

Introduction

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Introduction

Our motivation for this book project was to fill perceived gaps in ELT publications in Austria: between theory and practice; international and local perspectives; teacher education and classroom practice; secondary school and other educational contexts; pre-service and experienced teachers. To achieve this, we invited contributions, often written collaboratively, from authors who are current classroom teachers as well as authors who are researchers working in teacher education at the tertiary level.

The content of the book focusses on topics that the contributors consider particularly useful and relevant for English language teachers in different types of Austrian schools and educational institutions. In this way, we hope it will provide an accessible introduction to the field for pre-service teachers, but also serve as a useful guide and reference for more experienced teachers to consult, especially if they find themselves working in educational institutions they are unfamiliar with.

The book combines ELT theory with a strong practical, interactive component. All of the chapters have the same structure: following a section on theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context, they include examples of practical applications, which make the content personally relevant for practitioners. The chapters conclude with reflection tasks, a commentary on these tasks and suggestions for further reading.

The chapters are organized into four thematic sections. Author biographies can be found at the end of the book.

Section 1: The teacher

The focus of this section is on the experience of being and developing as an English language teacher in Austria. It considers some important concepts that influence teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

Fürstenberg and Schumm Fauster discuss the role of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a standard methodology in ELT. Fürstenberg and Bicman explore the role of an updated concept of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) for different teaching situations. Erling and Paar reflect on the importance of facilitating productive classroom talk. Burkert gives an insight into professional development for language teachers.

Section 2: In the classroom

The focus of this section is on practical considerations for the English language classroom. It addresses various areas of classroom practice by providing information which can inform teachers' decisions and choices.

Lang-Heran provides a comprehensive overview of the role of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the Austrian curriculum and educational standards. Kaplan and Campbell discuss the status of coursebooks in Austria and ways of using them effectively. Miglbauer and Prohaska give a state-of-the-art account of teaching English with technology in the Austrian context. Moser and Schweighofer consider central aspects as well as mediating factors of assessment and feedback. Paar and Fürstenberg explore the concept of Assessment for Learning (AFL) and different ways of putting it into practice.

Section 3: Language skills and subskills

The focus of this section is on language skills and subskills that teachers should foster in their learners. It is imperative that teachers have a sound understanding of these skills in order to make their English language classrooms lively and effective spaces for learning.

Fürstenberg and Schumm Fauster reflect on the four skills and take an integrated approach to teaching them. Newby and Pölzleitner present a communicative approach to teaching grammar. Platzer and Mercer discuss the importance of integrating global skills into language teaching. Pölzleitner and Schumm Fauster present ways of promoting intercultural competence and the potential of literature in this context. Blumrich and Hermann consider the concept of Open Learning (OL) and how they apply it in their teaching.

Section 4: Special contexts

The focus of this section is on teaching English in various contexts which teachers might encounter throughout their careers. The chapters give insights into how to work with heterogeneous groups at the interface of content and language.

Da Rocha and Müller-Caron explore concepts of differentiation and their practical application in Mittelschule (lower secondary school). Kletzenbauer and Moser discuss the necessity of taking a process approach to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at FH (University of Applied Sciences) and BHS (vocational secondary schools). Hofstadler and Kettemann introduce the concept of Content and Lan-

guage Integrated Learning (CLIL) and its implementation in Austrian schools. Phillips and Phillips reflect on how to meet the challenges of teaching English in adult education.

We would like to end this short introduction with a concluding thought. When we set out to publish this book, we had a number of aims in mind, but one aspect that we had not anticipated developed throughout. Through the exchanges during the work on this project, a community of practice developed amongst contributors. We hope that it will now expand to include the readers of this book. Having spent almost a combined 60 years in the profession which has given us so much satisfaction, we hope to now give back to the community of English language professionals with this publication and in doing so, promote further collaboration between researchers and practitioners.

A note on terminology

The German terms for educational institutions and organisations as well as specific legal terms are used throughout. They are italicized and glossed in English within the chapters.

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