Reviews

Exploring Parables in Luke: Integrated Skills for ESL/EFL Students of Theology
Cheri Pierson, Will Bankston, and Marilyn Lewis. Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2014. Pp. xv + 185, $21.99 (paper), ISBN 978-1783689408.

Reviewed by Megan Reiley, Westminster Theological Seminary

Finding a good textbook for academic ESL at the graduate level can be difficult, and finding one that focuses on theological English almost impossible. However, with the publication of *Exploring Parables in Luke: Integrated Skills for ESL/EFL Students of Theology,* there is a new option for students seeking to study theology at an English-speaking seminary or college.

Having taught with this book in the summer of 2015 in a seminary-based intensive English program focused on theological English, I can truly say that it is a worthwhile addition to the field. I used it in an integrated skills class for students who had received conditional admission from the seminary, dependent on improving their English. The program is rigorous, designed for graduate students of theology, and expects students to exit having the skills necessary for high-level work in theology in English. While this review will be for a general context, some of my comments come from my experience having taught in that context.

Summary

As a textbook, it is unique that each chapter focuses on a different parable from the book of Luke, as the title suggests. In addition to the parable from Luke, there is also an introductory parable and at least one theological reading that all relate to a single theme. Each chapter follows the same format, although the chapters do not necessarily have to be done in order and are organized so the first four are easier than the last four. Part I of each chapter consists of an introductory parable, often a folk tale from another country. There are comprehension questions, a language focus section and theological discussion questions after each reading. The language focus is usually a combination of either a vocabulary or grammar area that advanced students still struggle to use correctly.

After introducing readers to the themes of the chapter, Part II moves into a theological passage. These passages are summaries of evangelical theologians' writings on a theological topic. As a unique feature of the book, the authors have included two versions. The version on

the left is more difficult, and one can assume more authentic; the version on the right is a simplified text. Students are encouraged to choose to read the passage of their choice. The passages are followed by a language focus, comprehension questions, and questions that encourage students to make connections with other theological ideas and works. These follow-up activities are applicable regardless of which passage the students choose to read.

Part III introduces the parable from Luke and asks students to relate the themes and lesson of the parable to those of the earlier parable and theological reading. Each chapter then concludes with a writing section, guiding students to write their own parable over the course of the book.

Response

Overall this is an easy book to use in the classroom with intermediate to advanced learners, and it quickly engages theological students' interest. The themes from the parables and theological reading in each chapter tie together nicely, challenging students to apply the theological reading and think more deeply about the meaning of the Biblical text. The activities following each text include a nice variety of language exercises, such as exercises that develop morphological awareness, ask students to paraphrase a selection, and give students focused grammar practice. The writing portion of each chapter builds on previous chapters to walk students through the process of writing a parable themselves.

In many ways, *Exploring Parables in Luke* serves as a bridge between standard academic or general ESL texts and authentic theological material. To benefit from the book, the student must already be at an intermediate or above proficiency, although the intended language proficiency level is not indicated in the preface. Even the simplified version is not appropriate for lower-level learners as it presupposes an intermediate vocabulary and knowledge of English grammar. Additionally, the grammar and vocabulary instruction provided is minimal and assumes that students have already received fuller instruction or that the teacher will supplement with a more detailed explanation. On the other hand, the "difficult" text is itself a summary of other theologians' ideas and thus is often simpler than the authentic language that the theologian used in his or her original work. However, as a bridge between students coming from general ESL instruction and looking towards studying theology at a college or seminary, this book nicely helps move students closer towards their goals.

The weakest area of the book, at least in my experience of using it in an integrated skills classroom, is that it focuses almost entirely on reading and writing. The speaking and listening activities come as students listen to a text being read and then discuss the reading. While the book does encourage students to speak in pairs, small groups and as a class, there is no focused listening or speaking instruction. Particularly with listening, as it is such a crucial skill for students and so difficult to master, it would have been nice to have a section that suggests ways for teachers to incorporate academic listening into the curriculum. In the program where I taught we supplemented our discussions of each parable by reading along with audio versions of the Scripture passages from Luke and listening to sermons posted online about the parable. While understanding the publishing and logistical difficulties of including actual listening texts in the book, the authors could have at least provided some examples of ways to give the students authentic academic listening practice.

In the same way that parables themselves take difficult concepts and present them in often clearer story form, *Exploring Parables in Luke* is at its best when walking students through theological concepts by encouraging intermediate and high-level students to read and discuss these themes. It provides students initial exposure to authors and concepts they will more fully explore once they begin their theological studies. *Exploring Parables in Luke* offers students a bridge from general ESL material to authentic theological content, and does so in a high-quality, engaging manner.

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New Ways in Teaching Adults, Revised
Marilyn Lewis and Hayo Reinders (Eds.). Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press, 2015.
Pp. xi + 204, $47.95 (paper), ISBN 9781942223344.

