



Changing Practices for the L2 Writing Classroom: Moving Beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay

Nigel A. Caplan and Ann M. Johns

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It is likely that English language teachers at some point in their careers have used a five-paragraph essay to either prepare students for a standardized test, teach writing skills, or align their teaching with the content of textbooks and ESL curricula in which the five-paragraph essay is taught. A new edited volume, *Changing Practices for the L2 Writing Classroom: Moving Beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay*, makes a strong and convincing argument for *not* teaching the five-paragraph essay and engaging students in meaningless formulaic writing tasks. As the volume's co-editors Nigel Caplan and Ann Johns assert, the five-paragraph essay is an approach to writing that is "insensitive to context, rhetorical situation, audience, or communicative purpose" (p. vi). A common thread throughout the book is that writing instruction must be meaningful, purposeful, and contextualized, and Caplan and Johns have sought the expertise of well-known writing scholars to make their case.

The volume is divided into three major sections and begins and ends with an introduction and conclusion written by the editors. Part I, "Understanding the Five-Paragraph Essay," contains three chapters. In chapter 1, Nigel Caplan poses the question of whether writing instructors have always taught students the five-paragraph essay. In response, he traces the history of scholarship on the five-paragraph essay and offers four principles that can guide instruction, such as creating meaningful writing assignments; basing writing instruction on genres; providing opportunities for students to examine purpose, audience, context, and structure; and challenging prescribed rules of writing.

Chapter 2, written by Christine Tardy, explores whether the five-paragraph essay is a genre, drawing a clear distinction between *genre* and *form* and providing seven specific strategies for writing instructors. As Tardy states, "when we limit genres to template-like structures, we lose their social nature, and it is precisely that social nature that makes genres so productive and valuable for student writers" (p. 25). In chapter 3, Ulla Connor and Estele Ene compare the status of the five-paragraph essay in ESL and EFL settings with other first language instructional settings and conclude that the five-paragraph essay is not taught and valued in the same way. The authors explain how principles of intercultural rhetoric can support writing instruction in culturally diverse settings.

Part II, "Writing Practices beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay," includes six chapters which examine localized writing instruction in diverse contexts. In chapter 4, Luciana de Oliveira and Sharon Smith focus on young writers and highlight the prevalence of the five-paragraph essay in elementary schools in the United States. The authors state

that the five-paragraph essay does not work with this population of students because it neglects the many varied literacy demands these students face. Instead, the authors describe their version of the teaching-learning cycle (TLC) that uses scaffolding to support the learning of genres in four steps, which “approaches the whole text as the unit in focus, rather than individual sentences or paragraphs” (p. 83). In chapter 5, Christina Ortmeier-Hooper questions the effectiveness of the five-paragraph essay as a scaffold in secondary school contexts and offers six strategies that writing teachers can draw from to scaffold writing instruction more effectively.

The remaining chapters in Part II center on writing in post-secondary settings. In chapter 6, Dana Ferris and Hogan Hayes address the common misconception that skills learned by writing a five-paragraph essay will transfer to future writing tasks. Instead, the authors state that teaching transferable principles and processes (rather than formulas) can help students transfer what they learn to new writing contexts. Chapter 7, written by Ann Johns, states that the two most prevalent writing tasks for undergraduate writers in the U.S. is the timed in-class essay and the research paper. The author argues that the five-paragraph essay does not prepare students for these two tasks and that instructors should help students learn to activate their prior knowledge about writing, practice timed in-class writing, and analyze and respond to writing prompts outside of class.

In chapter 8, Silvia Pessoa and Thomas Mitchell examine the three discourse patterns that are common in disciplinary writing (i.e., description, analysis, and argument) and provide a model for teaching students to write in the disciplines. In the final chapter of Part II, Christine Feak describes how teachers can prepare graduate-level writers to master a wide range of genres that are needed both during graduate school and in their careers. One example is to familiarize students with online genres, such as LinkedIn profile statements and biostatements, so they can develop a professional online presence. As she noted, “Having acquired a set of tools rather than rules, graduate students can be prepared for the many different genres they are expected to master” (p. 196).

