

Reviews

***Connected Words: Word Associations and Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition.* Paul Meara. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, (2009). xvii + 174 pp.**

Reviewed by

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Paul Meara has arguably been the most original thinker in the field of second language vocabulary acquisition (SLVA) over the past 3 decades, and his independent approach to research in the field is apparent from the beginning pages of *Connected Words: Word Associations and Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. His point is simple, yet powerful: Second language vocabulary acquisition researchers need to ask better questions, be more critical of the status quo in the field, and invest more effort into producing more effective methodologies and research instruments that allow them to better illuminate critical areas in the field. This book is a historical account of Meara's attempts to do exactly that over a 30-year period.

The book is divided into five sections. Section 1, Early work, is made up of two chapters that Meara calls "classic research" into word associations, as the two studies are based on traditional research methodologies and traditional ways of interpreting word association data (i.e., by dividing them into syntagmatic and paradigmatic associations). As Meara acknowledges, the studies offer little insight into the second language lexicon or how high-quality associational data can be elicited. Rather, the primary benefit of these studies is to make the limitations of the traditional research paradigm clear and allow readers to better appreciate what follows by understanding the starting point of L2 word association research.

Section 2 is an exploration of one of several novel ideas in the book: Second language learners' ability to produce word associations can provide

estimates of their productive vocabulary sizes. In Chapter 3, Meara introduces Lex30, a software program that is designed to provide estimates of productive vocabulary sizes by having learners produce associations to a list of high frequency stimulus words. The strengths of Lex30 are that it is easy to administer; results can be obtained quickly, the computerized version is freely available, and the Lex30 v3.00 manual is provided in Chapter 9 of the book. Preliminary validation work on the instrument is reported in Chapter 4.

Section 3 is made up of three papers exploring the characteristics of word association networks. This section is “classic” Paul Meara, as it concerns one of his main areas of interest in the field of SLVA, modeling lexical networks in second language speakers of English, and it provides an excellent example of one of Meara’s favorite approaches to solving problems in the field of SLVA: Borrow a concept or analytical technique from outside of the SLVA field and apply it to second language learner data. In this case, an analytical technique, graph theory, is introduced and used to model the lexical networks of native and non-native speakers of English. In Chapter 6, the notion of a vocabulary network is explored using V_Links, a computer program designed to measure a person’s lexical organization of English. The manual for an updated version of this program is found in Chapter 9 of the book.

Section 4 is a previously unpublished 27-page annotated bibliography of word association research summarizing available published studies. As such, it is an invaluable resource for persons researching this topic. In section 5, Software applications, Meara presents the manuals for three software applications he has developed. These manuals show how to install the programs, use them, and interpret the output. Two of them, Lex30 and V_Six, were mentioned above and the third program, WA_Sorter, sorts and counts word association data. These programs allow readers who are interested in “getting their hands dirty” to investigate many of the key ideas presented in the book with their own data, and as such, they represent one of the outstanding features of this book.

While the book is fascinating and valuable in many respects, it is not without limitations. First, there is no indication that modern conceptions of measurement, as currently understood by psychometricians, are understood or valued. This is a key issue that must eventually be grappled with in discussing issues such as measuring lexical size. Second, further validation work is required for all of the instruments and computer programs described in the book, as the validation work done to date will likely be unconvincing to anyone with reasonably good knowledge of the language assessment

and validation literature. To his credit, Meara repeatedly acknowledges the tentative and exploratory nature of many of the instruments and the data they produce. A third issue concerns the fact that some of the work is overly dependent on computer simulations; proper investigations had not been carried out with human participants at the time the book was published. It is hoped that SLVA researchers will address this gap in the near future. Finally, the research methodology in several of the studies could be improved by using more sophisticated research designs, applying more modern analytical techniques, and gathering larger N-sizes.

Connected Words: Word Associations and Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition should be read by researchers in the field of second language vocabulary acquisition, persons interested in word associations, and more generally, by anyone who would like to see how an original thinker has approached solving complex linguistic problems. Whether you agree with Meara's approaches to the fundamental issues he has investigated over his 30-year career or not, you will likely find it difficult not to learn something—and perhaps a great many things—from this historical account of the research path followed by one of the most influential researchers in the field of SLVA. This is an important book that should be read by anyone interested in the second-language lexicon.

