

高教社外语教师教育与发展丛书
体验英语教学系列

实用英语教学法入门

Teaching Adult ESL

A Practical Introduction

■ Betsy Parrish



高等教育出版社

HIGHER EDUCATION PRESS

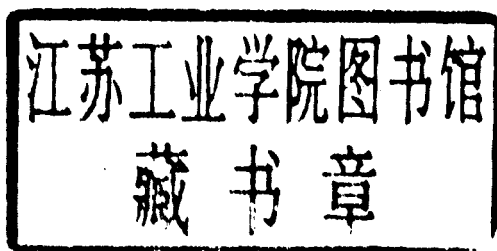


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出版前言

根据教育部大学英语教学改革的精神,《大学英语课程要求》提出要培养“学生的英语综合应用能力,特别是听说能力”,这其中包含了一些教学理念和教学模式的创新。要达到大学英语教学改革的预期效果,教师是十分关键的因素。大学英语教学改革的实践者是在教学第一线的广大英语教师,因此,针对目前我国大学英语教学师资短缺等问题,加强大学英语师资培训是摆在我们面前的一项刻不容缓的任务。为此,高等教育出版社策划引进出版了《高教社外语教师教育与发展丛书——体验英语教学系列》。

这是一套开放性的大型系列丛书,收入多位世界级语言教学专家的作品,具有权威性;内容涉及到外语教学方法、测试、评估等多个方面。丛书不仅系统介绍外语教学相关理论,更结合作者多年的教学经验,提供了大量实践案例,希望能够开拓我国外语教师教学及科研视野,培养教师在教学问题上独立思考、研究和创新的能力,成为我国外语教师教育与发展的助力器。

《高教社外语教师教育与发展丛书——体验英语教学系列》充分体现了体验式的教育理念,配合教育部大学英语教学改革推荐教材《大学体验英语》立体化系列教材及学习系统而出版,目的在于推荐新的教学理念,完成教学理念向教学实践的转化。

近期我社还将出版一系列为师范类学生、英语教师和英语研究者使用的英语语言教学丛书。我们由衷地希望这些教材的出版,对各高等院校的英语教学有所促进和帮助。

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2006年11月

DEDICATION

To Jonas, R my and Sina—who were there for me with love and support during this more than year-long effort.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest gratitude goes to Janet Isserlis, who has been with me from start to finish in the creation of this book. Her intellect, insightfulness, humor, and compassion have challenged and stretched me to write a book that is as responsive as possible to the needs of ESL learners and teachers working in diverse settings. The experience of collaborating with Janet enriched me professionally and personally. With her wealth of knowledge and experience, she directed me to resources, ideas, and experts in the field of adult ESL. She was exceptionally generous with her time and expertise (and patience!). Thanks, Janet.

I'm grateful to Erik Gundersen for his vision of the kind of book he felt was needed for teachers new to the field of adult ESL, and for giving me the opportunity to write such a book. Erik's trust, respect, professionalism, understanding, and guidance have made this journey a pleasant and rewarding one. I feel most fortunate to have had the chance to work with him.

My thanks also go to Sylvia Ramirez for the wealth of insightful feedback and suggestions she provided on the later draft of the book. She brought another very valuable perspective from working in contexts and with populations different from those Janet and I have experienced.

My thanks go Julia Reimer, Kathryn Heinze, Patsy Vinogradov, Janet Dixon, and Julie Pierce for reading and commenting on early drafts of many of the chapters. Julia was also kind enough to pilot a number of the chapters in her teacher education classes and workshops—and she was always there to listen as I talked through my plans or grappled with issues for many of the chapters.

Thanks to all of the teachers who welcomed me into their classrooms this year: Laura Lenz, Celeste Mazur, Beth Upton, Rosie Sharkey, Corinne Nash, Elizabeth Miller, Jeanne Specht, Tina Kush, Julie Hagen, Shayne Ernzer, and to the learners in all of those classes.

Thanks to Lyle Heikes, Beth Easter, Andy Nash, and Diana Pecoraro for giving so generously of their time and expertise during our lengthy conversations about text selection, assessment, accountability and standards—also to all those who responded to surveys and questionnaires, including Sylvia Ramirez, Donna Price-Machado, Barry Shaffer, Ellen Lowry, James Douglas, Suzanne Donsky, and Bonnie Olson.

Many thanks to my colleagues in the Graduate School of Education at Hamline University who supported this endeavor.



