

Ardo, Zsuzsanna. *English for Practical Management*. Oxford University Press, 1988. 162 pp. R33,50.

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This is a very curious book, and I am hard pressed to imagine a use for it in English classrooms. Despite the title, there is minimal focus on the kind of practical English skills one would expect to be covered. There are, for example, no guidelines for writing letters, memos, minutes or reports, and the section on making a presentation focuses on what one should wear and the importance of not mumbling, rather than giving advice on or practice in writing a presentation.

Topics covered include job interviews, dressing for success, time management, meetings, and decision making. There is very little explicit instruction or explanation of guidelines on these issues. The approach throughout is what the Americans call 'touchy-feely', relying heavily on encounter-group type interaction between students and personal questionnaires which include questions such as the following:

10. *You strongly disagree with a speaker. Do you*
  - a) *force yourself to speak your mind*
  - b) *shrivel up and say nothing*
  - c) *bawl him/her out in public*
  - d) *bawl him/her out in private*
  - e) *.....*
18. *When someone smokes at a meeting and it disturbs you, do you*
  - a) *tell them snappishly to stop*
  - b) *suffer in silence (and plan revenge)*
  - c) *cut the tips of the burning cigarettes off with long scissors*
  - d) *.....*
19. *When bored to death at a meeting, to keep yourself occupied, you*

- a) *draw doodlestrips*
- b) *chainsmoke*
- c) *bite your nails*
- d) *scratch and fidget*
- e) *force yourself to take notes*
- f) *doze with your eyes open*
- g) *catch up on your sleep with your eyes closed (letting out an occasional snore?)*
- h) *observe others and take mental notes of their behaviour*
- i) *drift off into your own thoughts in total isolation*
- j) *plan the next day's schedule*
- k) *mumble under your breath*
- l) .....

(pp. 65-67)

What content and skills are learnt will thus depend almost entirely on the students' own process of self-discovery and whatever ideas are generated by the 'buzz groups'.

The kindest word one could use to describe the format and presentation is 'lively'. There are numerous cartoons, drawings, and lovingly hand-lettered captions and headings. The style is somewhat reminiscent of the sixties, flower-power, peace and love, and psychedelia - altogether rather precious and cutesy-poo.

*English for Practical Management* may be of use in a management training course, and will probably work best with students who wear leather sandals and shop at health food stores. The comment on the back cover reads:

*Should you look professional and/or sexy?  
Computers? New technology? Wow!  
Are you a workaholic?  
Decision making - logic versus intuition?  
Just how creative are you?  
Where the hell is your time going?*

*Curious?  
.....then look inside!*

If that's your bag, baby - then go for it. And you have yourself a very nice day now.

*Margaret H. van Zyl*  
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McRae, John and Boardman, Roy. *Reading between the Lines*. Cambridge University Press, 1988. Teacher's Book, 87 pp. Student's Book, 120 pp. Two cassettes.

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*Reading between the Lines* is based on the assumption that literary texts and extracts (not to be confused with Literature) can provide a stimulating basis for classwork on language appreciation, reading skills, and oral fluency. The level catered for is upper-intermediate to advanced, and the activities include listening skills, note-taking, discussion, simulation dramas, and a number of reading strategies.

The student's book is organised thematically, and contains a wide range of provocative and challenging material from an almost complete range of genres (novels, drama, poetry, speeches, cartoons, advertisements, songs, newspaper reports). The unit on 'War', for instance, has extracts from Frederick Forsyth, Thucydides, *Asterix and the Chieftain's Shield*, Shakespeare, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, and Winston Churchill. Most of the texts are recorded on the accompanying cassettes.

The activities are varied and original. The unit on 'ideals', for example, includes an exercise asking students to draw a map of the Pleasure Dome after listening to and reading Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. This is followed by the question: 'Is it possible to draw the