Introduction

Welcome to the teacher training series *Shaping the Way We Teach English: Successful Practices Around the World*. It is made up of 14 modules in a video format with a supporting manual and additional resources. The modules are structured in such a way that you can use them in order or one at a time, depending on your needs and interests.

Goals for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Educators

These introductory materials are designed for educators in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) who share the following two goals:

1) To build an academic or "pedagogical" foundation in language teaching.

2) To improve language teaching classroom practices.

Rationale

English teachers, trainers, and researchers have long recognized the value of not only reading about but actually observing experienced, effective teachers in the classroom as a form of professional development. However, professionally produced multimedia (video-based) English language teacher training materials have been in somewhat short supply. Historically, many of those that do exist have taken a "talking head" lecture approach and have not necessarily included examples from an EFL context.

Shaping the Way We Teach English: Successful Practices Around the World uses a constructivist, inquiry-based approach, giving viewers opportunities to adapt materials to their local context. It incorporates authentic classroom scenes and interviews with teachers from Costa Rica, Egypt, Thailand, and the United States.

Contents of the Modules

At the heart of each module is a 10- to 15-minute video segment with examples from classrooms and educators around the world. Each module also has corresponding readings and support materials for you to print and copy.

In the video, you will have an opportunity to observe other teachers' practices. Some of these examples are from primary level classes, while others are from secondary level and post-secondary level classes. A variety of teaching styles and cultures are reflected in these examples.

Introduction

Suggestions for Successful Use of These Materials

Many factors can have an effect on the results that you obtain from using the video and manual resources, including:

• Your own personal reasons and motivation for using these materials.

• How closely the materials fit with current practices and the curriculum in your educational setting.

• The degree of flexibility and creativity that you bring to the task of making innovations and changes in your classroom practices; in other words, your willingness to experiment with and seriously try to use different ideas and techniques in your classroom.

The following suggestions can help increase your success with these materials:

Use the pre-viewing materials, readings, and supporting resources. We strongly recommend that you go through the pre-viewing activities, readings, and the supporting resources in the manual and on the disks before you view the video.

Use the observation guides in the manual. The manual provides observation guides and reflection questions for each module.

View the video as many times as needed. The video segments contain very rich examples of actual language classes. We encourage you to stop the video at any point to view it again or discuss what you see. This will help you interact more fully with the video materials and come away with a deeper understanding of each content area.

Think flexibly. As you observe other teachers in action and listen to their reflections on teaching, think as flexibly as possible. Look for answers to these questions:

• What new ideas does this classroom example offer me?

• How might I adapt this example to my students' language and age level? My curriculum and my institutional setting? My teaching style and my culture?

Conclusion

We invite you to approach your interaction with these materials as a personal challenge to "think outside the box." You can creatively "shape the way *you* teach English" as you experiment with ways you can adapt suggestions or techniques from the video to your own educational settings.