***Grammar Practice Activities: A Practical Guide for Teachers (2nd ed.)*. Penny Ur. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. xiii + 322 pp.**

Reviewed by

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Teaching a grammar-based curriculum can be a daunting process for both teachers and learners. Working through grammar exercises in a book or on the blackboard can prove dull and limit opportunities for learner interaction and communication. Teachers in need of inspiration can easily turn to the second edition of *Grammar Practice Activities*. Penny Ur has updated a well-regarded classic resource for teachers. As she sets forth in the introduction, the first edition was created because it was necessary to her and her colleagues' teaching. As part of the Scott Thornbury-edited *Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers* series, this book seeks to provide practical advice and a library of activities for teachers.

Part 1 of *Grammar Practice Activities* is devoted to a mixture of theoretical and practical advice regarding the roles of grammar, practice, and activities in the TESOL classroom. Part 1 is further divided into three sections that address each of the three roles in turn. All of the sections are clearly written and both serve as a thoughtful introduction to the activities in beginning educators' classrooms and offer valuable reminders for more experienced practitioners. Ur begins the first section by providing a concise definition of grammar and briefly considers several questions in the field regarding the acquisition and teaching of grammar. She acknowledges that such questions cannot be adequately dealt with in such a short section, but points the reader toward a "References and Further Reading" list (pp. 317-318) containing many titles on grammar and its place in language teaching and learning. Ur concludes the section by outlining her own beliefs and describing grammar as a means, not an end to language learning.

The next section of Part 1 deals with theories of practice, which are categorized in terms of validity, quantity, success-orientation, heterogeneity, and interest. Ur argues that a successful exercise would incorporate all of the categories. Astute teachers will be able to use these concepts as a yardstick for evaluating the effectiveness of classroom practice, whether in the form of an exercise in a textbook or an activity in a teacher's handbook.

The third and final section of Part 1 focuses on activity design and implementation. Ur deals with concepts that teachers should keep in mind when developing successful activities. She addresses various facets of activity creation and implementation including activity design and various styles of learner interaction, and finishes the section with three pages of practical tips to aid in implementing grammar-based activities in the classroom.

The second part of the book consists of 190 activities for use in the classroom. The activities are organized in such a way that the reader can easily scan the table of contents and quickly isolate an activity for a particular class. Each activity is prefaced by a heading containing the language focus, the recommended age, the learner level, the time necessary to complete the activity, and any preparation needed beforehand.

The format of Part 2 is clear and easy to follow. A header preceding each activity provides teachers with information to determine the suitability of the activity for their lessons. The procedures are presented in a simple bullet-point fashion, enhancing readability. Following select activities are language and teaching tips, each indicated by a light bulb icon. The former provide helpful advice regarding possible linguistic stumbling blocks, while the latter feature suggestions regarding the implementation of the activity.

Where applicable, the book contains pictures and materials to photocopy and use in the classroom. The images have been completely redone in this edition: Illustrations and cartoons have replaced photographic materials. The images are well drawn with clean lines, a boon to any teacher who does not have access to a state-of-the-art photocopier. A further bonus is that the materials presented in the book are also available on a CD-ROM that comes with the book. The images and materials are all in .pdf format simply requiring Adobe Reader for access. The index and bibliography are also very helpful: Alternative names for grammatical structures are listed (e.g., there is an entry for “continuous” which points toward “progressive”). The references and further reading section is reader friendly as well with sections devoted to various types of grammar and teaching resources.

For those who own the first edition and are considering purchasing the second, they can be assured that there are many reasons to do so. Ur and the editors have thoroughly revamped the original edition. Along with the new format described above, many changes have been made to the activities themselves. Although the overall count of activities remains basically the same, there have been many additions and changes. According to my count, over 40 new activities appear in the second edition. Some activities have been updated as well: “Passives in the Press” is now “Passives on the Internet.”

The book could have been strengthened by the inclusion of more activities devoted to less frequent grammatical structures. Although one can hardly fault Ur's emphasis on forms that occur more frequently in everyday speech, less common ones such as the future perfect are still tested on important exams such as the TOEFL and the TOEIC. Fans of Ur's previous work such as *Five-Minute Grammar Activities* (1992) will not be disappointed. The activities themselves are creative, varied in terms of structure and content and effective in providing meaningful practice and uses of focused language points. Beyond the excellent activities, the first section offers good practical advice regarding the creation and implementation of activities in the classroom. As one who has often made extensive use of both the first edition of this book and Ur's *Five-Minute Grammar Activities*, I am looking forward to using the new edition. All and all, *Grammar Practice Activities* would be a valuable addition to any educator's bookshelf.

