Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Primary School

Edited by Mary Lou McCloskey, Janet Orr, and Marlene Dolitsky

se Studies in TESOL Practice Series
l Burton, Series Editor

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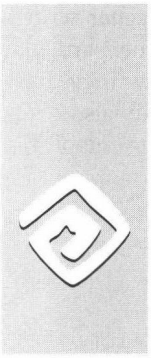

Series Editor's Preface

The Case Studies in TESOL Practice series offers innovative and effective examples of practice from the point of view of the practitioner. The series brings together from around the world communities of practitioners who have reflected and written on particular aspects of their teaching. Each volume in the series covers one specialized teaching focus.

CASE STUDIES

Why a TESOL series focusing on case studies of teaching practice?

Much has been written about case studies and where they fit in a mainstream research tradition (e.g., Nunan, 1992; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Perhaps more importantly, case studies also constitute a public recognition of the value of teachers' reflection on their practice and constitute a new form of teacher research—or teacher valuing. Case studies support teachers in valuing the uniqueness of their classes, learning from them, and showing how their experience and knowledge can be made accessible to other practitioners in simple, but disciplined ways. They are particularly suited to practitioners who want to understand and solve teaching problems in their own contexts.

These case studies are written by practitioners who are able to portray real experience by providing detailed descriptions of teaching practice. These qualities invest the cases with teacher credibility, and make them convincing and professionally interesting. The cases also represent multiple views and offer immediate solutions, thus providing perspective on the issues and examples of useful approaches. Informative by nature, they can provide an initial database for further, sustained research. Accessible to wider audiences than many traditional research reports, however, case studies have democratic appeal.

HOW THIS SERIES CAN BE USED

The case studies lend themselves to pre- and in-service teacher education. Because the context of each case is described in detail, it is easy for readers to compare the cases with and evaluate them against their own circumstances. To respond to the wide range of language environments in which TESOL functions, cases have been selected from EFL, ESL, and bilingual education settings around the world.

The 12 or so case studies in each volume are easy to follow. Teacher writers describe their teaching context and analyze its distinctive features: the particular demands of their context, the issues they have encountered, how they have effectively addressed the issues, what they have learned. Each case study also offers readers practical suggestions—developed from teaching experience—to adapt and apply to their own teaching.

Already published or in preparation are volumes on

- academic writing programs
- action research
- assessment practices
- bilingual education
- community partnerships
- content-based language instruction
- distance learning
- English for specific purposes
- gender and language learning
- global perspectives
- grammar teaching in teacher education
- intensive English programs
- interaction and language learning
- international teaching assistants
- journal writing
- literature in language learning
- mainstreaming
- teacher education
- teaching English as a foreign language in primary schools
- technology in the classroom

THIS VOLUME

Due to the increasing prominence of English as an international language, English is now taught in the early school years in many countries, resulting in teacher education challenges for teachers and planners and continuing debates on the best ages to learn an additional language. This book shows how the challenges and debates are addressed in 13 countries.

Jill Burton
University of South Australia, Adelaide

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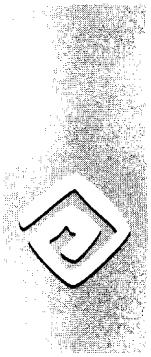

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Mary Lou McCloskey, Janet Orr, and Marlene Dolitsky

Although there is considerable discussion—even controversy—among English language specialists about the best age for introducing English language instruction in countries where English is not usually spoken in the home (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2001; Nunan, 2003), policy changes mandating the earlier introduction of English in foreign language settings are increasingly being implemented worldwide. In this collection of case studies, language educators and program implementers from 13 countries tell their stories about programs and practices designed to support English instruction for primary-aged learners. Each program is different—the influencing factors in each country vary due to the language or languages used in students' homes, the education systems, the cultural influences on language practices, the approaches to educational administration, and each nation's history of language teaching and learning. In spite of these differences, common threads are evident in the studies.

