

Vol 6. n.2
July 2003

The English Teacher

An International Journal

Institute for English Language Education
Assumption University

Institute for English Language Education
Assumption University Press
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ISSN: 1513-0630

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* *The papers in this journal are indexed/abstracted in ERIC Clearing house on Languages and Linguistics*

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PROJECT WORK (NEW EDITION) THE OXFORD RESOURCE BOOKS FOR TEACHERS SERIES

Diana L. Fried-Booth
Oxford University Press, 2002
ISBN: 0-19-437225-1, (127 pages)

Reviewed by Flora Debora Floris
Petra Christian University, Indonesia

Motivation is very important in the process of learning English as a second or foreign language. Nevertheless, teachers often face difficulties in motivating their students in learning English. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) state that it is necessary for teachers to vary the activities, tasks and materials they use with their students, and to use cooperative learning activities in order to motivate their students in learning the language. Project work is one important way of motivating students in learning the language. According to Hutchinson (2003), project work is very personal and offers a high sense of achievement, rich experience and a positive learning cycle. It also fosters creativity, co-operation, autonomy and learning skills of the students. In addition, as stated by Fried-Booth (p. 5), this kind of activity can also develop students' confidence "in using English in the real world, the world outside the classroom". Obviously, to achieve effective outcomes, the teacher needs carefully planned project work.

Fried-Booth's *Project Work (New Edition)* is a useful and informed resource book. It gives insights to teachers who want their students to "take a certain responsibility of their own learning, encouraging them to set their own objectives in terms of what they wanted and needed to learn" (p. 6). It is also very valuable for teachers who want to play the role of participants and coordinators (p. 18). Thus, I am not surprised to see that *Project Work* is still in print after its first edition in 1986. Obviously, many teachers around the world find the book useful.

This resource book includes 34 activities or projects. All these activities are contributed by teachers who are not only from English-speaking countries, but also from non-English speaking regions such as Italy, Iran, and Thailand. This makes the resource book more interesting because it recognises the role of English as an

international language. Another advantage is that teachers can have more options in terms of selecting appropriate projects for their students.

The first five sections - the *Introduction*, *How to Use This Book*, *Organizing a Project*, *the Project in Action* and *Multi-tasking* – give the essential information required for implementing the activities offered in the book. Teachers should read those sections first before they start to assign any projects. The *Introduction* states clearly the target audience and the theoretical background that underlies *Project Work (new edition)*. The section '*How to Use This Book*' contains the general guideline about the project framework used in each activity, while the last three sections present some insights on how to conduct effective projects. What I appreciate most from these first 5 sections stated above is that the author devotes approximately 30 pages to explain the theories and the guidelines on how to conduct the projects. Moreover, the author gives some brief examples to illustrate her explanation (e.g. see pp. 20-21 and pp. 30-33).

Basically, the activities (projects) in the book are classified into 5 major categories: media, culture, trips, local, and classroom. To assist the teachers in using *Project Work (New Edition)*, the author has provided a framework for each project. In that framework, teachers will find information and requirements for a particular project such as level, age range, time, general aims, language aims, location (inside or outside school), resources, teacher preparation, student preparation, procedure, follow-up, variation and comments. There is also an introductory statement that highlights the features of each project.

Project Work (New Edition) provides sufficient guidance on the teaching procedures advocated. The instructions for the activities are very clear and simple. Very clear illustrations, forms or worksheets are also provided for some activities. One thing that needs to be cleared though is the statements about the age range for the activities. Sometimes, the author uses the exact age range, such as 14-16 years or 16 years and above. At other times, she only mentions "older adolescent", "adult", or "adolescent". I think it would be better if *Project Work (New Edition)* does not specify the age range. A statement such as "this book is aimed at teenagers and adult learners" (as stated in p. 9) would be sufficient.

I find that the projects presented in this resource book are suitable for students at various levels ranging from elementary to advanced levels. The activities cater to students' needs, creativity and interests, and are closely related to students' experiences. They also teach social and moral value which is an important aspect and goal of education. For example, the project "Drugs: Only mugs do drugs" (p. 54-55) requires the students to conduct small research and at the same time increases the students' social awareness. Another project entitled "My Homeland, My Hometown" (p. 84-85) requires students to be familiar with their homeland, thus

improves their sense of belonging. "Pocket-money Survey" (p. 104-105) is another project that can motivate students because they are required to do research and report on teenagers' spending habits, a topic which is closely related to their daily life.

All in all, *Project Work (New Edition)* has a number of strengths. I believe it will prove to be useful, challenging and interesting for the teachers and learners of English who wish to develop and use their understanding and knowledge of English in the real world.

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