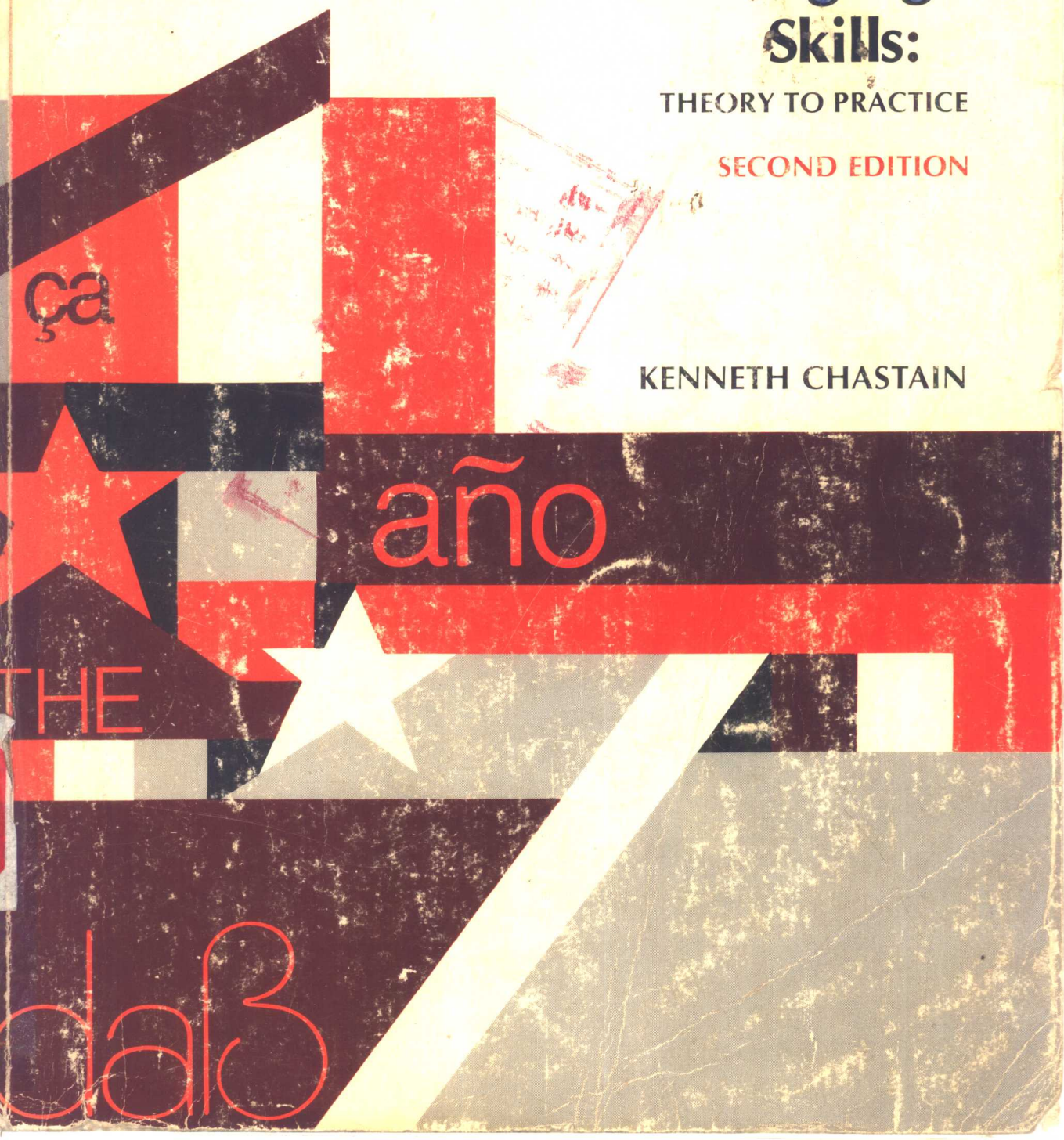


Developing Second- Language Skills:

THEORY TO PRACTICE

SECOND EDITION

KENNETH CHASTAIN



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THEORY TO PRACTICE

SECOND EDITION

KENNETH CHASTAIN

University of Virginia

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Fray Luis de León was teaching at the University of Salamanca when he was arrested and taken to prison. The story is told that upon being released, he began his first lecture with the following words, "As we were saying. . . ." The second edition of any work should be much more than a repetition of what the author was saying in the first. The selection of approach and content is perhaps more of a problem in the second edition than in the first. On the one hand, abandonment of the total content of the first edition would certainly arouse suspicions as to its validity. On the other hand, failure to incorporate new insights and to consider new directions in the field would be tantamount to admitting a lack of awareness of the new growth in an ever-changing field. Too, in my own case the omission of new material would constitute a repudiation of the necessity of staying abreast of current developments in order to achieve the goal of "educational engineer," which I espoused in the first edition.

The title of the second edition has been changed to *Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory to Practice* because the term *second language* is broader than *modern language* and creates a more positive image than *foreign language*. However, the basic philosophy of this second edition is in harmony

with that of the first. To be prepared to grow in their chosen profession, teachers must have a basic understanding of and familiarity with both the "science" and the "art" of teaching; and comprehension of the "science" must precede the development of the "art." Just as in Chomsky's theory of linguistics, the acquisition of some degree of competence is a prerequisite to productive and growing performance in the classroom. Both prospective and practicing teachers must be concerned with their ability to grow. Each of us should be evolving into what we can be. In no fundamental sense can a "bag of tricks" substitute for an expandable "blueprint."

