

In chapter 5, “Language Acquisition: Methods and Tools”, the writer talks about mental faculty and language acquisition. She then moves on to how statistical methods such as perceptual magnetic effect and distributional learning could be helpful in language acquisition. Software based learning such as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), and Babbel and Smigin find a detailed mention in this chapter. In this the author takes cues from natural language processing, although she does not go into too much detail. Writing aids such as dictionary, thesaurus, spell check, etc., have been mentioned under the topic “Foreign Language Writing Aid”.

Chapter 6 “Evolution of English” in a sense is a recapitulation of Chapter 1. The writer chooses to end the book on the same note that she started it on, with the only difference that in the last chapter, the writer includes a descriptive note on the phonological aspects of the evolution of English as a language. The end of the book is therefore in sync with the beginning, which is a good thing, and I am certain that the reader will find the text a coherent read.

Books on language learning are different from traditional grammar books. It is assumed that such books focus on the learner rather than on the teacher. A teacher who has acquired the skills of learning can use the techniques to make the learning process easier.

In the end, I would like to add that all the chapters in this book are very detailed. Each chapter is divided into sub-topics, and each sub-topic deals with a new concept. The arguments are compartmentalized, which helps the reader to understand the text comprehensively. Language learning is not an isolated process, it comprises of lexicon, grammar and structure of the language. In this respect, Hopkins’ book presents a comprehensive account of language learning. Even though the book is about English language and learning, the insights and

observation should make a good supplement to the literature of all languages, not just English.

Khushbu Kumari is a research scholar at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee. She is currently working in the area of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). She has done her Masters from the Department of Linguistics BHU, Varanasi.

khushaboobhu@gmail.com.

Succeed in TEFL: Continuing Professional Development.

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Hachette. (300 pages)

Riddell, David (2015).

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Reviewed by: **Kalyanee Rajan**

Succeed in TEFL is a remarkable book on many counts: its approach, scope, presentation and content are so well etched out, that the reader is hooked to its every word, every page and every illustration. Marketed as the “ultimate guide for developing your career as an English Teacher”, the book is truly as a complete roadmap to the professional development of an English teacher as it covers most of the significant aspects of the job. These include observing, teaching exam-focused classes, becoming a trainer, working out action research, using various online resources, writing and publishing, becoming a good manager, to name a few. The book has twenty-two chapters divided into four neat sections, in which Riddell generously pours out over thirty years of his experience of working in the field in varied capacities—teacher, trainer and on-line management tutor, Cambridge Joint Chief Assessor of CELTA courses for ten years and

his work at International House London since 2003.

The first section titled “A New Beginning” seeks to demystify the task of teaching for the teachers. It addresses the “what and how” of the profession, garnished with a liberal dose of motivation for those who are “sitting still”—the quintessential trap for any professional who has a stable employment. The first chapter titled “Don’t Sit Still” is a shout out to precisely such teachers. In this chapter, Riddell makes extensive use of his experiences to exhort people into action! He pitches the book to teachers placed at various tiers of the profession—those who are starting out and are fairly new to the job, those with a longer experience who may be feeling “stuck”, teacher trainers who are looking for CPD for themselves, and finally the managers/directors of studies and senior teachers working in managerial capacity who are seeking new targets for their team.

The second section titled “First Steps” deals with observing and being observed; sharing ideas in the staffroom; and INSETT sessions. It is in this unit that Riddell, the experienced trainer, begins to charm us with his flowing language, his rich array of primary material including interviews and case studies, and his fine handling of this extremely important facet of a teacher’s life. Observations and staffroom seem to be the most intimidating problem areas for most new teachers and Riddell’s cues to help them are not only effortlessly spontaneous, but also enormously useful in their practical application. Riddell makes a detailed mention of sharing ideas, materials and information within the staffroom. This is one area which requires a great deal of openness in the Indian context, as academic sharing is fraught with uncertainties and suspicion stemming from threats of plagiarism, sabotage or plain unhealthy competition. Riddell emphasizes on the efficacy

of the mutually beneficial task of mentoring of a junior teacher by a senior teacher. He asserts that this results in better interpersonal relations as they develop together, as opposed to unitary, isolated development. Riddell also mentions IATEFL’s SIGs (Special Interest Groups) and their utility in planning and development.

The third and the longest section, which includes thirteen chapters is titled, “Later Steps”. In this section, Riddell talks in great detail about several pertinent aspects of the life of an English teacher. These include using online resources, teaching exam-focused classes or competitive classes, managing and being a part of reading groups, attending and participating in conferences (which can be a daunting task even for some senior teachers unless thus inclined), writing, engaging in action research, becoming a trainer, professional bodies and journals, looking at the why and how of taking a sabbatical, setting and achieving SMART targets, and joining the management.

The unit on “writing” befits a special mention as it deals with a great number of typical problem areas for teachers. Riddell talks about writing for publication; designing course material; and writing books, articles and reviews, all of which form a significant part of a teacher’s professional profile. The unit on “Action Research” also demystifies for the reader, the hallowed concept of research by listing possible topics, making a research plan and outlining the steps for its successful execution. In “Becoming a student again”, Riddell reminds the teachers to show greater empathy towards the peculiar problems of the learners. He covers topics such as learning a new language, reviewing assumptions, and language learning for CPD. The unit on “Professional Groups and Journals” is again a valuable unit. In this unit, the author lays out the step-by-step procedure for joining groups such as IATEFL, TESOL and LinkedIn. He also lists some of the prestigious journals dedicated to the field of teaching and learning