

Book Review

A Cycle of Reflection Designed for Novices to Experienced Teachers: Promoting Teacher Reflection in Second Language Education: A Framework for TESOL Professionals

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Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals. T.S.C. Farrell. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015. pp. vx + 138

Written expressly for second language teachers, Farrell's (2015) book, *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals*, recognizes some of the specific needs of this unique field of education. As the author states in the first pages of his book, although teacher reflection is acknowledged to be an important component in second language teacher development, neither how to define it nor apply it in the language classroom has been conclusively settled. In this book, Farrell attempts to fill these gaps by providing both a workable definition and a practical framework for a second language teacher reflective practice.

The framework for reflection described here is designed especially with second language teachers in mind, although the information contained in this book might be appropriate for teachers in other disciplines as well. Given the author's career of more than 35 years teaching English and English language teachers "in Ireland, South Korea, Singapore, USA, and Canada" (Farrell, 2015, p. 3), throughout this book, Farrell demonstrates a real-world understanding of the perhaps more distinctive characteristics of second language teaching and second language teachers. The book is written in a clear and direct manner, accessible to teachers who may not have any theoretical or educational background in second language teaching or teacher reflection, or for whom English may not be their first language. That is not to say that it would not be interesting or useful for the most experienced of teachers, as Farrell's framework for a reflective practice is intentionally flexible in order to accommodate different interests and levels of experience.

The author outlines the book in the preface, briefly describing each of the nine chapters. The first two chapters are introductory in nature, with Chapter 1 ("Getting into Reflective Practice") providing the background for how Farrell developed his framework for reflection, and Chapter 2 ("Contemplation and Reflection") discussing both the theory and history of teacher reflective practices. In Chapter 3 ("Framework for Reflecting on Practice"), Farrell outlines his proposed structure for reflection, and in the subsequent five chapters, he describes each of the five levels of his reflective framework: "Philosophy" (Chapter 4); "Principles" (Chapter 5); "Theory" (Chapter 6); "Practice" (Chapter 7); and "Beyond Practice" (Chapter 8). Within each of these chapters, the

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author has included “Reflective Moments” to aid the reader in making personal connections with the material. In the final chapter, Chapter 9 (“Navigating the Framework”), the author explains how teachers with different interests, coming from all levels of experience from novice to experienced second language teacher, may use his reflective framework.

This is an important book for language teachers as a reflective practice has been recognized as a distinguishing factor between teacher development and teacher training since at least the 1990s (Head & Taylor, 1997). As such, it is an important component of teaching, mentioned in the literature in such diverse ways as helping to break the cycle of Lortie’s (2002) “apprenticeship of observation” (Mewborn & Tyminski, 2006), and curriculum reform (McDonald & Butler Songer, 2013). Although the theory and history provided by Farrell in Chapter 2 could perhaps be more extensive in its discussion of the many applications of a reflective practice in teaching, and may be somewhat dated in its discussion of research on second language teacher reflection, he has provided a flexible framework intended to be accessible to teachers of different backgrounds and all levels of experience.

To conclude, Farrell’s unique vision of teacher reflection permits teachers to enter his framework at whatever stage they view appropriate for their individual level of experience and personal interests, and move through the different stages as they feel would be most suited to their individual needs. Farrell’s recognition and accommodation of the individuality of second language teachers is what makes his contribution to second language teacher development through his reflective framework both unique and useful for teachers in this field.

References

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