

# Rich resource

Alan Maley's book on advanced learners, an addition to the OUP resource series, fills an important gap in the EFL teaching market

**ADVANCED LEARNERS**  
(OUP) Alan Maley  
ISBN: 978-0-19-442194-2

This title, the very latest in a highly recommended series of resource books for teachers, is devoted to perhaps the least-catered for student profile, the learner fortunate enough to be classified as advanced. The author, also the series editor, probably needs no introduction, although in contrast to most teachers he can perhaps consider himself well served if he's had major dealings with the best of the crop – more able learners. Less fortunate others, like you and I, can still wish, I suppose, but this really is ideal material to use should the chance to do so arise.

But why a whole book devoted to this specific group? In his foreword to *Advanced Learners* Maley explains how although there are many who reach a relatively comfortable plateau of competence in English, others are 'acutely aware of their blind spots'. Other factors include his belief that, as it becomes the language of global interaction and communication, it is no longer good enough to be able to just get by in English. Maley adds, though, how the expected user of material in this title must be assumed to be self-motivated and determined, concluding, 'At this

level there are no quick fixes.'

And just who are advanced learners? Maley suggests we may define them either in terms of occupational demands (teachers of English, academics and managers), by qualification (Ielts 6.5 and above, or C1 and C2 on the Common European Framework) or by psychological profile (independent, confident, having high aspirations). The overall aim of the book is to stretch these groups in two ways: by inducting them into previously unimagined territory, like writing poetry or teaching a grammar lesson (one would hope he's not referring to language teachers in this latter regard!) and helping them do better at familiar things like making a presentation. As learners at such a level tend to have specific concerns, activities in *Advanced Learners* are designed for small group, one-to-one and independent study.

Tasks in the opening section aim to raise awareness, provide a focus on strengths and weaknesses, help develop noticing skills, use other people as resources and share effective revision techniques, while those in the second, 'Tools of the trade', aim to help students become more critically aware of dictionaries, thesauruses, pedagogical grammars and related websites. Although there are others devoted to the four skills,

possibly the most enlightening chapter in *Advanced Learners* is that on vocabulary, where I personally learned much about my mother tongue. It focuses on collocation e.g. 'disappointing result' versus colligation e.g. 'as a result of', followed by work on words with Greek and Latin roots, and new words – do you know the meanings of 'ditzzy' and 'fractal'? – along with how such words come about. There are also tasks on loan words like 'envelope', double words like 'spick and span,' plus polywords (fixed phrases) such as 'from time to time'.

Tasks are always interesting, clearly explained and generally include ready-to-use photocopyable worksheets. Valuable use is made of matching tasks and table completion, but for some areas, such as Greek versus Latin roots, although Maley directs the user to a relevant website and reading material where answers are likely to be found, I found myself a bit perplexed; an answer key would have helped greatly. (I still don't know the origins of the loan words I looked at.) Further details on this title and others in the series can be found at: [www.oup.com/elt/teacher/rbt](http://www.oup.com/elt/teacher/rbt).

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## REVIEWS IN BRIEF

with the Bournemouth English Book Centre

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### BOOK OF THE MONTH



**TOTAL BUSINESS 2**  
(Summertown Publishing) John Hughes 9-780462 098654

*Total Business 2* is a new business English coursebook, and part of a three-level series. Each of its twelve modules has three strands. The first covers business topics, focusing on vocabulary; the second looks at typical business skills; the third strand, 'Learning strategies', practises the four language skills within a business context. The publisher's claim to provide material for both pre-work and in-work business English students seems justified.

**THE DEVELOPING TEACHER**  
(Delta) Duncan Foord 978-1-905085-22-4

The main argument of this book is that teachers themselves are 'the most powerful agents of change... in their own... career'. Part A is a concise overview of the theory behind current issues in professional development. Part B, the largest section, consists of practical activities. One looks at the Johari window, a tool for developing self-knowledge. Part C covers larger, complex tasks such as building a portfolio. Used selectively, this

intelligent slim book could be instrumental in helping teachers move forward. Great for trainers too.

While *Total Business* looks and feels like many similar books on the market, it actually excels in style and layout. Its 144 pages contain quality photos and diagrams. One outstanding feature is that ample space is provided for students to record their own answers, such as composing emails and a business report in the excellent templates provided. The sequence of grammar is logical. 'Art at work' is an engaging activity, and the 'Meetings wheel' provides enjoyable practice. An inventive gap-fill exercise allows students to choose the correct alternative of four to complete an authentic-looking document. This is an attractive book containing motivating tasks. Recommended.

**HANDBOOK OF RESEARCH ON WEB 2.0 AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**  
(Information Science Reference) Editor: Michael Thomas ISBN: 978-160566190-2

Technology moves fast. Often, pedagogy struggles to keep up. This 600-page handbook will therefore be welcomed by teachers interested in theory, research and data, and the principles

underpinning the intriguing world of Web 2.0 communications.

The *Handbook* contains nearly thirty chapters, each an academic essay with abstract and bibliography. Experts from around the globe have contributed. Especially useful are the sections on interactive whiteboards, blogs and podcasting; enthusiasts can delve into mobile technologies, personal learning environments and more. This book may become a milestone in the field; it deserves to be explored by more than users of university libraries. Comprehensive.

**VOCABULARY MATRIX: UNDERSTANDING, LEARNING, TEACHING**  
(Heinle Cengage Learning) Michael McCarthy, Anne O'Keefe, Steve Walsh 978-1-4240-5253-0

This resource book is designed for pre-service and new teachers. Ten chapters cover areas including collocation, idioms and words within discourse. The chapters have a three-part format: A brings us up to date with what we know about a topic; B examines learner problems; C looks at how we teach this area. *Vocabulary Matrix* is fascinating. It will prove useful for trainers needing to brush up on technical terms like 'polysemy' and 'colligation'. Highly recommended.

Reviews by Pete Sharma

for the Bournemouth English Book Centre

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