Part III, “Issues beyond the Classroom,” consists solely of chapter 10, the final chapter of the book. Deborah Crusan and Todd Ruecker discuss the effects of high-stakes standardized writing assessments on writing instruction and describe how teachers can help L2 writers succeed on these tests without teaching the five-paragraph essay format. In the conclusion, Johns and Caplan tie the major concepts of the book together by reiterating what good writing is and what good writers do, which is to “thoroughly assess the writing task and situation for which they are producing a text” (p. 222). They conclude by offering suggestions for instruction, addressing lingering questions from the book, encouraging writing instructors to enact change, and highlighting areas for future scholarship.

Caplan and Johns’ book is a valuable addition to the professional library of any student of second language writing. Writing instructors will find this book useful for informing their teaching, as each chapter offers concrete ideas for classroom-tested approaches that are grounded in theory and research. These ideas are easily located in the “Changes in Practices” section of each chapter, a feature that helps busy teachers find information quickly and creates uniformity across chapters. Scholars in L2 writing will appreciate the discussions of up-to-date research, which can enhance their knowledge of genre pedagogy. Finally, graduate students who are new to the field of second language writing will appreciate the deep discussion of the historical and educational contexts in which the five-paragraph essay is situated.

This book meets the need for a comprehensive volume that directly addresses a popular writing approach and offers sound alternatives for teaching writing. One particular strength is its relevance to a diverse population of readers, as well as the concrete suggestions for instruction provided in each chapter that are sure to inspire critical reflection on teaching and writing itself. The editors also effectively compiled a cohesive volume that approaches genre pedagogy from slightly different angles while managing to retain a common theme and focus, which is commendable. It is difficult to find any part of the book to critique, but it is worth noting that readers who are looking more for quick teaching ideas may not appreciate the book’s heavier focus on theory and literature. Nevertheless, I cannot imagine that readers would not be convinced to “move beyond” the five-paragraph essay in favor of more meaningful writing instruction.

Transforming Literacy Education for Long-Term English Learners: Recognizing Brilliance in the Undervalued

Maneka Deanna Brooks

New York, NY: Routledge, 2020.

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Maneka Deanna Brooks' recent book, *Transforming Literacy Education for Long-Term English Learners: Recognizing Brilliance in the Undervalued*, focuses on the sociocultural assets of long-term English learners (LTELs) by demonstrating these students' literacy practices within and outside the classroom environment. It is a highly relevant resource for English as a second language (ESL) and content-area teachers, who are expected to tailor their instructional practices for this subgroup. The book fills this gap by describing how teachers can utilize the cultural and linguistic assets of these students and maintain awareness about the learning needs of LTELs. The resource is also powerful in illustrating the ways educators can avoid the influence of detrimental labels and recognize the diversity within LTELs while taking their common characteristics into account.

In chapter 1, Brooks carefully lays out the rationale for her theoretical framework and introduces examples of humanizing reading instruction. She cautions against the myth of balanced bilingualism and approaches LTELs through the lens of dynamic bilingualism. Discussing detrimental labels, she encourages educators "to re-envision the way in which they are used and operate in their classroom" (p. 9). Deconstructing the policy process that manufactures the LTEL label and recognizing the association between literacy achievement and factors beyond language proficiency, Brooks adopts a definition of literacy as a social practice. She contends that LTELs' linguistic resources and literacy learning experiences matter and can be a counter-narrative to the current framing of these students. Thus, she strongly encourages a move away from deficit-based perspectives on LTELs in literacy instruction by recognizing these students' resources.

In chapter 2, Brooks draws on the concept of dynamic bilingualism to examine and reposition the literacy trajectory of five Spanish-speaking LTEL students living in California: Destiny, Eliza, Lizbeth, Jamilet, and Valeria. Each case details the learner's home and school language practices, performance on English language proficiency and English Language Arts (ELA) tests, linguistic history, and family portrait. She highlights how these students' multiple resources are frequently discredited by normative reading practices and shows that they are English speakers and readers who have found authentic ways to learn. She intentionally avoids using the official records that gloss over LTELs' assets completely. Also, she makes space for the diverse linguistic histories of these focal students rather than lumping them together under the label of LTELs. She argues that this emancipatory stance helps teachers avoid a static description for this subgroup, thereby allowing them to move away from a one-size-fits-all model of instruction.

