

Reviews

***Teaching Young Language Learners.* Annamaria Pinter. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2017. xvii + 217 pp.**

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Annamaria Pinter has taken on a great challenge in writing *Teaching Young Language Learners* for the Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers series. The book has been written to include as many teaching situations as possible, thus not all of the content is appropriate for each teacher, but it does offer value overall for both inexperienced and experienced instructors. For novice instructors, this book gives an overview about what you need to do to carry out professional lessons and also how you can positively influence less-than-ideal teaching situations. For instructors with experience, this book serves as a guide to further reading and research in areas that are specific to their situation. In each chapter, Pinter lists further readings and briefly summarizes the content of each recommended book. This alone makes it a great resource for those seeking to broaden their knowledge through more quality research about teaching young learners.

At the end of each chapter, there are tasks that can deepen the readers' understanding of this book and help them put into practice that which is covered in the chapter. Having such actionable tasks is very useful for all teachers, particularly busy ones who are planning the multiple activities needed to keep young learners engaged. Each chapter, quite sensibly, includes tasks at various levels of difficulty, so instructors can select the tasks that are most appropriate to their context and of greatest benefit in their situation.

In Chapter 1, Pinter summarizes research that has led to modern language teaching. She presents the advantages of those schools of thought and then offers findings from present-day research and insight into how that research can be useful in the classroom. While offering research-based evidence to support the various views, Pinter is deft at allowing the reader to reach their own opinion about each theory of learning. She introduces the main challenges that are faced in classrooms around the world to set the stage for the following chapters that offer a broad spectrum of suggested solutions to these issues. This opening chapter is most useful for new teachers or teacher trainers.

In Chapter 2, Pinter examines research on how the first language is learned and how this relates to learning a second language. She targets both language use at school and at home and describes the various stages of language development that children go through. Pinter suggests that generally knowing how children's first language develops can be of benefit to teachers of young learners. This chapter can help teachers who want to create a program that leads to more natural language use.

In Chapter 3, Pinter discusses the difference between learning a second language at home as opposed to at school. She presents research as to how bilingual children learn languages and how that research can be of use in teaching English as a second language. This chapter is important for teachers to understand how much language can be realistically taught given the time available and the amount of contact time the students have with the language outside the classroom. She shows research on the various milestones of language learning and what is realistic to expect from each age. Pinter includes examples of positive ways to teach various ages as well as various abilities. She lists digital tools and some free online resources that can be of great help to teachers to improve learning at both school and home.

In Chapter 4, Pinter introduces various models of ELT programmes around the world. She covers student motivation in relation to their own learning and how important it is to include activities that motivate students to learn. She lists various types of English programmes and emphasizes how important it is for each teacher to be familiar with the English programmes of the country in which they are living so that they can support the students or at least understand what the students are going through at school. This chapter is useful for private sector teachers but also for public school teachers to understand the types of programs there are in other countries as well as their own.

Chapters 5 and 6 cover the four skills followed by a dedicated chapter for vocabulary and grammar. These chapters are a fantastic summary of various practical activities that can be implemented with relative ease in addition to some that are longer term projects for instructors who want a deeper and more profound experience with their students. Samples from various textbooks are used to demonstrate the activities and lists of free resources for instructors are included. These chapters also contain clear explanations of the fundamental skills to teach students at each age (e.g., reading and writing during preschool years or at public school and specific methods for teaching young learners) in addition to ways to support students and techniques to adapt materials to meet the needs of each class. These chapters are great for teachers with any level of experience as Pinter provides examples of activities implemented by teachers in various countries and situations. Vocabulary and grammar are looked at more deeply in Chapter 7 and the author identifies various ways in which both can be taught more effectively. For example, on page 104 she gives the link to one of her favorite websites and shows how to generate a word cloud to visually show the most frequently used words in a story, and page 106 shows how to use colour coding to increase students' awareness of metalanguage.

In Chapter 8, Pinter addresses the very important topic of *learning to learn*, which she defines as “equipping students with learning strategies that can be used outside of school” (p. 111). In this chapter, Pinter demonstrates the importance of learning to learn and some strategies that can be implemented to encourage higher level thinking. For teachers in Japan, this is a very good chapter to read because contact time with the language is often limited in public and private English schools. Furthermore, in many cases, native speaking teachers are told not to use Japanese (the students' L1). I believe teachers should read this chapter in order to find creative ways to encourage learning to learn despite the challenge of time and language constraints.

In Chapter 9, Pinter discusses the challenges of creating materials and how to evaluate materials. The author provides various checklists that can assist with the evaluation of materials and then follows that up with suggestions on how to supplement materials to adjust to the specific needs of each class. The author covers suggestions for authentic texts (e.g., *The Grasshopper and the Ants*), topic-based planning (e.g., families), and lesson planning and offers hints for teachers interested in creating their own class materials.

Pinter looks at the importance of assessing students' abilities and the various ways to do that in Chapter 10. She explains CEFR (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; see <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/jp/exams-and-tests/cefr/>) and its influence on assessment as well as its growing influence on standard test types such as the Young Learners English (YLE) tests from Cambridge English. In addition to practical suggestions for assessments and examples of each, she covers in detail the challenges of assessing the abilities of young learners as well as the dangers of some types of assessment in relation to their (de)motivation.

Chapter 11 deals with intercultural awareness. This chapter may seem less relevant to some teachers working in Japan, yet as the number of foreigners continues to grow, this topic will become increasingly more relevant. Pinter highlights issues related to students from various countries such as learners with lower language ability or a different appearance trying to integrate into a new school and shows activities done by teachers that create positive language and culture learning opportunities for children.

Chapter 12 covers the two main types of research that can be conducted in a young learners classroom: classroom research and action research. The author discusses the role of children in the research and shows a few examples of the benefits of having children play a more active role in research. She shows some examples of surveys for children about their learning experience as well as a student-created survey.

