
Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

A Place to Be Navajo: Rough Rock and the Struggle for Self-Determination in Indigenous Schooling

Teresa L. McCarty

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 2002

229 pages, ISBN: 0-8058-3760-4

A Place to be Navajo is an inspirational inquiry into the experience of Indigenous schooling and the struggle for self-determination. Growing out of 20 years of ethnographic research with the Diné (Navajo) community of Rough Rock, this book tells us the story of Rough Rock as a leader in American Indian and bilingual/bicultural education. McCarty presents the voices and perspectives of Navajo students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members with great respect and sensitivity. She shares with the reader powerful Native American oral accounts about the successes and struggles of Rough Rock in implementing a community-based bilingual/bicultural educational program.

This book is a particularly valuable resource for teachers and researchers interested in issues about negotiations of cultural and linguistic identity, cultural and linguistic reclamation, community-responsive curriculum, and pedagogy grounded in local linguistic and cultural knowledge. The text integrates history, ethnography, and pedagogy.

McCarty begins by describing how she came to develop personal relationships and lifelong research with the Navajo community of Rough Rock. She then provides a rich description of the place and the people and of how people lived there long ago, which provides contextual meaning to contemporary struggles in the community's process of regaining control of education. Stories of experiences in residential schools help us gain an understanding of the need of the community to fight for local control of their education in order to regain and maintain a sense of Navajo identity. The implementation of Rough Rock's bilingual/bicultural education seeks to cross the lines between classroom and community, between school and home culture, so that the children experience cultural and linguistic enrichment rather than cultural and linguistic discontinuity.

This book would be of interest to ESL educators because it suggests strategies, without hiding obstacles, for success in bilingual education: for example, the role of heritage languages in language proficiency and the school as a potential agent of language revitalization, as well as an agent of assimilation leading to language and cultural loss. McCarty shows how in

Rough Rock community the development of bilingual and bicultural competence is not only the responsibility of the school, but primarily the responsibility of the community as a whole. In particular, the author highlights the challenge of making bilingual/bicultural texts culturally appropriate to Navajo students and shows how parents and community members worked together to develop curriculum materials. The reader is also taken into the classroom where she or he can observe bilingual teaching strategies. Through these descriptive accounts, McCarty looks at bilingual education program evaluation, questioning the appropriateness of standardized tests as a measure of student "success." Strategies are suggested to deal with the power of the dominant culture to "disable" minority cultures, such as parent involvement in student assessment.

A place to be Navajo is described as a place to speak the language and to live the culture. It is a place of cultural enrichment where children grow to be lifelong learners competent in both Navajo and non-Navajo worlds. This place cannot just be the school, for outside social and political pressures, as McCarty demonstrates, can lead to loss of culture and language. The place to be Navajo is Rough Rock community, but we are all implicated.

Nathalie Piquemal

The Reviewer

Nathalie Piquemal is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. She works in collaboration with Aboriginal communities on the development of ethical research protocols that are respectful and inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives.

The TEAM Swap Shop 1999: A Collection of Ready-to-Use Activities for the ESL Classroom

Manitoba ESL Teachers

Teaching English as a Second Language to Adults in Manitoba,
Winnipeg, MB, 1999

219 pages; ISBN-x

(TEAM c/o Language Training Centre, 300-123 Main St, Winnipeg, MB
R3C 1A3)

The TEAM Swap Shop 1999 is a collection of ESL teacher-created activities, which were successfully used by the teachers in class. The 48 activities, contributed by about 15 Manitoba ESL teachers, are categorized according to the level of language and type of skill activity practiced. Thematic materials are placed in separate chapters by theme.

Many of the activities are beginner level, some are Canadian Benchmarks, some are ESL literacy, and a few are intermediate or advanced. The first two communicative activities in the beginner level section, "Questions for

Everyone" and "Musical Classmates," are excellent icebreakers guaranteed to get any class talking. The intermediate communicative activity "Are You My Wife?" which can be used in intermediate to advanced levels and modified for lower levels, is brilliantly designed. It involves role-play where the participant is a member of a family of unspecified size and has to find another member of that family, and then both must find the third member. The role cards are well written with carefully organized prompts. This is definitely an activity to add to your "Best Activities" file.

"Words that Begin with A-Z" is a collection of 24 activity sheets for vocabulary building. X, Y, and Z are combined on one sheet. Each page has 11 to 17 questions; each answer begins with the letter featured on that worksheet. The questions are well thought out and will be interesting to most ESL/EFL adult students. The activity sheets are useful not only for building vocabulary, but also for dictionary practice, spelling, and trivia knowledge.

