

I'm an English Teacher!?

—Remark made by an underprepared teacher

Introduction: A Self-Development and Methodology Guide

This book is a teacher development and methodology book. It can be used by those of you who are learning to teach English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) as a part of your pre-service teacher education program. It can also be used as a teacher development text in in-service teacher development programs as a source for experienced EFL/ESL teachers who would like to refresh their knowledge and see their teaching differently. In addition, this book can act as an exploratory text for those who are simply curious about teaching EFL/ESL or by those who have accepted an EFL/ESL teaching position without the benefit of a formal teacher education program and are unprepared to take on all of the responsibilities of being a teacher.

The Purpose and Content of This Book

This book provides ways for you to work on the development of your teaching and classroom practices. It offers ways that you, as an EFL or ESL teacher, can develop your teaching through a process of exploration. This book also provides discussion on the different English teaching settings around the world and teaching issues associated within them. It also provides discussions, examples, and illustrations of how EFL/ESL can be taught as interaction among people; how classrooms can be managed; how teachers and students can make use of teaching materials, media, and technology; what digital technology includes and how it can be used; and the significance of culture for both students and teachers. In addition, this book shows how EFL/ESL teachers teach students to comprehend spoken English, to converse in English, to read for meaning, and to process writing.

This book is based on questions EFL/ESL teachers, including myself, have asked about teaching and learning over a number of years, and each chapter begins with a set of questions related to the content of that chapter. As such, one way to use this book as a part of your development is as a reference for ideas based on the questions posed at the beginning of each chapter and answered within it. This book also has a list of recommended sources at the end of each chapter and includes references to professional books and articles as well as EFL/ESL textbooks. The appendixes contain information on publishing companies and academic and practical journals on teaching EFL/ESL. These additional sources will help further your own development as an EFL/ESL teacher.

The end of each chapter includes a set of self-development tasks that are an integral part of this book. The purpose of these tasks is to offer opportunities to work on your development as an EFL/ESL teacher by observing, talking about, and writing about teaching. I encourage you to spend time on these tasks. I realize that finding the time to do these tasks is not necessarily easy because of busy schedules. However, I encourage you to find the time to systematically think about your teaching in new ways and to stretch your imaginations through the teacher development tasks.

I want to point out that this book is not, and was never meant to be, a book that neatly fits into what is known as “reflective teaching.” I point

this out because one reviewer (Rodgers 1998) mistakenly reviewed the first edition of this book alongside two other books that are clearly within the “reflective teaching” category. The reviewer took issue with the book; as she put it, “A reflective book it is not” (p. 611). As the title tag *A Teacher Self-Development and Methodology Guide* indicates, this book was created so that readers can work on their own development as teachers by understanding what other teachers, including me, believe about teaching and do in their classrooms. In short, reflection is an important part of learning to teach, and I do offer chances for teachers to reflect on teaching in this book. However, the focus of this book is much broader in scope than just reflection on teaching.

About the Third Edition

My approach to this edition was based primarily on feedback from readers, including those who took the time to write formal published reviews in journals, students in my TEFL/TESL Methodology class, and people I have met at conferences or online who offered feedback on the book. I have taken this feedback to heart, and I have done my best to incorporate what I have learned from you, the readers, into this edition.

The basic structure of the book has not changed. It still includes three parts. The first provides background to my understanding of self-development, as well as ways you, as teachers or prospective teachers, can explore teaching to work on your development. Part 2 still includes knowledge and experience related to teaching language, and Part 3 is about teaching language skills.

However, while maintaining the same three parts, I have used readers’ feedback to make several changes in the book. To begin, I have added an additional chapter, Digital Literacy, Technology, and Teaching EFL/ESL (Chapter 7) to Part II. This chapter highlights how digital technology has impacted the field of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL). It begins by defining digital literacy and goes on to discuss the kinds of digital technology that are available to EFL/ESL teachers and students, as well as provides examples of how teachers and students have used digital technology to facilitate language

learning. As technology is changing very quickly, this chapter also addresses the exciting, yet uncertain, future of digital (or other advances in) technology that could impact teaching and learning languages. The chapter closes, like the other chapters in this book, by addressing some of the problems associated with the use of digital technology to teach EFL/ESL.

In addition, I have brought in additional discussion about and examples of the use of digital technology in Part III of this book on teaching language skills. However, I also emphasize that teaching and learning EFL and ESL depends on what happens between people inside and outside the classroom and that digital technology simply adds another means through which such interaction can take place. Further, I point out that digital technology is only one kind of technology. As I highlight in Chapter 6: EFL/ESL Materials, Media, and Technology, teaching technology can be placed on a continuum from low technology (e.g., writing with sticks in the dirt, chalk boards) to high technology (e.g., use of computer programs) to higher technology (e.g., digital technology that allows for synchronous interaction), and any form of technology can be used to facilitate learning. It is not what technology we use, but rather how we use the technology that is available to us that is important.

As with the first two editions, Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the concepts of exploring teaching. However, in Chapter 1, The Self-Developed Language Teacher, I provide three new-teacher scenarios, and unlike in the first two editions, in which I relied on my memory to recall the teaching lives of two EFL teachers, in this third edition I use classroom observation and research to show how three different teachers approached (or did not approach) development of their teaching beliefs and practices. Chapter 2, Exploration of Teaching, still highlights ways teachers can approach the development of their teaching; however, I have woven in different examples to illustrate how some teachers have worked on their development. Further, the third edition maintains the inclusion of teacher self-development tasks at the end of each chapter, some which I have revised or added.

I have also done my best to read extensively and talk with other professionals about teaching, as well as reflect on my own use of innovative ways to teach (especially in Korea and Hawaii), and I have used this experience to revise the content of the chapters in this book. For example, in

Chapter 4, Teaching Language as Communication among People, I have added a discussion on Task-Based teaching; and in Chapter 6, EFL/ESL Materials, Media, and Technology; I have added a detailed discussion on how teachers can select context appropriate textbooks, as well as a discussion on how teachers can discover websites that have teacher-created activities and games, many of which allow students to expand their study of English in a fun way inside and outside the classroom. I have also included a discussion on the value of corpus-informed textbooks.

Likewise, in Part 3 on teaching language skills, I have updated each chapter in regard to ways each skill can be taught. For example, in Chapter 10, Teaching Students to Speak in Class, I have added a detailed section on the use of student presentations, as well as how digital technology has added new means for students to expand their speaking opportunities. In Chapter 11, Teaching Students to Read for Meaning, I have brought in a discussion on the intermediate-level slump problem that readers face and ways to provide opportunities for learners to cope and make progress with their reading. I also updated my discussion on the use of reading strategies and have added a detailed discussion on the importance of teaching students to use metacognitive reading strategies, as well as how they can be taught to use them. In addition, I have added discussions on how teachers can teach vocabulary as well as use grammar to help students to comprehend text. Further, in Chapter 12, Teaching Students How to Process Writing, I have expanded my discussion of the writing process to include how students can get feedback on their writing. I also expanded on an earlier discussion (see Chapter 7) on using blogs and wikis as a way for students to write to a real audience and collaborate on writing projects. I have also added a detailed discussion on how teachers can teach grammar in their writing classes as well as why they should consider doing so. I also added a discussion on the problem of grading essays and how teachers can use a writing portfolio as a favorable way to evaluate what they have accomplished in a writing course.

This third edition also includes an updated Recommended Teacher Resources section at the end of each chapter, as well as updated appendixes on professional journals (Appendix A) and publishers (Appendix B) in the field. I have also updated the endnotes for each chapter to reflect current, as well as historical, theory and practice.