Reviews

From Proficiency to Competencies: A Collaborative Approach to Curriculum Innovation. Youle Bottomly, Jeanette Dalton, and Chris Corbel. Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, 1994, 116 pp.

Reviewed by
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From Proficiency to Competency documents the process of curriculum change within Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES), a provider of English as a Second Language in Victoria, Australia. The volume, essentially a case study in which the authors were participant-observers, focuses a specific example of curriculum change and reports how it was experienced at all levels in a large language teaching organization. The authors regard the transition successful and wish to share the experience. The book has two major goals: 1) to document the approach used in introducing a competency-based curriculum, the Certificate in Spoken and Written English (CSWE), and 2) to document the experiences of teachers participating in this shift from a proficiency curriculum to the CSWE competency curriculum (p. 1).

The book has two sections, each comprising three chapters. The first outlines the background and motives for the change, the second describes the change process. An extensive appendix summarizes and categorizes staff interview data by the position of the interviewees.

Chapter 1 introduces and outlines the rationale of the project, its goals, and the roles of the researcher/authors. The basic curriculum change was a collaborative shift from an autonomous proficiency-based curriculum to a more sharply-focused, externally driven competency-based curriculum. For their purposes, Bottomly, Dalton, and Corbel define curriculum as "the range of experience that learners have under the auspices of an educational organization" (p. 2). They further outline their data collection methods, based on an ethnographic approach involving formal interviews of volunteers from all levels of AMES (managers, administrators, and teachers) and informal observation.

In Chapter 2, the authors describe and analyze the position of AMES within the context of educational organizations in the state of Victoria. AMES, the main provider of English training for adult migrants in the state, gets its major funding from state and commonwealth departments. Hence the organization's responsiveness to changing government policies. At the same time, the variety of roles, tasks, and personnel within AMES shaped the organization's curriculum change project. A process of devolved and collaborative networking fit the AMES organizational culture by encouraging those in the implementation process to retain ownership of the change, and thus enhance the chances of success (p. 11-12).

A second important background feature is the pre-innovation proficiency curriculum which used a twelve-unit scale to assess learners' overall language performance, to determine placement, and to determine exit levels. This scale, and the ways it shaped teaching, helped create the pre-innovation climate of proficiency-oriented language teaching at AMES.

In Chapter 3 the authors relate the decision to revise the curriculum to changes in the economy, the workplace, and society. In particular, a number of government reports on these changes made clear the need for competency-based language training. The authors discuss the ways these developments helped frame the shift to learning specific observable behaviors in language and literacy education and in the broader realm of post-secondary vocational training. National policy reinforced the linkage of language and literacy to employment, though without demonstrating the relationship or encompassing language theory. The subsequent policy and funding changes led to the curriculum changes. Teaching shifted from a needs-based, learner-centered, and essentially individually planned proficiency curriculum to the CSWE. AMES drew heavily on competency-based training and discourse methods to create the CSWE certificate (p. 21) and fill the need for nationally accredited competency-based curriculum without specifying learning processes.

The authors briefly discuss the strengths and weakness of these developments in terms of English for Specific Purposes. Some researchers in the project objected that narrowing the focus of language learning to specific observable outcomes failed to address the need for communicative competence, in the sense used by Widdowson. Further concerns were with focus on genre to the neglect of tasks. I felt that this discussion could have been developed more and a critically informed discussion of the role of the state in the language learning included.

Section 2 begins the discussion of the innovation process. In Chapter 4, the authors discuss the management and dissemination strategies

of the first stage of the innovation and present the support systems. They briefly discuss change theory in this context and use excerpts from interview data as a running response to and commentary on the innovation process.

In Chapter 5, full implementation of the change is discussed. First, the authors consider two interacting factors in evaluating organizational change—the characteristics of the change as well as local characteristics—using their interview data. Responses varied based on the interviewee's position in AMES and degree of involvement in the development and implementation of the CSWE. In general, the higher the position and the greater the involvement, the greater the degree of ownership evidenced, particularly true when managers were compared to classroom teachers. A second set of questions focused on participants' understanding of the new curriculum and yielded similar results. A final set of questions, dealing with implementing and assessing the CSWE, revealed the greatest confusion and resistance. Teachers reported that overall their teaching methods remained unchanged, though some found creative responses to the new restraints. These results lead the authors to discuss practical considerations in implementing new curricula.

The final chapter assesses the success and impact of the implementation process. The instruments used to evaluate the interviews indicate a successful innovation (p. 64-65). The authors attribute the success to the emphasis on collaboration and attitudes during the implementation process, as opposed to a focus on developing new skills and knowledge, an outcome consistent with other work on innovation strategies (Brindley & Hood, 1990). The final issue they address is the likelihood of the continuation and institutionalization of the innovation. They conclude that it is likely, given the commitment of AMES to the change, though are aware of countering pressures outside the organization.

The book succeeds as a case study of the process of curriculum innovation. The discussion is coherent, and provides sufficient political and organizational background. The authors make good use of their interview data to illustrate and support specific ethnographic points.

My questions come in regard to what I consider as a premature description of the change as "successful." First, AMES may be committed to the competency-based curriculum and its instrument, the CSWE, but there is no evidence that institutionalization will take place. Second, the authors' reliance on the narrow measures of Hall and Hord's Concern Theory blurs the difference between success and acceptance. Third, negative comments made by interviewees, particularly those lower on the organizational scale, while reported, are given short shrift in the

final assessment. And fourth, most relevant to practicing language teachers, the success of the competency-based curriculum and the CSWE goes unreported.

