

The Developing Teacher

by Duncan Foord Delta Publishing 2009 978-1-905085-22-4

The Developing Teacher fills a niche that is greatly needed in the world of ELT. Basically, this book is a collection of practical activities aimed at teachers who want to develop professionally. While most books of activities are intended for teachers to use with their students, the activities here are for a teacher's own professional development, both individually and with others. *The Developing Teacher* is the first volume in Delta Publishing's new *Teacher Development* series, which emphasises professional development in ELT. The book is divided into three parts: A, B, and C. Part A is a brief introduction to the topic of professional development in ELT. It provides several definitions of professional development and gives some arguments for it. In addition, there is a list of four areas in which a teacher can develop (skills, knowledge, awareness and attitude), and several different models for development are described (including the theory-philosophy model, the art-craft model, and reflective teaching). Part A is rounded out by a bibliography of titles for teachers who want to learn more. Part B, the longest of the three sections, builds on the theories and concepts of Part A. It has over 70 activities for professional development, arranged into five categories, presented as five concentric circles. The first category, *Self*, shows ways a teacher can develop individually. It includes such topics as stress and time management, as well as a useful introduction to doing self-observations.

The second category, *You and your students*, emphasises professional development in the context of interacting with students. The activities here touch on needs analysis, getting student feedback and experimenting with different ways of teaching. The third category, *You and your colleagues*, brings in the other teachers you deal with on a daily basis. Videotaping a lesson, team teaching, mentoring and being mentored are all mentioned here. The fourth category, *You and your school*, also deals with colleagues, but with an emphasis on management concerns. This section contains activities for improving meetings and communication with colleagues. The fifth category, *You and your profession*, deals with the profession at large, providing instructions for choosing and taking courses, leading workshops and writing articles for publication. Part C, gives concrete suggestions for three long-term projects: a teacher diary, a teaching portfolio and a teacher development scheme. A notable strength of this book is the author's presentation of a broad range of ways to develop (short-term, long-term, individually, with others). I liked the fact that Foord encourages teachers to find their own ways to develop, instead of insisting on one single way.

The book contains many clever ideas I hadn't thought of before. One activity I really enjoyed is called *A VAK experiment*. In this activity, the teacher introduces the students to three different learning styles (Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic). The students are given copies of a text, put into three groups (one for each learning style), then challenged to create an activity that would appeal to a student strong in one of the learning styles. The activity ends with each group presenting their materials to the class. One small problem I had with the book is that I felt a few of the ideas could have been extended to give teachers more support. For example, the section on keeping a teacher diary could have been improved with some examples of actual teacher diaries. Also, I thought the activity on getting published could have included a list of some recommended publications or websites. Overall, this is a very appealing book. Many teachers will find the activities here inspiring and helpful. I'm looking forward to trying out some of Foord's suggestions in the next few months.

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