Despite the significant challenge of creating a text that covers the vastly different types of classroom situations around the world, Pinter has brought together research, practical examples, and actionable tasks for instructors to implement. Due to the wide range of situations teachers find themselves in and their various levels of experience, it is understandable that not all of the content can be implemented. However, the book is arranged in a way that will allow each instructor to assess their situation and find the input they need to improve it.

Mixed-Methods Research in Language Teaching and Learning. A.
Mehdi Riazi. Sheffield, England: Equinox, 2017. xviii + 316 pp.

Reviewed by

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Mixed methods research (MMR) has become increasingly visible in journals and research texts in many academic fields. Second language teaching and learning are no exception, with an increasing number of studies reporting the use of mixed methods rather than a simply qualitative or quantitative methodology. It is, however, easy to oversimplify the core ideas of mixed methods approaches to research, and Mehdi Riazi's text is a timely introduction to the breadth of knowledge and skills required to both recognize and do high-quality MMR. Although the claim that this is the "first volume to examine MMR in language teaching and learning" (back cover) may be questionable—volumes already exist for TESOL (Brown, 2014) and second language assessment (Moeller, Creswell, & Saville, 2016)—Riazi presents a unique contribution to both second language acquisition and MMR.

The book comprises 13 chapters that are divided into three parts. In the first part, the author explores the theory and background of MMR. This is followed by the practical aspects of research in Part Two, such as ways of mixing methods, designing research, and writing research proposals. The book concludes with a final part that introduces a framework for analyzing research from different aspects of language teaching and learning. Useful boxes highlight or summarize the key points, making the work even more accessible and helping readers to easily preview or review each chapter.

MMR is, first and foremost, a broad movement from many disciplines in social research. As a result, many of the ideas presented in this volume are, by necessity, not originally from the field of language teaching and learning. Language teachers attending a mixed methods conference would find presentations from health studies, economics, policy studies, and various other areas of social inquiry. For this reason, it can be challenging for language teachers or researchers to relate to more general MMR texts. However, Riazi supplies examples from language research to illustrate potentially new or key concepts. Moreover, the studies introduced are used multiple times to better anchor these concepts by nurturing familiarity. The

MMR novice may still need to review previous chapters from time to time to fully understand some of the material while advancing through the book, but the most relevant concepts are presented in a clear and comprehensive fashion. Chapter 7, for example, provides point-by-point guidance on the many issues that those making proposals for MMR studies may face as well as strategies for dealing with the issues involved.

Although it only covers the first 52 pages, Part One is perhaps the most important section of the book for the general reader. Riazi presents a detailed look at the underlying logic of qualitative and quantitative approaches before discussing mixed approaches. He also considers the types of data each approach uses, as well as how each tradition is represented, in greater depth than may be typical in some methods texts. Perspectives on integrating qualitative and quantitative data vary and these are explored comprehensively in Chapter 2, which looks at the different philosophies of mixing research methods. The approaches presented in Part One have very technical-sounding names, such as *dialectical pluralism* and *critical realism*. However, despite the complex terminology and vocabulary, the text remains accessible. In addition, the ideas represented are useful in considering research methodologies in general, be they qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. As such, this section represents a valuable resource for new and experienced researchers alike.

Part Two deals with the “Practical Aspects of Mixed Methods Research” by meshing teaching and learning with some of the interdisciplinary roots of MMR. Riazi presents five reasons why qualitative and quantitative research might be mixed in Chapter 3. The qualitative and quantitative strands of research are usually presented diagrammatically in MMR, and these diagrams start to appear in Chapter 4, as the author explains the different typologies and notation systems commonly used. Different ways of mixing methods and the resulting inferences possible are all illustrated with examples or research. Some of these examples presage the content of Part Three, where some of the same studies are re-examined in more depth. Riazi concludes Part Two with guidance on writing research proposals, such as for a graduate thesis or grant. This marries the theoretical side of research questions and literature reviews with practical issues, such as budgets or timing estimates, creating an invaluable conclusion to this part of the book.

The final part is made up of six chapters and in Chapter 8 Riazi introduces his framework for analyzing MMR studies, or *FRAMMR*, as he calls it. This chapter also contains a more concrete guide to the use of diagrams in MMR design (p. 182), building on the typologies presented in Chapter 4. After

presenting this framework, the next four chapters each contain two pieces of research from specific areas of teaching and learning, such as motivation and attitude or assessment and testing, as completed examples of review and analysis using the FRAMMR framework. Examples open with extended abstracts before considering the design of the research. These designs are reviewed diagrammatically to analyze the qualitative and quantitative strands, honouring the emphasis on visual representation presented in previous chapters. Riazi concludes the examination of the studies with conceptual, methodological, and inferential commentaries. These include considering whether the reasons for mixing methods are made clear (or can be inferred), which of the five purposes for mixing methods a study might fulfil, or whether mixing is for pragmatic reasons or is more theory driven. These chapters then conclude with recommendations for two further studies that readers could analyze using the framework. A final chapter summarizes the book overall and discusses future challenges for MMR.

I would be reluctant to propose this as the first book for true novice readers of research methodologies, although it would be a good coursebook for those new to researching the teaching and learning of languages. There is simply too much here for it to be considered an entry-level text. Other guides may lay a better MMR foundation for the inexperienced or independent reader. An introductory guide to MMR, such as that by Creswell (2014), for example, is both simpler and shorter. The merit of Riazi's book lies in that it is field specific and addresses language-related issues and topics in depth. As such, it presents a solid foundation for further work rather than an introduction for the curious. For that reason, after having read one of the easier guides, those wanting to go further with mixed methods should probably make this the second book on their reading list.

