

**DIANE LARSEN-FREEMAN, 2000.**  
**TECHNIQUES AND PRINCIPLES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING.**  
**SECOND EDITION. OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 189 PP.**

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This second edition of *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* constitutes a revised, updated and enlarged version of the author's original book published in 1986. The first edition has been for years one of the books most widely used by students, practitioners and teacher educators in the area of language teaching. The main goal of the book is to present the different methods that have outlined the history of language teaching methodology throughout the years and, particularly, in the second part of the twentieth century. The term 'method' in this work is defined by the author as "a coherent set of links between actions and thoughts in language teaching" (1), and hence the title of the book, as it uses the term *techniques* to refer to 'actions', and *principles* to encompass 'thoughts'. Additionally, the book aims not only to present a variety of techniques but also to encourage their implementation by providing suggestions and indications for their practical classroom application.

The different methods are introduced by 'entering' a fictional classroom where each method is being practised, as the author believes that 'observing' a class will give the reader a greater understanding of each particular method and offer wider opportunities to reflect on them. By doing so, readers are exposed to the specific techniques and the teacher's behavior and actions within each method. However, as the author points out, these classroom encounters are idealized and belong to a non-real world in which students always catch on quickly and teachers do not have to contend with the many

management matters of real-life instruction. Nevertheless, I consider this strategy of depicting an imaginary classroom as highly interesting since some of the methods may be perceived as difficult to comprehend by readers unless a practical referential framework is offered. Once each lesson has been 'observed', the principles on which the teacher's techniques and behavior are based are inferred and stated. After the principles have been identified, a series of questions is asked and answered for each particular method, thus providing information about the goals and roles of teachers and students, the characteristics of the teaching/learning process, the nature of the student-teacher and student-student interaction, the attitudes of the students, the perceived view of language and culture, the linguistic areas and skills emphasized, the role of the students' native language, the accomplishment of evaluation, and the teacher's response to student errors. Following these specifications, the techniques used are reviewed and—in some cases—, expanded so as to provide further information for eventual application. In the conclusion to each chapter, the reader is asked about the potential of the information provided for practical use, thus encouraging us to view the methods through the filter of one's own beliefs, needs, knowledge and experience. Additionally, two types of exercises are included at the end of each chapter. The first type allows the reader to check their initial understanding of the method presented, whereas the second type requires the reader to relate it to their own teaching situation. Each chapter ends with a complete list of references and additional resources for further reading.

The innovations of the new edition have had hardly any impact on the initial chapters, which have merely been updated and very slightly modified, with the exception of Chapter 6, which originally was strictly focused on *Suggestopedia*, and has now been thoroughly revised so as to reflect the evolution of this method toward what has been defined as *Desuggestopedia*. The substantial modifications of the book are mainly perceived in the last part of it, for which two new chapters have been added to accommodate the treatment of a number of approaches and strategies mostly developed in the last fifteen years. These have been grouped around single chapters considering what the issues have in common, and with the intention of not making a second edition that would double the length of the first one. The final structure is made up of twelve chapters, the first and last ones being the introduction and conclusion, and integrating the chapters in-between (2 to 11) the body of the book. Chapter 2 is focused on the Grammar-Translation Method; Chapter 3 on the Direct Method; Chapter 4 on the Audiolingual Method; Chapter 5 on the Silent Way; Chapter 6 on Desuggestopedia; Chapter 7 on Community Language Learning, Chapter 8 on Total Physical Response; Chapter 9 on Communicative Language Teaching; Chapter 10 on Content-based, Tasks-based, and Participatory Approaches; and Chapter 11 on Learning

Strategy Training, Cooperative Learning, and Multiple Intelligences. As Chapters 10 and 11 are the ones which cover the most updated trends in teaching methodology, I consider that they deserve a more individual review.

Chapter 10 deals with three innovative approaches which, having the principles of Communicative Language Teaching as a common basis, also share the goal of teaching through communication rather than for it. Content-based instruction integrates the learning of a language with the learning or appreciation of some other content, often academic subject matter. The rationale for this approach derives from well-established educational paradigms such as immersion education, languages for specific purposes, and the 'language across the curriculum' movement. The model is illustrated in the book by the description of an international school class in which both English as a foreign language and geography are taught and learnt through content-based instruction. By means of the customary procedure of relating individual observations extracted from the fictional class with their corresponding theoretical underpinnings, the principles that underlie the paradigm are clearly stated in an organized taxonomy which synthesizes the fundamentals of the approach. Additionally, some more academic insights into the approach are also included.

