Managing Change in English Language Teaching: Lessons from Experience

Christopher Tribble (Ed.)

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Years ago, I taught in a private school in Kozani, Greece, using British Council materials and was offered a job with the Council for an English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) business program in Porto, Portugal. Reviewing this book brought back to me the worldwide influence and reach of the Council with its myriad English-language teaching (ELT) projects in countless countries. To those who are unfamiliar with this organization, the British Council is a registered charity that was founded in 1934. Today the Council has over 200 offices in more than 100 countries with the following philosophy: "The British council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide" (book jacket).

Against the larger backdrop of the British Council, *Managing Change in English Language Teaching* focuses on the practical challenges of creating and implementing international English-language projects that are designed to change teaching in a country. In the Overview, editor Christopher Tribble explains that the book contains descriptions of projects that can help any professional who is looking for practical examples and guidance in designing, implementing, or evaluating an ELT project. Project topics include approving project concepts, planning interventions, designing evaluations, learning from successful practices, and avoiding mistakes made by others.

The book is in three parts. The first, the Overview, lays out the entire book and its components in précis format: very handy for a quick review. The second part contains four articles that delve into some of the key issues and challenges in ELT project design, implementation, and evaluation. These articles provide the theoretical background to the third section, which describes 21 case studies from countries as diverse as Poland, Tunisia, Russia, Bangladesh, and Brazil. These studies highlight the practical experiences of administrators, politicians, managers, and instructors as they describe successful and unsuccessful components of their projects. The case studies are organized by four subtopics: policy and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and embedding and dissemination. A valuable final chapter entitled "Conclusion: Lessons learnt" gives a summary of the key advice from all the studies and could be used as a checklist for a new project.

None of the case studies in this book comes from a North American context; North Americans might wonder if it is worth reading about international projects. I would say Yes, because the issues addressed by the authors are familiar and recognizable: teacher resistance, funding woes, lack of instructional time, political change, inadequate professional development,

building capacity, test wash-back, and difficulties with bilingual programming, to name a few. Some factors, of course, do not apply to our part of the globe such as the effects of political unrest and war on ELT projects. For example, a project manager in Tunisia mentions, "At the time of writing, the unrest across the Middle East and North Africa has put everything on hold" (p. 108). Although these projects may have been designed thousands of kilometres away, in diverse cultures and/or contexts, there are lessons to be learned from these worldwide initiatives. In my opinion, these case studies would prove particularly useful to those working in institutions that seek to develop online programs or courses for the global English language market.

Anne Capune

The Reviewer

Anne Capune has a master of education in TESL from the University of Alberta and has been in the LINC program at NorQuest College for 14 years working as an instructor, coordinator, curriculum developer, and project manager. She regrets not being able to work for the British Council in Portugal because of difficulties with work permits.