

## *Using Textbooks Effectively*

**Review by Jessica M. Davis**

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*USING TEXTBOOKS EFFECTIVELY.* Lilia Savova, volume editor. *TESL Classroom Practice Series.* 2009. ISBN 978-193118559-2.156 pp. Member \$29.95. Nonmember. \$39.95.

Any teacher can tell you that textbooks are a major component of the ESOL classroom. Many instructors, like me, fall into a textbook rut, not knowing how to supplement or adapt a textbook to better serve the students who use it. Rather than search for the perfect textbook (which, to be honest, does not exist), why not learn how to use the books we have?

This is where *Using Textbooks Effectively* comes in. This text is chiefly aimed at both new and experienced ESOL instructors who are (or are considering) using textbooks in the ESOL classroom. It promises to deliver research-supported practices on the use of textbooks in the classroom, boiling them down to principles and strategies supported by concrete examples. Chapters in this book, however, are not limited to instructors. Program coordinators, curriculum development specialists, and public school teachers and administrators can also benefit from principles and strategies discussed.

Looking at the table of contents, one can see sub-topics such as text authenticity, updating science textbooks, learning to read and speak from the textbook, playing with texts, student and teacher co-constructed texts, curriculum development, understanding textbook design, and working with texts in specific settings. Within these topics, strategies and principles are introduced, tested by research and/or the authors themselves.

This book contains strategies for teachers adapting a textbook (including supplementation, follow-up activities, analyzing and modifying language), as well as strategies for students accessing and processing the information in a textbook (such as previewing, summarizing, and note-taking). While it provides broad application of strategies, it also illuminates these strategies with activities in specific contexts. Although specific scenarios may not apply to all teachers (i.e., science and technology teachers), the illustration of strategies is quite useful. In this way, it addresses the needs of ESOL teachers, science and technology teachers, and ESOL Program Coordinators, among others.

Clearly, this book covers a lot of ground in 150 accessible pages. Clear charts and tables organize information and activities so that a teacher can quickly grasp the material. With specific activities, questions, and worksheets included in appendices, this is more than sufficient for teachers to get started using textbooks more effectively in the classroom. This text, as part of a series on TESOL classroom practices, is an affordable, useful, accessible book that delivers concrete practices, principles, and strategies for anyone involved in the use of textbooks in the classroom.

### **About the Reviewer**

*Jessica M. Davis holds a M.A. in TESL from Northern Arizona University, where she is currently an instructor in the Program in Intensive English in Flagstaff, Arizona. She has also taught in China. Her foci include Drama and ESL, content-based instruction, and technology in teaching.*