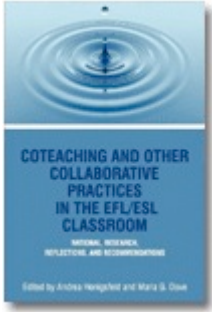




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For Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion



Co-Teaching and Other Collaborative Practices in The EFL/ESL Classroom Rationale, Research, Reflections, And Recommendations

Honigsfeld, Andrea; and Dove, Maria G., eds.
Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2012

Book Review

Tags: co-teaching | collaborative teaching | teaching theory

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If teaching is an art its effectiveness rests in the work of many dedicated hands – a conviction that contributors of *Coteaching and Other Collaborative Practices in the EFL/ESL Classroom* unanimously share. There are many helpful books on teaching but this one is unique in its aim and concrete ways it offers “teachers to collaborate effectively” (xviii). Andrea Honigsfeld and Marla G. Dove achieve their goal of providing “an accessible resource long awaited by educators whose individual instructional practice and/or institutional paradigm shifted to a more collaborative approach to language education” (xviii). Ingeniously compiled, the twenty-six essays, divided into four parts, examine the:

rationale for teacher collaboration to support ESL/EFL instruction, presenting current, classroom-based, practitioner-oriented research studies and documentary accounts related to coteaching, coplanning, coassessing, curriculum alignment, teacher professional development, and additional collaborative practices, and offering authentic teacher reflections and recommendations on collaboration and coteaching. (xviii)

The authors’ objective is not only to help inquiring instructors teach English as second or foreign language, but also to become effective leaders, learners, and coteachers – a global task. The collaboration encouraged for teachers to exercise transcends teaching English to include other disciplines such as mathematics and biology.

Each contributor uniquely provides evidence of how a theory about teaching might be translated into concrete and tangible outcomes. As is evident from the book’s title, collaborations extend beyond just teaching English to fruitful interdisciplinary teaching. The

teamwork called for is neither utopian nor essentialist. Rather the authors highlight insights gained from their own experiences of exercising collaborative learning, teaching, and mentorship, highlighting strengths and potential weaknesses. The latter are often symptoms of a lack of deep commitment to collaborative learning and teaching. The art of becoming effective teachers rests on the participants' willingness to develop a teachable spirit. Put differently, a good teacher is also a student in many ways - one who benefits from the wisdom and knowledge of collaborating with teachers, especially twenty-first century educators who face an overwhelming technological age with a slew of information making it very difficult for a teacher to be fully up-to-date in her or his own field of expertise, much less another field.

From a linguistic perspective, to learn English as a second language is also to learn one's native language - two languages at once. In other words, to grasp English as a foreign or second language, students actually learn more about the syntax of their native languages. As an immigrant myself, who learned to speak and write in English as a foreign language, and **now teach and use ancient biblical languages in my writing projects**, I treasure the insights and cogent arguments each author made in this priceless volume. In a nutshell, the contributors strongly advocate collaborative or coteaching as a practical and intellectual approach to sharpening one's teaching pedagogy. To that end, this book enshrines the wisdom of effective learning and teaching -- an invaluable resource that will revolutionize the art of learning to teach for years to come if taken seriously.

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