Organizational change is a constant and bears scrutiny. *From Proficiency to Competencies* has implications and lessons for all administrators and teachers facing such a change—in particular the importance of collaboration among participants at all levels. Bottomly, Dalton, and Corbel successfully impart this lesson in their case study of curriculum innovation.

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Text, Discourse and Context: Representation of Poverty in Britain. Ulrike H. Meinhof and Kay Richardson (Eds.). London: Longman, 1994, vii + 149 pp.

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Text, Discourse and Context, an investigation into what language and images tell us about social reality, asks the question, "How do we represent social life and give that life substance?" within the specific context of a post-industrial society with seemingly intractable social problems.

Five contributors endeavor to answer this by taking a multidisciplinary approach from linguistic, anthropological, and sociological perspectives, concentrating on the discourse of poverty in Britain in the 1990s. The existence and character of poverty in Britain, as elsewhere in developed post-industrial societies, has become a politically-charged and controversial issue attracting intermittent but occasionally intense interest on the part of the mass media. Poverty and perceptions of poverty are encountered by citizens at first hand (the beggar, the woebegone young homeless sleeping in shop doorways) or through the verbal and/or visual representations of a media-rich society. The authors discuss how poverty is represented by the print and electronic media on the one hand and by "the poor" themselves on the other.

Further, they consider the language used by television viewers to discuss the issue of poverty, interpretations inescapably being shaped by, if not conditioned by, the combination of prior understanding and

conceptualization and their exposure to verbal/visual textual forms. Significantly, the book is illustrated throughout with examples of naturally occurring discourse taken from a corpus of texts, primarily from mass media sources.

Text, Discourse and Context provides students of, and researchers into, language and linguistics with the opportunity to explore current social and sociopolitical issues, and illustrates a methodological framework permitting movement beyond the limitations of traditional and essentially rigid methods of research. Limitations of space preclude a review of all aspects of the text, hence the following emphasis on one contributor.

Brian Street, probably best known as the author of *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (1985), examines the international dimension of the representation of poverty in the U.K. and how it relates to the representation of poverty in the wider world of suffering in Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and—closer to home—Bosnia. At a time when Romanian gypsy children are claimed to be successfully and lucratively begging in the carriages of the London Underground with placards and mutely proffered ill-written cards mendaciously identifying them as Bosnian refugees, this is a timely and appropriate contribution.

In "The international dimension," Street contrasts images of involuntary starvation in Africa and elsewhere with images of homelessness and poverty in Britain, supposedly a prosperous post-industrial country. Set against the sporadic representation of visible urban homelessness and poverty in the Britain of the 1990's, a ten-day period in April and May 1991 offered print and electronic media images of fleeing Kurds, a cyclone's aftermath in Bangladesh, and an Ethiopian famine juxtaposed with no sense of irony with a debate over "fabricated" accounts of poverty in Britain. At roughly the same time, a labor union representing local government employees and health service workers ran a £500,000 advertising campaign denouncing government policy; inevitably, a quartet of paid or volunteer models were used in the advertisements rather than genuine sufferers, a fact gleefully trumpeted and exploited by the reactionary tabloid press.

The debate was loud and acrimonious but ultimately sterile. In his essay, Street uses the debate to make the point that a juxtaposition of text and context of this kind brings to the reader or viewer the framing message that the agendas within which poverty in the U.K. is debated are relatively insignificant beside these major international "catastrophes." Such juxtapositions take the concepts of disaster, catastrophe, and famine, not as independent phenomena to arouse horror and sympathy, and link them

with "poverty." This gives the terms a range and depth of reference seldom aroused within the parochial accounts of suffering and privation in Britain (and, arguably, within other post-industrial societies such as Japan, the U.S.A. and much of Western Europe.)

The repetition or overdetermination evident in television and newspaper images of poverty in the Third World can be interpreted as a sign not so much of the limited repertoire available to reporters as of a homogenizing conceptualization of the Third World itself. They briskly corral together different places, times, and specific causes of poverty and fuse them with a few simple messages and texts—an updated version of the heroic novels of Empire which Street considered in *The Savage in Literature* (1975) and discussed further in "Reading the Novels of Empire: Race and Ideology in the Classic 'Tale of Adventure'" (1985).

Also within this slim volume, Gunther Kress writes on "Text and Grammar as Explanation;" Ulrike Meinhof writes on television and the semiotics of poverty; Kay Richardson examines a particular television series "Breadline Britain," which focused on present-day poverty and deprivation in the United Kingdom.

The remaining contributor, Roger Hewitt is best known for *White Talk Black Talk: Inter-racial Friendship and Communication Amongst Adolescents* (1986). His essay in this volume, "The beggar's blanket: public skepticism and the representation of poverty," has no specific relationship to race relations. Instead it concentrates on how street beggars and the homeless are regarded by themselves as well as by their fellow citizens. As in George Orwell's account of being down-and-out six decades ago, the conspicuously poor have a variety of views. Not all their views are self-sympathetic : "... I know loads of people in London who beg, right. I know loads of them. They're all pulling eighty-ninety quid a day. It's ... I'm not joking. That's not poor" (p.129). Since this tape-recorded observation was made by an informant who had until recently been a very poor street person himself, there is a certain plausibility to the utterance. Rightly, however, Hewitt adds that this apparently adequate income is hardly comparable to the dependable earning of two thousand pounds a month with a stable life-style.

Those interested in language, linguistics, and semiotics will find this an absorbing, intriguing, and rewarding text of immense potential value to teachers of linguistics at upper-graduate levels.

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How To Be A More Successful Language Learner: Toward Learner Autonomy, 2nd edition. Joan Rubin and Irene Thompson. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1994, vii + 120 pp.

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If you are "presently studying a foreign language or are planning to do so" (p. vi) and see the need to develop, "a much clearer understanding about yourself as a language learner, the language learning process, how to set realistic goals, and how to find an environment that will help you realize these goals" (p. 117) *How to be a More Successful Language Learner* is an excellent guide. Unfortunately, in keeping with its "how to" practicality, it lacks a theoretical context on second language acquisition.

The book has two parts. Part 1, "Before You Begin," is for the person thinking of studying a foreign language and emphasizes the role of the learner in the language learning process while introducing language acquisition and the nature of language and communication. The authors begin with a discussion of learner characteristics such as age, foreign language aptitude, attitude, personality, learning style, and past experiences with foreign languages, then move through a general description of the language learning process, including clarifying and setting objectives, planning language study, the communication process, and the nature of language, and finish with a discussion of types of language learning resources.

Part 2, "Once You Begin," concerns language learning in progress. It first argues for learners "taking charge" of their own learning, then discusses the sorts of knowledge the learner brings to the language learning task, and closes with guidance on assessing strategy use. The last four chapters discuss the nature of vocabulary and grammar, listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills, and present strategies for developing those skills.

Throughout, Rubin and Thompson emphasize learner responsibility for and personal involvement in the learning process, and encourage learner exploration and experimentation. At the end, two appendices list major publishers of foreign language learning materials and organizations concerned with foreign language learning.

The book succeeds in three ways. First, it promotes traits characteristic of "good language learners." Successful language learners "have insight into their own learning styles and preferences ... take an active approach to the learning task ... [and] are willing to take risks" (Omaggio, 1978, in Stevick, 1989, p. 19). In addition, learning behaviors of successful adult students in intensive language training have a "diversity of [target language] practice activities ... insight into and interest in one's own ways of taking and retaining information, and personal involvement in learning the language" (Wesche, 1979, in Wenden, 1991, p. 12). Based on studies into "personal and general learner factors" (Rubin, 1975; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978), Ellis observes that "[t]he good language learner will ... possess sufficient analytical skills to perceive, categorize, and store the linguistic features of the L2 ... [and] possess a strong reason for learning the L2" (1985, p. 122). Rubin and Thompson encourage all these traits.

Guidance, the second strong point, is crucial in a book on language learning addressed to learners. On the one hand, as noted in classroom-based schemes for autonomy, "[m]any programmes, and most ESL teachers, claim to believe in autonomy, yet many of the same teachers regularly subvert that goal by excluding learners from decisions about planning, pacing, and evaluating classroom tasks" (Cotterall, 1995, p. 220). On the other hand, exhortation without guidance can undermine goals and force learners to "discover" the obvious. Teachers need to strike a balance between the two extremes, giving learners a starting point while encouraging them to move beyond it. Rubin and Thompson achieve this balance by emphasizing at the outset learner responsibility for success, then providing guidance in the forms of background knowledge and practical tips.

Third, in providing this guidance for learner development, Rubin and Thompson never lose sight of the learner's immediate task: learning the language. If we draw a parallel to teacher development, the importance of this becomes clear. Allwright (1993) states that "[w]hat is surely (and sorely?) needed is a way, not of adding research to teachers' problems, but of fully integrating research into teachers' normal pedagogic practices" (p. 125). These concerns resonate with Ho's (1995) critique of time-consuming reflective practices and Hayes' (1995) recognition that

teacher development needs to be classroom-centered. Coming back to the book's target audience, Rubin and Thompson's advice centers on language learning itself, in much the same way that Allwright (1992) centers research on teaching activity; it does not distract learners by involving them in copious diary keeping and self-categorization in terms of pre-determined learning styles, but focuses on what learners need to do to learn their target language.

The book strikingly omits one area: learner interaction with other learners. Only a small section (p. 103) deals with learner interaction with other learners as a means of dealing with overcoming the problem of few opportunities to speak the target language. As a great deal of language learning takes place in formal group settings, be they teacher-led classrooms or language clubs, and further, as modern communicative language teaching methods place great importance on group work, the absence of discussion on cooperative or collaborative learning, with suggestions on how learners might initiate it, leaves the volume incomplete.

This omission is understandable in light of the role accorded native users of the target language. While the authors do not usually draw the reader's attention to the idea of emulating a native model, in the chapter on speaking a number of the problems and strategies explicitly or implicitly assume communication with native users. This orientation is not a problem if the learning and target use situations are the same. Where they are different, however, the problems are also different, and have little to do with interaction between natives and non-natives and, as *JALT Journal* readers recognize, more to do with communication among non-natives coupled with the collaborative satisfaction of learning needs. This parallels the contrast Widdowson (1984) makes between teaching language *for* communication and teaching language *as* communication.