Many of the authors of these case studies report that English has been part of the national curriculum for some time, but English has typically been introduced at the middle or secondary level. Recently, educators have been encouraged (and sometimes mandated) to rapidly implement English language education for younger learners—students 6 or 7 years of age. Often, the speed of this implementation exceeds the pace at which programs are able to prepare materials and teachers, creating questions concerning the goals of primary English language education. These cases describe models of effective instruction, effective and rapid program design and planning, methods for carrying out English language instruction with teachers who are not well prepared, techniques for rapidly improving teachers' ability to speak and teach in English, and strategies for sustaining teachers and their English as a foreign language (EFL) programs. The cases even ask questions regarding who benefits from this shift to earlier English language instruction: Does the instruction first serve the country, the politicians, the government, the ministry, the parents, or the learners?

Although most of the case studies in the collection address more than one of these issues, we have grouped the chapters in main sections according to predominant topics: approaches to primary EFL program development, primary EFL curriculum and classroom practices, and teacher development for primary EFL.

The organization of each chapter is similar. First, authors provide a brief overview and share information about the social and political context of the program or project they describe. This gives readers an opportunity to discover various

sociocultural contexts, governmental policies, and historical language practices that affect the local situation. Second, authors describe their project or program, outlining the planning and implementation, describing effects of the program, and providing samples of materials developed and used. Third, authors depict distinguishing features about their project or program that make it special, notable, or universal—and perhaps worthy of replication in other countries. Fourth, authors recommend practical ideas from their program for others to use and adapt to their own contexts. Finally, authors offer conclusions regarding the accomplishments of the programs and future directions they may take.

PART 1: APPROACHES TO PRIMARY EFL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

These first four chapters address program-level questions about teaching EFL in the primary grades.

Spain

In chapter 2, "Multilingualism in the Educational System of Valencia, Spain," Carmen Pinilla-Padilla tells how the Valencian school system met dual challenges: (1) addressing the needs of the bilingual population for instruction in their local language, Valencian, and the national language, Spanish, and (2) implementing a foreign language (English) program beginning in Grade 1 through the Enriched Bilingual Education Program (PEBE). She explains the program's use of a content-based model and how it involves a careful and progressive integration of the three languages with content instruction. Pinilla-Padilla's detailed description of how the model is implemented and scheduled in the schools highlights its operational approach.

Taiwan

English officially became one of the required subjects in elementary schools in Taiwan in 2001, starting from the fifth year, with a shift to third grade beginning in 2005. Yi-Hsuan Gloria Lo, in chapter 3, "Leading the Way in the New Millennium: An Integrated Multiage EFL Program in Taiwan," describes the Experimental English Program (EEP) at Win Wau Elementary School in Penghu County, an island of Taiwan. The program, which was implemented as a response to the new language policy, field-tested an approach to EFL education that modeled innovations in instruction, including accommodating a variety of learning styles, using groups and cooperative learning structures, fostering student autonomy through learning centers, developing English language skills and positive attitudes toward the language, promoting discussion among educators in the region about foreign language pedagogy, and initiating a partnership between the teacher training institution and the local school.

Mexico

In chapter 4, "Pass It On: English in the Primary Schools of Coahuila, Mexico," Elsa Patricia Jiménez Flores describes the process of developing and implementing El

Programa de Inglés en Primaria (English Program in Primary or PIP). The program, which originated in the state of Coahuila, is now being implemented in more than two thirds of the states in Mexico. Jiménez Flores describes the organization of the program and the pre- and in-service training in both English language and English pedagogy to prepare teachers for program implementation. She also shares how the program has successfully supported learners as well as teachers, leading to a large number of learners entering secondary schools with advanced English language skills. As a result, the design of English language instruction at the secondary level for students who completed PIP was revised.

Italy

In chapter 5, "The Long and Winding Road: A Profile of Italian Primary EFL Teachers," Lucilla Lopriore focuses on the consequences of government leadership in primary EFL program development in Italy and on the professional development of teachers for this program. As is the case with many educational programs described in this book, the rapid implementation of primary English education somewhat precedes the teacher development required for implementation. In Italy, concurrent decentralization and reform efforts have resulted in foreign language programs that serve as a specific means of implementing changes in the overall education program. Lopriore describes how these innovations are taking place in schools, how they are influenced by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001a), the *European Language Portfolio* (Council of Europe, 1997), and the professional development program established to enhance both English language proficiency and the pedagogy of primary English language teachers.

