

Book Review: Manolescu, D. (2019). Tips. A Guidebook for Teaching Excellence in ESL

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The Guide for Teaching Excellence in ESL provides several demonstrations of the connection between language and culture. The book outlined the history behind words, the development of languages and alphabets, and the relationship between language and culture. Dan Manolescu recognized the student needs and core competencies that teachers must demonstrate to improve learning outcomes for students learning English. The book provided references to establish sources of information to support the author's work and approach to ESL instruction. He used his knowledge and experiences to create a comprehensive work that may benefit those new and veteran teachers who support ESL students. The author's knowledge of language and teaching is very evident throughout the book. The author signals the importance of performing an environmental scan when providing instructional tips to students because excellence can be achieved and is vital to building knowledge. As educators use language and culture to unpack Culturally Relevant Teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2020), powerful instruction allows one to ask questions to spark an interest in learning. The rationale for the book is centered around the idea that "very few disciplines include the reciprocal rapport and bridge the classroom and the community" (p.7). Moreover, "language is a miracle itself" (p.9), and understanding its connection to culture unveils interesting, informative, communicative, and motivating (Grant & Hill, 2020) ways to encourage student achievement. Dan Manolescu passionately states,

A deep reality resides in the relation between language and the individual... Language is the soul of cultures and societies. It transmits a measure of unity to the individual, and it is a socially cohesive factor. Societies break up when they abandon or weaken their languages as emblems of their own identity (p. 27).

Language is an expression of those who speak it, and it assists with the investigation of human differences. Good teaching goes beyond "the sit and get"; instead, students take the information obtained and do something with the knowledge to display mastery. Educators are challenged to find ways to push against their biases and in critical humility. The understanding and ability to reimagine education through a multilingual perspective promotes the democratic classroom that exemplifies (DEI) Diversity Equity and Inclusion. The author understood that when teaching English as a Second Language, teachers need to continue to research and translate the information in ways that are at the academic level of their students. The author collected his experiences and knowledge from years of teaching ESL students and put together this guidebook to support ESL teachers.

This guidebook stored various concepts of language learning into one resource of linguistic information and practice. To that point, the author articulates that everything we learn eventually has meaning if it is shared and we live to spread knowledge to others. The guidebook provides two main concepts "what to teach ESL students" and "how to teach ESL

students." In addition to teaching language, the author also pointed out the cultural differences when interacting with ESL students. Dan Manolescu believed culture influences language, and society breaks up when they weaken their language. Teaching ESL students is not only educating different languages; moreover, teachers are educating individuals from various cultures. The author recommended four basic principles in teaching ESL students: engaging, informative, communicative, and motivating. The book covered resources, tips, and examples of lesson plans for ESL teachers.

Language learning is influenced and shaped by culture. The author describes three fundamental concepts:

1. Language grows out of culture and represents that culture.
2. Culture is learned not inherited.
3. A language can easily be explained if we relate it to its culture (p.24).

The approach outlined in the book is the ICF (Immediate Corrective Response), self-correction, and critical reflection to guide reteaching and the resubmission of work from students. Furthermore, assessing student needs through mini lessons that do not overemphasize correction instead encourage students to engage in critical self-reflection guides revisions and academic progress at greater rates. Additionally, the author emphasizes the importance of humanizing the language acquisition process because words have their own stories, histories, and echoed the words of Lee Harper, author of *To Kill a Mockingbird* "You never really understand a person until you consider this from his point of view until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." Students' stories and experiences shared within the classroom humanizes the pedagogy and provides a deeper connection between the students, their experiences, and how they make sense of the world.

Another critical concept in the book defines ESL as teaching students English who speak another language speaks to the culture and climate needed to understand the correctness of the times. Reading instruction is used to develop the mental muscle while understanding the process. The author displays consistency with research by identifying the four areas of reading (Scan, Skim, Pre-read, and Deep Read). Utilizing these tips while allowing students to use their imaginations will spark creativity and curiosity. One of the interesting quotes states, "Read not to contradict and confute, not to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider" (pp.202). The goal for teaching English to students who speak another language is to empower them to become active participants in discovering how to respond critically and understand what is being said, expressed, or written.

The guidebook does not express the influence that native speakers have in classrooms versus non-native speakers. Also, very little is mentioned about the impact of foreign accents, oral or written presentations, and the over-emphasis of grammar which can amplify the lack of self-confidence (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). A thriving learning environment is one in which students feel appreciated and comfortable. Socio-economic politics also influence students' lives and create challenges in educational reform movements such as the emergence of dual language programs. Also, the book did not incorporate digital links to the reproducible activities to increase usability, increase participation, and assist instructors with providing meaningful feedback.

In conclusion, students have established their knowledge in their first language and may code-switch between first languages and English. Academically, they are required to write at professional levels and understand college-level books. At this stage, English is the knowledge they learn from the subject matter. The book on vocabulary, denotation, figurative meaning, mnemonics, reading, writing, grammar, and speaking function as a lesson plan template and can be an excellent resource for ESL teachers to support adult learners. Being mindful of how much time teachers have to read, the author offers an approach to language acquisition. The power of storytelling can be used to enhance the learning experiences for students. Working with students at various K-12 and college levels, creating an inclusive environment that empowers and supports their home culture and language is essential for their academic success and growth. Language is the soul of a culture, and "Memory is our internal studio, where we let our imaginations roam, where we get our new and sometimes splendid ideas, where we see a glorious future that makes us tremble" (p.196). Students need to be challenged with an appropriate level of stimulation that sparks growth and maturity. This happens when educators can respond in remarkable ways to the extreme task of educating their students by utilizing responsive strategies that incorporate focused concentration, active involvement, and critical self-reflection.

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