Foreword

Janet Isserlis

BACKGROUND

Why do we need this book? Why do we need it now?

Two years ago, Erik Gundersen invited reviewers to consider a prospectus for a book designed for novice teachers of adult ESL. It was huge in scope; a book you'd love to read but hate to have to write. The author's proposal addressed classroom practice, skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening), literacy and language development, classroom management, assessment, reporting and federal accountability guidelines.

I responded as thoroughly as I could to the prospectus, thinking all the while of how challenging it would be to develop the book and also wondering, really, do we need another handbook for adult ESL educators?

Betsy Parrish developed and accepted her own challenge to bring such a book to print. The text you're reading answers my question with an emphatic yes. Many of us tend to bookmark Websites, 'file' articles (to read later, to share with students, to get to someday), and otherwise not entirely take note of the fact that say, ten years have passed since we last saw a good book about teaching. While there are many timeless elements to good teaching practice that may well have been addressed in a text in the 1980s or 1990s, there are also many particular things about teaching adults that have changed over the last twenty years. By bringing together a guided set of readings and activities addressing sound educational practice, and providing detailed resource lists, all within a solid framework, the author has given new (and not so new) teachers a much-needed overview of what adult ESL instruction looks like, and, more importantly, what it looks like when done very well. Betsy brings her work as a teacher educator, her own international experience in learning and teaching languages, and her keen sense of what counts to this text so that the reader holds in her hands a complete introduction to the work we do when we work with adults learning English.

This work has grown out of an understanding of the general complexity of teaching well and the specific issues surrounding instruction for adults who possess a range of prior involvement with education, varied abilities to speak, read, hear, and write in their own languages and in English, and varied expectations of what school might look like in an English-speaking country. Beginning with an overview of who these learners might be, all the way through to an analysis of how they know and how we know what they've learned, this text provides teachers with a thorough overview of what learning looks like from intake to exit, who the stakeholders in the process are, and why it all matters in the first place.

Within the text, Betsy draws on examples of classroom practice and interaction gleaned from her own work and from that of colleagues. She describes processes through which to introduce and expand language development

activities, considering the different contexts in which the work might occur, points to strengths and drawbacks of methodologies and consistently credits the reader with the sense to explore, reflect upon, and analyze the choices she or he makes in the classroom. She points to published student texts across a range of interests and perspectives, their potential usefulness and constraints. She offers an analysis of techniques and methodologies that work without condemning other approaches out of hand.

Betsy brings great integrity to this project. She believes in the primacy of learners' strengths and works against a deficit approach to teaching teachers—believing that ESL learners and educators possess skills and abilities, if not experience. Her aim here is to assist teachers in assisting learners as well as they can. She believes that teachers are constantly learning, and that they want to know what works for their learners. She believes that learning should occur in a safe and supportive environment and that teachers care about this learning deeply. With this text she provides both new, and more experienced, teachers with key points to (re)consider in undertaking teaching, and a wealth of resources for those who so choose, to dig more deeply.

Each chapter in this overview text contains sufficient information to enable educators to know what questions next to ask, what information next to seek. Betsy amply cites resources for further learning, as well, so that the text can function both as a linear guide to adult ESL teaching, as well as a useful reference for regular review and consultation. Each chapter provides an overview of standard terms and practice, resources for further learning, Web- and print-based materials, as well as references to others in the field knowledgeable in a given area. This compilation of resources makes the book especially valuable as knowledge grows, sources are scattered, and time for searching, reading, and reviewing is limited.

No work is neutral. As federal and state mandates increasingly drive and limit program possibilities, we need access to voices of reason to remind us of what good **teaching** practice is still all about—and that measurement alone does not improve instruction. Betsy walks readers through mandated frameworks and constraints incurred through those mandates while remaining aware of the realities inherent in daily classroom work. We learn how learners understand progress, how we can understand it, and how we can translate it to those outside our programs to whom we are accountable. The process is demystified because Betsy has made it transparent. This is no small feat at a time when accountability drives instruction in too many instances.

THE WRITING PROCESS

Betsy and I first met at the International TESOL Convention in Salt Lake City, at what we'd thought would be a relatively brief breakfast meeting. Three hours later we emerged from the restaurant, having discussed a framework for the text, broad themes and specific resources, as well as having learned about one another's work, perspectives, and shared visions about language and literacy development. Over the following months we communicated by phone, met once in Minneapolis (where we spent an entire day

working on the book, visiting, and sharing a brilliant meal), and met again in the spring of 2003 when the book was almost complete.