In chapters 3 and 4, Brooks demonstrates how biology and ELA teachers use texts (handouts, chapters, textbooks) to scaffold LTELs' reading practices across different subject matters. Teacher-assembled texts that considered the LTELs' perceived linguistic proficiencies, content knowledge and educational histories were created by both teachers, which significantly supported accessibility and humanizing reading instruction. On the other hand, the students were given insufficient opportunities to interact with diverse types of texts by authors with whom the students are not familiar, which are the types of text students are likely to see on standardized tests. Teacher interpretation of the text, group work, and read-aloud were predominant practices in both classrooms. Despite the

elaborate description, I think a question remains to be answered: how can teachers maintain the balance between over-personalization of text choice and over-reliance on the types of texts that are privileged by high-stakes tests?

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the LTELs' independent reading practices out of school, which was often online or with their families. These settings provide for more intrinsic motivation and engagement in comprehension as well as demand fewer mechanical tasks. The data collected through think-aloud protocols contains three major themes: the students' stress on oral fluency, rapidity of understanding the read-aloud, and appropriate behavior. The students' reading practices predominantly contained summarizing, connection to their background knowledge, going beyond the text by incorporating opinion, and pointing out challenges when asking for the teachers' help. Noting the alignment between the practiced reading and the students' perception of good readers, Brooks recommends a transition to independent reading by giving responsibility to students gradually.

Chapter 6 concludes by emphasizing the emerging themes and shares relevant implications for classroom practice. Brooks draws attention to the misalignment between the reading instruction available to the LTELs and the sort of meaning-making skills required on high-stake tests. Highlighting individual differences, Brooks concludes by arguing for a more holistic approach to LTELs as opposed to focusing on their perceived challenges. She urges for the immediate implementation of a humanizing reading pedagogy that taps into the social resources of LTELs.

Possibly the biggest strength of this resource is Brooks' diligence in avoiding the deficit-based framing of LTELs. For example, she highlights progress by defining them as students who "remain identified as 'learning English' in secondary school" (p. i). Discerning the need for redefining LTELs as proficient readers, Brooks addresses this lacuna in an intellectually engaging manner. Another strength is her timely attempt to translate a scholarly work into a more practical text about an inclusive, humanizing, and empowering literacy pedagogy for LTELs. For example, Brooks offers questions that prompt the reader to think about the ways to understand and address the needs of LTELs. Additionally, the survey intended for uncovering the informal linguistic experiences of students (see page 34) can help teachers avoid assumptions based on typical LTEL nomenclature.

The book has a shortcoming in terms of presenting a solid framework for cultivating reader agency. Acknowledging Brooks' awareness of stressing the factor of agency, I think further study on this aspect might provide a significant foundation for pedagogical framework that nurtures safe spaces and helps LTELs empower themselves. Also, Brooks borrows the term "circumstantial bilingual" by Valdés and Figueroa (1994) to refer to the speakers who function as bilinguals due to the social circumstances in formal and informal contexts. A lingering question is: are LTELs positioned purely by their present circumstances? The term "LTEL" might overlook the intrinsic motivation of students for learning independently and foreground their social savviness, as the literature overwhelmingly does.

Overall, the book fulfills its purpose since the practical implications are shared explicitly. I find it particularly relatable and highly readable with its vivid descriptions and illustrative vignettes from biology and ELA classes. With its inviting design and easy-to-navigate chapters, the book is useful for educators who are looking for ways to tap into the lived experiences of LTELs for efficient literacy practices in various content areas. It is highly relevant to a California readership, given the significant attention to LTELs due to their increasing population in the state (Sahakyan & Ryan, 2018). As an educator and emerging researcher, I learned new insights from this powerful study that delves into predominant reading practices and challenges generalizations about LTELs.

References

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The Six Academic Writing Assignments: Designing the User's Journey

Jim Burke

Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2019.

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The *Six Academic Writing Assignments* by Jim Burke, one of the finest American writing educators, is a groundbreaking pedagogical textbook published by Heinemann. This book offers meaningful instructional principles, activities, and resources intended for all teachers responsible for preparing students with English academic writing skills for college success. The author effectively provides a theoretical framework and practical guide to help these educators design assignments that will transform and empower students to become more proficient writers, readers, and thinkers.

