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Book Review

Team Teaching and Team Learning in the Language Classroom: Collaboration for Innovation for ELT, by Akira Tajino, Tim Stewart, and David Dalsky (Eds.), London, Routledge, 2016, 216 pp., $185.00 (Hardcover), ISBN 978-1-13857-600-1

This book provides a timely overview of the practice of team learning and addresses collaborations in a variety of EFL/ESL contexts. The book has three sections. In the first section, two introductory chapters focus on characterizing ELT collaborations and innovations. The second section consists of five chapters on team teaching collaborations; the third section presents five chapters on collaboration and innovations beyond traditional team teaching. The entirety of the book embraces the construct of team learning as is clearly set out in the foreword, which emphasizes the important social nature of education, as opposed to the tendency toward individual competitiveness that is ever present in educational institutions worldwide.

Section one maps out the territory to be covered in the book by situating collaboration, team teaching, learning and innovation in EFL practice. Innovation of some sort has been demanded in all sectors of society in the recent decades of accountability ushered in centrally to meet performance guidelines. The privileged status of English has moved curriculum to more English and English-mediated instruction, both of which require practical knowledge and training in pedagogy. Collaboration is seen as one way of linking theory and practice, but the introduction of educational innovations in the classroom, that will also promote collaboration among teachers and learners, is considered a highly complex undertaking. This process requires contextualization and a focus on human interaction in order to avoid further loss of cultural ground to technocratic efficiency, which on one level or another is addressed in the articles presented. Chapter 2 merges more recent research on Exploratory Practice (EP) with a value-centered team learning model that aims at enhancing intercultural communication skills. The figures illustrate the various formulations the team may take and the patterns of communication likely to result. Quality of life in the classroom, the first principle of EP, "challenges the more common expression of the 'work/life balance', suggesting that instead of a dichotomy, life and work in the language classroom should be seen as one" (Hanks, 2015 p. 4). This principle is prioritized for all participants as they navigate their learning goals together in the classroom.

The second section in this volume brings together articles on five team teaching collaborations. Chapter 3 challenges students to mediate an imaginary wall between their Japanese teacher and a native-English speaking assistant. The students were expected to report the speech of one teacher to the other by changing the utterance from the first-person to the third-person verb form. The method employed is conversation analysis through video recording and relates the resulting formulations to the figures mentioned above, referencing the process to Vygotsky's ZPD and emphasizing collaboration with more capable peers. Having said that, the author observes the activity was designed to cover a discrete point of grammar (third person singular verb form in the present tense, i.e., She *likes* soccer) so in as much as it was a rule-bound pattern of interaction, genuine communication was not achieved. The range of vocabulary was also limited in the activity, though collaboration was evident in the microanalysis, and thus future research should address both longitudinal concerns and applications to learners above a beginner level. Chapter 4 uses qualitative data to explore collaboration and barriers between secondary

EFL teachers and content teachers in Hong Kong. The author analysed a rich set of data to examine how collaborative approaches are shaped and constrained by social practices, such as teaching philosophy and teacher identity. Team teaching is paired with international development in Chapter 5, which introduces how this process works to support the mission of the Peace Corps, where volunteers serve two years in a country after an initial training program of three months. Additional TEFL training curriculum is offered and after the pre-service training period the volunteers are assigned to a local counterpart in the community where they both serve as teachers. The movement toward deliberate classroom collaboration has resulted in further reflection on the dynamics of the team-teaching relationship. Chapter 6 explains the top-down introduction of team teaching in Japan and the stereotypical view of native and non-native speakers' roles, but shifts the focus to the important issues of overcoming a 'deficit model,' i.e. the reason for one teacher's presence in the class is to make up for a deficit of the other. The authors also propose a change in mind-set through in-service training programs that specifically address issues in team teaching such as its purpose and potential. The results are promising and long overdue. Chapter 7 shifts the research location again to Hong Kong and focuses on use of content-based instruction to promote L2 science literacy. This study compares the experimental treatment of interdisciplinary collaboration using adjunct afterschool courses as the intervention. The collaboration achieved significant results, but tension between beliefs and expectations of science and English teachers was also in evidence. The authors suggest that interdisciplinary collaboration in content-based instruction requires further professional development and role awareness.

