

**TEACHING CONTENT TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS STRATEGIES
FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL SUCCESS BY JODY REISS**

Reiss, Jodi (2005). *Teaching Content to English Language Learners: Strategies for Secondary School Success*. White Plains: Pearson Education. \$29.99

**Reviewed by
Kathryn Huebsch**

As the author, Jodi Reiss, indicates in her preface, this book was written with secondary teachers in mind. Unlike other books written about teaching content to English Language Learners, Reiss acknowledges and understands that content-area teachers are experts in their own fields and often lack training on how to teach their content areas to students with limited language proficiency. She promises that "Its purpose is to provide you with practical, easy-to-incorporate ideas that fit right in with the techniques and activities you currently use in your classrooms" (viii), a promise she does an admirable job of fulfilling.

Reiss' user-friendly book begins with a Contents Page that is clearly organized. The book is broken down in a way that content area teachers will find especially useful and applicable to their practices. In particular, Part II: "Strategies for Instruction" and Part III: "Strategies for Assessment," appeal to teachers struggling to address the needs of their ELLs in a mainstream classroom.

The author's introduction to English Language Learners is basic and informative and refrains from using a lot of technical jargon. Reiss puts teachers of social studies, math and science at ease by acknowledging that ELLs in those subjects are learning a new language in addition to learning the content of the course as opposed to the experience of English teachers whose content *is* the language. The strategies that she offers are almost all easily incorporated into the classroom. Ways to modify the curriculum including the use of graphic organizers, matrices and Venn Diagrams are introduced and then built upon by Reiss as ways with which to teach the subject while building language. By encouraging teachers to become proficient at the basic level of modification, she encourages the reader to attempt more complicated strategies of lesson adaptation.

Reiss' suggestions for increasing success on both classroom and high-stakes tests take on a special importance in today's world of state and federally mandated assessments. She offers strategies to make school tests more authentic and valid for ELLs. She also offers suggestions for

teaching students strategies that will aid their performance on high-stakes tests.

Although the strategies offered by Reiss are extremely helpful and an asset to any teacher who takes the time to read the book, the author does not adequately address how to teach immigrant students who have little or no formal schooling. These students need special attention and assistance in order to function in a school environment. The school skills that this group of students often lacks are skills that secondary teachers frequently do not know how to teach, let alone incorporate into a subject-specific classroom.

Overall, the strategies offered by Jodi Reiss in *Teaching Content to English Language Learners: Strategies for Secondary School Success* can help all students, not just English Language Learners. Indeed, her strategies for differentiation, textbooks adaptations and suggestions for assessments are great adaptations for teachers in the mainstream classroom. Furthermore, the wealth of information that ESL teachers have about the learning needs of their students is clearly evident in this book. Reiss' book would be a great resource to classrooms teachers; it is a strong first step in helping mainstream teachers to better meet the needs of their English Language Learners.

REVIEWER

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