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***Grounded Theory in Applied Linguistics Research: A Practical Guide.* Gregory Hadley. Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2018. xiii + 183 pp.**

Reviewed by

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In this monograph, Gregory Hadley provides much-needed insights into how to effectively conduct grounded theory (GT) studies within the field of applied linguistics (AL). As the author explains on multiple occasions, although GT represents one of the most prominent research traditions in social sciences, its application in AL has been largely inadequate, and this is epitomized by partial adoption of data analysis strategies, confusion with ethnography, and, worse yet, misrepresentation as “a trendy catchphrase [rather] than a means of inquiry” (p. 61). To remedy this adverse situation, Hadley sets out to offer extensive yet focused accounts of GT’s historical evolution, philosophical roots and diversity, and analytic affordances, with a myriad of illustrative examples pertinent to language education and research.

The three chapters in Part I lay the foundation for later, more hands-on chapters by examining various research paradigms within which GT has been used and by providing an overview of GT’s origin, evolution, and contemporary application. In Chapter 1, Hadley introduces major research paradigms in social scientific research (e.g., positivism, constructivism, critical realism, and postmodernism). Throughout the chapter, he takes care to help the reader grasp abstract concepts by advancing analogies and spelling out concrete implications of paradigmatic differences for making research decisions. Particularly laudable in the chapter is his portrayal of research paradigms as interrelated and complementary, rather than isolated and mutually exclusive. Such an understanding of paradigmatic differences is a helpful one for novice researchers and graduate students in AL, as the field presents an ever-greater diversity of perspectives, and there is an increasing need for communicating one’s ideas and findings across such differences.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide comprehensive accounts of GT’s developments, spanning from its inception in nursing research to its current state characterized by conceptual and methodological diversity. Contrary to the

common misunderstanding of GT as being a mere data analysis procedure, Hadley follows Dey (1999) in treating GT as an encompassing research enterprise, composed of a cyclical process of research initiation, data selection and collection, data analysis, and research conclusion. To illustrate how the process may be materialized in AL research, Hadley gives a narration of a hypothetical teacher–researcher project.

In addition to the cyclical process shared among researchers, the author brings into light some areas of divergence in contemporary GT, pertaining to coding procedures, the use of scholarly literature prior to data collection, and the relationship between GT findings and the macrosocial context. Hadley clarifies that such differences are not a sign of weakness. Quite the contrary, he returns to the earlier discussion on the complementarity of paradigms and contends that such diversity represents GT's dynamism and is a driving force for its further evolution. One powerful support for his argument is found in the treatment of the macro context in GT. Although neither Glaser nor Strauss (i.e., the founders of GT) devoted adequate attention to this issue under the assumption that a theory derived from the micro context is self-sufficient, recent proponents of GT (e.g., Bryant & Charmaz, 2010; Charmaz, 2006) maintain otherwise. This reflects the realization that inattention to the macro context would run the risk of inadvertently reinforcing the status quo. In concluding the background chapters in Part I, Hadley compares GT with other forms of qualitative research (e.g., ethnography, action research, and phenomenology) and stresses that a deliberate focus on ground-up theorization from data, rather than top-down theory confirmation or thick description of cultural practices, is what distinguishes GT from the others. It is to the nitty-gritty of the process leading up to this ground-up theorization as well as to theory dissemination that the author turns in Part II.

In Chapter 4, Hadley homes in on some key considerations prior to data collection and analysis. Particularly thought-provoking in the chapter are the anecdotal episodes of *ethicism*—oppressive oversight of research by managerial centers and government organizations. Although ethical considerations are undeniably essential, the author echoes other scholars in cautioning the reader that in some cases institutional review boards are designed to protect universities and not researchers or research participants and that these bodies do not always consider cultural appropriateness. For example, insistence on obtaining written consent (as opposed to oral or implied consent) can get in the way of building rapport with research participants from certain cultural backgrounds. As these issues are relevant to a great number of researchers in AL, not limited to those employing GT,

Hadley's critical discussion of ethicism as well as his advice on negotiating institutionally imposed constraints are of particular value to the AL community.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 offer practical advice on the selection, collection, and analysis of data as well as the dissemination of research. Reflecting the iterative model introduced in Chapter 2, Hadley shows how the researcher moves flexibly across these stages of research. Although space limitations preclude a detailed discussion here, his guidance features thorough and accurate insights, including strategies for creating descriptive codes (e.g., *use of gerunds*, p. 88), utilizing descriptive codes in soliciting further data from participants (e.g., *repertory grid*, p. 91), transitioning from the descriptive to the interpretive mode using analytical memos, to engaging in constant comparison, and performing theoretical coding (e.g., *dimensional analysis*, p. 120). Through these nuggets of wisdom, Hadley guides the reader expertly towards the creation of a GT that explains the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, in Chapter 7, he offers advice on how to effectively communicate one's research to an AL audience by means of highlighting the resonance between one's findings with current concerns of the field, anticipating potential criticisms and responses, and establishing clear evaluation criteria for GT studies.

Despite the numerous positive qualities highlighted thus far, the book also exhibits several shortcomings that the reader should be made aware of. First, the author's portrayal of the field of AL appears to be somewhat overgeneralized, if not misrepresented, when he states that most researchers consider quantifiable *hard data* more legitimate and prestigious than qualitative data. To the contrary, the current state of the field reflects an enhanced appreciation of qualitative research and its value in counterbalancing quantitative findings (see Canagarajah, 2016, for a survey of research in TESOL over the past 50 years). Second, although the author devotes considerable space to providing advice on data analysis, his discussion of the nature of interview data and the resulting implications for research findings is severely limited (see Talmy & Richards, 2011 for a further discussion on the topic). Third, the use of multimodal forms of data, such as cultural artefacts and video recordings, is mentioned only in passing. To help the reader keep up with current developments in AL, such considerations merit closer attention.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the scholarly contributions of Hadley's work are of exceptional value, especially given that AL, on the whole, has not taken full advantage of the potential of GT. Written accessibly

and featuring a myriad of illustrative anecdotes and examples pertinent to AL, Hadley's book is sure to become an invaluable resource for both novice and advanced researchers in our field.