Burke is committed to removing barriers in the student's journey through the writing curriculum to maximize student learning and performance. He applies the principle of design thinking to the design of academic writing assignments by viewing teachers as designers who understand their students as their products' users. He argues that teachers should create effective, engaging assignments with a focus not only on the prompts, questions, and genres of writing, but also on the types of writing and the design of those writing assignments. As a result, his book provides a user-friendly, classroom-tested tool for writing teachers to design academic writing assignments as roadmaps to guide students toward the mastery of academic writing throughout the school year.

The book opens with an introductory chapter, which describes the context of Burke's initial idea to write this book: a copy room where teachers were preparing handouts for their academic writing classes. Burke recognized the dreaded friction points that would likely hinder the development of students' skills, from the poor design of the assignments he witnessed, the incomprehensible instructions, or the overwhelmingly sophisticated questions. In this chapter, Burke identifies the six common categories of academic writing assignments (AWA) that all teachers use, while stating his belief that assignments provide a window into how teachers work. The author suggests how teachers can reflect on their own practice of assigning academic writing based on the six AWA categories and the AWA framework that he articulates at the end of this chapter.

The following six chapters provide detailed discussions of each assignment type. In chapter 1, Burke addresses an informal type of writing called Writing to Learn, which fosters students' ability to make rhetorical mental moves such as discover, discuss, generate, explore, or reflect. Chapter 2 discusses The Short Answer type, which aims at developing students' art of paying attention and close reading to explain or identify, ranging from one sentence to a paragraph. Chapter 3 refers to Writing on Demand, a timed writing type that assesses students' ability to write for a certain purpose about a topic or text such as in an ACT exam. Chapter 4 covers The Process Paper type, focusing on students' drafting and revision of their work in response to feedback from various sources. Chapter 5 is devoted to The Research Paper, with a discussion on preparing students to write their college essays, which require students to make in depth investigations before reporting their findings with evidence. Chapter 6, Alternative Forms of Academic Writing, emphasizes a variety of formats such as multimedia presentations or other digital formats or hybrids. The demands of real-world writing, such as resumes, proposals, or business letters are among the focus of this type.

These consistently structured chapters each contain six sections. Each section begins with a definition of an assignment type and the justification for its assignment, followed by a description of how students typically struggle with the assignment. Next, a detailed description of the forms and formats of the assignment, either in paper or on

screen, is provided, with sample writing papers from the author's own students. Burke also identifies obstacles and opportunities teachers may need to consider with each assignment type and offers recommendations for how teachers should reflect on their own practice related to a specific type of academic writing assignment. The author concludes the book with a chapter addressing how to teach writing better by design, where teachers are designers not merely of the assignments but of the students' experiences with the assignments. Throughout the book, the author highlights how an assignment moves through different designing stages including empathizing, defining, ideating, prototyping, and testing before becoming the final product. The author emphasizes the importance of collaboration among teachers as a design team in each designing stage to facilitate teaching and deepen students' learning efficiency.

Some professionals may not entirely agree with the way Burke categorizes the alternative forms of academic writing as the sixth type of academic writing assignment because these forms may not be equivalent to the other five unique types in the preceding chapters. Some examples of these alternative formats include surveys, presentations, executive summaries, letters of introduction and proposals for courses of actions or research topics, with the use of such applications as Google Forms, Survey Monkey, Keynote, Prezi, Infographics, and the like. While they may deserve more than one chapter, Burke explains his reasoning for grouping these 'outliers and hybrids' together based on what they have in common, which is 'their use of technology and their adherence to traditional forms' (p. 140).

What differentiates *The Six Academic Writing Assignments* from other academic writing textbooks is how this work provides a comprehensive overview of such a substantial number of categories of academic writing assignments in a systematic, accessible way. As a TESOL educator, I, myself, am fascinated with how the book provides a phenomenal collection of ideas and expert problem-solving techniques with rich online resources, a wide array of graphics, and authentic student work examples. My ESL teacher candidates also fell in love with the user-friendly format of the book, thanks to the readability of the font, the organization, and the use of marginal notes with QR codes for easy access to online resources for further reference. Middle school and high school teachers of writing, those in English for Academic Purposes writing programs at universities, and TESOL educators alike will find Burke's book a truly valuable resource for their teaching of academic writing.

