
Gerhard Bach and Johannes-Peter Timm, eds. **Englischunterricht. Grundlagen und Methoden einer handlungsorientierten Unterrichtspraxis**. Fünfte, aktualisierte Auflage. Tübingen: Francke UTB, 2013. ix, 386pp., Pb. € 22.90. ISBN: 978-3-82524-037-0.

This collection of essays deals with principles and methods of action-oriented EFL teaching. Its methodological approach focuses on educational issues according to the school curriculum as well as extra-curricular education. Based on a highly interactive and exploratory concept the book has been considered a standard work addressed to university students and university lecturers as well as to schoolteachers for more than two decades (first edition published in 1989).

The current fifth revised edition meets the challenges facing new pedagogic, professional and structural developments in EFL methodology. Proven approaches were critically analyzed and updated in the light of the latest research. Based on a broad theoretical foundation the publication provides an excellent insight into the main fields of EFL methodology, such as teaching English in primary school, the concept of bilingual teaching (CLIL), new technologies in the classroom, the debate about educational standards and competences, theory-based educational concepts, process- and learner-oriented approaches, learner autonomy, efficient life-long learning strategies, task-based and project-based learning as well as intercultural and literary competences. The volume succeeds in satisfying the urgent claim of giving teachers options to familiarize their students with the usage of a foreign language – “die fremde Sprache als Mittel zum sprachlichen Handeln zu erfahren” (vii). In this context the authors refer to the philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey and respond to changes in academic research as well as practical teaching. All chapters offer a wide range of ideas for the foreign language classroom.

The book is divided into 13 chapters which are all written by experts on EFL teaching established at Anglophone departments in German universities. These chapters can be clustered into three thematically grouped fields of research: a focus on action-oriented approaches marks the first three chapters written by (1) Gerhard Bach and Johannes-Peter Timm, (2) Werner Bleyhl and (3) Johannes-Peter Timm; secondly, specific aspects of EFL teaching and learning contexts, such as primary teaching, media, literature or CLIL are reflected by (4) Nikola Mayer, (5) Michael K. Legutke, (6) Reinhard Donath and Uwe Klemm, (7) Ansgar Nünning and Carola Surkamp, (8) Andreas Bonnet and Stephan Breidbach and Wolfgang Hallet, (9) Johannes-Peter Timm and (10) Claudia Finkbeiner; thirdly, fundamental aspects of learning and teaching a foreign language against the background of national and European educational standards are discussed by (11) Ralf Weskamp, (12) Gerhard Bach and Stephan Breidbach and (13) Gerhard Bach. All contributions are based on state-of-the-art research and aimed at internal coherence by presenting the topics from a interdisciplinary perspective and by skillfully connecting the single issues.

Central to all the essays is the question how students can be motivated and enabled to express what they think and feel, and what they plan to do. Answers to these questions are given by numerous suggestions and options for a meaningful goal- and learner-oriented interactive classroom. With a view to holistic language learning and teaching methodology the authors show how students can experience the English language as a means for communication in their everyday lives. The learner-oriented conceptualization of the volume depicts a view in which students are not considered as objects for teaching but as self-active learners who absorb and process the presented learning material with the help of the teacher and thus construct their own knowledge.

Each of the chapters is followed by a very helpful box called “Review and Reflect” with appropriate reproductive reading comprehension exercises, questions for critical reflection and tasks in order to comment on the contribution and invite the readers to review and evaluate what they have read. Furthermore, the publication is presented in an excellent layout with many helpful tables and illustrations that contribute for a better understanding of the discussed issues of EFL methodology. At the very end of the book, there is a comprehensive and very detailed appendix, which – next to the bibliography – contains an index of persons and topics. This enables readers to search efficiently for specific aspects in the book; they have the possibility to create new relationships between the topics, and they can find networking structures and interconnections in order to recognize new meanings.

Compared to many of the other introductions into EFL methodology on the market written in German, the book omits references to institutional contexts and

historical developments of language learning over the last decades, but this has no negative effect on the quality of the publication. It is particularly encouraging that the argumentation is based primarily on action- and implementation-oriented research, less on language acquisition theories and that the volume does not position itself in theories of applied linguistics. A separate chapter dedicated to the field of inter- and transcultural learning, which is increasingly discussed, would have been a welcome addition and could be an option for the next edition. However, the topic is integrated into various chapters and discussed in contexts such as media literacy and teaching literature.

In sum, the book is a collection of very convincing and refreshing approaches. The comprehensible and didactically well-presented volume is a worthwhile contribution to modern EFL methodology and offers many innovative teaching methods which teachers and lecturers may well want to try out in class. Moreover, it provides university students and career starters with numerous suggestions for all school types and is also applicable to university courses.

Maria Eisenmann (Duisburg-Essen)
E-mail: maria.eisenmann@uni-due.de

DuEPublico

Duisburg-Essen Publications online

UNIVERSITÄT
DUISBURG
ESSEN

Offen im Denken

ub

universitäts
bibliothek

This text is made available via DuEPublico, the institutional repository of the University of Duisburg-Essen. This version may eventually differ from another version distributed by a commercial publisher.

DOI: 10.1515/zaa-2014-0011

URN: urn:nbn:de:hbz:464-20201125-160510-9

In: *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, Band 62, Heft 1, Seiten 85–87.

This publication is with permission of the rights owner freely accessible due to an Alliance licence and a national licence (funded by the DFG, German Research Foundation) respectively.

All rights reserved. ©2014 by Walter de Gruyter Berlin/Boston.