

Newspapers by Peter Grundy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. 134 pp.

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In the field of second language teaching, the Communicative Approach which emphasizes the use of real-life objects or texts in language teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 1986) is becoming more widely accepted. Research on second language teaching also suggests that instructional approaches that integrate content and language are generally more effective than those that isolate language learning from content areas (Genese, 1991). In bilingual education, the combination of language and content can even help students to develop thinking skills during the second language learning process (Romero, 1991). From a communicative point of view, materials from the media are considered an efficient tool to facilitate language learning because they integrate language and content in a very natural way. Many ESL/EFL teachers are interested in introducing various materials from the media into the classroom (cf. Brinton, 1991; Penfield, 1987), and newspapers are popular because of their high availability, low cost, real-life news value, and cultural information. However, second language teachers, as Penfield (1987) pointed out, are not always certain about how to adapt media for teaching purposes. Peter Grundy's book *Newspapers* is a resource book for ESL/EFL teachers that answers the question of how to adapt newspapers for the classroom.

Grundy does not present many re-printed newspaper articles in his book; instead, he provides "a range of original, practical ideas for working with newspapers" (p. 5). These ideas are presented in 100 creative activities which can be applied to both ESL and EFL classrooms with students at all language proficiency levels. These creative activities constitute the essential elements of this book.

The book contains six chapters. In the first chapter, "Working creatively with newspapers," Grundy suggests that teachers can start with their own teaching experiences. They can write a list of things to do with news stories, feature articles, and

advertisements and then compare their lists with their colleagues'. In this way, each teacher will find several different teaching activities related to newspapers. He also gives detailed suggestions on how to select newspaper articles and introduces some material resource books and textbooks. These suggestions can help ESL/EFL teachers start working with newspapers in their classrooms.

The remaining five chapters are as follows: "Building confidence and familiarity," "Working with texts," "Working with pictures," "Project work," and "Personal responses." Each chapter contains approximately 20 classroom activities. For each activity Grundy indicates the appropriate proficiency level, the time needed, the kinds of materials and preparations which are necessary, the language skill being focused on, and a detailed description of the procedure. Grundy indicates the "activity," "level," and "topic" of every section in Chapters 2 to 6 in the table of contents, features designed to allow the reader to conveniently choose activities. In section 2.1, for example, the "activity," "level," and "topic" are as follows: "When I hit the headlines," "Lower-intermediate and above," and "Relating newspapers to personal experience." Therefore, teachers may easily find the activities which are most appropriate to their own teaching needs.

Grundy has thoroughly covered a wide range of different language skills in his book. As vehicles of real-life information presented in written form, newspapers are an ideal material to teach reading and writing. In fact, most of the activities provided in the book focus on the development of these two skills. Grundy has made an effort to cover important reading skills, such as skimming, scanning, and reading for a purpose. He also frequently incorporates writing activities in the book, such as rewriting a story and writing an abstract.

The communicative activities in the book also naturally integrate reading with listening and speaking. Newspaper articles stimulate interesting topics for class discussions. Retelling stories is an activity which involves both speaking and listening. In some of the activities Grundy recommends using radio news broadcasts in conjunction with relevant newspaper articles, thus integrating authentic listening into newspaper related language teaching. Because vocabulary is recycled to a very high degree, both in the

newspapers and in news broadcasts (Blatchford, 1973; Brinton, 1978), this is also an efficient way to teach vocabulary.

Grundy presents some interesting activities that focus on developing authentic responses from the students, such as "Discover how tasteless popular journalism can be" (p. 127) and "Relating newspaper stories to experience" (p.123). These activities will help the students to forget class pressures and treat newspapers as real-life subject matter instead of textbooks. These activities also provide a cultural background for the learners, especially for those in EFL environments where there are not enough opportunities to experience authentic language materials.

One weakness of the book, however, is that the author does not provide enough materials to use with the activities. For example, in the activity mentioned earlier (i.e., "Discover how tasteless popular journalism can be"), the suggested materials are: "popular newspapers containing tasteless materials" (p. 127). Thus, teachers who plan to use this book will need to spend a large amount of time searching for and preparing materials. Most of the activities introduced in this book are based on the following crucial condition: the teacher should build a "Story Bank" which includes "several dozen, even several hundred, newspaper stories and articles" (p. 28). This is not an easy task especially for EFL teachers in a foreign country where the supply of English newspapers is limited.

Newspapers is a very good authentic activities handbook for ESL/EFL teachers. Its creative classroom ideas are a valuable resource for teachers who are interested in using newspaper articles. The creative activities presented in this book can be used in different types of classes with students of different language proficiency levels. With the help of this book, ESL/EFL teachers can use newspapers to expand their teaching materials in a significant way.

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