Language and Social Justice in Practice

Netta Avineri, Laura R. Graham, Eric J. Johnson, Robin Conley Riner, and Jonathan Rosa (Eds.)

New York, NY and Abingdon, Oxon, OX: Routledge, 2019.

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The racial reckoning sweeping the United States today is leading educational institutions to prioritize the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in faculty and staff development meetings. Because there is disagreement over whether the current system was built for everyone or not, a public debate is raging about working towards more inclusion within the system vs. re-examining, dismantling, and reinventing the system by adopting anti-racist practices. How to start and continue much-needed DEI and antiracism conversations, then? How to move the needle from conversations to action and positive change?

The interdisciplinary book *Language and Social Justice in Practice*, edited by Netta Avineri, Laura R. Graham, Eric J. Johnson, Robin Conley Riner, and Jonathan Rosa, is an authoritative page-turner for all TESOL students, pre-

service teachers, seasoned educators, and administrators who are seeking inspiration and guidance in exploring the above questions.

The book is the result of a collaborative effort by activist scholars, all members of the Language and Social Justice Task Group of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). It presents twenty-four case studies for undergraduate students and teachers of introductory courses on social justice in Linguistics and Anthropology. The contributors view strong positions in scholarship as a form of social activism and consider the legitimization and inclusion of stigmatized populations and languages insufficient to create justice. They advocate for “the radical reimagination of alternative worlds” (p. 3) instead.

The book consists of five parts, each prefaced by an introduction and three critical questions, which could be used for classroom discussions, workshops, or staff meetings. The use of language links the thematic areas of race, education, health, social activism, law, and policy to social action and social change. The essays identify common threads around social justice and illustrate examples for teaching. Although in each chapter the contributors use local contexts to describe nuanced meanings of social justice, they also supply a broad definition of social justice involving equity, respect, representation, and recognition for all groups (p. 3). Further, they explain how social justice spans across individuals and groups both as a process and a goal, which can be either promoted or restricted by various gatekeepers. The contributors focus on linguistic diversity and language use in social justice debates (p. 2) by showing how dominant groups use language and inaccurate assumptions to justify and perpetuate socially constructed hierarchies and marginalization (p. 7).

The introduction affords a clear and historically contextualized overview of the research in sociolinguistics and ethnography of communication, which looks at language through a fresh lens that explores the connections between linguistic diversity and social inequities. It discusses research conducted in the fields of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics that have documented ties among power structures, language, and inequality (p. 1), resulting in a hierarchic “symbolic value” among languages, linked to socio-economic and political access. The introduction is a great primer for novice TESOL social justice advocates and helps contextualize the following case studies.

Throughout the book, the contributors show how language is an extremely influential vehicle to create and perpetuate, but also oppose, social hierarchies and inequities. The case studies in the race, education, and social activism sections will be of particular interest to all TESOL students, educators, researchers, and administrators for their practical applications to the classroom and to problematize policies and their application.

Specifically, the section about race lays bare the connection between the stigmatization of minoritized languages and discourses and their conceptualization as biological rather than socio-culturally constructed phenomena used to limit access to rights, resources, and institutions. As an ESOL teacher, I found the case study by Julia R. Daniels, a white high school English teacher of racialized students, particularly helpful. Daniels’ students reject “Standard English” as an oppressive language that caters to white people, prompting Daniels to reflect on her beliefs and teaching practices. Daniels undergoes a deconstruction of her identity through conversations with her students and colleagues about the ties between race and language. Subsequently, Daniels recognizes that her conformism in teaching leads her to frame “Standard English” as a racially neutral vehicle to access resources, while her students experience it as devaluing their languages and identities.

Daniels’s chapter helped me deconstruct my own conformism as an ESOL teacher. It reminded me of the privileges and need for self-accountability that my whiteness carries. Additionally, the discussion on assimilation reminded me of the persistent nativism in TESOL, biologically conceptualized in the dichotomy “Native English-Speaking Teacher” (NEST) and “Nonnative English-Speaking Teacher (NNEST),” where the label “native” conceptualizes legitimate, ideal, and default white (disguised as “racially neutral”) teachers, and the label “non-native” conceptualizes illegitimate, “deficient” and racialized (disguised as “diverse”) teachers.

