Reviews

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Farrell, T. & Jacobs, G. (Eds.) (2020). *Essentials for Successful English Language Teaching (Second Edition).* **London: Bloomsbury Publishing. 192 pages. ISBN: 978-1350093393**

Essentials for Successful English Language Teaching (Second Edition) provides readers with a well-rounded insight into the significance of the eight essentials in second language education. The authors characterize how these eight techniques can be implemented within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach. The book consists of eleven chapters that can be divided into three parts. The first part is the introduction. The second part runs from Chapter Two to Chapter Nine, introducing the eight essentials in detail. The third part includes Chapter Ten and Chapter Eleven, which shows how teachers can implement the eight essentials using technology and cooperation. Moreover, final reflections on the use of the eight essentials are provided in this part.

Chapter One introduces the paradigm shift from traditional teaching methods to the CLT method. Since the implementation of the CLT is not ideal as expected, the following sections in this chapter center on how readers should really understand and implement CLT as a real paradigm shift. First, ideas concerning CLT as well as the development of it are proposed. Then the eight essentials for implementing CLT are briefly introduced and the eight essentials are related to one another. Thus, they should be treated as a whole for the successful implementation of CLT.

Chapter Two introduces the first essential: encourage learner autonomy. Learners' autonomy is a learner-centered approach to second language learning. Learners are empowered to choose some of the teaching materials and techniques during class. Meanwhile, they should also be responsible for their own learning and the learning of those with whom they interact. To implement learner autonomy, three means of enhancing learner autonomy are listed: group activities, extensive reading program, self-assessment. Group activities activate second language learners' autonomy and provide learning resources for them.

An efficient way to group learners is setting up groups heterogeneously in accordance with learners' proficiency. The application of extensive reading program is another way to help learners develop their autonomy. Students are encouraged to choose their own reading materials by their interests and proficiency level as well as develop a life-long reading habit. Self-assessment promotes learner autonomy since learners develop their own internal criteria for their class performance, which enables them to take great control of their own education. One point worth noticing is that learner autonomy is not equal to teacher indulgence. Teachers should be more flexible and become true facilitators of learning. Namely, they should be prepared to cope with difficulties during the class.

Chapter Three describes the second essential: emphasize the social nature of learning. The social nature of learning means learners should learn from each other rather than trying to learn by themselves, which means that second language learning should be contextualized and cooperative. In order to interact successfully during class activities or outside of class, both teachers and learners need to promote their cooperative learning skills. To achieve this goal, cooperative learning activities should be conducted in second language classes, among which two kinds of cooperative learning activities are listed: group work and project work. In group work, teachers and students working together have access to various ideas and different grouping techniques can also be adopted to fit particular learning situations. Project work offers teachers and students a wider opportunity to cooperate actively with group members as it helps to break down physical barriers which often separate them from cooperative learning. Focusing on social nature of learning, teachers act as observer and participant during class. Moreover, students should be given space to try to learn on their own and their roles vary depending on the situation such as facilitator, time keeper, reporter, etc.

Chapter Four articulates the third essential: develop curricular integration. Curricular integration means various subjects are taught jointly so that learners are able to understand the links between subject areas. By appreciating these links, learners gain a whole view of the subject matter and a deeper purpose for learning. There are many forms of implementing curricular integration including content based instruction, project work, developing language competence, and using Language for Specific Purposes, etc, among which the use of a variety of

multidisciplinary resources can enrich the given lesson. These resources are commonly used to teach concepts, enhance students' engagement and motivation, promote critical thinking through experiences, or represent learning in multiple forms. Teachers may act as participant or facilitator and help orchestrate the integration of resources to provide optimal opportunities for learning. Students should actively participate in the activities such as making choices about the content of study, monitoring one's own thinking and learning from multi-disciplinary perspectives.