PART 2: PRIMARY EFL CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

The case studies in Part 2 provide insights into curriculum reform initiatives at the local level in major but not capital cities in Turkey, India, Vietnam, and Bulgaria.

Turkey

Yasemin Kırkgöz begins chapter 6, "Teaching EFL at the Primary Level in Turkey," by highlighting the current state of education in Turkey, with its complex political and economic ambitions. She then describes the challenges created in the country when the introduction of EFL instruction shifted from secondary to primary schools. One challenge is to ensure that a sufficient number of skilled teachers are ready to teach in the expanding English primary program. Kirkgöz describes the multiple approaches used to prepare teachers and elaborates on the results. A second challenge is to ensure that these newly trained teachers use curriculum and instructional materials specifically designed for young learners. Kirkgöz uses a questionnaire and classroom observation protocols to collect data about actual classroom practices. This study demonstrates the appropriateness of English language instruction and the new curriculum in primary classrooms. Finally, she reports the study results based on the different types of teachers who participated in the training exercises. Kirkgöz's case study vividly illustrates how teacher training and implementation of the curriculum are integrated into primary schools in Adana, Turkey.

India

In chapter 7, "Flavoring the Salt: Teaching English in Primary Schools in India," Jayashree Mohanraj shares insights into teaching English in primary schools in Andhra Pradesh, South India, where English is one of 18 official languages. First, she provides a historical perspective of English instruction in India, with a focus on the recurring struggle to revise language instruction policy. Although English has been spoken in India for 200 years, institutional and pedagogic dimensions of English language learning are complex in this country. Mohanraj brings to light the complex nature of the massive education system in India and places the use of English in the larger multilingual context of the country. She then focuses on curriculum development and the design and production of local teaching materials, including primary textbooks. A sample lesson helps readers visualize the practical curriculum as it is implemented in primary classes.

Vietnam

Ha Van Sinh, in chapter 8, "Is Grade 3 Too Early to Teach EFL in Vietnam?" describes how English instruction was briefly started in Grade 1 in Vietnam. Then, because the community was concerned about the effects of early introduction on pupils learning to read Vietnamese, the introduction to English quickly changed to Grade 3. To examine this effect, Sinh collected and analyzed data on pupil performance in Vietnamese and English classes, parent perceptions of children's schooling, and the EFL syllabus and its implementation in the classroom. The results and analysis are insightful.

Bulgaria

In chapter 9, "A Local Approach to Global English: A Bulgarian EFL Model Based on International Children's Culture," Lilia Savova presents a three-part instructional model for teaching EFL in Bulgarian primary schools. The curriculum model applies a literacy-focused approach, a theme-oriented method, and children's culture-based techniques. Savova illustrates the model with a number of classroom activities used in Bulgarian schools and relates it to Anthony's (1963) approach-method-technique model for English language instruction.

PART 3: TEACHER DEVELOPMENT FOR PRIMARY EFL

The true benefit of teaching English in primary school is its effect on the learners, who represent the future of every nation. The key aim of training programs is to address the needs of "clients." But in the case of government teacher-training programs, the stakeholders are numerous: politicians, ministries, teachers, parents, and, of course, pupils, who demand that their specific concerns be addressed. The remaining chapters in this volume address the programs that train teachers to meet the needs of these various groups.

Sri Lanka

In chapter 10, "Developing Teachers in the Developing World of Sri Lanka," David Hayes reports on a long-term training program in a country divided by regional and cultural strife, where opposing regions have different languages and where English is

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perceived by some as the language of colonists and by others as a language of prestige. The aim of the program was to provide teachers with needed practical training for primary instruction. Hayes describes how innovative approaches were employed to provide in-service teacher development at the primary level in state schools in Sri Lanka. Improvement in the quality of schooling is addressed through improved teacher competence. As Hayes states, it is teachers who actually decide which methodology will be used in their classrooms and who thus determine the success or failure of educational reforms. No matter how well-thought-out new methodologies are, if teachers do not buy into them, such improvements will be left by the wayside.

