
REVIEWS

TESOL Quarterly welcomes evaluative reviews of publications relevant to TESOL professionals.

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Understanding Expertise in Teaching: Case Studies of ESL Teachers.

A. B. M. Tsui. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Pp. xii + 308.

■ What exactly constitutes professional expertise is a topic of inquiry that has been addressed by the field of cognitive psychology but has remained relatively underexplored in language teaching. In *Understanding Expertise in Teaching: Case Studies of ESL Teachers*, Amy B. M. Tsui presents a “multiple and distributed” (p. 281) model of expertise for the field of TESOL. Apart from the introductory and concluding chapters, Tsui’s book is divided into two major sections: a review of literature (chapters 2–4) and an in-depth case study of four English teachers in a Hong Kong secondary school (chapters 5–9) who are in different stages of professional development.

The predominance of cognitive processing approaches in studies of expertise is apparent both in Tsui’s discussion of general conceptions of expertise (chapter 2) and in her presentation of existing studies of characteristics of expert and novice teachers (chapter 3). In chapter 4, she discusses some limitations of the information-processing model in understanding teacher expertise, and she presents a number of alternatives, which emphasize teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge (i.e., their subject matter knowledge and their ability to represent that knowledge to their students) as well as their practical, context-situated knowledge. Tsui’s own qualitative analysis addresses the very context-bound circumstances of teacher practice.

Tsui triangulates data from multiple sources: nonparticipant classroom observations, audio- and videorecorded and supplemented by field notes; regular semistructured interviews with teachers; and, in some

cases, interviews with students. In addition to providing detailed information about procedures related to her data collection and analysis, she carefully documents the ethical dilemmas associated with this type of ethnographic research. Furthermore, her discussion of these methodological considerations is framed by a rich, thick description of the larger linguistic context of Hong Kong, the context of the particular secondary school (the immediate setting of the study), and the backgrounds of the four teachers who are the focus of this study.

Tsui provides clear, specific examples and uses judiciously selected excerpts from observation transcripts and interviews to illustrate teacher knowledge on various levels, from classroom management to management of resources. She also discusses ways in which her four focal teachers differ in their understanding and implementation of the school's ESL curriculum, in particular focusing on teachers' experience with and perceptions of a curricular innovation: a process approach to writing. For Tsui, it is not only what teachers do in a classroom, but also "their conceptions and understanding" (p. 247) of those practices that help to define them as experts or nonexperts. Furthermore, drawing on specific examples of her case study teachers, Tsui argues that teacher expertise should not be viewed as a unitary construct, but rather as "multiple" and "distributed" (p. 281).

Although Tsui's analysis is informed by multiple data sources, conspicuously absent are external measures of achievement for the students of the four focal teachers in the study. This is particularly disappointing, given that in her introduction, Tsui herself proposes that student scores on public examinations may be "one relevant criterion for identifying expert teachers" (p. 5). Another limitation of the analysis is the underemphasis on the pivotal role of the school's principal in providing support and opportunities for the four focal teachers to further their professional development and in encouraging them to pursue positions of leadership within the school's organizational structure. Finally, it would have been useful for Tsui to provide, particularly for those readers who are less familiar with secondary-level English education in Hong Kong, some idea of the overall representativeness of the setting and practices of the private Christian school that is the site of the study. In spite of these limitations, however, Tsui's descriptive study is commendable in its scope and in its contribution to the literature on teacher expertise.

In contrast with earlier teaching expertise studies, which employed either laboratory tasks or elicitations of teachers' thought processes, Tsui's ethnographic study, in its emphasis on "the ways in which . . . teachers relate to their specific contexts of work and make sense of their work as teachers" (p. 246), offers a refreshing perspective on the subject.

This book will undoubtedly be of interest to teacher educators as well as ESL-EFL teachers and language program administrators.

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Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing.

Barbara Kroll (Ed.). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xvi + 342.

■ More than 10 years ago, I taught a course on L2 writing and used *Second Language Writing* (1990), edited by Barbara Kroll, mostly because it was the only text available. Since then, the field has exploded: It abounds with research, several introductory textbooks, and a dedicated journal. When I taught the course again more than 5 years later, the Kroll text was out of date, yet I wanted to complement my basic textbook with topics and authors that provided different perspectives. In the years that followed, I nagged Barbara Kroll about a second edition of her anthology. It is finally here, but rather than a second edition, it is an entirely new collection, covering the subfield of L2 writing. Each of the authors, all widely acknowledged experts, presents the state of the art in a specific area of L2 writing. For the most part, the selections are concise, accessible, and useful, focusing on general findings of research to date and their implications, rather than on specific findings or studies. Though none of the pieces could be called hands-on, most are directly or indirectly useful for practicing teachers as well as researchers. The volume would serve as a good complement to a more general text, such as Ferris and Hedgcock's *Teaching ESL Composition* (1998). The one loss in the new volume is that, unlike Kroll's first book, it contains no empirical studies.

The first section provides a context for the rest of the book. Paul Kei Matsuda traces the history of the field, focusing in particular on the disciplinary divide between composition and TESOL. Charlene Polio outlines approaches to research in L2 writing, an excellent entry point for those new to the field. Rather than present research findings, she addresses what variables (e.g., text complexity, revision processes) researchers have looked at and what empirical approaches they have taken (e.g., text analysis, surveys, think-aloud protocols). The second section concerns stakeholders and offers more personal accounts from teachers about their instructional preferences and journeys as L2 writers themselves (chapters by Alister Cumming, Tony Silva, and others).