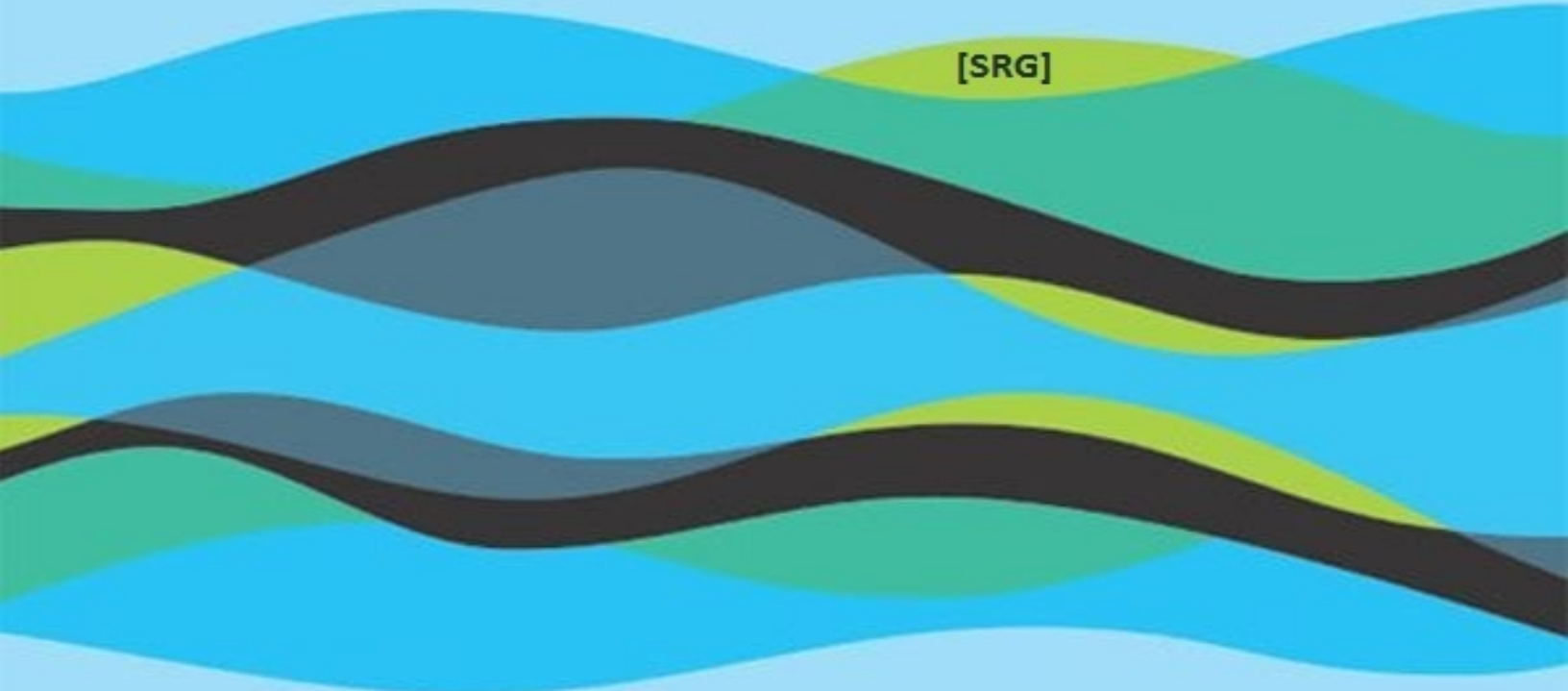


Third Edition

Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching

Diane Larsen-Freeman
and Marti Anderson

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**Diane Larsen-Freeman
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In memory of my parents, Elaine and Randolph Larsen, with heartfelt gratitude for their love and encouragement

DIANE LARSEN-FREEMAN

In memory of my mother, Mavis Anderson, and in honor of my father, Elmer Anderson, who both inspired me to be curious and compassionate

MARTI ANDERSON

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List of Acronyms

ALM	Audio-Lingual Method
BNC	British National Corpus
CBI	Content-based Instruction
CLL	Community Language Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CALL	Computer-assisted Language Learning
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SAARRD	Security, Aggression, Attention, Reflection, Retention, and Discrimination
SIOP	Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol
TL	Target Language
TBLT	Task-based Language Teaching
WL	Whole Language
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

