Reviews

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Rábano Llamas, M. F. and García Esteban, S. (Coords.) (2015). *Inglés para el Grado en Magisterio de Educación Infantil*. Universidad de Alcalá: Servicio de Publicaciones, 179 pp. ISBN: 978-84-16133-71-0

Inglés para el Grado en Magisterio de Educación Infantil (English for the Teaching Degree in Early Childhood Education) is a publication that intends to contribute to the holistic development of the future Pre-school teachers in the English language area. The book has been written by a group of professors from Universidad de Salamanca, Universidad de Huelva, UNED, the University Center Cardenal Cisneros, and Universidad de Alcalá. Their contributions come from their experiences with undergraduate pre-school teachers and current pre-school teachers in permanent education.

The six chapters of the book cover different aspects and activities that a pre-school teacher needs to know and master in order to promote the acquisition of a foreign language, in this case English, in students aged 0-6. The authors of the chapters presents their reflections and proposals in Spanish and then the tasks to be done by the teachers or students are shown in English. The work also includes a CD with the audios for the phonetic transcriptions of the first chapter. Moreover, this publication offers three resources to continue deepening in the topics covered: a specific bibliography at the end of each chapter, four annexes at the end of the book, and a complementary section about the *Total Physical Response technique* written by a vocational trainer professor from the British Council.

The first chapter deals with the basic concepts of pronunciation, accent, rhyme, stress and intonation of the English language. In the next chapter, the author proposes fifteen activities to integrate content and the second language (L2) in the Early Childhood Education. The third chapter points out how tales, myths, and legends are teaching resources that promote the acquisition of the L2 since they keep learners' attention, interest and motivation at high levels. This makes *storytelling* a useful

resource to cover interdisciplinary topics from other areas of the curriculum. In the fourth section, authors enlist resources for teaching the English language at this stage. Besides, they underline the benefit of including audio-visual and musical-visual materials and new technologies in the learning process. The fifth chapter describes two essential competences for a pre-school teacher: the communicative competence and the intercultural competence. The author proposes some exercises based on the reflexive-experiential teaching that fosterS students' autonomy and their critical and creative development throughout the learning of the English language. Finally, the book ends with a revision of the definitions and techniques related to the planning and testing of the contents and abilities of learners' abilities in the second language.

The present work represents a great contribution to the training of students of the Teaching Degree of Early Childhood Education since it considers important aspects for the development of the linguistic and teaching abilities they need to teach the English language. The tone and language used in the chapters make the content accessible to professors and future pre-school teachers. Finally, it should be emphasized that the methodologies, activities, and concepts revised in this book can also be used in primary and secondary education.

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TOPPING, K., BUCHS, C., DURAN, D., & VAN KEER, H. (2017). Effective peer learning: From principles to practical implementation. Londres: Routledge. 186 pp. ISBN: 9781138906495.

For some years now, cooperative learning has emerged as a methodology willing to transform educational practices and to contribute to the development of cooperation, core competence for the knowledge society –according to UNESCO and OECD. Numerous research studies support its potential, but there are still multiple barriers that hinder its widespread application in practice. Although a multitude of methodological proposals have been developed, it is easy to drift in a wide sea of methods and techniques. With the book *Effective peer*

learning: From principles to practical implementation, Topping, Buchs, Duran and van Keer come to rescue, offering a guide that aims at helping practitioners establish well-structured and effective peer learning projects using a variety of methods.

The book is organised into four sections. In the first section, peer learning is introduced, describing mutual interactions –cooperative and collaborative learning, in chapter 1– and directional interactions –same-age and cross-age peer tutoring, in chapter 2. In the second section, the general principles for peer learning are presented, focusing both on preparing learners for constructive interactions –chapter 3– and organising peer interactions in academic tasks –chapter 4. In the third section, practical propositions for the classroom are shown, in cooperative learning situations –chapter 5–, same-age peer tutoring situations –chapter 6– and cross-age peer tutoring situations –chapter 7. Finally, in the fourth section –corresponding to chapter 8–, conclusions and onward directions are gathered, pointing out the advantages, problems, potential and challenges of cooperative learning, and advice to maximise benefits and reduce difficulties is given.

This organisation, as the authors suggest, allows each chapter to be read separately with different purposes, focusing on cooperative learning or peer tutoring. Far from adopting a prescriptive tone, the authors manage to link theory and practice to invite the reader to reflect. A coherent and careful itinerary progressively takes us from the conceptual delimitation of cooperative learning to the practical level, through an exquisite clarity of exposition that allows integrating a wide variety of bibliographical sources and methodological proposals. The closure section puts the finishing touch, summarising the main learnings and explicitly stating their usefulness to carry out peer learning programmes successfully.

Focusing on the examples of peer learning projects, gathered in the third section of the book, it is important to highlight the wide variety of the twenty proposals, which come from different countries –United States, United Kingdom, Spain, Scotland, Mexico, Belgium, Israel, Canada, France and Switzerland– and aim at different educational stages –primary education, secondary education and university– and disciplines –reading, foreign languages, mathematics, psychology, statistics, physical education, argumentation, educational sciences and medical training. As in the other sections, it is worth mentioning the clear presentation and organisation

of the content –using tables and figures to facilitate the reader's understanding–, as well as the link between educational research and practice, which in this case takes form at the end of each proposal in a subsection which gathers scientific evidence that supports it.

In conclusion, this book is highly recommended for a wide variety of audiences: from those educational professionals who want to start using cooperative learning at any educational stage, to those who already use it and want to improve their practices, and even for those who are not convinced about is application in the classroom yet. As the authors warn, the book may have –desirably– a potential impact on the reader's environment, since the reader becomes a model for helping other people learn to use cooperative learning. In short, Topping (University of Dundee), Buchs (University of Geneva), Duran (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and van Keer (Ghent University) present a work with international projection that masterfully linking theory and practice gets to answer many professionals' concerns and encourages us to row together to progress with the implementation of cooperative learning in our classrooms.

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