References

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***Classroom Management*. Thomas S. C. Farrell (Ed.).
Alexandria, VA: TESOL, 2008. vi + 177 pp.**

Reviewed by
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While methods of instruction and assessment both play a prominent role in most ELT training programs, often overlooked is another important area of immediate practical concern, namely classroom management. As such, many EFL teachers may be relatively unprepared for the perhaps mundane but nevertheless imperative issues of arranging physical space, setting rules and procedures, communicating expectations, developing student rapport, fostering learner accountability, and other key activities necessary for “establish[ing] and sustain[ing] an orderly environment so that students can engage in meaningful academic learning” and “enhanc[ing] student social and moral growth” (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006, p. 4). For those of us in Japan, some of the best published sources of information on classroom management in Japanese contexts (e.g., section 4 of Wordell & Gorsuch, 1992) are unfortunately largely anecdotal, a bit dated, and somewhat difficult to obtain. Now, with the express goal of “offer[ing] ESOL students, teachers, administrators, and specialists practical strategies for enhancing their leadership performance” (p. vi), TESOL has recently published *Classroom Management*, one of several new additions to its Classroom Practice Series.

Classroom Management is divided into 15 chapters authored by ESL and EFL practitioners in primary, secondary, and post-secondary environments in a number of different countries, including China, Costa Rica, Singapore, South Korea, the United States, and Vietnam, as well as Japan. In Chapter 1, editor Thomas Farrell introduces the volume, expressing an aim of eschewing what he characterizes as the typical reduction and trivialization of teaching to a number of procedures and techniques, choosing to focus instead on shaping learning environments that support effective learning of English as a second (or foreign) language while promoting respect for student diversity.

Chapters 2 through 15 all follow a common, three-rubric format—“Context,” “Curriculum, Tasks, Materials,” and “Reflections”—although some authors take noticeably different approaches, especially to the first section, which often consists more of a theoretical framework or rationale for im-

plementing recommended practices in generalized cultural settings rather than a thick description of an actual classroom. The themes the authors seek to address also cover a wide variety of noteworthy issues, such as creating a culturally responsive learning environment, forming learner groups, assigning cooperative learning roles, raising learner awareness of in-class first and second language use, and encouraging greater oral participation from quiet students.

Although every chapter provides at least some amount of food for thought, most of the book's contributions might be characterized as extended "My Share" write-ups, highly readable and often containing some very interesting suggestions, but with little or no empirical verification of their effectiveness. For example, one chapter recommends using digital photo sheets to learn students' names in large classes, arguing that learning students' names can help teachers build rapport. Given no data to support this claim, however, readers are left to determine through their own experimentation whether this practice indeed leads to better teacher-student relationships.

The non-confirmatory nature of many of the claims in this book is especially problematic when authors of different chapters appear to contradict one another, as in the case of suggested principles for student grouping. Chapter 3 argues that "instead of relying on random assignments or similar academic abilities, it is essential to consider other factors such as status, racism, personalities, and friendships in the classroom" (p. 28). On the other hand, Chapter 6 advocates that teachers use a standard deck of playing cards to organize students into groups "to facilitate consecutive groupings of students with built-in layers of randomness and anonymity" (p. 57). As it is possible that either assertion may be correct under certain circumstances, it would have been nice had the editor included an additional chapter at the end of the book as an overall conclusion to assist the stated target audience of non-researchers by synthesizing some of the information and filling in a few of the gaps.

On a more positive note, four chapters should be singled out as exemplary of the types of contributions with the greatest potential to positively affect classroom practice. The first of these is Chapter 5, which draws on a series of data-based studies, including classroom video recordings and teacher interviews, to advocate a more effective classroom management technique than the common practice of moving between groups as quickly as possible to monitor student behavior. Chapter 7 describes a similarly systematic investigation, in this case of the relative merits of employing senior students as discussion group leaders. As one might expect, the author qualifies her

conclusion, indicating that this type of organizational decision requires a consideration of one's pedagogical goals (e.g., equality of participation, length of utterance, degree of comprehension, amount of enjoyment). Chapter 8 provides an explanation of how a set of cooperative learning roles was implemented and subsequently modified on the basis of student feedback. Finally, Chapter 9 presents case studies of teachers with different teaching styles as the basis for deriving a set of key practices any teacher can adopt with regard to both pedagogy in general and language pedagogy in specific.