One point which may disappoint *JALT Journal* readers is the book's focus on a U.S. audience. This is particularly apparent in the book's appendices, which give no addresses of non-U.S. publishers or organizations involved in language education. Limiting the list to U.S. sources is, on the one hand, practical, as it sets clear limits on what is and is on included. On the other hand, at least one source in each of the countries where the book is being marketed would increase the book's value.

Another problem non-native readers of English may encounter is the level of language employed. The book is aimed at a U.S. native-English-speaking audience. Adapting it into other languages (e.g. Brown & Yoshida, 1990) or a rendering it in simpler English would deal with this limitation.

Two areas of classroom practice supplement the book's focus on the individual learner. The first, in Chapter One, "You, The Language Learner," asks readers to consider previous foreign language learning experience. At the tertiary level in Japan, for example, most students have had at least six years of formal instruction in English. The varying levels of proficiency university and college teachers invariably encounter when these learners arrive in their classrooms suggest that the students represent a wide variety of language learning experiences. Sharing these experiences and becoming more aware of them would be valuable educationally, to learners themselves as well as to their teachers. The literature on experiential learning (cf. Boud, Keough, & Walker, 1985; Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993) as well as books dealing more directly with teaching- and learning-to-learn (Gibbs, 1981) provide theoretical and practical foundations for work in this direction.

The second area of classroom work concerns the chapters dealing with learning strategies. Teaching the strategies directly from the book is possible. However, an equally valuable approach would extend the previous activity of examining one's own language learning history through evaluating past study strategies and techniques, hypothesizing what works best for oneself, and then testing those hypotheses.

In addition to the book's use to the individual learner and classroom practice, sections of the book could serve as bases for teacher training discussions of language, communication, and the language learning process. For this, the absence of references to theoretical work may be something of an unintended benefit. Exposing teachers to ideas with immediate surrender value before encountering the research and theory underlying them may provoke insights into why the ideas work the way they do. Such an introduction could help address the ubiquitous "theory vs. practice" rift. Further, the book's focus on learning rather than teaching could make the practice of learner-centered teaching more meaningful. Teaching, after all, exists for students to learn—putting language learning first on the language teacher training agenda places the emphasis in the right place.

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Critical Language Awareness. Norman Fairclough (Ed.). London: Longman, 1992. 343 pp.

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Normal Fairclough introduces *Critical Language Awareness* by explaining that "critical" language study "criticises mainstream language study for taking conventions and practices at face value, as objects to be described, in a way which obscures their political and ideological investment" (p.7). The essays included provide theoretical reasons and practical suggestions for challenging the language conventions and uses that most of us take for granted and for empowering students.

Critical language study (CLS), also known as critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis, "starts from the premise that systems and uses of language are not neutral" and so seeks "... to expose the political and ideological background" (Carter, 1995, p. 29). CLS can take as its object texts and discourse, spoken and written. It relies heavily on Halliday's (1985) "systemic grammar" approach to text analysis, as Fairclough (1992) makes clear in another discussion of critical linguistics. Critical language awareness (CLA) is the pedagogical aspect of the theoretically and critically engaged CLS.

Fairclough, an influential researcher and writer in this field, used his first major work (1989) to show educators the ways people use language to wield power in modern democratic societies. He stresses that political awareness goes hand in hand with language awareness, noting that, "CLA is, I believe, coming to be a prerequisite for effective democratic citizenship, and should therefore be seen as an entitlement for citizens, especially children towards citizenship in the educational system" (p.3).

CLA developed in Britain during a decade dominated politically and socially by Margaret Thatcher and a right wing Conservative government. The book reflects this background—both in its theoretical and pedagogical discussions, and in its research and case studies. If this background does not attract, do not let it put you off either.

Critical Language Awareness will particularly interest teachers working in multicultural environments, and those teaching reading and/or writing. Fairclough notes "CLS sees itself as a resource for developing the consciousness of particularly those people who are dominated in a linguistic way" (pp. 9-10), a group including students in educational institutions ranging from primary school to postgraduate university level, from Britain to Botswana.

Fairclough (p. 50, 1992) and other researchers (van Lier, 1995) freely acknowledge the influence of European social theorists such as Foucault and use these insights to discover the ways educational establishments and everyday classroom interaction tend to control students. Throughout *Critical Language Awareness* the writers encourage educators to empower students within the specific institution, in academic discourse, and in society at large. The writers seek to give people the awareness, confidence, and skills needed to challenge the ways they are dominated linguistically, as well as economically, socially, and politically.

Part I, "Language Awareness: Critical and Non-critical Approaches," consists of one essay by Fairclough, in which he develops the inadequacies of appropriateness models of language variation and discusses issues raised by recent British government sponsored reports on the teaching of standard English in the UK.

Part II, "Critical Language Awareness in Diverse Educational Contexts," opens with the essay "Critical Literacy Awareness in the EFL Classroom" by Catherine Wallace. As a prominent advocate of critical reading, she sees it as a social process in which "our interpretations of texts are socially determined" (p.67). Too often, she says, foreign language teachers use texts without placing them in social and historical context. Teachers or administrators choose texts, she argues, "as either vehicles for linguistic structure, as general interest material usually of a fairly safe, bland kind or as functional survival material for some groups of L2 learners" (pp. 61-62). This is not enough. An effective reader needs to be both an assertive reader in the way Widdowson (1984) proposed—that is challenging the propositional knowledge in texts—and by challenging the ideological assumptions underlying the chosen text. Take pre-reading tasks. Wallace suggests a critical pre-reading task in which students consider why the topic was selected. She goes on to give an account of an EFL reading class she taught in London using a critical approach. There is enough detail to test the principles on other texts—they may not always be applicable.

