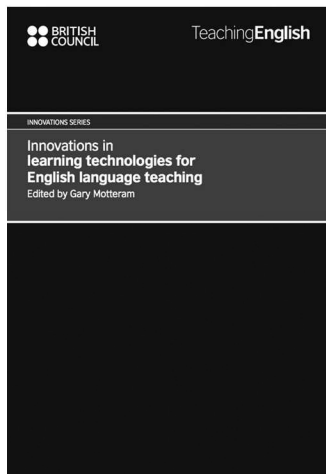


Innovations in learning technologies for English language teaching

Motteram, G. (Ed.)(2013). London: British Council, p. 201

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If economic crises are good for anything, it is for making us realise the importance of achieving better results with fewer resources. In the particular case of English language learning and teaching (ELT), this realization has accelerated an existing willingness to embrace innovation. Hence, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the classroom - whether as a physical place or as a virtual realm - is now the norm, rather than the exception. Practitioners, students, and the wider educational community are coping with a host of new concepts such as, 'extended classrooms', 'blended learning', or 'Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)', to name but a few. That is the reason why this book's topic might be enormously attractive for teachers and school administrators dealing with a changing educational playing field.

«Innovations in learning technologies for English language teaching», edited by Gary Motteram as part of the British Council Innovation Series, addresses two of the hottest trends in Education right now, bilingualism and educational ICT. Motteram attempts to offer a broad and systematic view of a quickly diversifying discipline, thus coming to fill in a void in the Computer Aided Language Learning (CALL) literature. Therefore, the book is organized into separate chapters that compile some of the current theoretical research, illustrating it through several practical case studies for different ELT contexts: Primary Education, Secondary Education, Adult Learners, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), with a final chapter on Assessment, before the concluding epilogue.

It is commendable that this book recognizes the criticality of context for the applicability of ICT in ELT. Additionally, it serves the purpose of providing a broad and systematic overview that is also useful from the practical standpoint. However, there is still some

work to be done by the ELT community to determine which categories and contexts deserve separate consideration. For instance, the authors' decision to include Adult Learners as separate from the ESP and ASP sections leads to an important degree of overlap in the corresponding chapters. Also, with the exception of Standardized Testing, it is problematic to consider Assessment as a separate context. This becomes evident in the case studies embedded in Chapter 6, which lack a clear focus on evaluation and could have been included in a different chapter.

Despite the former almost unavoidable flaws of the book, this is an excellent introductory text if one is interested in the topic but cannot devote much time to becoming an expert. Regular classroom teachers interested in particular contexts will find the short chapters and wide range of case studies very useful. In that respect, it is a much better choice than other works on the topic, which are either too academic and theoretical or just ICT 'recipes' without giving any thought to their applicability to particular contexts. In conclusion, given its usability and present day relevance, you should consider getting a copy.