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Teaching English Abroad

by Susan Griffith

Vacation Work Publications 2001

1-85458-250-X

For teachers, wherever their country of origin, about to take that first exciting post in Turkey, those thinking of moving on to something different in Uruguay or even those who dream of what might have been in Vietnam, this is the supreme source. Part One begins with background to ELT, such as motives, qualifications, opportunities and acronyms, before outlining, in admirable detail, the many institutions in both the UK and other countries which offer either the highly-valued Cambridge CELTA or Trinity TESOL courses. Institutions offering distance-learning and short introductory courses to ELT are also listed.

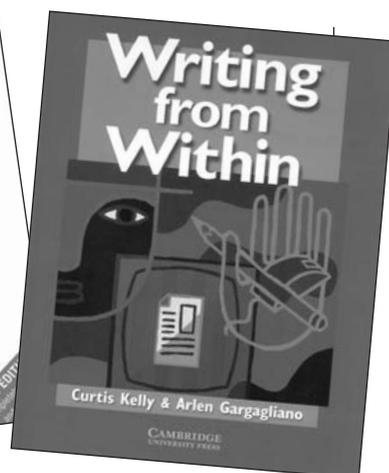
Part Two concerns finding a job with ELT organisations, including the British Council and voluntary organisations like Christians Abroad, while UK summer schools also get a brief mention. After a short section on where to look for posts and how to interpret adverts, advice is given on ways of applying: both turning up on the spot and writing in advance. Points to consider are listed for those who have time to prepare prior to departure, such as a check-list of details to look for in a decent contract, eg tax clauses, insurance contributions and pension schemes. Also usefully listed in the *What to Take* section is a recommended bibliography that balances grammar and skills titles, but adds addresses of several good book stores in the UK for when supplies wear thin. Sound advice for those starting out on the ELT path is to be had in the section devoted to problems both within and beyond work, such as dealing with unscrupulous employers and the inevitability of culture shock or even loneliness after a few months.

The most meaty part of *Teaching English Abroad* lies in its third, much longer section, which outlines general prospects for teachers in thousands of places in more than 70 countries. Though largely devoted to Western Europe, Asia is well covered, but there's disappointingly little on Africa. Oddly enough, Turkey gets considerably more coverage than the whole of the African continent! And while it's good to see

details on the ELT industry in areas the British Council is targeting, such as South America and China, it would be a good idea for the author – who relies on accurate responses from locals for compiling her material – to contact teachers in the former Russian republics to the south, such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, where things are swiftly taking off in the world of ELT.

Inevitably in such a book, details are too soon out of date – especially the currency conversions in Argentina! – and certain opinions should be regarded with a degree of scepticism, but on the whole, this still has to be the finest directory available for ELT job-hunting.

Wayne Trotman
Izmir, Turkey



Writing from Within

by Curtis Kelly and Arlen Gargagliano

CUP 2001

0-521-62682-X

Most teachers would agree that, of all the English language skills, writing is perhaps the most difficult to master for both native and non-native students. Kelly and Gargagliano believe that organising writing is the biggest challenge for students. According to them, the main focus of this textbook 'is to teach students how to generate topics, write cohesive paragraphs, and organise them into clear, logical, expository compositions'. They chose expository writing because they believe it is different from styles used in other languages and is the style most commonly used in academic and business environments.

Kelly and Gargagliano believe that accuracy and the ability to mimic models are not enough to facilitate excellence in student writing. Students need to be involved in activities that lead to 'discovery of self, of ideas, and of others'. To this end, they have chosen such topics as 'About Me', 'A Dream Come True' and 'Research Survey', which they hope will engage students.

Each of the 12 theme-based units follows a sequence of tasks based on the

process approach to teaching writing. These involve pre-writing (including brainstorming, paragraph analysis and organisational practice), writing (model analysis and assignment instructions), and post-writing (editing, giving feedback and optional activities).

This textbook has a number of strengths. Each unit follows a clear sequence which provides students with a scaffolding which will guide them when they do the optional communicative activity at the end of the unit. There is also a 'Later in this unit' box at the end of each brainstorming session to which students can refer before, during and after they work through the unit.

The task-based-activity emphasis of the textbook is very good. Students are engaged with information and models that are given to them – they learn by doing and are expected to apply what they learn to their own writing.

Another positive point is the division between editing, which involves correction of grammatical errors in one's own writing, and giving feedback, which involves reading and commenting on other students' writing. Feedback activities are designed to be non-threatening and positive for both reviewers and writers.

Having said this, I did detect a sudden leap in the *Giving Feedback* sections between the second and third units, which moved from commenting on points made by the writer to answering more global questions such as 'Which paragraph did you like best and why?' I felt that this could be problematic in Asian cultures, such as Japan, where students have had little or no experience in giving constructive criticism and where

there are cultural restraints (such as maintaining 'face') at work. Japanese students, when asked to give feedback on a piece of writing, tend to look at grammar and spelling, write their thoughts about the contents (as in a journal response), or put vague comments such as 'good work!' They need to do activities designed to help them develop the ability to give constructive criticism and feedback.

Another concern I had was in the pre-writing section of the units. Most of these activities involve students in making and sharing lists of words, phrases and ideas. There are other brainstorming activities, such as freewriting and making cluster diagrams, that can also be used effectively as pre-writing tasks and I felt a greater variety of activities could have been included.

Kelly and Gargagliano have, in spite of these two concerns, written a logical, clear and well-organised textbook, designed to engage and encourage intermediate students to develop their creativity and involvement in English writing. It is a foundation upon which an exciting and dynamic writing class can be built.

Thomas Anderson
Hon Atsugi, Japan

Continuing Cooperative Development: A Discourse Framework for Individuals as Colleagues

by Julian Edge
University of Michigan Press 2002
0-472-08823-8

Are you interested in developing both in your professional and personal life? Are you looking for a strategy to develop your own style of teaching? Then I strongly recommend this book.

Cooperative Development (CD) is a way of cooperating with colleagues to work on individual (self-)development. The starting point is: 'only I can really understand what I am trying to achieve'. In Parts One and Two of this book, Julian Edge describes how to work with his CD framework through a series of well-designed tasks. One colleague has the role of Speaker and talks about an issue in their professional life. The Understander listens attentively with respect, empathy and sincerity. The next step is Reflecting,

where the Understander tells the Speaker what they have understood from what the Speaker said. Through the process of responding to the reflection, the Speaker clarifies their own thinking.

Subsequent chapters describe the strategies of Thematizing, Challenging and Focusing, which enable the Speaker to move on to the ultimate aim of defining a small-scale but concrete goal for the future. For example, a teacher, exploring the problem of her students not listening to homework instructions, moved on to set herself the goal of consistently writing the homework on the board five minutes before the end of every class.

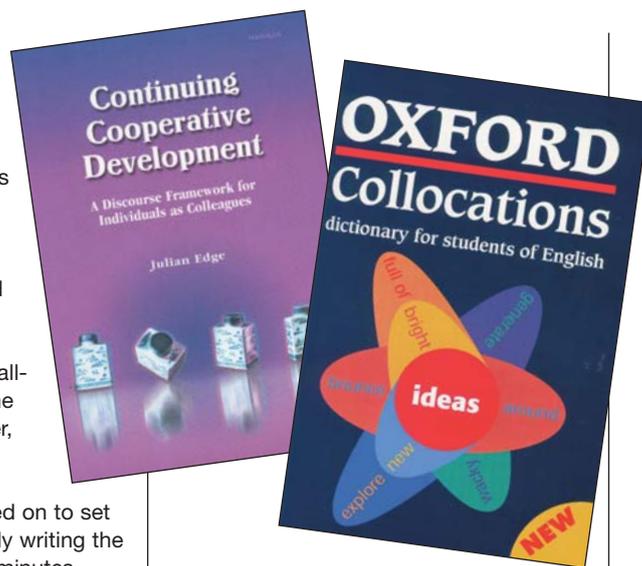
If you are not familiar with CD, I would encourage you to begin with Parts One and Two, which provide the basic strategies. Work through the tasks together with a colleague and experience CD. Then, at a later stage, progress to Part Three (in a way, you get two books for the price of one!), which gives detailed examples – useful for deeper insights into this type of discourse.

Part Three describes a scheme for group development which Edge used with colleagues at Aston University in sessions with several Understanders and one Speaker. They extended these group sessions to include visiting Speakers. Chapter 11 gives accounts of how others have worked with the CD framework and Bob Oprandy compares it with his Counseling-learning approach in Vermont.

The most rewarding, and the most challenging, aspect of CD is learning to set aside one's own perspective, judgements, opinions and advice, and to listen to another person in such a way that one can hear what they are saying and uncover the essence of what they think. When I tried out CD with a group of teachers, we discovered that, as we developed our listening skills, there were spin-offs both in the classroom and in personal relationships!

Continuing Cooperative Development gives you access to a discourse framework, in which you work with a colleague, to develop your professionalism, through exploring your own experience.

Jenny de Sonnevile
The Hague, The Netherlands



Oxford Collocations Dictionary for students of English

OUP 2002
019-431243-7

Learning vocabulary is basic for any language study, but in order to get to the real meaning of a sentence, it is necessary to study the words as they appear together (in collocation) with other words. This new dictionary from Oxford University Press does just that. The book has 897 pages, 9,000 headwords – a good number for learners – and over 50,000 collocations in context.

The practical difference between a conventional dictionary and a collocation dictionary is that the former is excellent for conveying the meaning of words and their grammatical usage. Where it is limited is in the production of natural-sounding text. A collocation dictionary, on the other hand, is designed to produce written and spoken language using vocabulary already somewhat familiar to students. Its emphasis on collocation highlights the most probable forms, whereas a concentration on grammar produces only the possible forms.

This dictionary includes a photocopiable section of simple exercises, making it easy for teachers to introduce the book to students. It will also prove a convenient tool when students wonder why we say, for example, *heavy rain*, but *strong wind*: the answer is in the book. Highly recommended.

Robert Kirkpatrick
Kumamoto, Japan

Have you ever thought about teaching English abroad? Maybe you want to live overseas for a year, start a career in the education industry, or have an adventure. Maybe you want to change your life. No matter what your "why" is, teaching English as a foreign language is a great way to finance your travels. It also gives you an opportunity to immerse yourself in other cultures and make an impact on students across the globe. We're here to guide you on your journey, and to help you find the TEFL job of your dreams. Teach English abroad in the beautiful island nation of Fiji with this opportunity, and share your unique culture with local children. Help English teachers by preparing lesson plans, assisting at the school library, maintaining classroom discipline, and encouraging active learning. You'll work with Fiji students attending a Catholic school located close to the volunteer house in Suva - this school currently supports 700 boys aged six to 13.