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***Teaching EFL Learners Shadowing for Listening: Developing Learners' Bottom-Up Skills*. Yo Hamada. New York, NY: Routledge, 2017. xvi + 188 pp.**

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Yo Hamada is an associate professor at the Center for Promotion of Educational Research and Affairs at Akita University, Japan. This book, consisting of seven chapters, provides a substantial overview of the shadowing technique, takes an in-depth look at the theory of shadowing, and examines its usefulness for the classroom. Additionally, Hamada reports on surveys into learner psychology, motivation, and self-efficacy. The first three chapters deal with the theory behind shadowing and detail past case studies on shadowing in the classroom. The remaining chapters focus on the practice of shadowing and its application in the EFL classroom while

providing readers with limitations on the current research. Although Hamada presents research from a Japanese EFL classroom experience, the shadowing techniques outlined can be beneficial to students in ESL environments as well as in other foreign language contexts.

Chapter 1 provides a definition of shadowing, its history and development, and a breakdown of the types of shadowing. Hamada outlines how shadowing developed as a practice from studies in selective attention, was then adapted into training practices for simultaneous interpretation, and finally evolved into usage in EFL environments. He differentiates the cognitive processes within *pure listening* (a focus on listening and comprehension), *interpretation* (a focus on listening, comprehension, and reiteration), and *shadowing* (a focus on pronunciation and prosody), citing studies from Gerver (1974) and Lambert (1992). Both studies found higher cognitive processing with pure listening and interpretation, but that shadowing showed the least cognitive load. This suggests that shadowing could lead to a greater focus on pronunciation and prosody, allowing learners to focus on phoneme perception rather than comprehension. Hamada suggests that, because shadowing exercises do not invoke the use of top-down processing, it is possible to strengthen bottom-up processing, which ultimately contributes to improved listening skills. Overall, this chapter is beneficial to both current and future teachers as it provides a detailed explanation of the theoretical underpinnings of shadowing and demonstrates why shadowing is effective for bottom-up processes.

In Chapter 2, Hamada begins with recommended procedures for shadowing in the EFL classroom with a sample exercise and a step-by-step outline of tasks. The chapter introduces the primary function of shadowing in terms of listening skill development, with empirical data obtained from case studies. On page 25, Hamada provides a table noting different studies on shadowing research and their durations. Although the lack of labeling of the durations is a bit confusing, the three studies described in the chapter are explained clearly. Through these studies, Hamada demonstrates that shadowing exercises can improve low-level listeners' phoneme perception skills. Through strengthening their phoneme perception skills and reinforcing their bottom-up processes, there is less demand on the cognitive load associated with top-down processes and the overall listening level for low-proficiency listeners improves.

In Chapter 3, Hamada presents details of five classroom studies demonstrating how shadowing can be used effectively in the EFL classroom. The studies cover different materials that can be used, situations to

implement shadowing, various difficulty levels, and the use of smartphones. This chapter will be especially of interest to researchers who would like clear information on studies, materials, and the implications of those studies. For educators, it also details how to apply the theories behind shadowing into pedagogy and delineates practical use with examples and data.

Chapter 4, "Shadowing in and out of the classroom," covers the psychological implications of shadowing and discusses motivational strategies. Hamada examined the learner perceptions of shadowing activities and found that if the learners perceived the shadowing exercise as easy, they did not feel it was beneficial. Due to this, Hamada contends that explaining the strategy and its effectiveness to the learners is necessary to maintain motivation. This chapter features mention of the need for comprehension questions before and after shadowing practice to sustain learner involvement and motivation when implementing shadowing strategies into lessons. In addition to a discussion on motivational factors, Hamada proposes that self-efficacy, or one's belief in their ability to accomplish a task, increases through shadowing training. Adapting Matsunuma's (2006) English self-efficacy scale (ESE) to listening self-efficacy, Hamada found that levels of self-efficacy increase as the learners become accustomed to the shadowing activity and are able to identify phonemes better. Additionally, a sense of accomplishment upon the completion of each task increases perceived efficacy as well. In the study, Hamada also found that self-efficacy increased regardless of an increase in ability to recognize phonemes. This information can be helpful to researchers and teachers as they examine factors contributing to learner motivation.

In Chapter 5, Hamada discusses implementing shadowing at the curriculum level, language course level, and lesson level with specific examples from EFL contexts in Japan. Although the cultural setting might not be applicable to all audiences, the discussion on course and lesson design can benefit teachers who would like to implement shadowing. At the curriculum level, Hamada's study found that learner attitudes and the perceived complexity of shadowing should be evaluated in the needs analysis as these will affect the results of shadowing exercises. At the course level, Hamada stresses that shadowing exercises work best in language-focused learning strands (Nation, 2007) as shadowing helps to raise consciousness and puts a focus on implicit learning. At the lesson level, Hamada again suggests the use of pre- and postlistening comprehension activities to reinforce motivation and broader learning objectives.

In Chapter 6, Hamada addresses the limitations and future of shadowing research. Specifically, he categorizes limitations by research design (lack

of control group, design parameters, low-level vs. low-listening level, and sample types) and shadowing research (classroom obstacles, simultaneous/delayed shadowing, perfectionism, meaning involvement, *i-1* materials, and assessment). Although Hamada does not identify accent as a limitation in his studies, he does note that in future studies, researchers may want to include native speakers of various origins to enhance learner phoneme skills with different varieties of English. He also discusses the possibility of shadowing research in other foreign languages and notes that current studies in the field are limited. Finally, he discusses the possibility of future studies that could further the research in this field, namely, shadowing and speaking skills improvement, World Englishes, and visual-auditory shadowing.

Chapter 7 answers questions regarding shadowing, including the topics of theory, research, psychology, practice, language, and materials. Of particular note, he explains how other researchers measure improvements from shadowing training, describes how shadowing and repetition differ, and further clarifies audio speed and materials.