Too, the second edition continues the systematic and conscious polarization of various dichotomies currently being discussed in professional journals. Although the first edition concentrated on cognitive factors in second-language learning, this edition treats the affective domain as well. The examination of extreme positions has been selected purposefully as a means of clarifying differences and of promoting more complete comprehension of each position. As does any teacher, I have my own particular preferences, which should become clear to the reader, but there is no conscious attempt to brainwash any reader just as there is no intent to deny modifications and/or blends of any of the extremes discussed in this edition. My goal in preparing this edition was the development of intelligent practitioners of the science and art of teaching, not the subtle philosophical entrapment of the unwary into any given "camp."

Nor have I, in any sense, rejected my original contention that teaching style is personal. No teacher should feel obligated to conform to any general theory or movement. Her style should be her own, and it should grow out of knowledge of theory, familiarity with current practice and methodology, insight into student individuality, her own personality, and the results she obtains in the classroom. However, ineptitude cannot be justified by the untenable rationalization that the classroom situation is due to personal style. That is obviously true, but it is also obviously true that good teaching and bad teaching do exist. Whatever the teacher's style, it must produce good results to qualify as good teaching. Most teachers prefer to sample, select, and discard as they grow personally and professionally. Having a variety of teaching skills will give them much greater flexibility and will allow them to provide much more adequately for individual differences among students. At the same time, no teacher can justifiably ignore what is happening in society, education, psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and second-language teaching. Change for the sake of change is unwise, but refusal to remain receptive to productive innovations is synonymous with stagnation.

No major organizational changes have been made in the format of this edition. The first part still deals primarily with theory, and the second part attempts to put the theory into practice. The discussion of the teaching process

itself is still based on three components: (1) defining objectives, (2) developing teaching procedures to accomplish these objectives, and (3) evaluating the results. This model is applicable to audio-lingual classes and to cognitive classes; it is equally applicable to the traditional classroom organization and to the more recent "individualized" classes.

The content and arrangement of the treatment of theory have been altered considerably. The chapters on first-language learning and research now precede the chapters dealing with audio-lingual and cognitive approaches to teaching. The research chapter now treats both cognitive and affective-social factors in learning. Results of studies comparing audio-lingual and cognitive methods or components of these methods are included in the chapters treating each approach. In line with the more recent trends to emphasize the individual in the instructional process in second-language teaching, two new chapters have been added: "The Student" and "Diversifying Instruction." Another new chapter, "Why a Second Language?," has been placed first in the book, reflecting my opinion that our profession must concern itself with answering this question.

Changes made in the discussion of practice involve emphasis more than actual reorganization. Additional classroom exercises have been included to supplement the more general descriptions of the first edition. The goal has been to provide a clue to the direction and types of activities that might be used in the classroom without giving so many as to stifle the potential creativity of the teacher. No book can provide all the types of exercises that teachers will require, if they are to satisfy the needs of all their students. Therefore, they should begin immediately to originate new ideas for student activities. A new chapter on meeting student needs has been added. It seems irrefutable that meeting the needs of modern-day students must be a prime consideration in the classroom, second-language or otherwise. Another new chapter, "Teaching Culture," has been included, reflecting the increased emphasis on cultural goals in second-language teaching.

The revision of the chapter format to include a chapter outline at the beginning of each chapter and a list of words to be defined, discussion questions, and activities at the end of each chapter has several objectives. First, hopefully the chapter outline will focus the students' attention on the general goals of the chapter. The definitions will help the students to learn the terms needed to comprehend the basic concepts of each chapter. The discussion questions at the end of the chapter should help the students to review the content of the chapter and to organize the information. (I agree wholeheartedly with Ausubel that true comprehension can only come about through meaningful learning. Each reader should summarize the basic concepts presented in each chapter in his own words before proceeding to new material.) The activities should also help him to begin the direct application of

Preface to the Second Edition

the ideas contained in the chapter to practical contexts. In addition, many of the discussion questions and suggested activities should help the students to go beyond the confines of this text. I urge both instructors and students to consider other questions and activities that would serve to broaden the understanding and the application of any of the concepts presented in this book.

One of the most interesting and exciting rewards of having written the first edition has been the gratifying privilege of meeting so many teachers and students who have used the book. I have most truly appreciated their many kind comments, and I have enjoyed becoming acquainted with all of those who have taken the time to introduce themselves and to chat for a few moments. I am indeed grateful to have the opportunity to prepare a second edition. My desire is that the second edition will be an asset to teachers and prospective teachers alike in considering and questioning the various components of the teaching process as they formulate their individual teaching philosophies. My hope is that the second edition will bring me into contact with as many new friends as the first.

In closing, I readily acknowledge my indebtedness and gratitude to Charles H. Heinle and Rand McNally College Publishing Company for encouraging, promoting, and publishing this second edition; to Carlyle Carter for her careful work in editing my original manuscript; to Terry Gamba and Gilbert Jarvis for providing examples in German and French respectively for the chapter on evaluation; to Gary Dielman (German), Gilbert Jarvis (French), and Kathryn Orth (German) for assisting with various examples in the language skills chapters; to Virginia Kruse for her dedication to teaching and her inspiration to her methods students; to Gil Jarvis for the insights that have stimulated much of my thinking and influenced many of my ideas; to Ben Christensen, Pierre Cintas, Ernie Frechette, Alan Garfinkel, Roberta Lavine, Ted Mueller, Phil Smith, Dave Wolfe, and the authors of reviews for the various journals for their many helpful suggestions; to my methods students for their stimulating questions, observations, and discussions; to Jan for preparing the manuscript; and to Jan, Brian, and Michael for their continued love and patience.

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