

TEACHING *by* PRINCIPLES

An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy

SECOND EDITION



Longman

H. DOUGLAS BROWN

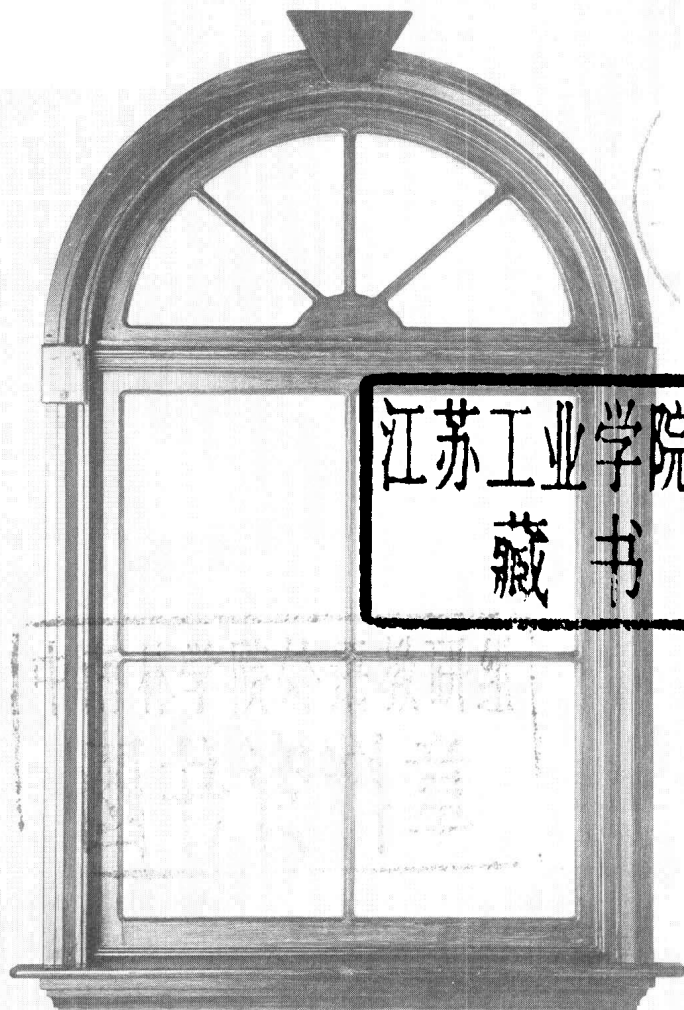
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H. DOUGLAS BROWN
San Francisco State University

Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy, Second Edition

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PREFACE

As we now gradually travel beyond the millennial milepost, we can look back with some pride at the recently completed century's accumulation of knowledge about second language learning and teaching. Such was not always the case. The first forty years of the twentieth century saw little if any development of a field of language pedagogy. But by the middle of the century, language teachers witnessed the "birth" of a disciplined approach to second language learning and teaching: methodological frameworks were the subject of applied linguistic research on the nature of language learning and the successful acquisition of languages in classrooms. Yet the nascent profession was hard put to come up with viable answers to questions about how to teach interactive skills in the classroom. By the 1970s, second language acquisition was establishing itself as a discipline in its own right, asserting its place not merely as an offshoot of linguistics or psychology. The resulting research of this adolescent profession was beginning to provide some profound observations about communicative language teaching. As the field gathered momentum, journals, professional organizations, university departments, and research studies grew with amazing speed.

By the last decade of the twentieth century, our storehouse of information about how to successfully teach foreign languages had attained a remarkable level of sophistication. Dozens of respected periodicals and hundreds of textbooks and anthologies currently offer ample evidence that language teachers must be **technicians**, well versed in the pedagogical options available to meet the needs of the various ages, purposes, proficiency levels, skills, and contexts of language learners around the globe.

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

This Second Edition of *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* synthesizes that accumulation of knowledge into a practical, principled approach to teaching English as a second or foreign language. It is a book for prospective and new teachers who need to learn how to walk into a class-

room and effectively accomplish communicative objectives. It primarily addresses the needs of those in teacher education programs who have never taught before, but it secondarily serves as a refresher course for those who have had some experience in the classroom. The book speaks both to those who are in English as a Second Language contexts (in English-speaking countries) and to those who are in English as a Foreign Language situations. And the book is designed to be read and studied and enjoyed by those with little or no previous work in linguistics, psychology, or second language acquisition.

