

THE PRACTICE OF
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
TEACHING

Jeremy Harmer



www.longman.com

THIRD EDITION
COMPLETELY REVISED AND UPDATED

THE PRACTICE OF
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
TEACHING

THIRD EDITION
COMPLETELY REVISED AND UPDATED

Jeremy Harmer



The Practice of English Language Teaching

by

Jeremy Harmer

3rd Edition

Product details

- **Paperback:** 370 pages
- **Publisher:** Longman Pearson Education ESL; 3rd edition (April 10, 2001)
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 0582403855
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0582403857
- **Product Dimensions:** 7.5 x 0.7 x 9.7 inches

The Third Edition of this text incorporates a broader and more detailed analysis of issues relevant to language teachers. *The Practice of English Language Teaching* is full of practical suggestions and samples from actual teaching materials.

Preface

When the last edition of *The Practice of English Language Teaching* was being written some schools used computers for word processing, and there were a few language games and simulations available on floppy disks. But that was about it. In what seems like a ridiculously short space of time, however, all that has changed. Computers are now, for teachers and students, the gateways to a wealth of information, contacts, and activities. The use of the Internet has mushroomed – indeed some countries have wired up their entire public education systems – and the technology for self study, language laboratories, and computer corpora has developed far beyond what many had anticipated.

Such advances are only the most visible signs of progress in a profession which, thank goodness, refuses to stand still. The teaching of English is in a constant state of flux, with new theories, practices, and materials erupting all over the world on an almost daily basis. We are constantly challenged by new research, provoked by the questioning of long-held beliefs, and amazed by the sheer brilliance and creativity of a diverse population of teachers, methodologists, materials designers – and, of course, students – from all over the globe. In a world where certain values are immutable, and where the qualities that make a good teacher may well be universal, change is nevertheless the lifeblood of our profession. To quote David Crystal in another context, ‘we know something is alive when we see it move’.

A book about language teaching methodology has to change too, to take account of all this movement. Since the last edition of *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, there have been many new areas of research and innovation, quite apart from the growth in computer use in teaching and learning. Large corpora have allowed experts to tell us much more about the different grammars for spoken and written English, and now have incontrovertible evidence about the way language chunks itself into phrases of various kinds. Attitudes to language study both in and outside the classroom have been modified too, with serious attempts to put at least one model of language teaching (Presentation, Practice, and Production) firmly in its place. The role of English in our modern world has been the subject of much debate, as has been a growing awareness that language teaching methodology is often as culturally-specific as the cultures it springs from and cannot, therefore, be exported without taking account of where it is headed. At the same time our profession has realised that developing teachers themselves is part of the way they can offer more to their learners whilst at the same time enriching their own lives.

All of these contemporary issues are reflected in this new edition, which also looks (with I hope a fresh eye) at a range of familiar topics, from motivation to the roles of the teacher, from classroom management to feedback and correction. There are completely new chapters on teaching pronunciation, language testing, coursebooks, and learner autonomy/teacher development. The example activities have been taken from up-to-date materials, and the references and bibliography are intended to reflect much of our current states of knowledge and enthusiasm.

This book is aimed at practising teachers and those studying on in-service training programmes and postgraduate courses. In that, it differs significantly from its sister volume, *How to Teach English*, which is designed specifically for those wanting a more gentle introduction to the science and art of teaching English.

Acknowledgements

The first two editions

The first edition of *The Practice of English Language Teaching* all those years ago could not have been written without the input and reaction of teacher colleagues and students at the Instituto Anglo-Mexicano de Cultura both in Mexico City and Guadalajara. They, and the trainees I worked with there, shaped the structure and content of that first edition.

At the very beginning I benefited greatly from help, advice, and reports given by Walter Plumb, Jean Pender, Richard Rossner, Donn Byrne and Jane Willis. Tim Hunt commissioned the book and Judith King edited it.

For the second edition, I was inspired by comments from Richard Rossner, Julian Edge, and Nick Dawson, and spurred on by Damien Tunnacliffe, who together with Helena Gomm and Alyson Lee saw the work through to its completion.

This new edition

Since the publication of the first edition I have had the great good fortune to work with teachers both in the UK and in many other parts of the world. Their responses and concerns, and the enormous amount I have learnt from attending their papers and workshops, led directly to the second edition of the book and have heavily influenced this new version, as have the many teachers around the world whose lessons I have been privileged to observe, and the students I have had the chance to work with.

As this new edition has gone through its various drafts to emerge in this, its final form, a number of people have directly helped the process in many varied and thought-provoking ways.

First among these – and someone to whom I owe a real debt of gratitude – is Martin Parrott, whose advice, encouragement, robust criticism and suggestions have been a feature of the writing process from the very beginning of the project. His unerring ability to spot problems of both style or substance saved me from many mishaps and inspired me to go further than I might otherwise have done.

Sally Blackmore's reports gave a clear, penetrating account of what the manuscript looked like from the point of view of the kind of reader it is especially designed for. She reminded me of what readers like that really need and I am forever in her debt.

Hanna Kijowska's report on part of the manuscript came just at the right time. She was able to bring a unique perspective to her reading of the material, helping me to sort out issues of level and focus. Her influence in the final version of those chapters is strong.

When Katie Head looked at the last third of the book she had little trouble pointing up problems and many roads not taken. Her comments challenged and inspired me, providing just the kind of creative tension that every writer hopes for from his or her reporters.

Thanks are also due to Kip Téllez and David Bowker whose reports helped to guide the book's development in a number of different ways.

Not only have I been blessed with such reporters, but I also got the best editor possible! Brigit Viney's detailed reading of the text and her clear-headed suggestions for how to improve it kept the process going. Without her this book would not be like it is.

Behind all of these people, however, has been my publisher David Lott, who believed in this project from the start, guided it, dealt with all the difficulties I put in his way, read the manuscript many times, and saved me from countless infelicities. Not only that, but he managed to keep me going at times when things got tough. This book exists because of him.

A number of people have generously answered questions, given me their time, or provided me with references I could not find, including Paul Cane, Gillie Cunningham, Chris George, Roger Gower, Kenny Graham, Peter Grundy, Katie Plumb, Michael Rundell, Michael Swan, and Douglas Workman.

When you are writing on your own, you need someone to bounce ideas off, and someone to ask for advice and guidance. As with the previous editions of this book, Anita Harmer has generously provided such counsel, listened to an author's moans and groans, and put up with the whole thing. To her are due heartfelt thanks.

But at the end of everything, the responsibility for what is in this edition of *The Practice of English Language Teaching* is, of course, mine. Where it works all of these people should take the credit, both jointly and severally. If there are places where it does not, it is almost certainly because I did not heed their advice carefully enough.

Jeremy Harmer
Cambridge, UK