In Chapter 4 Pete Sayers takes CLA into the community at large and discusses his role helping workers for a black housing association learn to read critically in order to understand officialese. They then used their experience as readers to help them write clearer English. Chapters 5 and 6 focus on academic writing. Romy Clark, in Chapter 5, makes the case for putting the "I" in academic writing to force writers to take responsibility for their own ideas "instead of masking their position behind the pretense of objectivity with impersonal language" (p.136). A university teacher and a student are the joint authors of Chapter 6, "Who's

Who in Academic Writing." Their essay focuses on the academic relationship between teachers and students. Students can use CLA to perceive the link between academic reading and writing and extract from readings what is appropriate for them. This section should make us, as teachers, reflect on the way we set assignments.

In Chapter 7 Mary Talbot analyzes an article in a teenage magazine to discover "how language helps construct women as 'feminine'" (p.174). It is a model of how we can use Halliday's functional grammar to examine systematically the conventional ways language presupposes conditions and creates impressions. Talbot notes, "Looking at language critically is a way of 'denaturalising' it—questioning and 'making strange' conventions which usually seem perfectly natural to people who use them" (p.174).

Michael Stubbs starts Part III, "Critical Language Awareness in Schools," with an essay on information technology and CLA, which sounds more exciting than this reviewer found it. Though not in the vanguard of information technology, I found nothing revealing or new in it.

In Chapter 9, Malcolm McKenzie presents a CLA approach to "euphemism as idiom" in school reports. In lessons he taught in Botswana, he led his 16-year-olds, who had a mixture of L1s, to an understanding of what certain euphemisms meant. Students rewrote reports in a more direct way, their meanings becoming clearly, and often amusingly, revealed. Then the class discussed reasons why euphemisms were used, whereas they had initially thought them silly. The students "now had access to a form of discourse that was no longer strange and unfamiliar" (p.237).

The core of Chapter 10, by Clark and Smith, retells how even 7-year-olds learned, while engaged in a story making activity, "to reflect upon their work and make decisions about where they would go next with it, at different stages of the book production" (p.245). By being able to explain what they have done, not merely describe it, learners make "a significant step towards critical practice" (p.247). This supports the more general contention by McCarthy and Carter (1994) that teachers need to make use of their students' intellectual capabilities because a "more reflective language learner is a more effective language learner" (p.165). Clark and Smith's account of CLA work in primary schools is sandwiched between rather polemical statements of how things in education ought to be and of the need for teachers to "challenge the National Curriculum" (p.239).

Chapter 11, case study, reports on a language awareness course taught in an English secondary school. The essay includes a useful general

background to 'language awareness' which could have come more helpfully earlier in the book.

Chapter 12 focuses on bilingual children from immigrant families living in Britain. The writers warn those developing language awareness programs not to erode the vital resource of minority community languages.

The book's final chapter, Part IV, "CLA: Perspectives for Emancipation," is a call for CLA "to be turned into action" and to develop "emancipatory discourse" (p.305). How should teachers incorporate this into the classroom? The authors, Roz Ivanic and Hilary Janks, offer this suggestion:

> We believe that CLA should underlie all language teaching and learning. It need not necessarily be the focus of all lessons but should regularly be foregrounded. In our view critical educators should help learners to identify situations in their own lives in which they currently feel dominated, and recognise the role language plays in this domination. Then they can discuss what might be done about it, and plan projects which can realistically contribute to change. This discussion can include the obstacles and constraints which deter people from emancipatory discourse, and the consequences of contestation. The learners' experience becomes the content of learning—a process which is itself empowering for the learners. (p.320)

All this necessarily presupposes an awareness of the socio-political controls in society.

A bold assumption runs through the core of this book centered on developing a reader's ability to recognise and challenge assumptions and presuppositions in texts, namely that "the main objective of schooling ought to be: developing a critical awareness of the world, and of the possibilities for changing it" (p.242). Fairclough, in the introduction, states it explicitly: "I assume that the development of a critical awareness of the world, and of the possibilities for changing it, ought to be the main objective of all education, including language education" (p.7). This is open to debate. Many educators, especially in Asia, might not agree with this. In Fairclough's favour is that he states his assumption explicitly, so you do not need the decoding skills of CLS to be able to work it out.

Reflecting on the book, it becomes clear that language is "loaded" and the ability to see through language is desirable. If critical language awareness can help students understand, for instance, the underlying difference between newspaper headlines such as "Nissan closes factory: Workers protest" and "Workers protest factory closure," then it will serve

them well. *Critical Language Awareness* is both thought-provoking and a useful resource for teachers wishing to put CLA into practice.

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As teachers, we see diversity in the classroom. We note how one approach works with some students and not with others. We see the differences in motivation and styles each student brings. Thomas Armstrong's *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* takes these intellectual and academic insights into classroom practice.

