

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## Language Teaching Awareness

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## CAMBRIDGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Series Editor: Jack C. Richards

This series draws on the best available research, theory, and educational practice to help clarify issues and resolve problems in language teaching, language teacher education, and related areas. Books in the series focus on a wide range of issues and are written in a style that is accessible to classroom teachers, teachers-in-training, and teacher educators.

*In this series:*

**Agendas for Second Language Literacy** *by Sandra Lee McKay*

**Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms** *by Jack C. Richards and Charles Lockhart*

**Educating Second Language Children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community** *edited by Fred Genesee*

**Understanding Communication in Second Language Classrooms** *by Karen E. Johnson*

**The Self-directed Teacher: Managing the learning process** *by David Nunan and Clarice Lamb*

**Functional English Grammar: An introduction for second language teachers** *by Graham Lock*

**Teachers as Course Developers** *edited by Kathleen Graves*

**Classroom-based Evaluation in Second Language Education** *by Fred Genesee and John A. Upshur*

**From Reader to Reading Teacher: Issues and strategies for second language classrooms** *by Jo Ann Aebersold and Mary Lee Field*

**Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom** *by Richard R. Day and Julian Bamford*

**Language Teaching Awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices** *by Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# Language Teaching Awareness

A guide to exploring beliefs  
and practices

*Jerry G. Gebhard*

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

*Robert Oprandy*

Monterey Institute of International Studies



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521630399](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521630399)

© Cambridge University Press 1999

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1999

3rd printing 2005

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data*

Gebhard, Jerry Greer.

Language teaching awareness : a guide to exploring beliefs and practices / by Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy.

p. cm

ISBN 0 521 63039 8 hardback

ISBN 0 521 63954 9 paperback

1. Language and languages – Study and teaching.

I. Oprandy, Robert. II. Title.

P51.G4 1999

418'.007–dc21

98–48366

ISBN 978-0-521-63039-9 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-63954-5 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2007

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

To John Fanselow, our mentor and friend,  
who has liberated so many of us from the  
usual ways of looking.

Contents

List of contributors	ix
Series editor's preface	xi
Preface	xiii
I	INTRODUCTION TO AN EXPLORATORY APPROACH TO TEACHING 1
Chapter 1	Exploring our teaching 3 <i>Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy</i>
Chapter 2	The process of exploration 20 <i>Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy</i>
II	PROCESSES FOR EXPLORING TEACHING 33
Chapter 3	Seeing teaching differently through observation 35 <i>Jerry G. Gebhard</i>
Chapter 4	Problem posing and solving with action research 59 <i>Jerry G. Gebhard</i>
Chapter 5	Reflecting through a teaching journal 78 <i>Jerry G. Gebhard</i>
Chapter 6	Exploring with a supervisor 99 <i>Robert Oprandy</i>
Chapter 7	Making personal connections to teaching 122 <i>Robert Oprandy</i>
III	EXAMPLES OF TEACHERS' EXPLORATIONS 147
Chapter 8	Teachers talking about teaching: Collaborative conversations about an elementary ESL class 149 <i>Robert Oprandy with Laura Golden and Kayoko Shiomi</i>

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices  
Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

viii    *Contents*

Chapter 9	Microteaching and self-observation: Experience in a preservice teacher education program	172
	<i>Jerry G. Gebhard, Mio Hashimoto, Jae-Oke Joe, and Hyunhee Lee</i>	
Chapter 10	Two action research projects	195
	<i>Helen Collins Sitler and Zubeyde Tezel</i>	
Chapter 11	How yoga was taught: Connecting my student and teacher selves	211
	<i>Jerry G. Gebhard</i>	
Bibliography		221
Author index		233
Subject index		236

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## *Contributors*

Jerry G. Gebhard, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Laura Golden, Teachers College, Columbia University

Mio Hashimoto, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Jae-Oke Joe, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Hyunhee Lee, Chungbuk National University, South Korea

Robert Oprandy, Monterey Institute of International Studies

Kayoko Shiomi, Teachers College, Columbia University

Helen Collins Sitler, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Zubeyde Tezel, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Series editor's preface*

A current theme in teacher education is to view teacher development as a process that involves both the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills and the examination of beliefs, principles, and theories and how they influence the way teachers teach. Teaching involves both thought and action, and the interaction between the two forms the focus of recent approaches to teacher development. Teacher education also has to face the issue of linking the content of teacher education to the contexts in which teachers work. Much of what occurs in campus programs is soon forgotten or discarded when teachers enter or return to schools; hence teacher educators are constantly exploring ways of making their curriculum and the activities they make use of relevant to the immediate and long-term concerns of student teachers.