Egypt

In chapter 11, "The Pyramid Scheme: Implementing Activity-Based Communicative Language Teaching and Supervision With Primary Teacher Educators in Egypt," Mary Lou McCloskey, Linda New Levine, Barbara Thornton, and Zeinab El Naggar describe a project in which a multinational consultant team facilitates training for teacher educators from university faculties and ministries of education. The authors first focus on how to develop teachers' effective knowledge, skills, and attitudes about educating young learners, through consideration of such topics as child development; language development; and effective, activity-based communicative language teaching practices. Next, the authors describe how the pyramid scheme supports teacher educators in developing their own professional materials to prepare themselves and the ministry of education teacher supervisors. The principles of local ownership, cultural relevance, innovative methodologies for language teaching, technology integration, experiential and active learning, a long-term timeline, and long-term usability are applied throughout the project and result in sustainable materials and training now being used throughout Egypt.

France

Marlene Dolitsky offers suggestions for facilitating practice teaching for preservice English language teachers in chapter 12, "The French Communicative Connection: Catching Up." In the program she describes, university faculty, cooperating master teachers, and peer student teachers support and observe practice teachers as they plan and then take charge of an English class for the first time. This field experience is a reality check after the preceding theoretical training. Although the follow-up conference with the practice teachers is based on the immediate lesson, Dolitsky emphasizes the importance of readying teachers for their careers. The aim is to prepare teachers who are striving for constant self-improvement. To this end, Dolitsky presents the process used to help student teachers prepare lessons in detail and analyze their own performance in the classroom so they will learn to bring about their own personal development as in-service teachers.

Korea

In chapter 13, "EFL Teacher Training for South Korean Elementary School Teachers," Sung-Hee Park describes major teacher training initiatives in response to the introduction of English in Grade 3. Park first describes the logistical and methodological aspects of the program and then provides information on the program's

effectiveness. The aim of the program is to help primary teachers develop skills to teach English as part of the primary curriculum. The program accomplishes this aim by helping teachers understand the curriculum for elementary school English and develop appropriate teaching methods and skills, improving their ability to use English as a medium of instruction, and preparing them to teach basic communicative language skills. Park offers recommendations, based on feedback from trainees, for designing effective English language education programs for primary school teachers.

Hong Kong

Gertrude Tinker Sachs and Tony Mahon, in chapter 14, "Enabling Effective Practices in the Teaching and Learning of English in Hong Kong," describe an oral approach to primary English study and offer insight into the development of pupils' enjoyment in learning English through the adoption of a literature-based approach. In Hong Kong, English has long been part of the primary school program, albeit not always as a particularly favored subject. Tinker Sachs and Mahon describe how their team carried out a longitudinal teacher development project in shared reading. They provide a careful overview of the factors that should be considered when adopting new literacy programs, including long-term commitment in supporting teachers and careful tracking of pupils' growth in reading and writing.

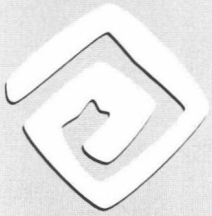
These case studies highlight the global role of English as it emerges as the main foreign language in primary schools. They demonstrate how educational systems have developed policy and have planned to deal with competing demands to include English in the primary school setting. This volume describes many insightful curricular innovations and classroom success stories; we hope they provide you with insights to guide the decision-making process in the English instructional programs in your school or country.

CONTRIBUTORS

Mary Lou McCloskey, past president of TESOL, is an international consultant and author of professional texts, standards, and program materials in the field of English for speakers of other languages. She has worked with teachers, teacher educators, and departments and ministries of education on five continents and in 31 of the United States.

Janet Orr was 2004–2005 chair of TESOL's Elementary Education Interest Section (EEIS) and is currently coeditor of the *EEIS E-newsletter.* Her interest lies in curriculum development and assessment of young learners in ESL and EFL settings around the world. She is currently an education specialist for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Sri Lanka.

