Learning Teaching
The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching

Third Edition

Jim Scrivener

MACMILLAN
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About the series

Macmillan Books for Teachers

Welcome to Macmillan Books for Teachers. The titles are written by acknowledged and innovative leaders in each field to help you develop your teaching repertoire, practical skill and theoretical knowledge.

Suited to both newer and to more experienced teachers, the series combines the best of classic teaching methodology with recent, cutting-edge developments. Insights from academic research are combined with hands-on experience to create books with focus on real-world teaching solutions.

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Adrian Underhill

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About the author

Jim Scrivener has worked in many different countries, including Russia, Georgia and Hungary. He has been Head of Teacher Training for International House Hastings, Director of Education for IH Budapest and is currently Head of Teacher Development for Bell International, where he designed the Online Delta course. He was leader of the team that designed the Euro exams and has been actively involved with Cambridge ESOL exams including design of their online teacher portfolio. He is also the author of *Teaching English Grammar* which won the English Speaking Union Award for Best Entry for Teachers in 2010.

He is married to Noëmi and has two adult sons, Alex and Ben, and a young daughter Maisie. He can be very boring about Bob Dylan if you give him half a chance.
Foreword to Third Edition

*Learning Teaching* has been one of the most popular and widely-used guides to ELT since it first appeared in 1994. It provides a complete training course in today’s classroom practices and is rich in immediately-usable practical techniques and suggestions for classroom activities. It speaks in a uniquely reassuring and encouraging way to both novice and experienced teachers, offering clarity about the practices of good teaching while also supporting the teacher’s own development of their craft through experience, common sense, self evaluation and reflection. *Learning Teaching* informs the reader succinctly without over informing, proposes rather than demands, offers choices rather than single all-purpose solutions, and above all instils the confidence that ‘I can learn to do this well’.

This third edition adds a substantial and timely new element in the accompanying DVD which allows readers to watch ideas from the book being practised by teachers in real language classrooms. There is a complete one-hour lesson which provides insights into many small but crucial aspects of teaching technique as well as some of the bigger questions about how a whole lesson can be shaped and managed, what can be expected from learners and how they may progress during a single hour. And there are many short clips in which different teachers, including the author, demonstrate key techniques described in the text (such as learning names, board writing, eliciting, concept questions, using timelines, drawing out quieter students, working with errors and many others). The DVD includes a wide-ranging selection of printable worksheets, observation tasks, templates and resources.

There are also revised and updated sections on recent developments and changes in ELT including CLIL, young learners and teaching exam classes, and a new chapter on technology covering presentation software, Interactive Whiteboards and virtual learning environments.

As well as being of use to trainee teachers on initial and in-service courses, experienced teachers will be able to use it to review their repertoire of ideas and approaches, and trainers and managers involved in the professional development of others can also use the material here on their courses. This third edition of *Learning Teaching* will build on the reputation of its predecessors and remain the single-book-to-have for ELT professionals who want to develop and become the best teacher that they can be.

*Adrian Underhill*

Series Editor
Introduction to Third Edition

Teacher: One who carries on his education in public. (Theodore Roethke)

This is a book for language teachers. Mostly it’s a guide to methodology – to what might work in the classroom.

Learning Teaching is a book that can help you learn to teach in more effective ways. It is also a book about a kind of teaching where you are also learning. However, it is not a book about the right way to teach. Indeed, there is no scientific basis yet for writing such a description of an ideal teaching methodology. Instead, we can observe teachers and learners at work and take note of strategies and approaches that seem to be more beneficial than others, not necessarily in order to copy them, but to become more aware of what is possible.

The act of teaching is essentially a constant processing of options. At every point in each lesson, a teacher has a number of options available; he or she can decide to do something, or to do something else, or not to do anything at all. In order to become a better teacher, it seems important to be aware of as many options as possible. This may enable you to generate your own rules and guidelines as to what works and what doesn’t.

Language teaching happens in a wide variety of locations and contexts, with a wide variety of colleagues and learners, and whatever I describe in this book, I’m certain you’ll find something different every day of your teaching career. For that reason, no book like this can definitively tell you how to do it. You can get ideas and step-by-step guidelines and a little inspiration, but bear in mind that everything you read also needs to go through the filter of your own understanding and be checked out in terms of the local context you work in.

Thus, rather than saying ‘This is how to do it,’ I’ve tried to say ‘Here are some ways that seem to work.’ You’ll find lots of ideas and options in these pages, and it’s largely up to you what you want to take away from them. I aim to give you a ‘toolkit’ of possibilities.

Situations and examples are mainly drawn from the world of English teaching, but the ideas and techniques may also be useful to teachers of other languages. The book is primarily aimed at teachers starting out on a training course or in their first year or two of work, but I hope that you will find something interesting in it wherever you are in your career.

The order of chapters in this book may partly reflect the order a new teacher finds topics of interest and importance when learning to teach. I aim to give you some essential background information and core survival techniques early on.

To encourage you to engage with the material in the book, there are many tasks. Sometimes these are questions to answer or think about; sometimes they are bigger problems or things to try out. Of course, if you prefer, you can simply read the tasks and go straight to the commentaries.

In this book, I use he and she, him and her largely at random.

Jim Scrivener