In conclusion, this book might best serve as a resource for teachers who have completed a foundational course in classroom management and are looking to gain further insights into developing their own approaches to working more effectively with learners from different cultural backgrounds. Those lacking familiarity with some of the more fundamental classroom management issues, on the other hand, should perhaps first read the excellent global treatment by Wright (2005) before taking up the current volume. Those wanting an up-to-date, empirically based tome focusing on classrooms in Japan, however, can only continue to hope and wait.

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***The Bilingual Reform: A Paradigm Shift in Foreign Language Teaching.* Wolfgang Butzkamm and John A. W. Caldwell.
Tübingen: Narr, 2009. 260 pp.**

Reviewed by

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A growing body of research clearly supports the principled use of the learner's first language (L1) in aid of second and foreign language learning, especially when teaching at beginner and intermediate levels. With this volume, Butzkamm and Caldwell make a vital contribution to the field by providing clear step-by-step instructions to guide teachers in using a wide variety of bilingual teaching techniques. What's more, these techniques are firmly grounded in a clear and comprehensive theory of positive L1 support.

In the introduction, the authors discuss the combination of factors which have contributed to the stigmatization of L1 use in the classroom. In some teaching contexts, many teachers overuse the L1, due in part to their own limited oral proficiency in the target language (TL). At the same time, effective bilingual techniques have been criticized or simply ignored by other teachers who cannot speak their students' L1. Furthermore, policies and teacher training programs which have promoted TL exclusivity as best practice at all levels have caused many teachers to feel inadequate or guilty about using the L1, even when such practices may in fact be pedagogically sound. Rejecting the widely held view of the L1 as a hindrance to learning or as a resource of last resort, Butzkamm and Caldwell convincingly argue that explicit TL-L1 connections should act as the foundation for learning in a modern communicative approach. This positive view of the L1 is supported throughout with quotes from learners and teachers who have used bilingual techniques with great success. The authors also bring to light an impressive list of studies demonstrating the effectiveness of such techniques—including the seminal work of Dodson (1967)—which until now have received little attention.

In Chapter 1, Butzkamm and Caldwell explain how teachers can supplement TL explanations and nonverbal communication strategies by using the "sandwich technique": The teacher says a phrase in the TL, provides a discreet L1 translation in the tone of an aside, and then restates the phrase again in the TL (e.g., "Why are you late? *Dōshite okureta no?* Why are you

late?"). Rather than leaving students struggling to figure out meanings on their own, precise and immediate comprehension is ensured, with very little time given over to the L1. Students use a similar sandwich technique when they ask "How do you say *isogashii* in English?" or when they insert L1 equivalents for TL words they have not yet learned, as in "I went to the *toshokan* yesterday." The teacher or another student can supply the needed TL expressions, which are then noted and learned so that the L1 equivalents will not be required in the future. The authors suggest that these techniques can allow teachers to quickly establish a TL atmosphere in the classroom while promoting more authentic, meaningful communication in the TL than would be possible in classes where the TL is used exclusively. Comprehensible input can be maximized and learners can express their ideas more spontaneously as they discuss high-interest, level-appropriate topics, gradually becoming less dependent on the L1 as their proficiency in the TL improves—all in keeping with a truly learner-centered, communicative approach.

Chapter 2 deals with the theory of *dual comprehension*, which holds that input must ultimately be comprehended on two levels—that of meaning and that of form. The authors explain how L1 translations can be used to impart dual comprehension, following time-honored teaching strategies. In Chapter 3, the authors demonstrate how the L1 "provides an indispensable Language Acquisition Support System" (p. 66), facilitating learning with respect to vocabulary, communication skills, grammar, and reading and writing. The authors also present 10 maxims which deftly refute arguments commonly made against L1 use, along with a final maxim that reaffirms the value of monolingual activities, provided that learners have been sufficiently prepared: "Direct method lessons can be fun. Monolingual explanations and paraphrases are not outlawed but will become ever more important" (p. 87).