In sum, I thoroughly recommend this book to educators and teachers who are looking to increase L2 listening skills in low-level listeners. I enjoyed the author's personal introduction and reflection on his own language learning experiences and feel they help the reader more fully understand his research motivation as well as his perspective. The book provides fundamental information on the history and practice of shadowing in the EFL classroom and the findings are supported by a number of studies. Although the research focuses on EFL learners in Japan and almost all of the studies take place within Japan, the concepts, theories, and strategies for shadowing are applicable to all EFL contexts as well as ESL environments.

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タスク・ベースの英語指導—TBLTの理解と実践 [Task-Based Instruction of English as a Second Language: Principles and Practices of TBLT]. Masanori Matsumura (Ed.). Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten, 2017. xii + 256 pp.

Reviewed by

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In two parts and nine chapters written by five authors, this book introduces task-based language teaching (TBLT), covering both the theoretical background or “Principles” in Part 1 and the implementation of TBLT in classrooms as “Practices” in Part 2. Although it is targeted towards those interested in teaching English in Japan, the content is applicable to language classrooms everywhere. A notable strength of the book is the completeness of its coverage of both research and teaching. In this way, it reflects how TBLT has generated a growing literature in SLA and applied linguistics in which both researchers and teachers explore the effective use of tasks for teaching and learning second and foreign languages.

The first part of the book explores TBLT’s foundations with both cognitive models of language learning and educational philosophy. In Chapter 1, the editor, Masanori Matsumura, proposes TBLT as a way of producing students capable of using English for meaningful, authentic communication in response to current criticisms of conventional English education in Japan such as classes that focus solely on preparing students for university entrance examinations. In Chapter 2, Junya Fukuta introduces readers to key concepts in TBLT such as corrective feedback, task sequencing, and cognitive complexity along with empirical research findings. In Chapter 3, Fukuta then evaluates TBLT’s educational philosophy from a critical perspective, recognizing advances made in TBLT while noting that the approach previously lacked a strong educational perspective because it focused on cognitive perspectives for L2 learning and instruction. Drawing from Long (2015), Fukuta also introduces TBLT’s core principles including learning by doing, individual freedom, rationality, learner-centeredness, and egalitarian teacher–student relationships. Subsequently, he discusses possible issues with these core principles when implementing TBLT in the Japanese educational context. For instance, one of the challenges he highlights is finding a middle ground between creating learner-centered classes based on

needs analysis and working within the Japanese school system where study goals must be set by teachers for all students. He argues that it is necessary to reconsider the educational purposes and goals in public education so that the teaching methodology better coheres with those purposes and goals. Yu Tamura dedicates Chapter 4, the final chapter focusing on theoretical principles, to responses to frequently asked questions about TBLT. Those questions involve task, grammar instruction, and the use of L1. By adding further theoretical information, Tamura clarifies several possible doubts and concerns teachers may have about implementing TBLT in their classrooms.

Chapter 4 also segues into the second half of the book, which explores how to implement TBLT in a variety of classroom situations. In Chapter 5, Matsumura provides practical information and ideas for teaching English with tasks, a brief summary of task types available for classroom use, and a list of resources, such as publications and websites for teaching materials.

Subsequent chapters deal with the feasibility of implementing TBLT at various school levels. For the elementary school level, Kazuyo Kawamura reports in Chapter 6 on the use of input and comprehension-based tasks along with the child's L1 as effective ways of teaching, based on empirical findings from studies conducted in children's English classes in Japan, Spain, Hungary, and South Korea. For the secondary level, due to the time constraints imposed by preparations for the university entrance system, in Chapter 7 Tamura suggests the use of a TBLT module in conjunction with an assigned textbook. Tamura first acknowledges the dilemma faced by secondary English teachers: producing students capable of communicating in English while meeting the requirements for university entrance examinations. Subsequently, he proposes TBLT as a solution, suggesting specific ideas such as the use of the Can-Do list from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as an alternative method of needs analysis. Also, he argues that activities in assigned textbooks can be revised into comprehension and/or production tasks, including a step whereby students are required to make judgements in order to complete the tasks. For the college level, Ken Urano shows in Chapter 8 how to design a TBLT course and how to teach, focusing on the specific task, "Writing a business message in English." These specific examples suggest that English for specific purposes classes constitute fertile terrain for TBLT. The chapter provides clear descriptions of target tasks and pedagogical tasks based on needs analysis. Urano also provides an alternative solution for using a relevant textbook when it is difficult to conduct any needs analysis due to the sensitivity of the target discourse.

The book concludes by reemphasizing the importance of learner-centeredness in teaching and learning L2. In the final chapter, Matsumura underscores the significance of providing learners with opportunities to organize, synthesize, and analyze information actively while letting learners make their own judgements. Furthermore, he urges readers to consider L2 ability as an asset, not a limited competence, and encourages learners to be confident with using their L2 to make contributions to real-world communications. Matsumura argues that TBLT frees learners from conventional social systems and frameworks and that it provides future L2 users with opportunities to learn how to use their language abilities to develop their own ideas and values while expanding their perspectives.

This book provides readers with an in-depth treatment of its subject matter in which the authors present TBLT as an innovative approach that can bring about positive changes at all levels of English education in Japan. However, they also support Long's view that TBLT is still a work in progress (Long, 2015). In Chapter 1, Matsumura highlights this by noting that perspectives of TBLT researchers and practitioners on various aspects of tasks and the specific steps to take for implementation are still inconclusive. Fukuta also mentions in Chapter 2 that some empirical findings in TBLT research have led to ongoing discussions calling for clearer pedagogical implications. The authors show throughout the book that, although TBLT is a promising approach in L2 teaching that utilizes SLA research findings, it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. As Matsumura indicates, while maintaining TBLT principles, we need to customize various teaching aspects, such as ways of intervention and incorporation with learner needs, to fit the most appropriate instruction into our own teaching contexts.

Nonetheless, although the book accurately points out the caveats for TBLT, introducing it to a wider audience through the publication of this book comes at the ideal moment in Japan, when vital solutions in L2 teaching, including Japanese as a second language, are eagerly being sought, as they are in many countries around the world. Due to its balanced look at principles and practices and breadth of information, there is no doubt that many will be inspired by this book as it guides readers from an overview to a deeper understanding of TBLT.

