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Values in English Language Teaching

Bill Johnston

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This book offers a new perspective on language teaching by placing moral issues--that is, questions of values--at the core of what it is to be a teacher. The teacher-student relation is central to this view, rather than the concept of language teaching as merely a technical matter of managing students' acquisition of language. The message is that all language teaching involves an interplay of deeply held values, but in each teaching situation these values are played out in different ways. Johnston does not tell readers *what* to think, but only suggests what to think *about.*

Values in English Language Teaching explores the complex and often contradictory moral landscape of the language classroom, gradually revealing how teaching is not a matter of clear-cut choices but of wrestling with dilemmas and making difficult decisions in situations often riven with conflict. It examines the underlying values that teachers hold as individuals and as members of their profession, and demonstrates how those values are played out in the real world of language classrooms. Matters addressed include connections between the moral and political dimensions in English language teaching, and between values and religious beliefs; relationship(s) between teacher identity and values; the meaning of professionalism and how it is associated with morality and values; the ways in which teacher development is a moral issue; and the marginality of English language teaching.

All the examples are taken from real-life teaching situations--the complexity and messiness of these situations is always acknowledged, including both individual influences and broader social, cultural, and political forces at play in English language classrooms. By using actual situations as the starting point for analysis, Johnston offers a philosophy based in practice, and recognizes the primacy of lived experience as a basis for moral analysis. Examples come from teaching contexts around the world, including Brazil, Thailand, Poland, Japan, Central African Republic, Turkey, and Taiwan, as well as various settings in the United States.

This book will change the way teachers see language classrooms--their own or those of others. It is a valuable resource for teachers of ESL and EFL and all those who work with them, especially teacher educators, researchers, and administrators.

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