Section three segues into a focus on collaborative innovations beyond teaching. Chapter 8 argues for collegial collaboration. Here two scholars intertwined their autobiographical experiences with non-judgmental communication and communication technologies (ICT). Their narratives share the common framework of Cooperative Development, and explore the potential it offers for professional training, interaction and exchange within the growing demands of ICT. Chapter 9 addresses the dynamics of team learning both in the classroom and at the administrative level, and how the two dynamics interact. The founding of an institution and its programme to offer degrees in English, through subject-area and interdisciplinary course work teamed with content-based language support, provide the context for this auto-ethnographic approach to self-reflective inquiry. The author carefully notes the learning environment at this international college is in no way typical of a standard Japanese university. The analysis is framed by the author's conception of communities of practice (CoP), composed of team members engaged in identity-forming social learning experiences in the classroom, and in governance and committee work. This expands the concept of the team to embrace the challenges now shared by students, teachers and administrators. Chapter 10 investigates the same institution in Japan, but here through the standpoint of an integrated curriculum. This chapter argues that a multi-dimensional curriculum design (MCD) coupled with CEFR guidelines and *The European Language Portfolio* (ELP) will lead to a new vision of content and language integrated learning (CLIL). The authors report on their own two-person teaching team which promotes autonomous learning, and instills this consciousness in the students along the lines of the 'can do' manner of self-assessment in Europe. The internal processing of language and the relational roles of teaching and learning are fused together. This is taken a step further in an effort to integrate a seamless blend of content and learning, which promotes language objectives and active task-based learning while mitigating distinctions of the two goals. Chapter 11 uses technology to support learner collaboration "virtually" over two continents. Students at a leading university in Finland and another in Japan were instructed to work with a partner and produce an essay on a topic that compared and contrasted an aspect of their cultures. Google Docs was used as the format for the collaboration. This exploratory practice revealed technological and academic culture issues that required further attention. The first design did not explicitly address how the students would work through the process. A second exploration with more detailed instruction and clear deadlines in the writing process yielded qualitative data of further interest and addressed the logistical challenges associated with using social network applications as a means of intercultural collaboration. Chapter 12 brings another aspect of team learning into focus by engaging peer mentoring as a tool for professional development. Identity and activity theory are used to explore a case

study in Vietnam with extensive qualitative data. The results strongly support the need to provide beginning teachers additional opportunities for feedback and reflection at this crucial point of their career. Moreover, beginning teachers and mentors both shared in the observed and observer roles. This encouraged further reflection and highlights the need to provide training in mentoring skills, and thus create the mutual engagement essential to nurturing a positive professional identity.

The concept of the "co-construction of the lesson" in the team learning format presented in this volume requires the participants to cognitively address, welcome or accept their agency in the process. It is not entirely clear in every chapter of the book how or to what extent this was accomplished. Thus, in practice, the important foundation set out in section one, if explained at the start of a second or foreign language course in the learners' L1 language, particularly in cultures with a teacher-centered classroom environment, would help inspire trust and collegiality among the participants. In addition, at times I had trouble keeping up with the acronyms used in the articles. Although the many acronyms were clearly introduced at their first usages in the text, I would have appreciated a list of all the acronyms in the index to facilitate the reading process.

In addition to the articles touched on above, the volume features a compelling foreword by Dick Allwright, a leading scholar of exploratory practice, in which he brings together a more active and productive conception of collaboration termed 'collegiality'. The chapters in this book explore innovation as a cohesive social endeavor. The contexts discussed are predominantly EFL classrooms in Asia in various schools and levels of education and learner proficiency, but the articles also offer insights applicable to other second language acquisition settings. In addition to being practical and informative, it takes an admirable stand in the philosophical debate that pits competition against collaborative educational practices.

References

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