Our process evolved through a back and forth communication around each chapter as Betsy wrote. She would send the electronic version, I'd read it, respond in writing—and sometimes on the phone—and Betsy would rethink, revise, rewrite. Sometimes we'd push each other, always knowing that the other could push back. My classroom experience is largely rooted in very basic level ESOL literacy. Betsy has worked with more varied groups of learners. She taught me a lot about my own assumptions of what teaching 'should' look like, pushed my thinking and broadened my understanding, both of classroom practice and of teacher education.

Despite the fact that Betsy and I talked through our decisions carefully—*how to sequence material? what should we emphasize?*—I worried that the book might reflect my own biases too much. Because our experience felt somewhat limited by the kinds of programs we'd worked in, we sought the perspective and voice that Sylvia Ramirez brought to the work as our third reader and critical friend. Her experience as an administrator running a large program in California compels her to think long and hard about the implications of standards-based practice and its demands on teachers and students; that thinking shaped this work and strengthened it immeasurably. We are grateful to her for reminding us of points we hadn't considered—usually because our contexts differed from those she knows well, and are grateful, too, for the support she gave us when Betsy's text was, after all, moving in the right directions.

Throughout the process, we were always glad for, and cheered by Erik Gundersen's endless goodwill and support.

AUDIENCE

I see this book serving multiple audiences. As an overview text for teacher education within higher education, it brings together points that other authors may cover in greater detail, but not always within the broader contexts that this text addresses. It also lends itself quite well to independent reading and exploration, and would be a useful vehicle for program-wide professional development. Betsy addresses an ongoing need for educators with a thirst for learning but limited time and resources for gathering information scattered across various media, including print, Web-based, and video. She frames her intentions clearly, lays out each chapter carefully and in the end has created a text that welcomes educators into acknowledging the joys and challenges of the work we do by informing us all of what's come before, what's possible, and what has to be done.



Introduction

Betsy Parrish

In the foreword, Janet Isserlis shared the process involved in creating this book, our shared philosophy, as well as some ideas as to how this text might best be used. A fundamental aspect of our collaboration was a shared vision of what teaching and learning should look like. I would like you, the reader, to have a sense of what beliefs shaped the work I completed over the past year and a half, and then invite you to reflect on your own beliefs about teaching and learning as a means of framing how you read, interact with, and understand the teaching principles and practices presented in the coming chapters.

It is my belief that learning starts from within. Every ESL learner as well as every ESL teacher experiences what we do in the classroom differently. Everything that happens is shaped by experiences, culture, expectations, strengths, and needs. Each of you will experience this text differently. Some of you may have spent a considerable amount of time in an ESL classroom already and will draw on those experiences to shape and understand the principles and practices covered in this book. Those of you who are new to teaching ESL will draw on your experience learning other things. It is because of this belief that every chapter is interspersed with tasks that allow you to preview content, explore your ideas and practice and, finally, apply what you've learned in your own class, or through observing and talking with others.

I also believe that learning is cyclical and that it takes time. While I have chosen to organize the content of this book in a particular order, there may be some topics that you'll revisit as you read the book, particularly those of you new to ESL. Chapters 1 and 2 provide a broad context for you as a reader, examining issues of ESL learner life circumstances, second language acquisition, a broad overview of teaching approaches, and program options. Chapters 3 through 5 focus on the tools of classroom teaching—presenting and practicing language, developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Chapters 6 and 7 look at planning for and managing teaching and learning. Chapter 8 points to materials selection and the use of technology in the classroom. The last two chapters provide an overview of assessment, accountability, and standards. While you may work through these topics in a linear fashion, they should be viewed as interconnected and as a starting point for further exploration.

Finally, I believe that the best learning and teaching are collaborative. Collaboration is what makes my work as teacher, learner, and colleague rich and rewarding. I had the opportunity to collaborate with many people as I developed this book. My collaboration with Janet had a tremendous impact on the structure and content of this book. My collaboration with learners and teachers throughout my career has given me myriad examples to draw on, which I hope provide you, the reader, with vivid examples of learning and teaching in action. The activities in this book serve to promote collaboration

between you and your classmates or colleagues, and the teaching principles presented in these chapters are grounded in the belief that good teaching is based on a genuine collaboration with learners.