In *Language Teaching Awareness* two scholars at the forefront of second language teacher education and their collaborators describe the rationale and practice underlying what they term an *exploratory approach* to teacher development. This refers to activities that seek to develop deeper understanding of teachers' beliefs, theories, principles, and attitudes in order to better understand the nature of classroom second language teaching and learning. The authors' agenda is not to present a body of information that is intended to help change or improve teachers' practices. Rather, they make a strong and convincing case for exploring teachers' beliefs and practices and using the knowledge and awareness that result from this process to make informed decisions about one's own teaching.

Crucial to the process of exploratory teaching proposed in this book are the observation and description of teaching events and processes, investigation of teaching through action research, using journal writing to write about and explore teaching, and using conversation to examine teaching from different perspectives. These activities are intended to help teachers understand their own practices as well as those of other teachers, to explore alternative approaches to teaching, and to see teaching in different ways. The book presents accounts of how these and other activities can be used within an exploratory approach to teacher development. Procedures for using each

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

xii *Series editor's preface*

activity are carefully illustrated, and ideas on how to use the information or insights gained are given. At the same time, new and challenging insights about each of these processes are presented. The set of first-hand accounts and case studies in Part III describe how these processes have been successfully used and how they helped teachers achieve new insights about teaching and about themselves as teachers. *Language Teaching Awareness* thus makes a valuable contribution to the field of second language teacher education and will provide a valuable resource book for teachers and teacher educators who seek to better understand and manage their own professional development through the application of the principles of exploratory teaching.

Jack C. Richards

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Preface

This book is about how teachers can explore their teaching in order to gain awareness of their beliefs and practices. There are several ways in which we consider our exploratory approach to be different from that in other language teacher education books. Some books with a teacher *training* emphasis focus on ways teachers can improve their teaching by mastering prescribed ways to teach. That is not the purpose of this book. Other books do not present *best* ways to teach but concentrate on how teachers can develop knowledge and skills about second language teaching. For example, Richards in *Beyond Training* (1998) discusses six content domains of second language education that teachers should develop. These include theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills and language proficiency, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning skills, and decision making and contextual knowledge.

Teacher educators who follow such a *developmental* approach provide a variety of activities for teachers to construct a knowledge base in the six domains. These include, according to Richards (*ibid.*, 17), experiencing teaching (e.g., practice teaching, microteaching, internships), observing (e.g., peer observation, use of video protocols), reflecting on teaching and learning (e.g., journals and other written activities, language learning experience), investigating teaching and learning (e.g., analyzing classroom processes, establishing databases), focusing on critical events in teaching (e.g., by analysis of case studies, doing role plays), doing project work (e.g., action research, curriculum and materials development), information-oriented approaches (e.g., lectures and large-group teaching, discussions), communication activities (e.g., student oral presentations, skills training), and proficiency-focused activities (e.g., analysis of classroom language and discourse, practice of classroom functional language).

We see much value in this developmental approach to teaching and have made great use of such activities in our own teacher-preparation programs.<sup>1</sup>

1 Although we see value in the developmental approach to teacher education, we also recognize that development is not always beneficial. Tanizaki (1967), for example,

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## xiv Preface

We also recognize that there has been much progress made in second language teacher development (see, for example: Edge 1992; Freeman 1989; Freeman & Cornwell 1993; Freeman & Richards 1996; Johnson 1999; Li, Mahoney, & Richards 1994; Richards & Nunan 1990). Through our experience, though, we feel compelled to forefront several ways to promote an *exploratory approach* to developing teacher awareness. Our emphasis on exploration overlaps with the developmental approach to (language) teacher education. Similar to those touting that approach, we agree that teachers need to take responsibility for their own teaching and that they can benefit from the cooperation of colleagues, students, and others. However, we set ourselves apart in certain ways from the usual approaches to teacher development.

