

**Book Review: Teaching English to Second Language Learners in Academic Contexts:
Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking**

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***Abstract:** This review critiques the book: *Teaching English to Second Language Learners in Academic Contexts: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking*. The book includes valuable knowledge related to teaching English for academic purpose (EAP). The authors succeeded in providing theoretical framework and practical guidelines for in-service and prospective English teachers to upgrade and enhance their teaching practices in terms of teaching English for academic purposes.*

***Key Words:** EAP, ESL, EFL, English teaching, Language skills*

The Review

With the new trends in language pedagogy, English teaching and learning has received much attention as researchers have consistently looked for the most effective and beneficial practices to teach English to speakers of other languages. Throughout the years, English education is one of the most researchable fields as new learning theories, teaching practices, and learning concerns have appeared. The focus was on understanding how language is taught in second or foreign language contexts. Recently, one of the topics that arise is teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP). This refers to teaching and training language learners to use language appropriately in the academic settings. One of the efforts that helps in increasing the awareness of this field can be found in the book: *Teaching English to Second Language Learners in Academic Contexts: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking*. The book is an informative book in the field of teaching English for academic purposes and teaching English for second or foreign language learners. This book was written by Jonathan Newton, Dana Ferris, Christine Goh, William Grabe, Fredricka Stoller, and Larry Vandergrift, some of the most influential experts in the field teaching English as a second language.

The book consists of 14 chapters which can be categorized into four sections representing the English language domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The authors discussed each one of these themes thoughtfully and extensively answering some questions such as how this skill works and what language teachers need to know about teaching and assessing these skills in the academic context. Each chapter is broken into theoretical explanations of the topic, review of the current research, teaching practices, summary, some discussion questions, and finally recommended resources for future reading. Moreover, the book links research theories of EAP with teaching applications to provide a critical perspective of the most effective and useful teaching practices. The intended audiences for this book are second and foreign language researchers, advanced learners, and, more importantly, in services and prospective language teachers.

The first section, presented in chapters 2,3, and 4, focuses on teaching English reading. In terms of language learning, reading is “the bridge” that facilitate learning other language skills (Horwitz, 2008). This section includes three main themes related to effective reading pedagogy. First, the authors start with presenting the theoretical perspectives on how reading comprehension works and clarifying the importance of reading for language learners. According to the author, students with academic goals need to be good readers. In the academic context, language learners read for many purposes such as finding answer their questions, learning new ideas and knowledge, and developing expertise in certain filed, looking for evidence to support their arguments, and synthesizing information of a larger text. Each one of these purposes serves an academic need for language learners. Second, these chapters also offer essential guidelines for teachers to build effective reading curriculum. This includes 12 guiding principles that cover different domains of the curriculum including lesson planning, learners’ needs, reading and writing connections, vocabulary learning, and assessment. The objectives of these principles are to inform teachers how to improve learners’ reading skills and to develop learners’ learning autonomy and make them independent readers. The third theme represents the practical applications sourrounding reading instructions and assessment. Reading instructions involves more than teaching students how to read. Instead, it includes providing instructional activities that promote learning autonomy, increase students’ motivation, and allow for more critical and creative thinking.

The second section, covered in chapters 5,6, and 7, provides an extensive introduction to English writing. This section is divided into three chapters. First, the authors present an overview of the theoretical perspectives on how writing skill works and what research has to say about effective writing teaching and learning. That is important because language teachers need to understand how this skill is acquired and what are the differences between teaching first language L1 and second language L2 writing. Second, moving from theory to practice, the authors present some practical applications when developing a writing course. In other words, the authors tend to answer the question: how language teachers can build and develop an effective writing curriculum that promotes more strategic writers? Third, the section ended by presenting some of the issues writing teachers might face for instruction and assessment. Understanding these issues will ensure more effective and successful writing lessons that motivate students to be strategic writers.

The third and the fourth sections, covered in chapters 8 to14, focuses on understanding the English oral skills, listening and speaking respectively. These chapters include an overview of how listening and speaking work in terms of second language acquisition. More in-depth explanation of both skills were provided to help teachers understand how these skills can be developed and improved in language classes. Additionally, the authors offer a framework for developing curriculum for both skills. This proposed curriculum allows language teachers to know what they need to do to motivate learners to to be strategic listeners and fluent English speakers. It helps in designing and constructing listening and speaking activities that encourage independent learning. Moreover, at the end of each chapter, practical applications and classroom activities for listening and speaking were presented to help link the theoretical perspective with actual teaching.

Significantly, the book is a useful source related to teaching and learning academic English in second and foreign language contexts. The book provides vital knowledge that second language teachers need to upgrade and enhance their teaching practices in terms of teaching English for academic purposes. This knowledge also is essential for prospective language teachers who need to be informed with the best language teaching approaches. The book offers guidelines on how each language skill works and, more importantly, how it can be taught in the academic settings. The promise of the book is that it combines theoretical perspectives with practical applications for teachers to not only understand current research surrounding EAP but also to apply this knowledge to their daily instructions. Teaching English for academic purposes is a promising field. Language researchers are encouraged to continuously and consistently explore the new trends and issues surrounding this field. With a teacher-friendly text, the authors in this book succeed in providing valuable knowledge for readers to understand what is important and what needs to be done to prepare language learners academically.

References

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