In doing this, he builds on Gardner's (1983) work in multiple intelligences (MI), in which he advanced the theory of multiple intelligences and challenged the inadequacies of the general theory of intelligence. Working from this concept, some investigators have looked into students' perceptions of and beliefs in their abilities and needs in the motivational arena. Others emphasize the active role that effort has to play in language acquisition. Recognition of learners' differences and choices is a common theme. Students present complex attributes that cannot be pinned down to any one approach or methodology—people

and their willingness as well as their capacity to learn are complex matters.

However, while the theorists are hard at work uncovering the shortcomings of current and past practice, classroom teachers need to know what they can do to benefit from this research. MI has seen a phenomenal growth in educational applications as well as research support. A remarkable characteristic is that MI provides for a coherent marriage of many methodologies now being practiced. In other words, teachers need not discard their current classroom activities, but may integrate these with others to construct a balanced approach to language education. Armstrong gives us a well delineated collection of illustrations, examples, models, figures, checklists, tables, inventories, and lists to accomplish this balance. Using this straightforward approach to MI, we can practice and refine the art of identifying and teaching to students' strengths and weaknesses while abandoning limited approaches that place teachers and students at a serious disadvantage, inside the classroom and out.

Chapter 1, on foundations and theory, provides a succinct introduction to traditional concepts and the historical development of MI theory. Here Armstrong delineates the seven intelligences propounded by Gardner (1983) from clinical observations. In Chapter 12, Armstrong further addresses the theoretical basis of the MI perspective of cognitive skills.

Chapters 2, 3, and 10 deal with personal development and assessment. Chapter 2 focuses on the teachers' attributes and contributions, providing an adult MI inventory to give teachers a personal perspective. By pointing out the teachers' intelligences, MI shows teachers how to adapt personal strengths to teaching. Chapter 3 describes students' intelligences and provides an extensive checklist to use in getting students involved in assessing their strengths and tendencies. There are guidelines for developing students' portfolios that can be used in assessment and method and syllabus design. In Chapter 10, Armstrong expands on assessment by providing a detailed list of alternative assessment methods, instruments and measures, including a practical guide to developing and compiling student portfolios.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 11 focus on the practice of a multi-modal approach by delineating materials for lessons, syllabus, and curriculum design. Drawing from students' social and physical environment, these four chapters provide a coherent framework of strategies and activities on which to build and from which to launch innovations. Appendix C expands this with example lessons for various levels and subjects. Chapter 11 specifically focuses on special education, describing how MI replaces the "deficit-oriented paradigm" (p. ix).

Chapters 7 and 8 address classroom environment and management. Classroom issues are initially addressed with questions. We are then given a detailed description of activity centers. These serve the goal of making large classes manageable and incorporating the advantages of small classes. In the chapter on management, strategies for attention, transition, communicating rules, forming groups, and coping with behavioral problems are provided that extend the environment set forth earlier.

Chapters 9 and 13 address the school environment and compare MI to the traditional setting. In this way Armstrong illustrates how MI is providing a complete transition that can expand the existing programme and curriculum. Chapter 9 provides a description of the Key School, founded in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1984, which has been built completely around the MI concept. Chapter 13 specifically explores MI applications in computer technology, cultural diversity, and career counseling.

MI is not an alternative methodology or basis of evaluation. As a radical restructuring of educational philosophy, systems, methodology, and psychological precepts, it is a basic paradigm shift. Armstrong's approach to this is pragmatic. He highlights the "dysfunctional" program designs of formulaic teaching and one-size-fits-all assessment. By developing the case for the interaction of inherited capacity and environmental influence (1995a, p. 203), Gardner strongly reinforced the teachers' role in education. Armstrong succinctly provides an introduction to the theoretical basis of MI (p. 11) and illustrates the teachers' role with examples from contemporary and historical figures and modern teaching techniques. Since intelligence is considered to be the capacity to do something rather than the expression itself, social influences may encourage the development of some intelligences and curtail others. Imagine Bach without access to an organ or Gandhi securing a teaching job in Britain. The point being that times and opportunities have a profound effect on potential. If educators and administrators are not cognisant of the ramifications of the MI Theory and their social context, they may overlook students' strengths, force them into politically correct molds, and classify them by their weaknesses (p. 17).

MI has profound implications for language education in Japan. Feldman (1980) and postulated crystallising experiences that initiate or trigger an intelligence. Armstrong delineates its antithesis, the "paralysing experience" in which negative or aversive experiences lead to a disinclination to develop or use an intelligence. The resistance to learning that so many language teachers see in their classrooms may represent years of acquired aversion to a foreign language.

There are some problems with this book. In an MI environment, specialists, or brokers, serve to assess the students' needs and the schools' programming. Unfortunately, Armstrong describes these pivotal roles are only briefly in Chapter 9. Gardner, however, placed strong emphasis on the role of specialists who assess the students, and brokers who match students to curricula, styles, and learning opportunities in the community (1993, pp. 10-11). Armstrong treats this all too briefly, though he does implicitly describe the process of mastering these roles.

Nor does Armstrong address administrative logistics and scheduling limitations. Many language teachers in Japan, especially those engaged in part-time and temporary teaching, simply do not have enough time to gather material to build an MI syllabus, curriculum, or methodology. Such an approach also requires administrative support and a realistic workload. Adjunct teachers working at multiple work sites or on terminal contracts are seriously disadvantaged. Public school teachers working with prescribed materials and syllabi and committed to long and frequent committee meetings are locked out. In a small class or with manageable class loads this would hold more promise—otherwise the time required makes MI based approaches problematic.