Task-based instruction —the second approach described within this chapter— is presented through a class in which young students fulfil the task of completing a timetable. Once again, features inferred from the fictional observation of the class are linked with the underlying principles of the methodological paradigm. TBI foundations lie on the belief that it is highly beneficial for students to be provided with a natural context for language use by means of the completion of assigned tasks which offer both a perceived purpose and a clear outcome, as well as abundant opportunity for student-student and student-teacher interaction and negotiation using the target language. Although tasks are used in mainstream Communicative Language Teaching classes as a common pedagogical activity, their focus being task completion, in the task-based lesson, however, it is not only the task's product or result that is important, but also the language used in the process itself. As in the section devoted to the content-based approach, after the reflection on the experience, some more detailed theoretical information and references are also provided.

The third methodological proposal within this chapter is the participatory approach, which constitutes a less common paradigm similar in some ways to the previously described content-based approach. Although both models rely on meaningful content as the basis from which formal, lexical and skills development activities derive, the originality of the participatory approach lies in the nature of the content itself, which is not embedded in subject matter texts, as in CBI, but rather based on issues of concern to students. Originally,

the participatory approach was developed in the early 1960s in Brazil, in a native-language literacy program for non-educated population, and since then, it has developed multiple variations in different contexts always sharing the common goal of helping students —mainly adults who lack formal education— to understand the social, historical, or cultural forces that affect their lives. The underlying principle is the belief that education is most effective when it is experience-centered and when it relates to students' real needs. The recurrent pattern of class observation and principle association is successfully used once more to match procedural features with their theoretical rationale.

Chapter 11 deals again with three methodological innovations: learning strategy training, cooperative learning, and multiple intelligences. What these three paradigms have in common differs from those explored in the previous chapter in that the main concern of these is with the language learner and not with the pedagogical applications. For this reason, as the author states, 'Because of their different focus, they complement, rather than challenge, those found in Chapter 10' (159). Although these innovations do not constitute comprehensive methods in the conventional sense, they reflect interesting and enduring methodological practices which reasonably justify their presentation.

The foundations of training in strategy learning —the first of the models described— are based on the realization that, in order to maximize students' potential and contribute to their autonomy, language learners need training in learning strategies. The imaginary experience reported is based on the teaching of a learning strategy called 'advanced organization', which will help students to improve their reading skills in terms of both comprehension and speed. After describing the lecture, the experience is examined in the usual manner —observations on the left, matching principles on the right—. Additional information about the typology and purposes of strategies are included in a subsequent short though clarifying section. The second model is cooperative or collaborative learning, which essentially involves students learning from each other in groups. It has to be said, however, that —as the author points out—, it is not the group configuration that makes cooperative learning distinctive; it is the way that students and teachers work together that is important. In cooperative learning, teachers teach students collaborative or social skills so that they can work together in a more effective manner. The principles of this trend are, as usual, inferred from the observation of a class working —24 young students in a second language context— and, once again, additional explanations are provided. It is important to point out the author's insistence on the complementarity of the trends in the Chapter and the ones presented in the previous one. The last methodological innovation considered in Chapter 11 is multiple intelligences, an approach 'in which teachers expand

beyond language, learning strategy, and social skills training, to address other qualities of language learners' (169). The rationale for the model is based on the recognition that students have different learning and cognitive styles, and bring with them specific and unique strengths which are often not taken into account in classroom situations. These personal capabilities have been defined as seven distinct 'multiple intelligences': logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and verbal/linguistic. Although everyone might possess these seven intelligences, it is believed that they are not equally developed individually. For this reason, this perspective proposes the plan of lessons not only to promote language acquisition among students with diverse capabilities, but also to help them realize their own full potential with all seven intelligences. It has to be pointed out that this final section only follows the customary procedure partially, as the matching column method for relating practices with theoretical explanations is not used here. The example of the imaginary classroom is presented, however, once again.

Further substantial modification is also found in the conclusion chapter which, from just an 'epilogue' in the first edition, has evolved into a complete chapter of its own in the new one. This section includes a referential chart in which the methods discussed are summarized and their major differences are explicitly highlighted.

*Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* is, in short, a highly informative book, as it provides an exploration of methods in which complex pedagogical issues are presented with great clarity in a well-structured organization. It can be particularly interesting for students and new teachers, as it offers a practical, not too technical overview of the evolution of methodology throughout the years. For more experienced teachers and educators it can also be of relevance, as it introduces organized and coordinated information and references about recent methodological innovations whose literature is usually found independently.

Anecdotally, I cannot finish this review without mentioning the most solomonic decision made by the author in order to cope with political correctness in terms of gender reference, for which she has decided to assume that the fictional teacher is female in even-numbered chapters, and male in the odd-numbered ones. A wise though most curious decision that by no means alters the quality of the work.