Chapter Five introduces the fourth essential: focus on meaning. Learning is not a passive process of obtaining knowledge from teachers. Rather, learners should actively construct meaning through searching for the links between the prior experience and new experience. This is a shift from the behaviorist to socio-cognitive framework. Within the socio-cognitive framework, some of the classroom applications focusing on meaning are outlined, such as Task-Basd Language Teaching(TBLT), building meaningful vocabulary, inquiry, etc. When second language students are bewildered or uninterested in the teaching materials, teachers should construct a scaffolding to support learners. On one hand, teachers should choose appropriate textbooks to help students construct knowledge. On the other hand, a diverse range of materials beyond the textbook should be searched as the complements to the textbook. Learners should be actively engaged in activities to construct meaning by connecting new information with prior knowledge and cooperating with peers and teachers.

Chapter Six introduces the fifth essential: celebrate diversity. Diversity means that teachers recognize and celebrate learners' uniqueness and it is discussed from the following perspectives: teacher awareness, learning styles, communication styles, multiple intelligences, and cross-cultural communication. Teacher awareness means that teachers should have a clear awareness of their own reality so that they are prepared to accommodate the needs, learning preferences and styles of students. Every student has their own learning style so it poses constant challenges to teachers when they need to cater for these learning styles. Teachers can use a variety of teaching methods and grouping patterns to solve the problems. Learners' communication styles are also influenced by their background so sometimes learners' ways of talking are not in line with the communication patterns in class. Teachers should attempt to appreciate the differences and try to learn more about students' cultures.

Multiple intelligences mean learners' distinctive capabilities and interests working together during class. Teachers' instructions must be varied to match with the intelligences that are appropriate for students to develop and students in turn will also appreciate working with people in varied intelligences groups, which is thought to celebrate diversity. In cross-cultural communication, teachers face challenges because students share different cultural background. To be proficient in communication, teachers should be aware of prejudice and try to avoid prejudging in teaching. To accommodate diversity in class, teachers should spot the differences and bias as well as build cultural respect. Moreover, they should spare more time for students to consider and bloom the classroom activities. To sum up, second language teachers must gauge students' learning styles and try to accommodate diversity in class.

Chapter Seven describes the sixth essential: expand thinking skills. Learning is not a sole process of collecting lower-order facts to be remembered and then coping with exams. Rather, learning should aim to develop higher-order thinking skills, i.e., cultivating critical and creative thinking. Learners should be instructed to think about their thinking, reflect on and elevate their thoughts and beliefs. Moreover, learners should be encouraged to ask questions and behave creatively as they are producers of novelties instead of passive receivers. To expand thinking skills, teachers should be aware that language should be taught contextualized and through meaningful content, which can be fused into techniques such as question-and-answer pairs, critical writing, the SUMMER model, etc. Expanding thinking skills maintains that learners become critical thinkers and construct knowledge that goes beyond the classroom.

Chapter Eight introduces the seventh essential: utilize alternative assessment methods. The alternative assessment instruments have been applied to complement traditional assessment methods such as multiple choice, true-false, and fill-in-the-blank items which focus on lower-order thinking. Compared with traditional assessment instruments, alternative assessment instruments work on processes through which learners attain higher order thinking. These instruments are not the sole measurement while they also provide facilitative resources for learners and monitor students' competence through the learning process. Time-consuming and difficult as they are when in implementation, they are gaining prominence due to their superiority. To utilize these instruments

successfully, teachers must keep in mind that learning is a process and they should encourage students to involve themselves in it. Furthermore, teachers should develop various assessments such as portfolios, peer assessment, self-reports, etc. They are encouraged to be engaged in the assessments and discuss the learning process with students.