Unlike one of the goals of development, that of improving teaching, the aim of exploration is, in our view, simply gaining awareness of teaching beliefs and practices. Improvement implies that some ways are better than others in teaching. Searching for such ways can limit teachers from looking beyond the concept of effective teaching, possibly blocking them from becoming more aware of teaching possibilities outside of what is considered *improved teaching*. In contrast, the goal of exploration is simply to gain awareness of teaching. As Fanselow points out, the aim of exploration is “seeing . . . teaching differently” (1988: 114). Being open and attempting to see and understand what is going on between the teacher and students and among the students themselves liberates teachers from the pressure of finding a better way. Trying alternatives just to see what happens, exploring to gain awareness, is energizing. The more elements of the teaching-learning dynamic that reveal themselves to us, the more we want to explore. Thus, a cycle is created; increasing awareness makes teachers curious to explore further, leading again to fresh insights and new questions to explore.

points out how modern lighting has eroded the aesthetic quality of traditional beauty in Japan. As Tanizaki puts it, “This was the genius of our ancestors, that by cutting off the light from this empty space they imparted to the world of shadows that informed there a quality of mystery and depth superior to that of any wall painting or ornament” (p. 20). Examples of the risks of development are everywhere. For example, an article in the Science and Environment section of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Glausiusz, June 22, 1998), reads: “Growing disaster? Genetic engineering can improve crop yield, and may create aggressive plants that are super-resistant to disease and insects” (p. A-6). The article is about how genetically engineered crops can increase food production in the developing world. But, there is the risk that “ecological and evolutionary forces could turn these crops into disasters” (ibid.). Perhaps the plants will prove to be so robust that they will grow aggressively, like weeds, to overrun other surroundings, including other farmlands. Antibiotic-resistant genes might escape into soil bacteria and end up infecting humans. Crops engineered to carry Bt-toxin genes might trigger the evolution of Bt-resistant bugs, and so on.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface* xv

An appreciation for the intricacies of teaching takes over, and the search for *better ways* or *the best way* to teach something is less pressing than discovering new choices.

Quite similar to this point is the second distinguishing feature of our approach – seeing nonjudgmental description as preferable to prescriptions of how teaching *should* be done. Detailed descriptions of teaching can provide explorers with a wealth of knowledge that can result in a great deal of awareness of what is. We do, however, recognize some value in prescription within an exploratory framework. For example, while working with a pre-service teacher who spoke about 85% of the time during class and who expressed interest in cutting down the amount of his teacher talk, his supervising teacher said, “I wonder what would happen if you were to feign laryngitis the next class you teach. Try it and tell me what happens.” The realization that came from being silent and noticing how much the students were able to communicate without him transformed the teacher’s view of classroom interactional possibilities. In this case, the teacher was seeking some direction from his supervisor, and the prescription was given in the spirit of exploring what might happen if the teacher were to “lose his voice.”

A third feature of our exploratory approach is the need to pay attention to language and behavior. In regard to language, usual conversations about teaching are filled with high-inference words and ambiguities. To counteract such tendencies, we promote the use of metalanguages, discussions among teachers of the ambiguities of the usual words used to talk about teaching, and awareness of the ways that teachers use judgmental as well as descriptive language during such discussions. We also explore how crucial listening is in opening up channels of communication and creating understanding among educators.

A fourth characteristic of our approach is our emphasis on going beyond usual ways of understanding teaching, especially that of problem solving (i.e., identifying and overcoming a problem area in one’s teaching). Although problem solving can provide much awareness, as Chapters 4 and 10 demonstrate, there are a number of other avenues that teachers can travel. These include seeing what happens by trying the opposite of what we normally do (e.g., asking open-ended questions instead of ones we already know the answers to), by seeing *what is* by contrasting what we do with what we think we do, by considering what we believe in light of what we do, and by exploring other avenues discussed in Chapter 1.

We also see value in exploring connections between our personal and our professional lives. This is often neglected in the literature on teacher development. Therefore, a fifth highlight of our approach is our interest in having teachers consider *connecting questions*, that is, questions connecting who

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)xvi *Preface*

they are as people with who they are as teachers. Examples of such questions, discussed in Chapter 7, are: “How does language teaching fit into my vision of who I am (becoming) and how I’d like the world to be?” and “Am I REAL in and out of school?”

