

To the Teacher

Flexibility is a vital concept in a student centered, holistic, task-based approach. Every language student has different proficiency, confidence, motivation and attitudes to learning, so that it is unrealistic to expect everyone to learn the same thing at the same time. However, it is possible to provide an infrastructure within which effective learning can be promoted and encouraged. This book attempts to provide such an infrastructure, designed to work hand-in-hand with a flexible teacher-figure who acts as a facilitator of learning, a language resource, and a founder and maintainer of a non-threatening learning environment.

Central to this approach is the individual growth of the student, in terms of cognitive, affective, social, cultural, and linguistic development. The tasks and activities in this book therefore help students to build their self-esteem, irrespective of their language level. Every page offers opportunities for small successes, from which effective learning can emerge.

Another goal is the promotion of higher-order thinking skills. These include problem-solving, critical thinking, analysis, deduction, inference, summarizing, and creativity. The sections in this book encourage students to think for themselves, solve puzzles and riddles, negotiate role-play situations, discuss important issues and participate in meaningful debates. These activities enhance thinking skills and help students to think ‘outside of the box.’

Keywords for the teachers are: Confidence, Motivation, Independence and Flexibility. Students who are confident, motivated and independent will be good language learners inside and outside the classroom, while flexibility refers to the role of the teacher in facilitating appropriate learning experiences. A flexible teacher is able to monitor students, assess their learning needs and guide them onto tasks that are suitable for them. This Teacher’s Guide gives suggestions on how this can be done, through group work, individual effort, collaboration, and mutual respect.

Teachers are encouraged to give students a significant measure of freedom in their task-work, getting away from the factory model of learning that treats everyone as identical items to be turned out in a predictable manner. Instead, every student can be helped along an individual path of learning, measured and improved by ongoing participation and meaningful reflection.

Putting all these ideas together, the following pages explain how the activities in this book can promote this approach and make learning enjoyable, challenging, and meaningful. This *Teacher’s Guide* offers page-by-page commentary and advice, as well as useful teaching-input, in the form of hints, ideas and suggestions for effectively maximizing the learning experience.