The use of the term **approach** in the subtitle of the book signals an important characteristic of current language-teaching pedagogy. For a significant part of the twentieth century, teacher education programs were expected to deliver a handful of different methods—relatively homogeneous sets of classroom practices that sprang from one particular theoretical perspective. Thus, the Audiolingual Method, with its behavioristic underpinnings, was at one time touted as a method for all occasions. Or teachers would learn how to use the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, or Suggestopedia, each with its own “formula” for success and its own theoretical bias. We have today graduated beyond such a restrictive concept of classroom practice. While we may indeed still appropriately refer to classroom “methodology,” the various separately named methods are no longer at the center of our concern. Instead, our current—and more enlightened—foundations of language teaching are built on numerous principles of language learning and teaching about which we can be reasonably secure. A principled approach to interactive language pedagogy is one that is built on such principles.

So, *Teaching By Principles* (TBP) is a book that helps teachers to build a repertoire of classroom techniques that are firmly embedded in well-established principles of second language acquisition. Most of these principles are treated comprehensively in my companion volume, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (PLLT) (Pearson Education, 2000), now in its fourth edition. Those who use the present book in their teacher-training program would benefit from (a) having first read *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (PLLT), or (b) using PLLT as a companion text. However, *Teaching By Principles* (TBP) can be used effectively without its companion, since major principles on which current pedagogical practice are based are summarized here in the early chapters.

PRINCIPAL FEATURES

The features of the first (1994) edition are all retained:

- A practical focus grounded in fundamental principles of second language acquisition.
- Reader-friendly prose that talks to teachers in plain, understandable language, with a minimum of distracting references to the dozens of potentially related research studies.

- A step-by-step approach to teaching language interactively that helps the novice teacher to become confident in directing interactive, student-centered, cooperative classrooms.
- Separate treatment of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but with special emphasis on the integration of skills.
- End-of-chapter topics for discussion, action, and research, many of which model an interactive classroom by providing tasks for pairs or small groups.
- Suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter, annotated to facilitate judicious choices of extra reading.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SECOND EDITION

A number of improvements have been made in this Second Edition, following the comments and suggestions of teachers, students, and reviewers who have used *TBP* in its First Edition. Here are the major changes:

- **Updated references throughout.** In six years, the field of language pedagogy has made some significant advances that are reflected in every chapter of the book. Especially noticeable are new and updated suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter.
- **New topics.** Some new areas of focus include technology in language classrooms (Chapter 9); form-focused instruction (Chapter 20); a new model for error treatment (Chapter 20); basic concepts in language assessment (Chapter 21, a revised version of *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, Third Edition, Chapter 10, “Language Testing”); practical classroom assessment options (Chapter 22); teacher collaboration (Chapter 23); and critical pedagogy (Chapter 23).
- **Permuted chapter sequences.** Feedback from teachers and reviewers prompted some changes in sequence of chapters. In Part I, the history of language teaching and current approaches are now placed *before* the two chapters on the 12 principles and intrinsic motivation. The chapters on lesson planning and classroom management have been moved from the end of the book to the earlier discussion of designing and implementing classroom lessons (Part III), where they more appropriately belong.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Teaching by Principles is in many ways a product of my three decades of instruction and research in teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. During that time, it has been my pleasure and challenge to teach and to learn from hundreds of students in my courses. I am grateful for all those inquisitive minds—now scattered around the world—whose insights are well represented here.

I am also indebted to teachers in many countries of the world, especially in those countries where I have had the honor of lecturing and teaching: Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Yugoslavia, and of course the US. I learn so much from the exchanges of ideas and issues and stories from these contacts!

Special thanks go to my graduate assistant, Kaoru Koda, who was most efficient in her help in an extensive bibliographical search. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the feedback I received from my faculty associates, Professors Jim Kohn, Tom Scovel, May Shih, and Barry Taylor. The nurture and camaraderie among these and other colleagues at the American Language Institute and San Francisco State University are a source of professional stimulation and of personal affirmation that what we are all trying to do is most certainly worth the effort.

H. Douglas Brown
San Francisco, California
June 2000

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