Environmental restrictions aside, Armstrong balances emphasis on the teachers' potential and current practices with that of the students'. By providing a structured approach to enable teachers and students to begin their inquiries, this book serves as a practical reference for the classroom. Geared toward the lower grades, it is appropriate at this time in Japan when pilot programmes in foreign languages are being set up in elementary schools. It is also basic enough to be adapted for students in higher education. MI theory proposes a number of options by recognising the evidence for human diversity. Armstrong's work provides us with a greater number of practical, classroom options for attending to this diversity.

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Reviewed by
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In considering a book called *Multilingualism*, the first question one must ask is just what such a book should be about. Taking into account that, at least according to one definition Edwards offers, "everyone is bilingual" (p. 55), one sees that there may be as many varieties of multilingualism as there are people. The scope of a book intended to encompass such a widespread and various phenomenon would be, to say the least, huge. The field is further broadened when one remembers that the causes and effects of multilingualism are not only individual, but also social and political.

Each section of each chapter of Edwards' relatively slim volume could be, and in fact has been, the subject of at least one book. Those with more than a passing interest in multilingualism will want to seek out those books. Fortunately, Edwards' ample references will allow them to do so. Interested non-specialists, however, will find *Multilingualism* to be a satisfying overview of this multidisciplinary field.

Edwards begins by making what should be an obvious point: "To be bilingual or multilingual is ... a normal and unremarkable necessity for the majority in the world today" (p. 1). It is seldom, however, a necessity for people whose first languages have political clout. Those with first languages such as English can easily forget that most of the world doesn't enjoy the luxury, or suffer the poverty, of monolingual living. Having established that it is monolingualism, not multilingualism, which is the aberration, Edwards goes on, in Chapter 2, to point out that "multilingualism is largely a practical affair, ... few people become or remain multilingual on a whim" (p. 34). Describing some of the circumstances under which multilingualism can be born, Edwards makes it clear that economics, politics, or a combination of the two are usually what drive people to add a language to their repertoire.

It is often, for example, for economic and political reasons that people leave their linguistic homelands for countries in which they will need an additional language to survive and succeed. Likewise, territorial expansion, particularly in its colonial or imperial varieties, is likely to make it incumbent upon the subject people to adopt the language of their rulers. In addition, the eccentric boundaries imposed on parts of the world by the colonialists have forced, in countries like Nigeria, diverse language groups into political, and therefore, linguistic contact. In coun-

tries such as Belgium, Canada, and Switzerland, federal arrangements exist which encourage the citizens of those nations to obtain some degree of competence in their fellow citizens' languages.

In Chapter 3 Edwards moves briefly from the social to the individual in order to discuss the cognitive consequences of bilingualism. In his thorough and critical review of several studies on both sides of the issue he finds no support for the notion that bilingual competence has either positive or negative effects on linguistic or mental ability.

How, then, to account for the contradictory findings of the studies he surveys? This question brings Edwards back to the social. He notes that "most positive findings come from studies of immersion children (where language attitudes are favorable), most negative ones from those 'submersed' in second-language education (leading to so-called subtractive bilingualism)" (pp. 70-71). Thus, both the social attitudes toward the learners, and of the learners, appear to be of paramount importance.

Paradoxically, the same language contact which is a necessary condition for multilingualism also breeds language conflict, and the result of this conflict is often the decline or even death of a language. Edwards, like virtually all linguists, accepts that no language is in itself superior or inferior to any other language. How, then, to explain that some languages thrive while others fall out of use? There is, as Edwards makes clear, no one cause for the decline of a language (p. 103), but the language conflicts he anatomizes such as those between English and Gaelic in Nova Scotia, and English and Irish in Ireland, affirm what common sense would suggest: languages with less political and economic strength and prestige never displace those with more.

The language decline or loss that sometimes results from language contact is typically followed by attempts at revival. As Edwards notes, though, "the very existence of a revival effort is an indication of some ultimate or penultimate stage in linguistic history" (p. 121). Citing Nahir (1984), Edwards indicates that perhaps this explains why revival movements have almost always failed to "turn a language with few or no surviving speakers back into a normal means of communication."

Edwards tempers this bleak view by pointing out that defining "revival" in a less idealistic fashion allows one to identify more successes. While Irish, for example is unlikely ever again to be the vernacular in much of Ireland, efforts to preserve it have resulted in increased access to Irish heritage as well as stimulating Irish literature and politics. Even as it has, in some sense, failed, then, the Irish movement has had its successes, and, as Edwards further consoles, "so long as some record of it exists, a language is not dead" (p. 118).

Language change—the decline and death of some languages, the ascent of others—is an obvious and ongoing linguistic fact. Languages don't die, though, unless there is a viable replacement, so why should the waning of a language be the source of such profound pain to its speakers? The answer is that language appears inextricably connected with ethnic and national pride, and as a cursory glance at history will bear out, this sort of pride, though perhaps irrational, is extremely powerful.

Edwards, who deplores the historical "disembodied nature of much work in social sciences" (p. 205), draws, in chapter 5, on examples from, among others, the ancient Greeks and Romans, to demonstrate that until quite recently rulers didn't much care what language their subjects spoke. The link between language and nation did not begin to be forged, at least in Europe, until the late 18th century and it was not firmly in place until a century after that. Once it was, though, it was easy for groups to see any diminution of their language as a threat to their identity.

