
Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction

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TEACHER'S HANDBOOK: CONTEXTUALIZED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION.
Judith L. Shram, Eileen W. Glisan. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle and Heinle Publishers, A Division of Wadsworth, Inc. \$18.00

As one would expect from the title, *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction* was written for foreign language teachers (in both foreign languages and ESL) to assist them in their work and development. The sources of the teacher's professional growth are daily practice and experience and also interaction with other professionals sharing and generalizing these experiences, and that is how theories about language learning and teaching often develop. The *Handbook* leads the reader through theoretical knowledge back to classroom activities providing the opportunity to observe and discuss teaching situations in light of current theories and information.

The book can be interesting and useful from different sides. It provides the survey of theoretical findings and research concerning the key aspects of foreign language acquisition and teaching. Each chapter dealing with a certain problem opens with a "Conceptual Orientation" section describing the problem and different approaches to it. The main theoretical issues and notions such as conceptualized language learning or whole language approach, as well as terms and definitions, are introduced and explained. The readers will learn the most important names and publications in the field and update their theoretical knowledge.

Another goal of the book is to help teachers apply theories in their practical work in the classroom. This process is presented as a creative one, encouraging the reader's reflection. The sections "Observe and Reflect"/"Teach and Reflect," of each chapter contain teaching situations and observational episodes with questions to the reader, and the "Discuss and Reflect" section requires the reader's active participation by answering questions in writing such as, "How would you develop this lesson?" The interesting point is that the reader can also use the *Handbook* as a notebook: there is space left for notes, answering questions, writing plans, thoughts, etc. Thus the book reflects personal ideas and experiences which collaborate with the authors, and contribute to the book, making each copy of it personalized and individual.

The book consists of twelve chapters. Chapters 1-3 present general theoretical issues and approaches to language teaching. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the situation of teaching young learners. Chapters 6-9 deal with teaching techniques in developing

different skills: grammar, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Chapter 10 is on handling student diversity in the language classroom. Chapter 11 is on testing and Chapter 12 is on the use of technology in teaching language.

The *Handbook* can be used both as a methodology textbook in foreign language teacher education and as a reference book. Each chapter contains reference materials. The book includes a resource section with all sorts of useful information like sources of free material, sample lesson plans, teaching evaluation forms and a list of professional organizations.

The *Teacher's Handbook* thus presents both information and challenges to its readers, involving them in active creative work with the book. It requires the readers' effort, but rewards it.

About the Reviewer

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