All the case studies illustrate that inclusion and validation of minoritized languages and cultures leads to their speakers’ empowerment, while deficit framing perpetuates conformism and assimilation, which leads to assimilationist policies and their implementation. Johnson’s chapter on the “Language Gap” (p. 97), a deficit-based approach to education, helped me trace its historical origins and the role that organizations and individuals play in

its perpetuation in the media and in schools (p. 100). In the following section on social activism, I found a roadmap to use inclusive pronouns correctly and learned about the California-Based School Kids Investigating Language in Life and Society (SKILLS) program, based on “the model of youth participatory action research” (p. 168).

While the book is fairly exhaustive, only Alim mentions the “hostility towards teachers and students who speak English with an accent” (p. 188). Given that a majority of TESOL teachers worldwide are labeled NNESTs, a chapter on this group seems missing. Additionally, while all chapters include definitions for jargon and other terminology, a glossary of relevant terms would be helpful.

As a NNEST teacher, I subscribe to the stance that policies addressing DEI are insufficient in and of themselves to effect social justice. Deconstructing one’s beliefs is fundamental for reconceptualization. This book offers a springboard to do just that. If you want to do something to help effect social change in TESOL, then start by reading this book.

Navigating the Intercultural Classroom

Tuula Lindholm and Johanne Mednick Myles

Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press, 2019.

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In a discipline where language and culture constantly interact, Tuula Lindholm and Johanne Mednick Myles’s *Navigating the Intercultural Classroom* provides English language teachers with a wonderful resource to help understand culture and use it as a resource in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes. Written to offer teachers concrete approaches to integrating intercultural communicative competence into their classes, this book is thoughtfully written and well organized, offering many ways that ESL teachers can help their students build cross-cultural understanding and develop intercultural competence.

Following a foreword from interculturalist Darla Deardorff, the book includes a preface introducing the book, six chapters, a conclusion, and five appendices with useful charts and summaries of intercultural principles and theories, as well as suggestions for observing and analyzing cultural activities. The objective is to connect TESOL and intercultural training (p. vii) by focusing on students’ effective performance in new cultural settings as well as on their appropriate interaction with native English speakers in such contexts (p. ix). The authors draw upon the work of Michael Byram on intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and highlight the role of culture in the ESL classroom.

Chapters each include an overview, questions for thinking about the topic, theoretical perspectives, discussions of relevant ESL issues, and examples of classroom best practices, followed by a “case in point” conclusion. Chapter 1, for example, focuses on Intercultural Communication and Teaching Culturally Diverse Learners, first by defining culture and discussing how it interacts with language and identity, how it is reflected in culturally embedded behaviors, and how several cultural dimensions (such as high- vs. low-context and individualism vs. collectivism) impact the understanding and use of language in context. The authors warn against stereotypes and overgeneralizations about people before discussing cultural awareness. They then offer a succinct summary of ICC, referencing some appendices, and relate it to effective intercultural communication. Since they are concerned about new cultural settings, the authors also introduce cultural adaptation and culture shock. The

classroom best practices section begins with teaching strategies that accommodate the transition process and includes descriptions of four separate activities plus three different games and simulations that can be used in or outside of class. The chapter ends with a case study that helps readers process what they have learned.

Like the first chapter, Chapter 2, “The Role of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching and Learning,” is forty-some pages long and lays groundwork for the shorter remaining chapters (of roughly twenty-plus pages each). Brief theoretical perspectives highlight language and culture connections, the role of language in intercultural communication, and the importance of pragmatics in communicative competence. A useful section outlines why ICC needs to be taken seriously by showing how it is incorporated into curricula that use the Canadian Language Benchmarks, The Massachusetts Framework, and the Common European Framework, followed by a discussion on incorporating ICC into one’s curriculum. Brief sections address classroom talk and meaningful interaction, as well as the assessment of ICC. The classroom best practices section emphasizes a culture learning approach that highlights a) cultural conversation focusing on storytelling about culture and identity, b) cultural knowledge and comparisons, and c) self-reflection about cultural behaviors, all with relevant activities that teachers can adapt for their ESL classes. The concluding case study addresses the culture shock of a Chinese woman in Canada, and how Lindholm supported her intercultural adjustment.

