

Recipes for Tired Teachers

Christopher Sion (Ed.) Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1985. Pp. 115.

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As suggested by the title, *Recipes for Tired Teachers* is a collection of 'well-seasoned' activities for the EFL/ESL classroom. The recipes have been originated, tested and refined by teachers from all over the world. They are particularly useful for teachers who feel their class has become 'bogged down', or who want to fill up the time or who want to warm up the class before the main activities.

The book itself is divided into eight units: Group Dynamics, Creative Writing and Thinking, Reading and Writing, Listening, Role-playing, Structures and Functions, Vocabulary (Lexis) and Fun and Games. The Table of Recipes on pages v-xii is fully comprehensive and includes title, author, suggested level, approximate time and materials needed.

Each recipe follows an almost identical format. At the beginning, language functions are spelt out and the materials needed for each recipe listed. This is followed by two more sections: 'Before Class' which includes preparatory work that needs to be done before class and 'In Class' which includes the classroom activities themselves described in several stages. In some recipes, the teacher will find an 'Author's Note' or 'Editor's Note' where comments and further suggestion are added at the end of that activity.

What is important about this book is that for some recipes permission is granted for the teacher to duplicate or otherwise reproduce them for classroom use, for example, the Personality Test (I-6), Discussion Tactic (I-9), etc. However, in accordance with the editor's introductory statement that 'the creative impulse of the teacher in bringing the activities to life is natural and should be encouraged.', creative teachers can feel free to modify and adjust the activity to the needs and interests of their students.

From my experience, I found that some of the recipes are difficult for students, even for those who are at the specified level; for example, The Misuse of Words: A Syntax Exercise. In that activity, the students are asked to select an article that interest them and then to pick one or two sentences from it. The total number of words should not exceed twenty-five. After that, the students write their sentences in vertical columns of five words with adequate spacing between both the words and the columns. The teacher then collects the sheets of paper with the columns of words and redistributes them making sure that no student receives his or her own sheet. The students are asked to make new sentences using the columns of words, but now they have to work horizontally and add words of their own. The sentences may be any length but must be grammatically and syntactically correct.

No matter how difficult the activity is, it is not a total failure. I found it challenging and motivating; the students were involved and tried to complete the task to the best of their ability. I think that this is true and applicable to every recipe in this book.

In my view, as the recipes are ready-made, the points the teacher has to take into consideration are as follows:

- : material availability : Do I have stores of magazines and newspapers, a cassette recorder, an overhead projector?
- : recipe adjustment : Does the recipe suit my class and the level of my students?

: the purpose of using a recipe : Is it meant to be just a warm-up activity or the main activity? Do I need to make any adjustments as regards the amount of time allocated to each activity?

As the recipes are created by real teachers, each activity is virtually guaranteed to be practical and self-contained. The recipe maker--the teacher himself--has tested his recipe and tried to make it workable. We cannot easily find books of this sort where ideas are created by teachers and shared among their fellow professionals. Tired teachers will find *Recipes for Tired Teachers* invaluable in their language class.