

use of language forms. Used in conjunction with story-telling and roleplay, realia contextualise a grammar lesson and facilitate memory and learning. Also discussed and demonstrated is the use of graphics (charts, tables, schedules) as a means of focusing the communicative practice of grammatical structures.

The final section of the book deals with the integration of techniques and resources, and covers the use of songs, verse, games, problem-solving and text-based activities. This combination of technique and resource is particularly useful for matching structure and discourse in context, and can be used in all phases of a grammar lesson. Mini-grammar lessons are also suggested for remedial purposes.

This book presents a convincing argument for the study of grammar to help L2 learners perceive the relationship between grammatical structures on the one hand, and discourse pragmatics, semantics, and the social function of language on the other. Having provided a clear rationale for their approach, the authors proceed to demonstrate useful techniques for making grammar accessible to the student, using easily obtainable resources. Most chapters are filled with usable exercises and activities (e.g. cloze tests) for teaching specific aspects of grammar such as tenses, wh-questions, relative clauses, and logical connectors.

This book makes for stimulating reading. It is clearly and logically sub-divided, very readable and always relevant. It is essential in this time of communicative language teaching that we do not lose our perspective of the role that grammar plays in language learning. This publication will help to re-focus attention on important issues, and, at the same time, be of great practical value to the L2 teacher.

## **Susan Sheerin**

*Self-Access*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989 (Paperback 200 pp.)

This is the latest in Oxford's "Resource Books for Teachers" series, edited by Alan Maley. Susan Sheerin, an experienced EFL teacher, is the Director of Studies at the Bell School in Cambridge.

Today it is widely accepted that all learners differ with regard to learning style, personality, motivation and specific needs. The movement towards learner-centred curricula stems from a disillusionment with 'lockstep' teaching, and from the development of a communicative language teaching philosophy. An urgent need now exists to develop effective mechanisms for enabling students to learn independently of teachers. One such mechanism is the self-access study centre where students can learn in their own preferred way and at their own pace. This book aims to help EFL and ESL teachers set up and manage such self-access study facilities, thereby allowing students to choose their own material and also correct and assess their own performance. This is not a move towards making teachers redundant, as self-access learning should be integrated with and complementary to classroom learning.

It was Strevens who wrote: "It takes better teachers to focus on the learner" - implying that the organization of a learner-centred approach is likely to be most strenuous and challenging. This book is a very practical aid to meeting that challenge.

It contains five chapters. The first offers practical advice on how to set up self-access

facilities. It covers aspects such as layout, equipment, storage, staffing, and materials, illustrated by means of photographs and diagrams. The second chapter deals with learner training and preparation for self-access learning. This includes initial orientation to the system and guidance on helping students make the most effective use of the facilities.

Chapter three contains suggestions for self-access activities in reading and listening, using short and longer texts. These receptive skills are well-suited to self-access work because feedback can easily be supplied. The materials used also serve as comprehensible input, enabling students to acquire new language while focusing on other language tasks.

The fourth chapter deals with productive skills and covers both the mechanics of written and spoken production, as well as less controlled and free production. The latter, regarded as essential to language acquisition, presents difficulties for self-access work with regard to the provision of feedback. The solution appears to be to develop students' skills and confidence in self-evaluation, and to this end, chapter four provides guides to learner training. This section also contains many graphically illustrated ideas for practising the more elementary sub-skills which make up the global writing and speaking skills.

Each chapter contains activities which Sheerin regards as 'prototypes' or 'recipes' for various types of self-access activities. The activities consist of three parts: a **pre-task**, which is classified according to main focus (e.g. reading), type of activity (e.g. cloze text), level (e.g. elementary or intermediate), age for which intended, topic, type of activity (e.g. information transfer, pronunciation practice), and specific aim. Advice is also provided on the preparation needed for the activity, and a set of instructions and a task sheet are included. The second part, the **post-task**, should not initially be shown to students. It consists of the Key (i.e. answers to activities, solutions to problems), a tapescript (where applicable), and follow-up (e.g. suggestions to further activities). The third part is directed at the teacher and contains very useful notes and comments on the organization of the activity, as well as possible variations on the main task.

The need for differentiated learning has never been disputed. Especially the language teacher needs to make optimal use of the limited time during which the learner, with his unique learning style, is exposed to the language. This book explains how self-directed learning can be facilitated, both by individuals and in groups, thereby making a major contribution towards achieving learner independence. The role of the teacher in this learner-centred approach is also comprehensively described.

Teachers who wish to make self-access facilities available to their students will find this book extremely helpful and informative. The activities described in it are clear and practical, and cover a wide range of aims and topics. A careful study of these activities will enable teachers to generate new ones in keeping with their own particular needs and situations. As language teachers come to realise the increasing importance of individualization and self-directed learning, this well presented book will certainly prove to be a source of many stimulating ideas and an invaluable aid in the field of second and foreign language teaching.

J.J. Swartz