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**Becoming a Language Teacher: A Practical Guide to Second Language Learning and Teaching 2nd ed. (2013)**

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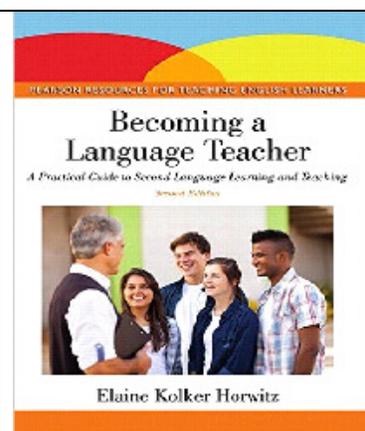
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*Becoming a Language Teacher: A Practical Guide to Second Language Learning and Teaching* is a book that tackles different topics related to language teaching and learning. The book is practical in nature and aims to support new teachers with the challenges and obstacles they may encounter during their teaching career. Horwitz who is an experienced language teacher, a professor of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Director of the Graduate Program in Foreign Language Education at the University of Texas, Austin, has gained much knowledge and experiences in teaching. Through this book, she focuses on strategies and methodologies that will benefit her readers and help them become successful future teachers.

Comprised of 11 chapters, the book highlights issues that every language teacher should be aware of. The first part of the book, which consists of 3 chapters deals with questions that are common among teachers. Chapter 1 familiarizes teachers with different classroom settings and introduces them to learner characteristics and some factors that may hinder language learning. Chapter 2 tackles theories related to second language acquisition and gives examples of what teachers can do in the classroom to maximum use of each theory. Moreover, it explains how these theories differ with respect to issues related to language teaching. Chapter 3 sets out to give detailed descriptions of the different language teaching methodologies that can help learners acquire a second language. It also illustrates the roles of both teachers and learners as described by each methodology. Furthermore, readers learn what to do to foster a teacher-centered class. As such, part one focuses on issues that teachers should be aware of before beginning their teaching experience.

The second part of the book includes 5 chapters. Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 follow the same structure and focus on the different language skills. They discuss listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills respectively. They describe the process that should be followed to explain the skill under discussion and provide guidelines to ensure effective implementation of the skill. Furthermore, they suggest some activities that teachers can use and discuss some assessment issues. The chapters also emphasize certain ideas in relation to each skill. For example,

concerning listening, chapter 4 stresses the importance of providing a context, choice of listening items and replaying the listening. It states that speaking represents an obstacle to students and teachers alike. As for reading, chapter 6 suggests that teachers activate their students' background knowledge to help them develop their reading strategies. With respect to writing, chapter 7 explains that dictionaries are important and that teachers should pay attention to language corpora. Chapter 8 talks about the benefits of content classes and how they integrate all the skills to help learners not only develop in the target language, but also enhance their academic literacy. It clearly points out that language objectives take much longer to achieve than content objectives and suggests that teachers assign learners readings that suit their language level and background. It also sheds light on The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), an approach used for teaching language through content. In short, the second part of the book is concerned with helping the teachers effectively implement the different skills in their classes.

The third part of the book includes chapters 9 and 10 that deal with how a teacher decides what to teach. Chapter 9 tackles language assessment and teachers' difficulties in terms of material teaching and assessing. It discusses problems related to language testing, different testing approaches, and national and international standardized tests. Chapter 10 discusses the practical part and how teachers should plan their classes. It emphasizes that lesson planning constitutes an obstacle to new teachers. It also differentiates between long-term and short-term planning and introduces some anticipated problems. Moreover, this chapter draws attention to two important points which are differentiating instruction and learner autonomy. All in all, this part of the book focuses on issues that are critical to all teachers and constitute problems to those who are still novice.

The fourth part which includes chapter 11 expresses hope that the book has helped teachers view themselves in a better way and helped them critique their beliefs. It continues to give advice while stressing that there will always be developments and changes in the field of language learning and that teachers should always expect that.

All along, the book draws readers' attention to important factors that have a strong impact on language learning. It introduces different classroom settings, talks about how learners vary with respect to their expectations and styles to help convey the various environments teachers may find themselves in.

Despite her vast experience, Horwitz refrains from imposing her opinion on her readers. She does not tell her readers that this is best practice; instead she explains different methodologies to help readers decide what is best suited to their style and what they want to adopt in their future classrooms.

The title of the book is suggestive of who it addresses and encapsulates the message it sets out to deliver. I personally believe that pre-service teachers are fortunate to have this book to get them started. Teaching includes a lot of trials and errors, but this book serves to help minimize those errors.

The book has a novel approach in that it not only presents important information, but also gradually leads readers to find out what their areas of strength and weaknesses are. It is particularly powerful because of the way it is organized. Each chapter starts with a set of questions to direct the readers' attention to the topic that the chapter deals with. The readers are then presented with different situations under a section called 'Voices from the classroom'. This section gives readers a chance to think about what they have read and consider how they would react when faced with a similar issue. It also presents ideas as to how they can best deal with

these issues. Bullet points are extensively used to highlight important ideas. At the end of each chapter, the teachers are provided with a 'Finding your way' section that poses questions to deepen readers' understanding of the content of each chapter by asking them to further think about some of the issues that were discussed. In addition, the 'Planning for your classes' part is extremely helpful because teachers can always come back to their notes to look up important ideas they took away from the reading. The 'Teaching Checklist' is insightful as it triggers deep reflections and makes teachers aware of their teaching practices. It also provides readers with plenty of references and suggestions for more readings which serve to provide teachers with more in-depth knowledge about their field.

In summary, I have read many books about teaching but in no book have I ever found so much important information and thought provoking ideas combined. I would say that today's teachers are fortunate to have this book to enlighten their path and help make their mission easier. This is a must have book for all pre-service teachers and even for those who are experienced because it has invaluable information from someone who is accomplished in the field.