Marlene Dolitsky is an associate professor at the University of Paris's Teacher's College (Institut Universitaire de la Formation des Maîtres). Her main mission is to train teacher learners to teach English in their future primary school classes. One of her major research interests, and the subject of her doctoral thesis, is child bilingualism.



PART 1

Approaches to Primary EFL Program Development

CHAPTER 2

Multilingualism in the Educational System in Valencia, Spain

Carmen Pinilla-Padilla

INTRODUCTION

Educational authorities in Valencia, Spain, envisioned that early introduction of the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) would enrich bilingual education programs that were already being developed in primary schools. Because Valencia is a bilingual community with two official languages, the authorities believed that increased communicative competence would result from an integrated treatment of these two languages along with the early introduction of EFL. The educational system specific to the Valencian Community was designed with the goal that students use all three languages as means of communication in the content areas.

CONTEXT

The educational system in Spain previously included teaching EFL only from the third year of primary education. Since 1998, the autonomous Ministry of Education in the Valencian Community started a plan with the ultimate goal of providing multilingual education, including one foreign language and the two official languages (Valencian and Spanish), to all children from the age of 5 onward. To maintain the time devoted to teaching other areas, the plan was devised to be developed progressively. From the beginning, teaching language has been designed according to the content-based language learning approach.

The state administration in Spain follows a decentralized model, which allows the autonomous communities[1] certain powers in the area of education, including executive and regulatory powers. The communities are responsible for implementing basic state standards and the regulation of nonfundamental aspects of the system. In the Valencian Community, the autonomous community administration has formulated its own educational administration as a councillorship (*Conselleria*).

Three laws[2] constitute the basic legislative framework of the Spanish education system. The first compulsory basic educational level established is primary education,

[1] In Spain, the country is divided into 17 autonomous communities that have full governing autonomy except for military matters and international relationships.

[2] The Organic Law on the Right to Education (enacted in 1985), the Organic Law on the General Organization of the Education System (enacted in 1990), and the Organic Law about participation evaluation and government of teaching institutions (enacted in 1995).

TABLE 1. PRIMARY EDUCATION IN SPAIN

	Schooling Year	*Students' Ages*
First cycle	1	6–7
	2	7–8
Second cycle	3	8–9
	4	9–10
Third cycle	5	10–11
	6	11–12

which is divided into three 2-year cycles. The students' ages range from 6 to 12 (see Table 1).

The administration of public primary schools is the responsibility of the school council and the teachers' assembly, as collegiate bodies, and of the headmaster, head of studies, and secretary, as individual officers. In Spain, the educational coordinating bodies at the school level are the cycle teams and the pedagogical coordination commission; in Valencian Community primary schools, there are also Valencian language normalization teams, which are responsible for guaranteeing the enforcement of the law regarding the use and teaching of the two official languages. Although the educational action of the different schools is based on governmental regulations, every school has its own educational and curricular project. Therefore, different schools' syllabi, although derived from a common framework, vary from one school to another.

The teachers' assembly includes all the teachers in a school and is chaired by the headmaster. This body is responsible for planning, coordinating, and adopting all decisions regarding pedagogical and educational matters. The teachers' assembly also drafts proposals to be submitted to the school council. The school council comprises teachers, parents, and students and is the ultimate decision-making body regarding the curriculum.

The Weekly Timetable

Teaching in primary education is usually organized around twenty-five 60-minute periods per week, including a weekly maximum of 2½ hours (30 minutes per day) of break time. These class periods are usually distributed on a 5-hour-per-day schedule, Monday through Friday, although some schools have incorporated a new system increasing the class periods by 30 minutes every day to allow for a weekly in-service training afternoon. Table 2 shows the hours devoted to the core curriculum in primary education in the Valencian Community.

Languages

The 1992 constitution states that Spanish is the official language of the Spanish state and, therefore, all Spanish citizens are under the obligation to know it and have the right to use it. Some autonomous communities have a second official language, which has co-official status as stated in their autonomic statutes. These communities

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