One way that people seek to defend their languages is to shield them from perceived impurities. These impurities can come from within in the form of, for example, a loosening of formerly sacrosanct grammatical standards, or from without as borrowings from other languages. Prescriptivism, though long eschewed by professional linguists, is the shield most defenders of a language pick up when they perceive a threat of pollution. In the case of English, one need only witness that the columns of "language mavens" such as William Safire are a regular and popular feature in many newspapers. Though Edwards doesn't side with the mavens, he does take linguists to task for "refusing to acknowledge the power and appeal of prescriptivism" (p. 164). In doing so, linguists ignore the popular demand for some sort of linguistic standard and thus leave the field open.

Throughout *Multilingualism,* Edwards prefers to present the range of positions on a given issue rather than arguing for any one position. This is appropriate in a book which is intended as an overview, but still, one occasionally yearns for a bit more rhetorical fire. Those yearnings are satisfied in chapter 7, where Edwards takes up the relationship between multilingualism and multiculturalism, particularly as it relates to education. Education is a topic which rouses Edwards to passion.

He ridicules the sort of multicultural education programs which devote an hour or so a week to "ethnic show-and-tell" (p. 188) and is no less critical of those which emphasize "empowering" minority students to the exclusion of all else. It would be a mistake to think, though, that he is an opponent of multicultural education. Rather, as he argued in an earlier book (Edwards, 1985), "all education worthy of the name is

multicultural." "Promoting multicultural awareness and tolerance must ... become an inextricable part of the whole educational enterprise" (in Edwards, 1994, p. 189).

Later in the same chapter, discussing language and gender, he asserts that "in Japanese where women say *ohiya*, *onaka*, and *taberu* for 'water', 'stomach' and 'eat' ... men say *mizu*, *hara*, and *kuu*" (p. 199). Given Edwards' general proposition, that there are differences between men's and women's Japanese, is true it seems petty to point out that the assertion he uses in support of it is not: some women, for example, do say *mizu*; some men do say *taberu*. It's worth noting, though, because this small lapse does plant a seed of doubt about the generalizations Edwards draws from languages such as Koasati, Chiquito, and Desano, with which few readers will be familiar.

The only other quibble one might raise with is that he ignores what Steiner has identified as the fundamental question concerning multilingualism: "Why," as Steiner asks, "should human beings speak thousands of different, mutually incomprehensible, tongues" (1992, p. 51)? Given that *Multilingualism* is intended as an overview, and not primarily as a work of philosophy, this is easy to overlook.

These small reservations are further eclipsed by the author's' command of the many disciplines which must inform any serious study of multilingualism. This, coupled with the jargon-free precision with which he writes, make *Multilingualism* an excellent overview of a complex field.

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Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural Aspects of Second Language Writing. Ulla Connor. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996. 201 pp.

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Ulla Connor's book is a must read as a definitive summary and introduction to the field of contrastive rhetoric. For students, researchers, and teachers of L2 writing, this text provides a necessary historical background, showing the various influences and practical needs which originally gave rise to contrastive rhetoric.

Part One of the text seeks to define contrastive rhetoric while showing how and where it intersects with various related areas of study. Connor gives a basic sketch of a number of the rhetorical studies that have been done on several languages since Kaplan's pioneering work in 1966 and places these studies in the overall scheme of where the field is headed in the nineties.

Part Two focuses on how contrastive rhetoric works together with other disciplines, focusing on rhetoric and composition, text linguistics, cultural anthropology, translation, and genre studies. In the chapter on rhetoric and composition, Connor discusses the influences of contrastive rhetoric on four different approaches: approaches based on rhetorical theories, the expressionist approach, the cognitive approach, and the social constructivist approach. The next chapter discusses the relatively new area of text linguistics and shows how this area of study had helped to vitalize contrastive rhetoric. Central to the next chapter on cultural anthropology is the fact that more research is needed. Drawing from the early work of Kaplan and others on up to the present, Connor reminds us that some writing patterns seem to be culture specific. But what this means on a practical level for the teacher in the classroom remains largely elusive, largely because we do not know enough about the underlying causes of these differences in writing style. In the following chapter on translation studies, after showing their similar origin to contrastive rhetoric, Connor shows that both deal with interlanguage transfer though in very different ways. To my mind, the finest chapter is the final chapter of Part Two. Here, Connor looks at genre studies as it is applied to L2 teaching. This is an exciting and growing area still in need of research. She explores this area, in her own words, "in three domains: student writing at the primary, secondary, and college level; academic writing; and professional writing, a

category that includes political writing" (p. 126).

Throughout, Connor continually points out specific areas that need further research. The final section of her book outlines the changing methods of research which have formed the outlying features of contrastive rhetoric from its inception. From the early empirical analyses influenced by structural linguistics, contrastive rhetoric has drawn increasingly from education, anthropology, and linguistics in order to meet the needs of this growing area of study. She then explores the most current methods of research that have come out of these various fields and suggests how they might be practically applied to contrastive rhetoric. Overall, Connor achieves her ultimate objective in first, defining the field and showing its connections and debts to adjacent fields of study and second, leaving her target audience—graduate students, teachers, and readers—with numerous suggestions for practical applications as well as directions for further research.