Sixth, we recognize that a number of teachers and teacher educators understand the importance of process as it relates to teacher development. Bailey (1990), for example, discusses the process of keeping a teaching journal. Wallace (1998) elaborates on the process of doing action research. Gaies and Bowers (1990) present a process of clinical supervision. Lange (1990) offers a blueprint for teacher development programs. We choose to highlight the importance of involving teachers in processes through which they can make more informed decisions. As Jarvis pointed out in 1972, we need to shift “the responsibility for decision making to the classroom teacher. . . . It is perhaps time to train the teacher to analyze his situation and make his own decisions for his situation” (p. 201). By knowing and experiencing ways to process their own teaching, the goal of Part II of this book, teachers can more easily “construct, reconstruct and revise their own teaching” (Fanselow 1988: 115). This frees teachers from others’ recipes and prescriptions, which can not only limit their awareness of how they (can) teach, but also block them from constructing their own set of beliefs,

Paradoxically, for teachers to make more informed decisions, we feel it is important for them to start with “a beginner’s mind” (Suzuki 1970), the final distinguishing feature of our exploratory approach. This means we enter conversations, observations, and other teacher education activities with an open mind, unclouded as much as possible by preconceived notions about what we think *should* take place in classrooms and other teaching settings.

We invite you to try our exploratory approach to teacher awareness if you are a student or a teacher educator in a teacher-preparation program, a teacher in a language-teaching program who wants to further your awareness of teaching or of how to do classroom research, or a supervisor or administrator working with language teachers in the field.

If you are willing to suspend judgment, not be overly concerned with improving your teaching, explore avenues to awareness that are off the beaten path, pay attention to your use of language and behavior, make connections between your personal and teaching lives, try out processes of exploration that may be new to you, and start with a beginner’s mind, then we invite you to explore your teaching beliefs and practices through the readings and tasks in the pages that follow.

Jerry G. Gebhard  
Robert Oprandy

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-63954-5 - Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices

Jerry G. Gebhard and Robert Oprandy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Acknowledgments*

We owe a special thanks to students who gave us feedback on our book, including Joan Brill, Tim Cauller, Maria Estrada, Gail Pizzola, and Mark Putnam; to students in Observation of English Teaching (EN 694) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, including Muhamed Alkalil, Abdulaziz Alnofal, Ali Mohammad AlSehri, Maria Luciana Beltramo, Chin-hui Chen, Katherine Lai, Noh-shin Lee, Frances Lin, Patricia Miller, Yuji Ogura, Hyeong-Kyun Oh, Robert Palmer, Jennifer Ritter, Paige Tomkinson, Mi-Lim Ryoo, Nancy Shepardson, Akiko Suzuka, Patricia Tompkins, Lu Xu, and Dorothy Yoo; to students in Language Teacher Supervision and Language Teacher Education at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, including Michelle Bettencourt, Mary Chang, Maria DaCosta, Komal Deshpande, Ruth Dilsiz, Noel Harris, Brian Howell, Deanna Kelley, Esther Kim, Jonathan Langley, Heather MacLean, Erin McDermott, Debie Mirtle, Marissa Monty, Adam Myers, Rachel Nason, Julie Pfeffer, Allison Rainville, Kyla Stinnett, Stephen Tharp, Linda Wade, Gordon Walker, and Toni Washuta.

We thank David Thorstad and Olive Collen for their careful editing. We also thank Ida Roman and Geraldo Contereros for their research assistance, Mio Nishimura and Pat Tirone for their graphic design help, and Peter Shaw for going the extra mile at MIIS. We would particularly like to thank John F. Fanselow for his feedback on Chapters 1 and 2, Leo van Lier for his feedback on Chapter 4, and Jim Roth for his contribution to Chapter 6. We also thank the Japan Association for Language Teaching for granting us permission to republish parts of Chapter 11 and William Acton and Taeko Kamimura for their roles in making this happen.

We also offer our loving appreciation to our wives, Yoko Gebhard and Pat Tirone, for their unswerving patience and understanding.