Chapter 3 discusses the Teacher as a Cultural Informant and Classroom Strategist, starting with theoretical perspectives on a teacher’s culture, beliefs, and biases. Here Lindholm and Myles suggest asking cultural questions, understanding how to explain, break down, and illustrate differences as cultural informants, and how to recognize their instructional strategies as well as the strategies they offer students in order to help them in ESL contexts, such as in handling job interviews (p. 89). Students can also serve as cultural informants, and nonnative-English-speaking teachers from outside the target culture can see their own knowledge as a strength. An interesting section touches on cultural conflict in the classroom, whether between teacher and students or between students themselves, including issues of classroom management, face, and group work. A short classroom best practices section offers “[a] step-by-step guide to understanding one’s cultural identity” (p. 99), as well as collaborative conflict resolution strategies for adult learners. The case study reflects a touching cultural moment from a class with a guest speaker.

As its title indicates, Chapter 4 considers English for Academic Purposes Programs and Cultural Expectations. The authors use theory to introduce ways that participation and classroom interaction, intercultural awareness, and contrastive rhetoric in intercultural writing all reflect cultural and educational factors, and then they challenge pedagogy from a cultural perspective. The authors note how cultural variables in EAP address both style and substance in regard to critical reading and thinking, academic writing, and other ways to express knowledge, as well as the social life of students on campus. Classroom best practices include using autobiographical identity texts, TED talks, narratives about culture, cultural words, and activities for using discourses appropriately. The case study involves a problematic intercultural encounter. Chapter 5, “Employment Preparation Programs and Cultural Integration,” begins by considering soft skills in employment, ICC in workplace-focused programs, and intercultural values and beliefs, including workplace communication. It turns next to the art of small talk, networking in the digital age, using emotional intelligence in the classroom, and mentoring in employment programs. The classroom best practices activities involve preparing for job interviews, negotiating, providing critical feedback, and using small talk starters. The case study centers around small talk in an engineering firm.

Chapter 6, the shortest, succinctly deals with Technology and Computer-mediated Intercultural Communication. Theoretical perspectives draw upon multiliteracies as connected to ICC, including online literacy, followed by a discussion on using social media and the acculturation process in order to foster ICC, through social media, email, video, and chat, plus social networking sites. Classroom best practice suggestions include a native English speaker buddy system via social media, online communication and collaboration, and tips for teaching email messaging. The case study provides two brief emails to professors and discusses ways to improve them, as well as the

cultural information they reflect. The two-page conclusion argues that “integrating intercultural goals and competencies into ESOL education requires more than an understanding of theory and a revision of curricula; it involves a complete reconceptualization of the nature of ESOL teaching and learning” (p. 171). As such, Lindholm and Myles remind teachers that we always need to pause and ask questions about our assumptions as we face intercultural challenges, and help our students remember to do the same.

This is a useful and practical book that busy teachers will appreciate, as they can put the theory into practice using the activities and techniques the authors discuss. One great way readers can do this is through the darkened text boxes throughout the book that expand upon key insights noted in the chapters, often drawing upon examples from the authors’ teaching experiences to illustrate their points. Other strengths of the book include the way that chapters incorporate various classroom best practices by introducing suggested activities, and that chapters end with case studies indicating how “culture does matter” (e.g., p. 76), further reflecting the very issues addressed. As a reader I appreciated the way both authors shared examples from their experiences as teachers and learners throughout chapters, not only in North America but in other contexts (like India, p. 88), too. Finally, the different teaching and learning contexts noted include community college, business, adult education, English for academic purposes, and employment preparation, among others, so teachers will find examples that they can connect with or that will help prepare them for future teaching contexts.

As a teacher trainer, I like that the book’s chapters are all self-contained and include a References list, so that if teacher educators want they could use a chapter on its own, even if they don’t adopt this as a course textbook. If there is a weakness I noted, it is that the focus of the book is clearly on ESL contexts, where students are adapting to a new English-speaking culture, as opposed to EFL situations where the classroom is not (as) intercultural. Yet the authors prepared for this challenge by noting in the Preface that their goal is to address ESOL classes where international students are in “countries in which English is the dominant language” (p. viii). That said, teachers and teacher educators who use this book will find many great case studies and examples, as well as plenty of activities to implement in different types of ESL classes. In short, this book is an excellent resource for teachers who wish to reflect on how to put theoretical perspectives into practice in addressing culture and intercultural communication in their teaching.