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***Intercultural Interventions in Study Abroad.* Jane Jackson and Susan Oguro (Eds.). New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. xvi + 215 pp.**

Reviewed by

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Over the past several decades, the growing importance of intercultural understanding and communication in a globalized world has been reflected in the increase in students who take part in international educational experiences such as study abroad. Yet, it is well known that study abroad alone, in the absence of critical reflection, often does not result in meaningful changes to a student's intercultural competence. *Intercultural Interventions in Study Abroad* is a timely compilation of studies that attempts to address this problem by reporting on interventions that implement tasks, workshops, and a variety of other mediums, which seek to augment the positive effects of the study abroad experience through meaningful and sound practices. This book is an edited volume with contributors from wide-ranging backgrounds and educational contexts, including researchers based in Asia, Oceania, North America, and Europe. What unites this diverse collection of scholars, teachers, and program administrators is their interest in the understanding and advancement of sound pedagogical practices in study abroad programs through carefully devised interventions at the different stages of study abroad. This book is aimed at informing the reader about key concepts and theories, sound methodological practices, and guiding principles for conducting research or designing programs in a study abroad context.

The introductory chapter serves both as an excellent resource and as a road map to understanding the book's overarching organization and objectives. In terms of resources, valuable information such as related journals and professional organizations, including descriptions of some of the well-known conferences in study abroad, are provided, which will be highly useful for those who are new to the field and seek to go beyond the scope of the book. This chapter also succinctly lists what the reader is expected to gain after having read the book and concludes by summarizing the contributions of each subsequent chapter, which allows readers to both survey the scope of the studies and easily skip ahead to those chapters that are most relevant to their interests.

The remaining chapters are each written by different authors and thus the presentation and writing style does vary somewhat, but by and large the chapters are well written and follow a similar prescribed organization. For instance, each chapter effectively presents the relevant literature and appropriately defines key terms. This allows readers who are relatively new to study abroad research to better understand the context of the studies that follow. Importantly, all the chapters include a section on pedagogical implications, most of which are highly concrete, practical, and actionable. For example, on page 133 of Chapter 8, Jane Jackson concludes that direct intervention by mentors is often warranted in order to raise awareness about key concepts that would otherwise be missed opportunities in student-centered interactions.

Though the aforementioned chapter structure is consistent throughout the book, it is important to note that the methodologies and stages of intervention are quite different, so that the content is rarely repetitive or redundant. The data collection tools include written reflections, journals, recorded interviews, focus groups, and class interactions, among others. Also impressive was the wide array of technological platforms and tools that facilitated some of the data collection and analyses, such as the various online learner management systems, telecommunication software, statistical packages, and validated data collection instruments. Although many readers will already be familiar with some of these, such as Blackboard and Skype, readers may also learn about other useful software to collect and analyze qualitative data (e.g., NVivo) and validated instruments to measure intercultural competence (e.g., the Intercultural Development Inventory). These give the reader a sense of what tools are available to exploit for the learner's and researcher's benefit in study abroad research. Furthermore, as there were multiple studies reported for the pre-sojourn, sojourn, and post-sojourn stages, researchers and administrators involved at any point in the study abroad cycle can glean some insights specific to their context. Finally, although most of the studies in the book focused on interventions involving students, some also included teachers. Chapter 12, for instance, details how cultural immersion impacted the teachers' intercultural competence. This adds a welcome balance that provides a perspective from the lens of those who are often in a position to effect change in the curricula.

Although the overall quality of the studies reported in the book is acceptable, there are two significant and related criticisms: small sample sizes and the overreliance on anecdotal data. To be fair, several of the chapters report on studies with a sufficient number of participants and provide quantitative

data that is triangulated with the qualitative data, which allows the reader to be more confident about the validity of the results. However, other chapters rely solely on anecdotal evidence but are not then accordingly modest in the interpretation of those results. Somewhat surprisingly, some chapters do not contain a single figure or table, relying entirely on quotations from individuals to address the study's research questions. Although there is absolutely nothing wrong with conducting smaller exploratory or case studies, the reporting of these findings should be accompanied with the necessary caveats so as not to mislead the reader.

In spite of these shortcomings, and on the whole, *Intercultural Interventions in Study Abroad* delivers an up-to-date and informative examination of study abroad research. The content of the chapters is sufficiently scaffolded so that those unfamiliar with study abroad research can gain a broad understanding of the key concepts and essential theoretical frameworks underpinning many of the current studies in the field. Aside from satisfying research-related aspirations, the book also provides a good deal of practical advice on how to improve the quality of study abroad programs by implicating tasks and activities intended to enhance the benefits of the study abroad experience. In sum, this book is a worthwhile read for researchers, teachers, and administrators who seek to deepen their knowledge of study abroad research, especially in a second-language learning environment.

***Second Language Pragmatics*. Naoko Taguchi and Carsten Roever. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2017. viii + 328 pp.**

Reviewed by

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Just as pragmatics is defined as much by considerations of appropriateness as linguistic content, our aim in this review will be to consider *Second Language Pragmatics* not only in terms of its content generally but also with a particular context for use and a particular type of user in mind. With this review being cowritten by a teacher of graduate level pragmatics classes and a graduate student who has taken such classes, we will consider this book not as a work

of reference (a role it does fulfil superbly, by the way) but rather as a core text for use in postgraduate classes for students who are likely to become English teachers. To give a little more background on the imagined users of this book in the way we have framed this review, the majority of students would already have studied something about pragmatics, such as having read George Yule's (1996) still excellent introductory text, *Pragmatics*.

As for the organization of this review, the first half is written by Jim Ronald and the second half largely by PhD student Stachus Peter Tu.