In Chapters 4 and 5, Butzkamm and Caldwell discuss the importance of establishing connections between TL expressions and existing L1 knowledge, and demonstrate how the L1 can act as a key for understanding TL grammar through *mirroring*—providing "literal translations and adaptations with a view to making the foreign structures salient and transparent to learners" (p. 106). In Chapter 6, the authors explain how bilingual, semi-communicative drills can help students to recognize patterns in TL sentences. Students learn how to make substitutions and create their own TL sentences which can then be used in communicative exchanges and short pieces of creative writing. Chapter 7 builds on the previous chapter, presenting a series of lessons based on brief dialogues and role-plays. Once comprehension has been

clearly established, students memorize the dialogue and learn to imitate the teacher's pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation through a series of "skill-getting" activities. Next, students learn how the structures in the dialogue can be manipulated and substituted, and finally students apply what they have learned as they create and perform their own role-plays. The theory behind this approach is explained in Chapter 8. As speaking is a complex skill that requires the learning of a whole range of sub-skills, Butzkamm and Caldwell advocate both "part practice" and "whole practice," in agreement with skill theory and modern brain research. The authors warn against assuming that learners will acquire the TL holistically simply through participating in communicative exchanges.

In Chapters 9, 10, and 11, the authors suggest many ways that high-quality TL input can be made fully comprehensible with L1 support such as reading and telling stories to the class, using bilingual readers for silent reading, using different soundtracks and subtitles on DVDs, and doing TL-L1 translation, re-translation (translating back into the TL), and, for more advanced learners, consecutive interpreting (i.e., not simultaneous). In Chapter 12, the authors draw parallels between strategies employed by young developing bilinguals and second language learners, while Chapter 13 contains ideas for teaching classes in which the learners do not share a common L1. Finally, Chapter 14 proposes directions for future research which would serve to demonstrate the relative effectiveness of bilingual and monolingual techniques in a variety of teaching situations.

Butzkamm and Caldwell's work is surprisingly wide in scope; however, readers will find a wealth of additional studies on the topic in another recently published volume, edited by Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain (2009). Taken together, these two volumes represent the state of the art in this burgeoning area of research. *The Bilingual Reform* is highly recommended for teachers wanting to expand and improve their repertoire of teaching strategies and to weigh their own beliefs against Butzkamm and Caldwell's carefully reasoned approach. As the title suggests, many readers will no doubt experience a shift in thinking with respect to the role of the L1 in their teaching practice.

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***Hybrid Identities and Adolescent Girls: Being 'Half' in Japan.*
 Laurel D. Kamada. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2010.
 xix + 258pp.**

Reviewed by

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"Are you happy to be half?" I asked my teenage daughter.

"Ussai! [Don't bother me with this!]" she replied.

"Well," I countered, "should I call you half or double? Which do you prefer?"

My daughter responded, "*Shiranai. Kono hanashi yameyou.* [I don't know. Let's stop this talk.]"

My effort at banter with my multi-ethnic teenage daughter failed. I was unable to engage her in deeper conversation, analyze the discourse, and discover how she views her hybrid half-Japanese, half-white identity in Japan.

However, Laurel Kamada, a specialist in applied linguistics working at Tohoku University, has arrived at many of the answers to my questions in her recently published *Hybrid Identities and Adolescent Girls: Being 'Half' in Japan*. With this book, Kamada becomes the first scholar to conduct in-depth analysis concerning the identities of half-Japanese, half-white bilingual (English- and Japanese-speaking) girls living in Japan.

The author herself declares that the book is an attempt to examine "how six adolescent girlfriends in Japan discursively construct their hybrid identities within the context of Japan" (p. 4). Readers can learn how these six very brave but also very average multi-ethnic girls negotiate their identities in a society that simultaneously marginalizes and empowers them.

Kamada collects her data through an interview process with the girls, including six different meetings stretching over a time span of several years. She places the recorded conversations in context through poststructuralist discourse analysis, a method popularized by writers such as Foucault and Derrida. This method examines how people – in this particular case, the six girls – construct realities through the use of language.

It is difficult to summarize the findings, mostly because the topic is complex and shifting. However, it can be said that the six girls in the study contest their marginalization in a society that emphasizes a discourse of homogeneity, and that gradually they are able to position themselves within

a more positive and empowering discourse of multi-ethnicity and diversity. Over time, and through language, they affirmatively create for themselves their engendered half/double identity.

As a pioneering text examining the construction of multi-ethnic identities in Japan, *Hybrid Identities and Adolescent Girls* is an excellent academic work, theoretically and methodologically sound. Limitations to the text might include the possibility of researcher bias and problems with the participant-selection process, but the author is forthright in acknowledging and confronting these concerns. It seems probable that the research is indeed accurate and relevant.

Scholars of multiculturalism and multilingualism should be particularly pleased to see this text in publication, with a hope that further studies – in Japanese and English – continue to explore the many remaining issues. Graduate school students may also find this book helpful as an example of a well-done, if not quite perfect, study involving explicit and vigorous use of poststructuralist discourse analysis within the framework of a practical research project.