To the Teacher Educator

The Work of Language Teaching

The work of teaching is simultaneously mental and social. It is also physical, emotional, practical, behavioral, political, experiential, historical, cultural, spiritual, and personal. In short, teaching is very complex, influenced not only by these 12 dimensions and perhaps others, but also requiring their contingent orchestration in support of students' learning. When *language* teaching in particular is in focus, the complexity is even greater, shaped by teachers' views of the nature of language, of language teaching and learning in general, and by their knowledge of the particular sociocultural setting in which the teaching and learning take place (Adamson 2004). Indeed, research has shown that there is a degree of shared pedagogical knowledge among language teachers that is different from that of teachers of other subjects (Gatbonton 2000; Mullock 2006). Nonetheless, each teacher's own language learning history is also unique. The way that teachers have been taught during their own 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie 1975) is bound to be formative. There is also the level of complexity at the immediate local level, due to the specific and unique needs of the students themselves in a particular class at a particular time, and the fact that these needs change from moment to moment. Finally, the reality of educational contexts being what they are, teachers must not only attempt to meet their students' learning needs, but they must also juggle other competing demands on their time and attention.

Because of this complexity, although this is a book about the methods and methodological innovations of recent years, we do not seek to convince readers that one method is superior to another, or that there is or ever will be a perfect method (Prabhu 1990). The work of teaching suggests otherwise. As Brumfit observes:

A claim that we can predict closely what will happen in a situation as complex as [the classroom] can only be based on either the view that human beings are more mechanical in their learning responses than any recent discussion would allow, or the notion that we can measure and predict the quantities and qualities of all ... factors. Neither of these seems to be a sensible point of view to take.

(Brumfit 1984: 18–19)

After all, 'If it could be assumed that learners were 'simply' learners, that teachers were 'simply' teachers, and that one classroom was essentially the same as another, there would probably be little need for other than a technological approach to

language teaching' (Tudor 2003: 3), with adjustments being made for the age of the learners, specific goals, or class numbers, etc. However, the truth is that

Learners are not 'simply' learners any more than teachers are 'simply' teachers; teaching contexts, too, differ from one another in a significant number of ways. In other words, language teaching is far more complex than producing cars: we cannot therefore assume that the technology of language teaching will lead in a neat, deterministic manner to a predictable set of learning outcomes.

(Tudor 2003: 3).

Tudor goes on to observe that this is true even within a given culture. It cannot be assumed that all teachers will share the same conceptions of language, of learning, and of teaching.

Rather than the elegant realisation of one rationality, then, language teaching is likely to involve the meeting and interaction of different rationalities. Murray (1996) is therefore right in drawing attention to the 'tapestry of diversity' which makes our classrooms what they are.

(ibid. 2003: 7)

Language Teacher Learning

Recognizing the complex and diverse nature of the work of teaching has stimulated much discussion during the last 15 years around the question of how it is that language teachers learn to teach (Bailey and Nunan 1996; Bartels 2005; Burns and Richards 2009; Freeman and Richards 1996; Hawkins 2004; Johnson 2009; Tedick 2005). In addition, during this same time period, the journal *Language Teaching Research* began publication with Rod Ellis as its editor. Much of the research reported on in these sources can be summed up in what Johnson describes as her current understanding of language teacher learning:

L2 teacher learning [is] ... socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, subject matter, curricula, and setting ... L2 teachers [are] ... users and creators of legitimate forms of knowledge who make decisions about how best to teach their L2 students within complex socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts.

(Johnson 2006: 239)

Such a view has radically transformed notions of teacher learning. As Richards (2008: 164) notes: 'While traditional views of teacher-learning often viewed the teachers' task as the application of theory to practice, more recent views see teacher-learning as the theorization of practice.' Rather than consumers of theory, then, teachers are seen to be both practitioners and theory builders (Prabhu 1992; Savignon 2007). Given this view of teachers as theory builders, teacher education must serve two functions: 'It