Confidence trick
This intriguing book blends psychological theory with practical classroom ideas

SEEDS OF CONFIDENCE: SELF-ESTEEM ACTIVITIES FOR THE EFL CLASSROOM
(Helbling Languages)
Verónica de Andrés and Jane Arndt
978-3-85272-200-9

Seeds of Confidence, the latest in Helbling’s series of resource books for teachers, is organised around a model of self-esteem developed in 1982 by Reasoner. Thus, each of the five chapters reflects components of his model, namely: security, identity, belonging, purpose and competence. Contents and activities also largely reflect an amalgam of work by linguists such as Dörnyei on psychology and group dynamics, Krashen’s input hypothesis, plus work by Arnell and Stevick on ‘affect’ in language teaching, i.e. feelings, emotions, moods and attitudes.

Those looking for solid language teaching activities will perhaps scoff at such titles, but this sets out its stall early on. The introduction explains the importance of self-confidence, illustrating this with Stevick’s belief that when it comes to language learning ‘success depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom’.

Chapters begin with an outline of how components are related to the language classroom. This is followed by detailed activities, for each of which the authors list the focus, level, time and preparation required; in most cases the latter involves scissors and a bit of paper. Some activities, though, require the accompanying CD, which contains thirteen delightfully uplifting music tracks and relaxing spoken imagery scripts; others require copying some of the tables provided, although most need not just as easily be drawn on the board.

Chapter 1, ‘A sense of security’, deals with encouraging the correct language learning environment by setting positive classroom rules, establishing contact with the teacher, and avoiding intimidating students. ‘Routines’, (1.1) lists three activities which I tried with what I felt was genuine success: my intermediate-level class explained to each other ‘something new and good’ in their lives, their news of the day, and what they saw themselves doing in ten years’ time. We all left the room feeling interested in each other and, even reticent students had been vocal.

The second chapter provides activities that work on self-confidence, and involves suggestions for encouraging verbal praise, helping with overcoming onerous tasks, and providing opportunities for students to gain acceptance.

Although mostly pursuing fairly original activities, chapters contain the occasional class at an Institute of Technology, Izmir, Turkey; www.waynetreiman.com.

Wayne Treiman continues to sow the seeds of confidence among his EAP students at the Institute of Technology, Izmir, Turkey.

The revised, second edition of this English for academic purposes book draws particularly on vocabulary from the Academic Word List. The first five units cover areas such as multi-meaning words, word families and collocations. Then, Units 6 to 10 look in turn at five alphabetical subslists of the Academic Word List, offering systematic practice in those lexical areas outlined in the first part of the book. Useful grids clarify problematic areas and fit into work formation. This extensive book provides a solid grounding in vocabulary suitable for higher education, although working through the whole book would be quite challenging. A sound, high-level practice book, with a focus on areas such as business, the environment, health and politics.

BUSINESS VENTURE 1
(Oxford University Press)
Roger Barnard and Jeff Cady
978-0-19-457817-2

Business Venture 1 is the third edition of a popular short course for professional people. The twelve units cover everyday business situations such as visiting clients, making plans, giving opinions and entertaining, with a particular focus on American English. The book has a modular structure, with each unit containing six modules. The strength of this approach is that teachers can easily select specific modules to provide the basis for bite-size lessons. However, teachers need to be critical and selective; some modules, such as practising numbers, would be better done as self-study or homework. The book contains extensive practice for the Toeic test.

Total Business 3
(Shortman Publishing)
Paul Dummett with Colin Bovin
978-0-19-457817-2

Total Business 3 is the highest level of a three-level series of business coursebooks. Like others in the series, it contains twelve core modules, each with three strands. The main strand Business Topics covers grammar, vocabulary and language skills. Topics include management, innovation and culture. The other two strands are Business Skills such as presenting and telephone and Learning Strategies including note-taking and problem-solving. Many of the topics such as ‘corporate social responsibility’ are interesting; there is a nice quiz on doing business in China, and a fascinating test on organisational culture. Some activities will be familiar to business English teachers, such as ‘management language’ and ‘learning globalisation’. Recommended.

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