Reviewed by Shalom Bay, Biola University

Various professionals from across the globe have coalesced to make this book, a collection of activities, possible; Marilyn Lewis and Hayo Reinders have spearheaded the movement. Both Lewis and Reinders have spent numerous years teaching overseas in multiple

countries. The dedication is for colleagues in Japan and likewise the majority of the contributions seemed to be aimed at overseas classrooms. Izatt's "Anne of Green Gables: Developing Listening and Speaking Skills" (p. 76), for example, specifically states "Japan" in its introduction. Nonetheless, the activities can be readily applied for any teaching context, as demonstrated throughout the book.

Summary

The collection commences with the Categorization of Activities by Skill. The chart has two columns: Category and Page Number. The Categories are as follows: Speaking, Reading, Writing, Listening, Vocabulary, Grammar, Integrated, English for specific purposes (ESP), English for academic purposes (EAP), In class, Out of class, Computer-assisted language learning (CALL), Very quick, and Learning to learn. Due to the crossover of skills across categories, there are numerous page numbers listed for each category. This is followed by an introduction and dedication. Then without any further ado, the reader comes straight to the activities, which follow a straightforward format: Title of activity, Author, one sentence summary (like an abstract), Levels, Aims, Class time, Preparation Time, followed by a brief paragraph introduction.

This book is like a cookbook. The contributors are chefs who have submitted their own recipes (procedures) for different dishes (activities). Some of the activities are very simple; these can be related to pre-literate (pp. 104-106) and beginning levels. Some recipes are more advanced and require more technical skills (pp. 100-103). Some of the recipes are smaller in portion and are more like snacks or appetizers; these are the activities that would not fill a large portion of your meal (class time). In fact, if you're looking for a heavy meal (or a full lesson plan), you might want to find a different book. This book does require some knowledge and classroom experience to replicate the recipes. Some of the recipes provide very detailed notes (found in Procedure sections) whereas some provide very minimal blurbs and expect you to fill in the blanks. Moreover, you will find the amount of time allotted per activity to be precise measurements of time such as "22 minutes" (p. 26), as well as guesstimates, such as "minimal" (p. 5).

If you were not well acquainted with the topic presented, more explanation would be required to carry out some activities. In Berridge and Muzamhindo's "Questioning the Text:

Developing Critical Reading Skills" activity (p. 8), Step 3 of the procedure calls for the teacher to "present the students with a concise explanation of different types of questions, particularly higher/lower and open/closed (See Appendix B)." However, Appendix B (p. 10) does not provide sufficient explanation as to what these types of questions or thinking are. This might lead some teachers to hesitate from choosing this activity due to the extra legwork required.

Some recipes provide you with alternatives, found in the Caveats and Options sections. Most provide a References and Further Reading section for curious readers. Particularly helpful are the Appendix sections, when included, where sample handouts and/or worksheets are provided. The reader will be grateful for what is provided. For example, Allthorpe's "Hang on a Minute: Developing Fluency in Speaking" activity (pp. 5-7) provides a thorough explanation of the procedures and even include caveats and options, yet omits references, any further reading and appendices.

Activities focus on decreasing anxiety and increasing confidence for practical purposes. Tomas and Dil's "Encouraging Peer Feedback with Sticky Notes" (pp. 170-171) is one such example. The practicality of the "I Need a Job: Role-Playing Job Interviews" activity by Han (p. 64) is notable. What is similarly very useful in real life is Ho's "Eliciting the Components: Identifying the Characteristics of a Letter and a Summary/Abstract" (p. 71). The sample letter, summary/abstract and chart in the appendices are very relevant and helpful. Schoen's "The Boss and the Memos: Communicating Through Writing Memos in a Workplace" (pp. 154-156) also covers a very needed skill needed for adults in the workplace. Toland's "The Speed-Dating Game: A Merry-Go-Round of Authentic Communication" (pp. 160-166) provides communicative practice in a light-hearted and low-pressure environment.

There are also activities that go beyond simple skill practice for students. Hassall's "Using L1 to Teach L2: Encourage Students to Evaluate the Efficiency of L1 and L2" (p. 67) appears to be the basis of a very interesting research topic; the students are guided to introspect on their own use of L1 and L2. Hilder's "The Pyramid Method: Raising Students' Awareness for Note-Taking Strategies" (p. 69) is also more metacognitive and reflective. Menconi's "Lovely Topics: Expressing Interests in Classroom Topics" (pp. 111-112) would greatly assist the teacher in planning a suitable program based on feedback from the students. Ogilvie's "Investigating Intercultural Habits: Mini Research Project About the Frequency of Behaviour in Different Settings" (p. 126) helps "procedural knowledge," or intercultural awareness.

Viana's "Students as Researchers: Investigating Language Appropriateness Through Corpora" (pp. 174-177) is also more investigative. Kirkness' "Using Answering Machines to Practice Telephone Conventions" (p. 81) and "Teacher as Postie: Practicing Authentic Correspondence" (p. 83) provide great personal and linguistic practice for students. These activities all have the purpose of creating connection and community with the students and the teacher.

Commentary

Although one might be able to infer as to which are the so-called time-tested activities, it would still have been appropriate to label the activities based on their novelty and revisions or their demonstrated consistency. Another suggestion that might be helpful is to categorize the teaching ideas by skill level (beginning – advanced). To go further, categorizing the activities by length of time required to prepare or class time would help a teacher quickly look up an idea for class.

Despite the fact that this is a revised version, however, there remain some outdated aspects. For example, Bricault's "Melody in Class: Using Songs to Exchange Cultural Values" (pp. 18-19) is a great idea but provides very minimal resources. A sample of some sort would have been a good support. Also, it says to play music with an audiotape, which is mostly outmoded. Lonsdale's "Academic Writing Through Oral Skills: Discovering Academic Conventions" (pp. 96-97) is great, but calls for the use of an overhead transparency (OHT) which nowadays is likewise outdated in many contexts.

Another way to use the activities in this book is that that they can be modified. Chan's "Watch to Learn: Using Videos or DVDs for Note-Taking Practice" states that the activity "requires . . . half a dozen lecturers, professors, or other colleagues [to] agree to being video recorded as they give actual lectures" (p. 21). This may not be necessary, though, as you can find clips on YouTube or elsewhere via the Internet. Clark's "Goal Setting: Developing Literacy Level" (p. 28) activity is great, however I would contest the level stated. Rather than Intermediate, I would say Beginning to low-intermediate because the cloze exercise provided in Appendix B has students conjugating simple verbs (such as be, want, like).

In some cases activities in the book could have been improved, such as by including sample student-written poems for Davidson's "Learning with Rhymes and Rhythms: Using Poems for Creative Writing" (p. 40) or example skits for Dickens' "Gee! Have Fun and Learn

With Fillers in Conversation" (pp. 45-46). However, even without certain aspects this book provides a myriad of engaging and diverse teaching ideas and proves to be a good reference.

What's great about *New Ways in Teaching Adults* is that many of its activities can be used with materials you have at hand; you are not required to go out and search for some of the materials required. For example, Magrath's "Using Authentic Materials in ESOL: How to Adapt Everyday Materials" (pp. 108-110) uses apartment guides which are readily available in many places. So, if you are looking for ideas for teaching adults ESL/EFL, this edited collection of activities is a great resource!

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Virtuous Minds: Intellectual Character Development
Philip E. Dow. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.
Pp. 208, $18.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0830827145.

Reviewed by Cristy Brink, ELS Language Center

I began to read this book at the end of a week in which I had caught three of my Intensive English Program students plagiarizing. Experiencing pressure from without and desperation within, they saw the levels of our EAP program as a barrier rather than a path to their progress. They were willing to deceive and to short-circuit their own learning to get the talisman of a completion certificate.

Having dealt with academic dishonesty, I was primed to receive the message of *Virtuous Minds*, an exploration of the seven aspects of intellectual virtue and their benefits. Written in an accessible style, with engaging anecdotes and explanation, it proposes intellectual virtue as the antidote to the dismaying prevalence of deception, carelessness, bias, and cowardice in our public and private lives. This book is aimed at Christians, primarily but not exclusively educators. To aid the reader in understanding and applying the concepts, a discussion guide and sample curricular documents are included in the appendices.

Summary

The introduction to *Virtuous Minds* argues that moral choices have an intellectual dimension; we make most of our choices on "mental autopilot" (p. 23), so our habitual thinking

processes affect the direction of our lives, whether for good or ill. The author links intellectual virtue with the command to love God with all of our minds.

In chapters 1-7, Dow describes seven intellectual virtues: courage, carefulness, tenacity, fair-mindedness, curiosity, honesty, and humility.

• Intellectual courage is the willingness to take risks in the pursuit of truth. It is the basis of all the other virtues, enabling us to practice them when the stakes are high.

• Intellectual carefulness is a habit of paying attention to detail and resisting drawing conclusions until there is sufficient evidence. It results in confidence in one's own work and a reputation for trustworthiness.

• Intellectual tenacity is the determination to do necessary, difficult, and tedious work in the pursuit of goodness and truth. A habit of tenacity leads to personal growth, overcoming of limitations, and real success.

• Intellectual fair-mindedness is a willingness to listen to a variety of opinions in order to arrive at the truth. It is not the same as relativistic openness, which precludes a knowledge of truth by proclaiming all opinions to be equally valid. Fair-mindedness requires the sacrifice of the ego, a willingness to be proven wrong, to gain the truth, along with a willingness to listen carefully whether we admire a speaker or not.

• Intellectual curiosity is simply the desire to know more and the willingness to follow facts where they lead. It involves observation and a habit of asking why things should be the way they are.

• Intellectual honesty is concerned less with getting information than with presenting it. It is a desire to help others arrive at the truth that makes one careful to avoid misleading an audience, distorting facts, or claiming another's work as one's own. It also has application to the personal realm; e.g., whether we will admit sin or change the rules to suit our conduct, or whether deception will ruin our relationships. Intellectual honesty leads to greater trust and a stronger foundation for the pursuit of knowledge.

• Intellectual humility is a willingness to see our abilities and limitations in light of an omniscient and all-intelligent God. It results in a teachable spirit that leads to greater understanding and expanded horizons. Intellectually humble people can enjoy the successes of others as well as their own, and they are willing to share their knowledge generously.

Chapters 8-11 detail the fruits of intellectual character: increased knowledge, better thinking, love for God, and love for neighbors. Increased knowledge leads to a richer experience of the world, new insights and solutions, and greater influence in the world. Better thinking skills and habits of mind make learning less painful in the long run and therefore make possible greater growth and achievement. More importantly, the expanded knowledge and stewardship of potential that accompany intellectual virtue lead to better worship (Rom. 12:1; Mk. 12: 30; Ps. 8:1-4) and apologetics (I Pet. 3:15). It makes trust possible between neighbors and fuels both practical improvements in our neighbors' lives and a greater concern for their dignity.

In chapters 12-13, Dow considers how to develop the intellectual virtues in ourselves and in others. First, he offers ten principles for personal transformation. These include goal setting, self-evaluation, planning, accountability, and concrete action. Next, Dow makes seven suggestions to teachers and parents, addressing motivation, modeling, and teaching.

Dow concludes with a reflection on the parable of the sheep and the goats (Mt. 25:31-26) in order to highlight that both groups acted unconsciously ("But when did we…"). Their virtuous or evil deeds flowed naturally from a virtuous or evil character. The daily, small decisions of a lifetime became the habits of mind that produced fruit leading either to eternal life or eternal destruction. Thus, the consequences of the intellectual virtues extend far beyond the classroom to eternity.

Commentary

In the descriptions of the seven virtues, I saw everything that my plagiarizing students needed, from the courage to make mistakes and learn from them, to curiosity about language and course content, to the tenacity to persevere and achieve excellence, to the honesty to do independent work and humility to accept accurate feedback and learn from it. The diagnosis was clear. If I were a teacher or administrator in a K-12 Christian school, the appendices would provide direction for a treatment plan, with outlines of curriculum, assessment rubrics, and senior project assignments. The application to a secular, university context is less clear. However, there is plenty of guidance here that a language teacher can take and adapt.

Dow's first suggestion to teachers is to "begin with the end in mind" (p. 126). Here, Dörnyei's (2009) L2 motivational self system comes to my mind. To stay motivated in a

difficult task, learners need to have fully realized ideal- and ought-selves in their L2 context. Moreover, there needs to be harmony between these two future selves. For students coming from vastly different educational cultures, the ideal self is likely to need elaboration and adaptation as they are confronted with Western academic practices, and what emerges may not be in harmony with the ought-self enforced by peer norms and other community pressures. In order to increase language learners' motivation to practice the intellectual virtues in their new context, teachers will have to hold up examples of intellectual virtue for learners to enfold into their ideal L2 selves and provide explicit instruction in Western academic norms to help them develop an ought-self that is in harmony with their ideal.

Until now, I have taken a pragmatic approach to training my students in Western academic practices. Not wishing to send the message that the ways they are used to are wrong, while mine are right, I have instead focused on teaching them what works in their new context. Curiosity and critical thinking are rewarded; plagiarism and copying are both ineffective and disapproved of; therefore, they need to comply in order to be successful, regardless of what they feel is right or wrong. However, Dow makes a convincing case that intellectual virtue is not separable from plain old moral virtue. Therefore, aping intellectual virtue as a pragmatic strategy for success is not sufficient. As a Christian English teacher, I ought to be concerned with my students as whole persons. According to Dow, "Because our minds tend to lead our actions, in a very real sense the quality of our intellectual character even trumps moral character in terms of its power to direct the course of our lives" (p. 22). While I wish he had provided better biblical support for this claim, Dow amply proves that intellectual character has a tremendous impact on the direction our lives take, whether personally, socially, or professionally. Although the application may be limited by the teaching context, and perseverance will be required to see any fruit from such a difficult task, I recommend this book to Christian English teachers who hope to have a godly impact on their students' intellectual development.

Reference

Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9-42). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

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