Lay readers, too, will find value in this text, although the academic jargon and structure may at first be displeasing. The information in the book should be of value to parents, like me, whose multi-ethnic adolescent children living in Japan are less than cooperative in divulging feelings about their identities.

***Multiple Intelligences Around the World.* Jie-Qi Chen, Seana Moran, & Howard Gardner (Eds.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009. xix + 411 pp.**

Reviewed by

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It is now 28 years since Howard Gardner published his seminal *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983), challenging the convention of a single form of intelligence (emphasizing linguistic and logical-mathematical skills) and positing instead seven distinct "intelligences" (e.g., bodily-kinesthetic and musical) corresponding to a wider range of human capabilities. For educators, this development implied the need for multiple learning approaches that would reflect student diversity and facilitate multifaceted understanding. Nowadays, with motivation studies similarly advocating multiple pathways to second-language acquisition, the pertinence of Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory for language teachers is clearer than ever. Given this, the present volume, which aims to survey the theory's impact hitherto and assess its future possibilities in education worldwide, is well worth attention.

The book is organized into six parts with Part 1 providing an overview of the past, present, and likely future of MI; Parts 2 to 5 focusing on MI implementation respectively in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, South America, and the United States; and Part 6 offering attempts at synthesis and reflection on MI's social and cultural significance and potentialities. Each chapter begins with an abstract, while an appendix chart indicates which educational issues, setting and educational level each chapter treats.

In Chapter 1, Gardner revisits the gestation of his theory before relating its spread abroad and describing how he, Moran, and Chen conceived of a book in which individuals would "write about how MI ideas had been understood and applied in their school, community, region, or nation" (p. 9). The chapter concludes by previewing the accounts of some of those individuals and considering both how MI theory has spread and why it has flourished in certain environments and not in others. Favorable factors identified are "the rediscovery of traditions," "a desire to broaden curricula, pedagogy, and assessments," "a desire to reach underserved students," and "an affirmation of democratic practices and values" (pp. 13-14).

In Chapter 2, a popularizer of MI in education, Thomas Armstrong, notes how MI theory is specifically American in, for instance, its pragmatism, optimism, individualism, and egalitarianism, and yet is a “chameleon” insofar as diverse cultures readily relate to it.

This adaptability to local circumstance is manifest in the next twenty-seven chapters, which detail MI experimentation worldwide. In some cases, Gardner’s theory accords well with long-standing cultural traditions. We learn, for example, of the consonance of MI with precepts of Chinese classics, which similarly articulated individualized teaching principles. In other cases, (e.g., Turkey and Colombia), MI arrives as radically innovative, but is welcomed for its recognition of hitherto neglected student diversity. Predictably, there is much here on ideology and policy, but there are also down-to-earth stories. These include testimony of teachers who reexamine how they taught before embracing MI and regretfully acknowledge injustice (i.e., neglect or belittling of students not primarily endowed with logical and mathematical skills). One Turkish teacher’s lament is typical: “I am sorry for the students for whom I have had prejudices I had a garden of eight square meters, but I had watered only two square meters of it” (p. 248).

The book’s last three chapters revert to the general, with co-editor Moran examining how interactions among newly-recognized intelligences can enrich culture at large, Mindy L. Kornhaber exploring how MI theory interacts with social policy and becomes a force for democracy, and perhaps most notably Chen, inspired by Vygotsky, proposing his “cultural zone of proximal development,” a construct by which the diverse examples of MI implementation in earlier chapters might be explicated.

With such a rich abundance of experience and reflection in this multi-author book, there will be much for each reader to take and some to leave. One reservation of our own concerns the implication in certain chapters that students’ goals correspond unvaryingly to Gardner’s intelligences, which might result in an undue focus on the intelligences themselves as goals of class activities. Following Gardner’s original lead, and in accord with certain contributors in the book, we prefer to see the list of intelligences as a reference for creating multiple *entry points* to school subjects. Thus, teachers of subjects primarily requiring one intelligence might create activities permitting alternative access to those subjects by use of additional intelligences, thereby enhancing certain students’ motivation, involvement, and performance. To cite two examples from Japan, contributor Tomoe Fujimoto reports having learners use both linguistic and kinesthetic intelligence to master the abacus, while elementary school teacher Satomi Watanabe is described as

using a wide range of entry points in her teaching of Japanese characters (*kanji*) (p. 92).

