasantly practicable and achievable.

One minor weakness of the book is that because of the limited length of each chapter, at times I thought some theoretical concepts and issues needed fuller elaboration. For instance, the author explained second language acquisition theory in only 2.5 pages. However, given that the intended readers

are practitioners, it probably makes good sense to keep the chapters short and provide references for further in-depth reading.

All in all, I highly recommend Stewart's *Keep it R.E.A.L* to all literacy teachers of ELs who are rising to the challenge of classroom diversity in the context of standardized education, who wish to teach not just from the book but the heart, and who believe in the power of literacy and biliteracy in bringing success to EL students. It is indeed a worthy addition to any literacy teachers' library.