The book opens with a fresh and exciting introduction, first to pragmatics and then to second language pragmatics. Rather than getting bogged down in a swamp of historically and geographically varied definitions, it starts with illustrative examples then moves quickly to the circumstances of second language users and the risk of pragmatic failure: communication difficulties arising from misinterpreting or being misinterpreted. Only then are we shown how the meanings of pragmatics have developed in the few decades of the field's existence before going on to a description of three interconnected subfields in second language pragmatics: cross-cultural pragmatics, intercultural pragmatics, and interlanguage pragmatics. The chapter ends with an overview of the scope of second language pragmatics and research.

With the second chapter, "Disciplinary domain and history," we come to realize something of the complexity of this discipline-straddling field, with pragmatics, second language acquisition, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and various other disciplines having a part in the history, development, and current circumstances of second language pragmatics. Taguchi and Roever introduce areas of pragmatics that relate to these various disciplines: speech acts and implicature, politeness theory, and conversation analysis. This is achieved in language that is not overly academic and again with examples or illustrations that are clear and to the point.

In Chapter 3, the authors report on research into L2 pragmatic development: what the learning of pragmatics involves. Starting with the two-dimensional model of, simply put, knowing and using, the next focus is on learning in noninstructional environments, with attention, awareness, and noticing being necessary conditions for intake, even for frequently encountered pragmlinguistic forms or sociopragmatic factors. More classroom-oriented perspectives follow, with skill acquisition theories and collaborative dialogue showing great potential but still in their infancy in regard to research. Returning to L2 environments, we are given a quick overview of sociocultural theory and language socialization before finishing with conversation analysis.

Chapter 4's focus on research methods explains in more detail the various data collection methods that have already been mentioned in previous chapters. These include learner assessments of acceptability or pragmatic meaning, noninteractive production data such as from discourse completion tasks (DCTs), interactive production data as from role-play, elicited conversation, or natural interaction, and verbal (or think-aloud) protocols. Evaluations of each of these are given, from the limited usefulness of DCTs to the gold standard of natural interaction, together with practical guidance about employing these methods and dealing with resulting data.

Chapters 5 and 6, "What learners have in common" and "What differentiates learners," are both concerned with pragmatic competence and pragmatic development of learners of other languages. We learn that despite native speaker pragmatic competence in their first languages, lower level learners of other languages typically lack both the linguistic tools needed for using language in pragmatically appropriate ways and awareness either of the pragmatic devices they do have at their disposal or of the need for pragmatically appropriate language. For English, the belief that the word *please* magically turns an order into a polite request is an example of this. In the chapter on learner differences, the authors consider factors that affect the extent or speed of individual second language learners' production and comprehension of pragmatic language: L2 proficiency, motivation, and personality together with identity, subjectivity, and agency. With little attention paid here to the effect of instruction or changing contexts, the reader may sense, wrongly, that these factors are fixed for the individual.

Much of Chapter 7, "Contexts for pragmatic development," places strong emphasis on the role of natural contexts for learners' pragmatics development but downplays the role of classroom-based instruction. We receive the message that it is the "abroad" aspect of study abroad that accounts for increased pragmatic competence, rather than the "study" element, even though in many cases the study abroad may be predominantly language classes. The assumption that may be taken from this is that pragmatic development is more easily facilitated via an actual environment versus a simulated one.

In Chapter 8, the authors introduce the role of teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics and note the considerable gains reported through explicit instruction. They also lament the poverty of L2 classrooms in this regard, with little structured pragmatics teaching or assessment. This circumstance is also reflected through this chapter; based as the book is on research, it gives little advice other than to recommend explicit, rather

than implicit, instruction and to point to the lack of research into inductive or deductive teaching.

The thorny issue for the pragmatics of native-like or similar pragmatic targets is left unaddressed until Chapter 9, where the authors round off the book with an excellent discussion of globalization and language change, focusing mainly on English as a lingua franca and intercultural competence. Although generally for lingua franca use, there may be an agreed goal of clarity and effective communication, and pragmatic considerations clarify this by including interactional success, mutual considerateness, and the confirming of meaning when in doubt.

There is no doubt that in terms of its scope, detail, and organization, *Second Language Pragmatics* is a masterly work in the area of SLA-oriented pragmatics. Returning to our initial question of whether it would be a suitable core text for a Master's level pragmatics course, the answer would have to be an enthusiastic, yet well-hedged, yes. The book covers much of the research in the field, even pointing out areas where research is sorely lacking. The authors also discuss a wide range of issues and provide excellent examples to illustrate these, together with a very impressive list of roughly 800 references.

On the other hand, with its rather strong SLA orientation, the book tends to downplay the role or contribution of classroom instruction for learners' pragmatic development. For graduate students, most of whom will typically become language teachers, this orientation together with just one chapter focusing on their primary interest may leave them feeling left out. One other important issue is that this book is hard work; there is a lot to digest and, with no diagrams, tables, or discussion questions to guide the reader, little support or scaffolding to help the reader. No doubt graduate students are one key target readership for this book and the others in the Oxford Applied Linguistics series, and with that in mind, the publishers may want to consider what support such a book should offer.

These are both important issues, but neither is beyond resolution. Regarding the SLA natural context focus of the book, for a course over two semesters, we might imagine this book for the first semester being balanced by Ishihara and Cohen's (2010) *Teaching and Learning Pragmatics*, for the second semester. As for the lack of scaffolding, students and teacher could share the tasks of creating diagrams, tables, discussion questions, and a glossary of key technical language: a hard but worthwhile task for the first group of students studying with this book and a very helpful set of resources for students in subsequent years.

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Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts. Icy Lee. Singapore: Springer, 2017. xx + 157 pp.