Chapter Nine introduces the eighth essential: promote English language teachers as co-learners. Second language teachers should establish the notion of life-long learning. They learn from students and their colleagues as well as depend more on themselves, their colleagues and students during their professional development. Just as students are given more opportunities to manage their own learning, it is the same for teachers. They as co-learners take more control of their own teaching and develop their own professional growth paths. They are encouraged to innovate through critical thinking and their own research, that is, they should also integrate the other seven essentials mentioned in the previous chapters and put them into practice in curriculum design and implementation so that they can learn how to attain the teaching objectives maximally. To embody this essential in classroom, some implications have aroused interest such as reflective practice, peer coaching, action research and other forms of classroom investigation. These classroom implications visualize teachers' role as co-learners as they may act as searchers for knowledge, researchers, models of effective learners, etc. Students should also collaborate with teachers and transform their traditional cognition towards teachers' roles in class.

Chapter Ten discusses how to facilitate the implementation of the eight essentials with the help of technology and cooperation. The advances in technology make it accessible for students and teachers to join online communities where they can create and share resources as well as catalyzes the implementation of the eight essentials within CLT. However, the negative impacts of technology should also be cautioned. Meanwhile, it poses challenges for teachers to keep up with technologies outside of class. Furthermore, the uneven distribution of technology in schools should be noticed. Cooperation is another activator for the implementation of the eight essentials. Teachers cooperating with their peers gain better understanding of the principles behind effective groups and employ reflective practice through which they receive feedback and direct their future teaching.

Chapter Eleven draws this book to a conclusion. First, the eight essentials are reviewed and integrated. In order to successfully implement these eight essentials within CLT, the authors state that second language teachers and learners should take a whole view of them since they are connected and dependent on each other. Second, having taken a big picture of the eight essentials, teachers are encouraged to reflect on their work. They introspect whether the eight essentials are fused into the classroom and how they can implement the eight essentials as a synergistic whole within CLT.

Evaluation

As the title suggests, this book mainly introduces how the eight essentials contribute to successful English language teaching. The authors have achieved their intentions through the well-structured layout in the book. Concerning the introduction of the eight essentials, they first create a real-life context in class to introduce the topic at the beginning of each chapter, which orients the readers' attention towards the essentials. Then the interpretations of the essentials are introduced to make readers take an in-depth knowledge of them. After interpreting the essentials, the book comes to the central part. Classroom implications including the activities and the learning environment congruent with the essentials are introduced. This part gives examples of how the essentials can be implemented in the classroom. The following section shows the teachers' role and learners' role to make the essentials better implemented. Finally, questions are proposed to make teachers reflect on themselves. The layout of each chapter enables teachers to take a whole view of the essentials. i.e., what are they, why should they be fused into class and how can they be successfully implemented in class?

This book is written in the hope that readers will carefully consider the eight essentials and form their own ideas and paths, especially EFL or ESL teachers. They will find the book valuable as they will maintain a sense of fulfillment through collaboration with their colleagues and students as well as reflect on themselves once the eight essentials are implemented as a whole in class. This book is also applicable to other second language teachers as the eight essentials are essential in language learning classrooms.

The eight essentials are quite fit well with the principles within the CLT. Neither of the essentials is exclusive to the CLT principles. As Richards &

Rodgers (2008) advocate, the principles of CLT view language learning from the communicative view and can be the scaffolding of a variety of classroom procedures. The implementation of the eight interconnected essentials is the reflection of the CLT principles, indicating learners' independence and contribution through active collaboration with their peers, active construct of knowledge through curriculum integration and inclusiveness for diversity, as well as fluent communication through various forms of assessment and teachers' participation.

When it comes to the deficiency of the book, it will be more perfect if modules of lesson plan are included. As theories and essentials are introduced in the book, it is necessary to put them into practice. Spratt et al. (2011) hold, "a lesson plan is a set of notes that helps us to think through what we are going to teach and how we are going to teach it" (p.133). It reflects what teachers want learners to do and how they enable learners to do it. The lesson plan should reveal how the eight essentials are penetrated through the teaching procedures and how they serve the teaching objectives. The lesson plan activates the eight essentials within CLT, and thus makes them more vivid as readers will explicitly perceive how the eight essentials run through the whole lessons successfully, which strengthens readers' understanding of the eight essentials and apply them in second language teaching.

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