

## Book review

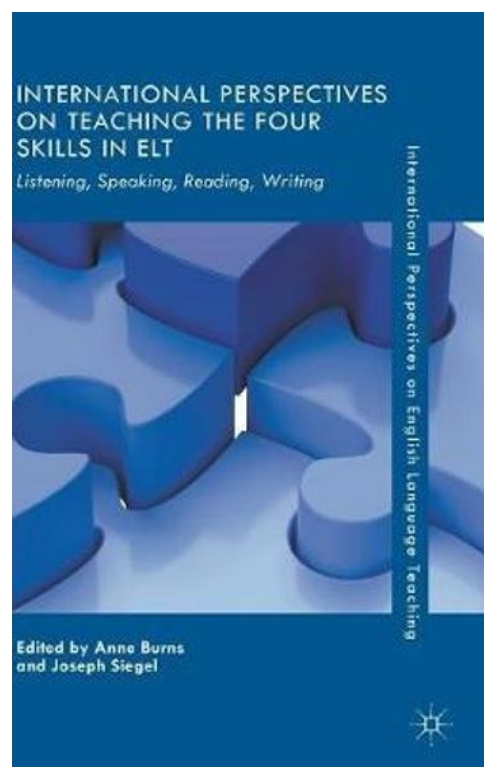
### **International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT: Listening, speaking, reading, writing**

Edited by A. Burns and J. Siegel, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, Pp. 255, ISBN 978-3-319-63444-9 (e-book)

*International Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills in ELT: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing* compiled by Anne Burns and Joseph Siegel is a fascinating collection of testimonies from English teachers all over the world and their experiences on teaching the four skills. As it provides such a broad scope of experiences, this volume can be useful and compelling not just for novice teachers but also experienced ones.

The book opens with an introductory chapter written by the editors Anne Burns and Joseph Siegel in which they explain the themes and issues that come up when teaching the four skills. Furthermore, the volume is divided into four parts, one for each one of the skills. Each chapter is in turn divided into sub sections such as Introduction, Implications, Conclusion, Questions for Reflection and a Reference section.

Part 1 delves deep into listening and it is four chapters long, going from Chapter 2 to 5. Chapter 2 is written by Denise Santos and Suzanne Graham and features a striking contrast in the listening pedagogy in an as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in Brazil and an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom in the English speaking UK. The third chapter, written by Willy A. Renandya and Guangwei Hu deals with an examination of the way L2 listening is currently being taught in China. The fourth chapter, which was written by Michael McAuliffe and Gavin Brooks discusses the development of a listening course inside the mostly monolingual Japanese universities. The fifth and final chapter is written by M. Gregory Tweedie and Robert C. Johnson and explores the uses listening can



have in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) more specifically in the context of nursing education which is where they conducted their research and where English is commonly used as a *Lingua Franca*.

Part Two encompasses Chapters 6-9 and deals with the pedagogy of speaking. Chapter 6 deals with teaching speaking skills in the context of primary schools in Cameroon. It is written by Achu Charles Tante and mentions the ever so frequent problem ESL and EFL teachers have: just how complicated it is for students to express themselves in English. Chapter 7, written by Phillip Chappel, explores inquiry dialogue as a genre to promote teacher and students speaking skills in the classroom; chapter eight, written by Winnie Pang and Michael Burri, dives into the uses dialogic speaking skills can have in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes in Canada. Olga Kozar wrote the ninth and final chapter of the speaking section and it features a Russian perspective on using Skype as a tool to teach conversational English to adults. This chapter can be intriguing to teachers all across the globe since technology has come to stay in the field of education.

Part 3 of this volume is dedicated to reading and it encompasses Chapters 10-13. Chapter 10 is written by Olga Vrastilova. It explores the possibility of using authentic literary texts in elementary school classes. As she mentions in this chapter, reading is often adapted in texts aimed at EFL students but she argues that elementary school students can actually access and understand authentic material, such as children's literature written in English. Sri Rejeki Murtiningsih and Winda Hapsari write in Chapter 11 about how reading can be used to further develop critical thinking skills and collaborative work. In Chapter 12, Gordon Blaine West argues that autonomy can also be developed in the context of an ESL academic reading course through the reading skill. Finally, in Chapter 13, the last chapter of the reading section, Kevin Roach deals with the social significance reading can have in adult migrants. His captivating argument is that, in order to teach reading skills to adult migrants, teachers need to be aware of literacy as a social practice.

Finally, Part 4 is about writing and it encompasses Chapters 14-17. Chapter 14 is written by Rawia Hayik and is about promoting descriptive writing through culturally relevant literature in the context of Israeli college students whose first language is Arabic. Nhu Luan Pham and Noriko Iwashita delve into using corrective feedback in order to enhance Vietnamese learner's autonomy in Chapter 15. In Chapter 16, Ricky Lam explores promoting self-reflection in writing through the use of showcase portfolios. This section concludes in Chapter 17 which is written by Brazilian teacher Isabela Villa Boas who argues for localizing the pedagogy of second language writing through a skills-integrated language program in order to create a more meaningful written production. Once the writing section is over, the volume has a final concluding chapter which, like the introductory chapter, was also written by the editors Anne Burns and Joseph Siegel. In this final chapter –Chapter 18– the authors theorize about the possibilities that the four skills might take in the future.

Overall, because of its broad scope, *International Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills in ELT: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing* is a compelling read for both novice English teachers and experienced ones. That being said, it does not mean that there are not chapters that feel somewhat lagging or those that present issues that the reader might not find interesting or relatable. Nevertheless, this volume is highly recommendable and a good read. Personally, I agree with Burns and Siegel captivating argument in their concluding Chapter 18 where they state that, as English speakers interact in a more and more globalized community outside the classroom, they will need to integrate the four skills in much more complex ways than the ones they are currently sitting through at school. Consequently, it is time for teachers to rethink the way we are teaching the four skills to our students because seeing the four skills as completely separated entities is no longer viable and the English curricula all around the world needs to be modified in order to suit the needs of these highly globalized students.

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