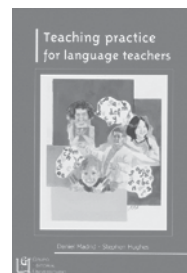


Teaching Practice for Language Teachers. Daniel Madrid & Stephen Hughes (2006). Granada: Grupo Editorial Universitario.

Tony Harris
Departamento de filología Inglesa
Universidad de Granada

Teaching Practice for Language Teachers is a 117-page 14-chapter manual, divided into two parts, theory and practice, aimed principally, as we are informed in the introduction, at “student teachers of English as a foreign language who are preparing to embark upon their school-based practice”, which, the authors note, is widely held to be “the most important part of initial teacher training” (p. 9).



PART I: The theory of school-based practice is comprised of 7 chapters:

- Chapter 1: The practical component of initial teacher-training;
- Chapter 2: General objectives of teaching practice;
- Chapter 3: Teaching practice and professional socialisation;
- Chapter 4: Teaching practice and professional learning;
- Chapter 5: Tutor intervention and supervision;
- Chapter 6: Professional development through school-based experience;
- Chapter 7: Teaching practice and classroom research.

PART II: The Institutional Framework is also made up of 7 chapters:

- Chapter 8: The school-based experience in initial teacher training;
- Chapter 9: The legal framework and future trends;
- Chapter 10: School-based experience for modern language teaching;
- Chapter 11: The student-teacher's report on the school-based experience;
- Chapter 12: The effect of school-based practice on the behaviour of student teachers;
- Chapter 13: Student teacher perceptions towards school-based experiences;
- Chapter 14: Concluding remarks.

The book is completed with relevant Appendixes, a wide-ranging Bibliography, as well as helpful focusing questions at the end of every chapter.

Part I takes us on an epistemological tour of the terrain, which includes a thorough examination of the types of knowledge available to the student teacher (Chapter 1); various theories and models for supervision (Chapter 4); tutor intervention styles (Chapter 5); and teacher/learner characteristics (Chapter 6). What I particularly like about this section is its critical, reflective tone, which, it would seem, is likely to encourage a similar questioning attitude in readers of this book. For example, the importance of school-based practice is, we

find, not so enthusiastically shared by practicing school teachers (Chapter 1), nor is the bridging between established theory in the field and classroom practice always seen to cross over without problems. Indeed, the “complexity, uncertainty, instability” (p. 21, Chapter 2) of the classroom is one that cannot be addressed by pre-established skills and capacities, and trainees are cautioned against the risk of replicating rigid, uncompromising conservative perspectives which do little to address the changing and complex situations of the classroom (Chapter 3). Trainees should find their own voices, rather than borrowed ones (Chapter 4) by engaging in “continuous dialogue” with their tutors (p. 39, Chapter 5), though, citing Gibb’s (1964: 25) observation that “help is not always helpful”. The logical conclusion to Part I is that teachers should take control of their own learning by becoming action researchers (Chapter 7).

Part II sets out its stall from the outset with the comment that “[o]nly the effective development of the interaction between theory and practice can lend any sort of guarantee to teacher training” (p. 49, Chapter 8), and reflects on possible future trends in school-based practice in Europe. Madrid and Hughes combine many years of practical experience at the chalk face with a wealth of classroom-based research, and this is clearly evident in Part II, which moves from a detailed analysis of the classroom context, complete with quantitative and qualitative questionnaires for the analysis of general competences of the FL class as well as a self-assessment model for teaching (Chapter 10). Ideas for the writing of a final report are outlined in Chapter 11, and this is complimented by some useful insights into the way attitudes and actions may change during the course of the teaching practice in Chapter 12 followed by an examination of a study completed by student teachers from the University of Granada into general teaching competence in Chapter 13. The final chapter provides a summarised overview of the manual and concludes that although school-based practice will undoubtedly present the trainee with a series of “uncertain and even confusing situations”, it is “an opportunity to consciously experiment, in a planned way, with different approaches and activities” (p. 95) in an learning experience, which, according to the authors, is normally seen as a positive one.