REVIEW ESSAY


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Ramage’s book covers the main areas that every teacher needs to know when teaching a foreign language class. Her book is divided into ten chapters which cover topics such as reasons why students should take foreign language classes, lesson planning, the four main language skills, grammar, using the language in class, assessment of students, and exploitation of real-life language learning opportunities.

This book has many strengths which make it a great edition to every teacher’s collection. To begin, Ramage begins by discussing why it is important to increase the profile of language learning in a school so that students continue to keep motivation. Secondly, she covers long-term and medium-term planning in addition to teaching individual lessons. In addition, she describes how to teach the four language skills while giving excellent activities and suggestions for differentiation. For those teachers who are new to the profession, having practical suggestions for multilevel classes could be a real life-saver. Finally, her recommendations for assessment range from making marking manageable, to informal in-class assignments, to individual feedback, to reporting to parents.

Although, Ramage’s book explains assessment quite well, it does not discuss portfolio-based assessment. Also, she unfortunately did not choose to devote an entire chapter to vocabulary learning. I find this surprising because there is a lot of professional second-language literature devoted to this very topic. Rather than treating it as an area of study in its own right, she describes some vocabulary learning techniques dispersed throughout the book. Unfortunately one piece of vocabulary learning advice that Ramage recommends is not supported by the literature. She asks that teachers introduce synonyms and antonyms when teaching a new word. This strategy, although commonly suggested, has proven to confuse learners by increasing the word’s learning burden (Nation, 2008, p. 108).

Overall, the book is an excellent resource for those who are new to the profession, those heading overseas, or those teaching heritage language learners.
Reference: