

- 70. Thaler, Engelbert. 2008. *Offene Lernarrangements im Englischunterricht*. [Open learning approaches in English teaching]. München: Langenscheidt, 371 pp., EUR 29.00.**

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Teacher-fronted classrooms have come under criticism for a few decades now – even before PISA and similar large-scale school assessments. Autonomous, student-centred learning, based on the constructivist paradigm, is generally believed to lead to more motivating and effective learning results.

This book <see also summary 69 in this volume> intends to give a thorough and critical overview of open methods and approaches in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The first part traces the various sources of the paradigm of openness in the fields of philosophy, educational theory, political sciences, psychology, applied linguistics and foreign language acquisition. In the second part 10 criteria of open TEFL are posited and discussed. The third

and central section presents 27 open methods and approaches divided into six groups:

- task-based approaches (*Freiarbeit*, *Planarbeit*, station learning, project work, task based language learning, storyline, participatory approach)
- *Spiel*-based types (games, plays, simulations)
- media-based forms (music-based language learning, film-based language learning, Internet-based language learning, self-access)
- skill-based forms (extensive reading, creative writing, oral presentations, discussions, improvisations, narrow listening)
- phase-based techniques (open lesson starts, surprise-sensitive teaching, breaks, open closures)
- interaction-based concepts (learning by teaching (LdL), cooperative language learning)

Each of the 27 approaches is analysed according to three parameters: background, intention, evaluation. The fourth part tries to exemplify the concept of open TEFL by means of an empirical study: MODUS 21, an ambitious German reform project involving 43 schools, is investigated from an open TEFL point of view. The main result of this study is that an overwhelming majority of teachers from all types of schools are in favour of a combination of teacher-fronted and student-centred teaching approaches. The last part integrates the findings of the previous chapters and pleads for *Balanced Teaching*, i.e. a synthesis of open and closed learning arrangements.