Before you begin reading, take some time to think about your own beliefs about teaching and learning. You will be invited to reflect on these beliefs again at the end of the book, but continue to think about how your views evolve and change throughout the process of learning more about teaching ESL to adult learners.

LOOKING FORWARD

Complete these statements with your current beliefs about teaching and learning in adult ESL contexts. Work with a group of classmates or colleagues, or write your reflections in a journal.

- 1** Strengths and challenges adult learners bring to the ESL classroom are. . .
- 2** Some common purposes for learning English are. . .
- 3** Learning a second language involves. . .
- 4** If I walked into an adult ESL classroom, I'd like to see. . .
- 5** Learners' roles and responsibilities in class are. . .
- 6** My responsibilities as an ESL teacher are. . .

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Working with Adult ESL Learners

1

Part I ♦ Making the Adjustment to a New Culture

1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Adult ESL learners come to communities and classrooms for a variety of reasons and with a variety of backgrounds. The transition from one culture to the other is far easier for some than it is for others. There are a number of factors that contribute to one's ability to adjust to a new culture and to acquire the skills (linguistic and nonlinguistic) to survive and thrive in that new culture. These factors include everything from the reason one has emigrated from his or her country to access to transportation in the new culture. In Part I of this chapter, we examine the challenges immigrants and refugees face as they make the adjustment to a new culture. We also consider principles of learner-centered teaching that are responsive to learners' diverse strengths and needs, which may help ease the transition to a new culture. Next, we turn to the issue of second language acquisition. What do we know about the process of learning a second language? How do age and previous educational experience affect the ability to learn a second language? These are among the questions and issues explored in Part II.

Getting Started

★ Task 1.1

There is no question that the primary goal of learners in ESL classes is to acquire the English skills needed to thrive in a new culture, but why does meeting that goal come more easily for some people than for others? Read the following stories of two immigrants and decide who faces the greatest challenges as an immigrant to the United States. Identify the advantages and disadvantages each may have and complete the table below:

Yurie is a 44-year-old Russian immigrant who came to the U.S. with his family in 1995. He completed an advanced degree in Russia and worked as a researcher at a prominent university. His son, Gregor, was born in the U.S. and has been going to



CHECKLIST

After reading this chapter and completing the activities, you should be able to

- ★ enumerate factors that contribute to successful cultural adjustment.
- ★ describe the characteristics of the learner-centered classroom.
- ★ define communicative competence.
- ★ discuss developments in second language acquisition theory that have influenced current teaching approaches.

school here since kindergarten. As a family, they always speak Russian at home, and Gregor is completely bilingual. Upon completing the highest level of ESL courses in the adult education program in his district, Yurie found a position as a researcher at a local university. While he is satisfied with his professional situation in the U.S., he misses the professional status and respect he had gained in Russia. Yurie and his family take part in sports, go to the YMCA, and are involved in Gregor's school. They return to Russia regularly and have family visit them every year.

Thida is a 39-year-old Cambodian widow and mother of four. She and her family came to the U.S. in 1985 from a refugee camp in Thailand. She came from a family of rural farmers, so she has no formal education and no literacy in her first language. Two of her children were born in the refugee camp, and the other two were born in the United States. Thida's husband died after the birth of her fourth child. Her two younger children seem to be learning English and adopting American ways very quickly. Her culture expects extreme respect for elders, which she doesn't see her children extending to her. As a widow, she would like her children to stay with her, but her daughters want to live and work away from home. Thida has been on and off public assistance through the years, but she has held the same job as a line operator in manufacturing for the past three years.

Complete this chart with information from Yurie's and Thida's stories:

Yurie's advantages	Yurie's disadvantages
Came to the U.S. with an advanced degree.	
Thida's advantages	Thida's disadvantages
Is currently employed.	

Follow-up Compare and discuss your answers with a classmate. If you are working on your own, you may want to start a journal with responses to the questions in the book. What did you notice about Yurie's and Thida's lives? Differences in education, connection to family, and involvement in the community are all factors that would most certainly influence their chances of success in a new culture. These variables have a tremendous impact on teaching and learning, and, while you cannot possibly know everything about every learner in class, understanding students' situations can help teachers become more responsive to learner needs and more understanding of what learners are going through as they adjust to a new life.

1.1.2 A PROCESS FOR UNDERSTANDING ADULT ESL LEARNERS

As ESL professionals, we can only imagine what it must be like for our learners as they come into a new culture, which entails learning new systems of education, government, and commerce. At the same time, they have left