

Developing as a teacher

Teachers Develop Teachers Research, General Editors: Julian Edge and Keith Richards, Heinemann, 1993 £12

Sound Foundations, Adrian Underhill, Heinemann, 1994 £12, Chart/User's Guide £6.50

Bryan Robinson

TEACHERS DEVELOP *Teachers Research* (TDTR) is one of those delightfully ambiguous titles we all wish we'd thought up. Delightfully and deliberately ambiguous, as the editors make clear, to the extent that it produced a wide range of interpretations falling, however, within the three general areas of personal development as teacher development; the quality v quantity debate; and the ever-growing application of action research to EFL practice.

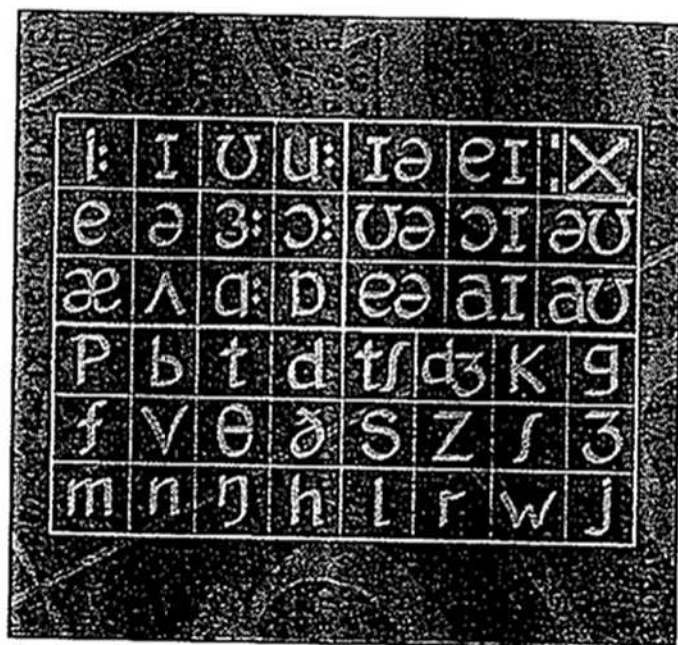
Julian Edge and Keith Richards, conference organisers and editors of this selection of papers from the Aston University/LATEFL Conference on classroom action research and teacher development (September 1992), encapsulate the umbrella-concept beneath which the conference evolved in Adrian Underhill's question: "How can I develop to become the best teacher that I personally can be?" and Jon Robert's answer: "I hope to re-think and to change my practice." The papers they present amply respond to both question and answer

covering theoretical, practical, academic and pragmatic aspects.

Plenary speaker Mel Myers, an applied psychologist, sets the tone by describing a "Planning Professional Development" scheme, and defining two concepts: Self-organised Learning and Increasing Professional Efficiency. This is carried on through Bridget Somekh's analysis of the role of the teacher in classroom research, and David Nunan's justification of the action research cycle.

However, the quality of the contributions is best measured by considering the personal nature of papers like Margaret McGinity's on teaching ESP in a Spanish university, or Anne Turner's "Diary of a SIG" from Greece, which demonstrate one of the essential bases of Teacher Development (TD) work: everyone can contribute, if they want to, and through some apparently small element of knowledge derived from what they find in their own back-yard, can contribute significantly to the greater good of us all.

From the same TD series, *Sound Foundations* contrasts sharply with TRTD in that it is neither ambiguous in its aims nor, to my mind, a title belonging fully to a series on TD, being much more the kind of reading essential on initial training courses. Adrian Underhill presents a compendium of pronunciation train-



Laying down strong foundations in English

ing and teaching ideas in two parts: the first is a "discovery toolkit", for the teacher-as-learner; the second, a "classroom toolkit" for the teacher on-the-job.

Sound Foundations begins with a concise contextualisation of its place in the spectrum of teacher resource books. Based on "humanistic, holistic and positive" beliefs Underhill subscribes to the essential premise of the Gattegno's "Silent Way", namely that of the primacy of learning over teaching. He describes his sound chart and unveils the underlying principles behind its development. What follows is the expla-

nation of a three-part structure - at the levels of sounds, words, and connected speech - in "discovery activities" - through which the teacher as-learner can mouth their way through the phonology of English - and "classroom activities" - focusing on points like stress pattern awareness; fortis/lenis distinctions; and finger correction for "roadside repairs". Throughout, activities are presented step-by-step, giving variations, a commentary and further exercises. Bryan Robinson teaches at the University of Granada, Spain, and is a senior examiner in English (Language B) for the International Baccalaureate

The best laid plans

Planning Classwork - a task-based approach, Sheila Estaire and Xavier Zanón, Heinemann, 1994, £7

Vincenzo Monda

AS THE TITLE suggests, the authors argue that syllabuses should be organized around tasks which have to

to help teachers, is the result of years of experimentation and practical experience.

Planning Classwork consists of four main chapters: how to plan units of work, how to plan them stage by stage, applying the framework, and a rationale for thematic task-based units of work, plus two appendices (on how to organize an

chapter before the stage-by-stage discussion in chapter 2. In fact, the main characteristics of the learning process are discussed in this fourth chapter: (a) the dimensions of knowledge (b) a cognitive perspective; (c) syllabus design.

Each chapter offers useful hints and strategies for all the different steps in the

Book briefs

Something for everyone this month! Whether you work in a state school or teach in the private sector, *Education and the State* by E.G. West is a thought-provoking discussion about the role of government in education. Originally published in 1965, this new edition has been updated and is available paperback for a mere £6.50. It is published by

is
in
th
as
it
th
ou
TI
M
we
de
ef
ad
ES
pr
G
Th
in
wh
Th
in
pr
are
sta
dis
del
pul
the
There
adv
Re
v
447