

STC

Diploma TEFLA

- * Teacher Training courses for Foreign Teachers of English

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NEW - from May 1994

DIPLOMA IN ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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are brought into play to provide continual variety and activity.

The Teacher's Book provides ideas for Action Rhymes and Songs. Each of the Pupil's Books provides for around 30 lesson-activities.

Each pupil's book has a Playbook to go with it. This is an activity book for

a year-old range. Teachers unfamiliar with this age group will find the Teacher's Book a great support. *Small World/Potamus and Friends* provides a good introduction and a sound foundation for learning the English language.

Barry Cusack is a freelance trainer, and management consultant.

Teacher as learner

Bryan Robinson

Understanding Teacher Development Ed: Andy Hargreaves and Michael G. Fullan *Cassell/Teachers College Press 1992 £12.99*

Last September a DoS friend asked me if I'd lead some sessions on the teacher development programme at his school. What had he in mind, I asked. I thought TD was best dealt with from the inside: importing trainers doesn't always produce the right kind of results. I outlined topics we might deal with - teacher motivation, career development, ... - only to be cut short: "Oh no! We wouldn't want that kind of session!". TD is a current buzz term, but how many of us really understand what it means?

Understanding Teacher Development is a collection of essays written by teachers and trainers working mainly in Canada and the US, with contributions from Europe and Australia, too. They discuss TD in schools without specifying subject-matter or levels of education, and aim at a wide audience.

The editors of this book have two objectives: to be

critical in their analysis of TD, and to be humanistic. They seek to find out why and when TD serves as a skilling, professionalising, and empowering element. Their focus on TD is three-sided: firstly, they view traditional training in skills and knowledge - what my DoS friend really wanted; second, comes the process of enabling teachers to reach greater levels of self-understanding; finally, we find "ecological" change: enabling teachers to comprehend the context they work in and to make changes within this themselves.

The knowledge and skills approach is the most dominant, aiming to provide teachers with greater control over subject-matter and greater flexibility in the classroom. It is criticised as being "top-down" - the "expert" goes into somebody else's teachers' room and tells them how to do it.

TD through self-understanding poses questions about behaviours and beliefs; life cycle patterns; career development - which most EFL DoS's find difficult to handle; and day-to-day teacher control, or the lack of it. Contributors describe research based on approaches involving reflection, introspection personal journals - and analy-

sis of formative experiences - collaborative auto-biography. All are balanced against objective criticisms of costliness, time-consumption, and self-indulgence.

Ecological change as a focus of TD deals with the context of teaching itself, or of the wider working environment. Firstly, writers look at classroom teaching as the focus of TD. Later they deal with questions of resources, time, leadership, and of the encouragement essential in the culture of any school which successfully fosters TD. The overall message is that a collaborative school culture is essential; one which can shift the balance from administrators to teachers: a teacher (as learner)-centred approach.

School owners, and DoS's need books like this to overcome their often geographical and professional isolation and thus establish a deeper understanding of their teachers and their situation. I haven't yet done the sessions on grammar my friend asked for ... the challenge to me now is how to fit them into my newly widened understanding of Teacher Development. *Bryan Robinson teaches at the School of Translators and Interpreters, University of Granada, Spain.*

being understood. This is in refreshing contrast to many books at a pre-intermediate level.

The teaching notes are also comprehensive, helpful and understandable and there is a good contents chart. This makes it a very easy book to teach from and should be useful for teachers who are not familiar with it (or who keep preparation to a minimum!).

As well as containing realistic dialogues, the tape also deserves praise for the variety of English accents used. Given that English is generally regarded as the language of international business, it is important that people can understand English spoken by foreigners as well as the "doctored" accents found on many teaching cassettes. Great efforts have been made here to include speakers from a range of countries so that, hopefully, a European will not have to say "pardon" too many times to his Far Eastern guest. The Mr Harada tape was particularly good, although perhaps this is one occasion where some of the dialogue was not very realistic in terms of content - which Japanese car manufacturer is really going to close down a plant and switch production from a luxury car to small motorbikes? However, such a strategy may be appropriate for other countries, so again the subject matter is relevant for business.

One criticism - and only a small one - is the use of symbols/funny letters to denote the various sounds. I have never found these useful and many learners seem confused by them. However it is a small minus in an excellent book. *Roma Haigh teaches at Business Language Consultancy, South Kensington, London.*