"Tom and Jerry's Day Fishing" is a unique rebus reading experience designed to stimulate reluctant advanced readers. "Jokes" introduces a tried-and-true activity where each sentence is written on a strip of paper, then the sentences are organized into the correct order, but with a twist that squeezes the maximum from the activity in an interesting, imaginative way. "It is good for practising pronunciation, asking for clarification, checking comprehension, examining discourse elements, and understanding Canadian culture and humour," claims the contributor.

The book is printed on both sides of 8.5" x 11" paper, coil-bound, and with a soft cover. Library collections will need to reinforce the soft cover for it to endure repeated use. Most of the contributions are vocabulary or communicative activities prepared for adults, not children or young adults. With ingenuity some could be adapted for younger students. There are a few excellent grammar activities and a couple of short readings. The layout is pleasing, the worksheets clear and good for copying. However, there is no index to help locate materials; this could be added in the second printing. One section contains exclusively Manitoba content, but could be used as a template for other provinces. Almost all the 48 activities are certain to instruct and entertain ESL adult students in any beginner or intermediate class.

The Reviewer

Ellen Pilon is an ESL/EFL teacher at the International Language Institute in Halifax. She is also active in TESL Nova Scotia. As a devotee of lifelong learning, she is studying for her third master's degree, this time an MEd in TESL.

Communication Links: Basic Activities for the Language Classroom

Loretta Meaker

Oxford University Press, Don Mills, ON, 1999

190 pages; ISBN: 0-19-541399-7

Communication Links is an invaluable resource, full of reproducible classroom activities intended for basic and low-intermediate learners. Many of the reproducibles and lesson ideas could be adapted to higher intermediate levels of adult or young adult classes. Ideas for variations and expansions are included.

The activities are organized into five themes, each with three sections, and each accompanied by excellent in-depth teachers' notes. Canadian author Loretta Meaker has chosen her topics well: The Family, Clothing and Footwear, Food, Health, and The House. The subjects are useful and interesting for beginners, although parts of the Food and House units would need modification for younger students to keep their interest. Each section includes page references to corresponding pictures in *The Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary* and *The Oxford Picture Dictionary*, Canadian edition.

Units teach mainly vocabulary, followed by restricted and less restricted practice speaking. For example, in Part A of Clothing and Footwear, the teacher begins with questions and answers on what students are wearing. The Teacher's Tip suggests imaginative ways of introducing realia. From there the lesson moves to a brainstorming session on what people wear. Demonstrative pronouns are then added to information questions. A circle card game follows, reinforcing vocabulary and singular-plural forms. Altogether the unit contains eight Teacher's Tips and 13 reproducibles.

The author, obviously fond of cards for teaching, features cards in most sections: pick a card and ask a question; match a word card to a picture card; arrange cards in the right order; clue cards, command cards, color cards. In Health alone there are 25 pages of cards to copy, and one complete set is recommended for only a small group of students. Granted most of the cards can be used again, but this is a lot of copying when less paper-intensive methods might be just as successful.

Meaker points out that the book provides "some additional fun, practical and relevant activities to review and reinforce aspects of the theme." Her well-organized, imaginative teaching suggestions are so useful that a teacher could use these thematic units as the main part of a vocabulary lesson. Each section has copious teaching notes, with extra teaching tips adding even more detail. In fact each thematic unit is a complete, well-planned lesson, a model for new teachers to follow and a pleasure for experienced teachers to work with. Meaker's introduction is an encapsulation of the best teaching

techniques, such as brainstorming, organizing groups, pair work, timing, retrenching ("it isn't working").

One purpose of the book is to provide material for the multilevel class. Some of the activities have cards and worksheets divided into basic, middle, and high levels. The materials are well designed so that they can be used simultaneously with the different levels of student. For example, in Food there is a field trip to a local grocery store and three worksheets, one for each level.

Why "communication links"? Because the purpose of the activities is to "focus on providing active learner participation and communicative practice." The book does meet this goal. The ideas are so plentiful and so well planned for teachers that the students can only succeed. The only danger in following the lessons verbatim could be overkill.

Although the basic organization is the same throughout the book, the learning activities are different. There is enough variety to ensure that students would not get bored if a teacher used the book frequently. The strengths of the book are its organization, its teaching plans, its interesting and varied activities, its inclusion of references to *The Oxford Picture Dictionary*, and its excellent reproducibles. Useful in every classroom where a picture dictionary is a staple, this book would be an asset to teachers of beginning and low-intermediate adult and young adult students who wish to make learning vocabulary enjoyable and successful. *Communication Links* is a book one would pick up again and again.

Ellen Pilon

The Reviewer

Ellen Pilon is an ESL/EFL teacher at the International Language Institute in Halifax. She is also active in TESL Nova Scotia. As a devotee of lifelong learning, she is studying for her third master's degree, this time an MEd in TESL.