Despite the examples just given, most teachers in Japan may be unsurprised to read that this country has generally proved “uncongenial to the MI meme” (p. 10). Nonetheless, the chapter on Japan holds interest not only by citing cases like those above to show teachers exploiting individual talents both within and outside today’s standardized education system, but also by demonstrating similarities between MI and pre-Meiji instruction.

As mentioned above, the editors’ brief to contributors was to detail MI implementation in their “school, community, region or nation.” This directive has led to the chapters of Parts 2 to 5 having disparate intentions, foci, and styles. From each of these chapters, one can learn much about MI’s presence in a particular country in a chosen context, and taken together they offer a smorgasbord of information on recurrent MI teaching and policy issues, providing stimulating material for anyone envisaging MI implementation. However, insofar as disparateness of content works against effective comparison, some readers may find themselves asking to what degree cited cases are representative and wishing for an approach with a resolutely single focus (e.g., historical background or in-school application) capable of yielding valid comparative data.

Without a statistical overview, one might infer from certain enthusiastic chapters that the MI paradigm is occasioning a revolution in educational practice. And such a phenomenon would be fully consonant with ambient postmodern trends that vindicate those hitherto marginalized by a culture, true to Socrates, that prioritized *logos* and educated accordingly. To quote Armstrong, MI theory gives validity to “a nation’s folk traditions, its core national identifications, its aesthetic ideals, and other subtle dimensions of a society’s deep cultural practices” (p. 24). This being so, there can be little wonder that it is so welcomed by supporters of minority cultures such as those of the American periphery. René Díaz-Lefebvre (p. 317) rejoices that Latino students in the United States feel empowered by MI’s recognition of their specific cultural values (*familismo, respecto, simpatia*), while C. Brandon Shearer (p. 358) cites a view from Puerto Rico that MI is exactly what is needed to ensure a fair recognition of the island’s artistic, musical, and other traditional cultural orientations. We surmise that a similar sentiment of the rightness of MI is to be found among postcolonial restorers of local traditions the world over.

However, as Gardner himself is careful to remind us, in fact MI remains itself on the margins: “Most schools around the world remain uniform

schools, where a narrow group of topics is taught in the same way to all children and where modes of assessment are unadventurous” (p. 16). In the face of this discouraging reality, Gardner expresses the hope that MI will win general acceptance through digital media’s inherent adaptability for individualized learning, and he concludes that if this occurs, “the authors in this book will deserve considerable credit for sustaining and enriching MI ideas and practices in the interim” (p. 16).

Only time will tell whether Gardner’s hope is well founded. Yet even if MI were to remain *forever* on the margins, the authors would still deserve praise for an impressive contribution to the MI movement. Thanks to their efforts, more educators far and wide will take fresh and fair account of students who are diversely intelligent. Championing, documenting, and interpreting a movement now touching every continent, *Multiple Intelligences Around the World* marks a bold new phase in the educational paradigm shift that Gardner and his followers have long announced. It offers an ample awareness of MI’s expanding role in education globally, and persuasively shows how MI practice can everywhere lead to the recognition, respect, and realization of learners’ diverse potential, with all that that implies for personal self-esteem and collective well-being. Given all this, we are glad to acknowledge a remarkable book that demonstrates the universal reach and validity of those insights Gardner first articulated nearly 3 decades ago.

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***The Developing Language Learner: An Introduction to Exploratory Practice.* Dick Allwright and Judith Hanks. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. xv + 312 pp.**

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Emerging in the 1990s through a series of workshops and articles, Exploratory Practice (EP) was designed to offer a new view of teachers and learners as collaborators in classroom-based research. Regrettably, even in this new book-length treatment, EP seems vague and its goals ill-defined, despite the efforts of Allwright, retired chair of Applied Linguistics at Lancaster University, and Hanks, one of Allwright's former graduate students, now at the English Centre, Leeds University.

With early contributions to teacher education and observational classroom research, Allwright's long career has spanned work for the British Council in Sweden in the 1960s to his time in Brazil, following his retirement. The philosophy and pedagogy of EP as presented in *The Developing Language Learner* largely evolved from the experiences of this charismatic teacher-educator at the Cultura Inglesia, a not-for-profit language school in Rio de Janeiro.

