

Reviews

example, the grammar translation method is presented and in the list of techniques associated with it one finds that students are encouraged to find antonyms and synonyms – a vocabulary-building tool that could be incorporated in an eclectic method classroom.

There is a helpful new chapter on the use of technology in language learning, and in the concluding chapter there is a helpful summary, presented in tabulated form. There is a critique of the table and a useful discussion on how teachers learn to teach: we are encouraged to identify our beliefs concerning teaching, construct theories and then develop our teaching practice to fit our individual understanding and the needs of our students in changing contexts.

This is a useful book that I would love to have had on my shelf when I was taking a course in methodology. It will become a foundation book for my own teacher training methodology courses.

Sandy Willcox
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Working in Russia and Eastern Europe

by Isobel Williams and Stuart Amor
Cornelsen 2011
978-3-06-520229-9

'Always be prepared to be surprised' – a statement from the recorded dialogue of two Europeans working with Russian partners – could be a motto for this book.

The image of Russians (and other Slavs such as Serbs or Poles) created by Hollywood and European filmmakers is primarily a negative one and, as a result, Europeans are still quite suspicious about doing business in these countries.

Reminders of the Communist past are often an obstacle to mutual understanding, as is the behaviour of present-day Russian and Eastern European politicians and some strange and often obscure business rules. Thus potential users of this textbook might be wary of doing business with people from former Socialist countries.

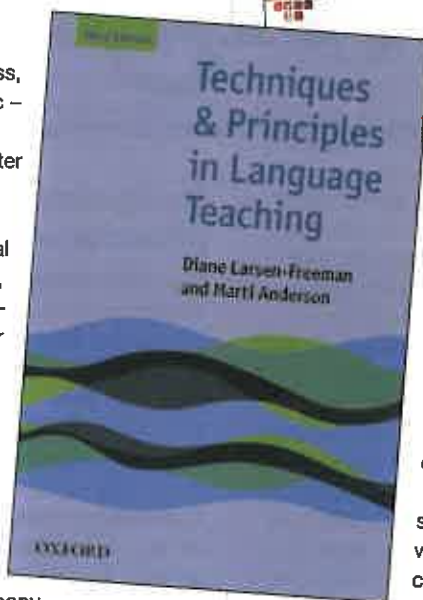
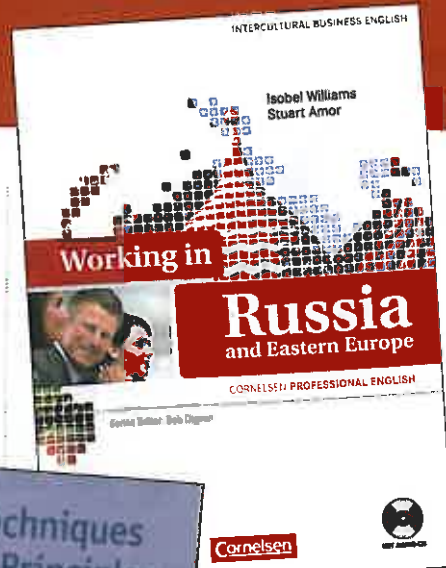
But the book leads step by step to greater understanding: Russians and Eastern Europeans, though they differ from many Europeans in their habits and in the expression of their emotions, are just normal businesspeople who send

emails, engage in small-talk, make serious decisions, develop their businesses and – moreover – their countries' economies, and gradually integrate into the European economy.

However, the practical benefit of this book goes beyond a simple rehabilitation of potential business partners from Eastern Europe. The essence of its innovative character lies in the combination of three approaches – business, cultural and linguistic – which defines its structure. Every chapter consists of three focuses, providing students with practical material on business, culture and business-oriented language for everyday use. The attached CD contains recordings of dialogues featuring different accents, which helps to immerse students in the atmosphere of an international company.

Although many books on business English are well designed, *Working in Russia and Eastern Europe* has as its advantage a smaller format and an attractive layout. The book is very easy to use and pleasant to read. Energetic red boxes with the figure of a chess king draw our attention to key ideas (eg 'People are different. Stay flexible and tolerant at all times' and the translated Russian saying 'Life is work, work, work – but there comes a time when you must celebrate' – a version of 'business before pleasure').

Aside from traditional exercises for pairs or groups of students and vocabulary practice, there are texts on business projects, famous politicians and tycoons and everyday life in the chosen countries. There are also short, but at the same time in-depth, descriptions of business cultures, etiquette and protocol in the appendix. It is interesting to learn from the country information files that 'Bulgarian business decisions are often heavily influenced by personal sentiments' while Czechs 'prefer an unhurried, methodical approach to



analyzing proposals and figures'. The much-talked-about Russians 'are tough and like to indulge in a fair amount of theatre if necessary' and it is necessary to plan ahead in Belarus since 'bureaucracy is still cumbersome' there.

The book is very stimulating, and students will definitely feel comfortable with their real-life partners from

Eastern Europe after taking classes based on this textbook. Step by step, they will learn to tolerate and not to react negatively at first sight to incomprehensible things, in addition to learning to speak English in a business environment. The recorded dialogues of native speakers (British and American) avoid the notorious 'Globish', while the various other accents included create diversity and depict a pluralist and multicultural world.

A second motto for the textbook could be summed up as 'The golden rule is don't generalise'. This sound advice should prevent students from believing in stereotypes or being prejudiced against their future colleagues from Russia and other Eastern European countries.

Speaking of working abroad, the authors advise: 'Try to think of it all as a thrilling adventure – a wonderful opportunity to grow and learn.' The appeal of this textbook is that it convinces us to study intercultural business English and, with it, to grow and learn.

Elena Yushkova
Vologda, Russia