Action Research, to which EP is sometimes compared, seeks to solve a classroom problem. In contrast, EP aims for the very broad outcomes of thinking and understanding. If EP seems hard to pin down, Allwright and Hanks insist that it is partly because teachers haven't properly framed a question to explore. They cite the 1999 JALT workshop where Allwright waited 20 minutes for the teachers to properly frame a question about English language education in Japan (p. 177). The teachers seemed confused and appeared to have no idea where Allwright was leading them.

That seems to be the problem with this book. Most of its five parts offer a rationale for EP's use: outlining a view of the language learner, then offering the authors' perspectives on research, while only much later describing EP and providing some resources. When Allwright and Hanks describe their five underlying principles of "the developing language learner," most teachers would concur: The learner is a unique, sociable individual who learns in a mutually supportive environment, is capable of taking learning seriously, of making independent decisions, and of developing as a practitioner of learning.

However, the authors soon take an extreme position on communicative language teaching (CLT), which they term “the strong version” of CLT. They argue, among other points, against any linguistic correction of students or the use of published materials designed for language teaching: extreme positions that many teachers would not accept. They emphasize the value of learner autonomy, but fail to suggest how a teacher might introduce it. In addition, they draw no distinctions between practicing learner autonomy in a classroom in Britain and one in China or Dubai.

As for research in education, Allwright and Hanks discount much of it due to “the ‘irreducible complexity’ of human life” (p. 147). Likewise, testing and assessment are dismissed because each student is different and the language classroom an intact social organism. Although the authors accept some classroom-based research, they find quantitative statistics dubious because statistics produce overgeneralization and introduce “the highly problematic issue of validity” (p. 75).

It will be difficult for most readers of this book to take these pronouncements very seriously. The concept of *validity* is no more in doubt in educational research than in any of the social sciences. Far from being questionable, research provides educators with a rationale for teaching practice instead of conducting it, as in the past, on the basis of tradition and popular prejudice. Frankly, the early parts of *The Developing Language Learner* have more to do with the critical stances Allwright has taken over the years than with exploring EP.

In Part III, Allwright and Hanks finally deliver the EP pedagogy. After such withering comments about current educational practice and educational research, and numerous claims for EP as the solution to so many classroom problems, this section of the book is simply underwhelming. Several years ago, EP was described as an eight-stage process whereby teachers and students identified a question or “puzzle area,” discussed it, collected classroom data through interviews, surveys, role-plays, or poster sessions, and interpreted it (Allwright, 2005). In this latest version, the authors have reduced EP to a series of warm and fuzzy principles: putting quality of life first, understanding classroom life, collaborating with students and colleagues, trying to develop everyone’s potential, and integrating these efforts into classroom practice in an ongoing process. These are certainly salutary aims, but they are so general that it would be very hard to verify if they were actually being achieved.

Far more space in the book should have been given to descriptions of EP in classrooms. None of the fragmentary examples in the book indicate how

EP might form part of a larger syllabus instead of just a lesson or an activity taking place over several classes. And instead of offering some powerful evidence supporting EP, Allwright and Hanks present only 15 case studies; all of them from Brazil, and five from the same teacher. These short accounts, more like anecdotes, provide so few details about the teachers' syllabi, the student's language abilities, the institutional environments, and the number of students in the classes, that the reader has insufficient evidence to critically evaluate them. In addition, much of the learner data reproduced in the book consists of student posters, which also are hard to analyze. One poster, "The WHYS of the Present Perfect" (p. 171), poses such questions as "Why the present perfect don't use to time." Grammar aside, this "inquiry-type approach," which is hardly new, doesn't seem appropriate for learning verb conjugations.

Yet instead of providing more credible arguments, the authors cite "personal communications" from teacher practitioners. Personal communications with teachers about quality of life are hardly convincing, nor is the proof found in Chapter 14, one of the last chapters in the book, a testimonial contributed by two Brazilian teachers with a list of names of those attending local EP meetings, a photo of the group, and member quotes. Finally, Part IV offers some resources, websites, journals, and the text of an open letter to classroom teachers from Allwright describing EP as "people exploring the life they are living every day, in and between lessons" (p. 275).

Given such sentiments at the end of the book, the reader can't help thinking that EP, whether a pedagogy, a philosophy, a movement, or all three as the authors would have it, can only be accepted as an article of faith. If the authors, at some future point, can work out the details more clearly, EP may yet have a role as a collaborative approach to teaching and learning. This book belongs to the *Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics* series which includes such titles as *Tasks in Second Language Learning* (2008) and *Language Testing and Validation* (2005). One cannot but wonder why such distinguished series editors as Christopher Candlin and David Hall published this book in its present form.

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