Reviewed by

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English writing skills are becoming more and more important in this globalized world, where communication through English emails, for example, is a common daily activity. In addition, with the recent shift in English education in Japan to well-balanced teaching of the four skills, effective teaching of writing is an urgent topic especially for English teachers at junior and senior high schools. However, probably due to a lack of training in teaching writing, many secondary school English teachers in Japan may not have sufficient knowledge about how to use feedback and assessment to improve students' writing skills. Personal observations have revealed conscientious teachers spending hours correcting all of the mistakes in their students' writing, although research shows that such corrective feedback is not necessarily effective (Hendrickson, 1980; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009). Problems like these are addressed in this book, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*, by Icy Lee, who explores alternative, more effective ways of giving feedback and assessment, based on theory and research.

The book consists of 10 chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction, in which Lee explains the difference between *assessment of learning* (AoL), whose main focus is scores, and *assessment for learning* (AfL) and *assessment as learning* (AaL). AfL and AaL focus more on student learning and are fully discussed in later chapters. Chapter 2 provides an examination of the theoretical principles of AfL/AaL, which are framed by social constructivism. Lee writes, "Learning is socially and culturally constructed, with learners shouldering

the responsibility of learning and the teacher playing the role of facilitator” (p. 12). Then she discusses practical principles for effective assessment such as focusing on the process of writing and offering descriptive and diagnostic feedback in order to help students recognize their strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 3 focuses on AfL, in which assessment is used to promote learning and improve teaching. Lee argues that although it might be difficult to change the examination-driven system in many L2 school contexts, the implementation of AfL needs to be school based. This innovation requires teachers to collaborate with a shared vision and for students to play an active role in writing processes with a clear understanding of the learning objectives and the assessment criteria of the writing tasks. Then, in a summary of the pedagogical principles underlying effective AfL practices, Lee suggests setting the genre-specific goals of writing and familiarizing students with the language features of the genre as well as the success criteria through prewriting activities. She also refers to the importance of drawing students’ attention to teachers’ comments before scores are presented so that feedback can make a positive impact on student learning. In Chapter 4, Lee states that as a subset of AfL, the main focus of AaL “is to develop learners who are capable of self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-regulated learning” (p. 41). She then discusses strategies for effective AaL practices in L2 writing classrooms, such as having students actively involved in establishing the learning goals and success criteria and helping one another through peer assessment.

In Chapter 5, Lee examines perspectives on feedback in writing. Viewing feedback from a sociocultural perspective, she argues that in order to provide students with mediated learning experiences, feedback needs to be focused, purposeful, and in line with instruction and students need to engage actively with the feedback through interactions with their teacher and peers. The focus of Chapter 6 is on teacher feedback. Lee asserts that “overall, L2 school teachers’ feedback practices deviate largely from feedback principles recommended in the literature” (p. 72). For example, Furneaux, Paran, and Fairfax (2007) found that secondary school EFL teachers focused heavily on correcting grammatical errors instead of providing well-balanced feedback on language, content, and organization and tended to give unfocused written corrective feedback (WCF) on student writing, not focused WCF, which research findings recommend especially for students with a lower level of English proficiency. Lee discusses several possible reasons for the research-practice divide, which include the institutional context that requires teachers to adopt a comprehensive approach to WCF, the examination culture (in

which grammatical accuracy is emphasized), and a lack of teacher training, hence a lack of knowledge on best practices. To help promote teachers' feedback literacy, Lee presents eight guiding principles for effective feedback. One of them, "Less is more" (p. 75), could serve to reduce the burden on both teachers and students. Chapter 7 deals with peer feedback. Citing a number of theoretical perspectives and research findings, Lee maintains that peer feedback is an essential strategy to promote L2 students' writing development. She then points out that in L2 school contexts, however, peer feedback tends to be undervalued, especially with younger, less proficient L2 learners and in cultures where teachers play a dominant role and students avoid criticizing their peers. Lee addresses teachers' possible questions, concerns, and suspicions about peer feedback in the form of FAQs and offers practical tips to help teachers implement it effectively.

In Chapter 8, Lee introduces portfolio assessment in L2 writing. Portfolios are collections of students' writing samples, and portfolio assessment is characterized by student centeredness, multiple writing opportunities, and delayed evaluation. Lee argues that portfolio assessment, which promotes students' self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-regulation, is suitable for L2 school contexts, adding that for its successful implementation, however, teachers need to learn how to use writing portfolios effectively as teaching and assessment tools.

Chapter 9 details the use of technology for assessment and feedback in L2 writing classrooms. Technology appears to be a promising tool to supplement instruction and assessment by human teachers, and this chapter introduces various technological resources and examples of their use. First, Lee introduces digital storytelling, blog-based writing, and collaborative writing on wikis. Then she examines automated writing evaluation and screencast feedback as possible teacher evaluation tools as well as tools for self- or peer evaluation, like Microsoft Word and concordancing (p. 133). She refers to the importance of teachers choosing tools suitable for their own contexts and of learners being provided with sufficient training in using technologies. At the end of the chapter, Lee introduces a project called the "Writing ePlatform," designed for upper primary and lower secondary students in Hong Kong and consisting of tools such as eLab, in which students submit their writing and get instant corrective feedback, and eTutor, which helps students learn about common errors. Lee describes this as an example of technology use with the potential to promote AfL/AaL.

Chapter 10 is devoted to discussing teachers' assessment literacy. Research shows that in general, L2 writing teachers lack and need training

to effectively use feedback and assess students' writing for the ultimate goal of promoting student learning (Crusan, Plakans, & Gebril, 2016; Lam, 2015). Lee argues that exposure to the literature and critical reflection are crucial for teachers' literacy development.

This book is neatly organized and readable and provides L2 school teachers practical tips and suggestions on classroom writing assessment and feedback. Regarding teacher feedback, Lee mainly focuses on written feedback, which may well be the major type of feedback in many L2 school contexts. However, as Langer and Applebee (1986) stated, in a social constructivist view of learning, tutorial interactions between the teacher and students are a critical part of instructional scaffolding. Therefore, one-on-one oral feedback could have been elaborated upon further.

Nevertheless, with lots of specific examples given, this book appears to be useful for many L2 classroom writing teachers. Lee repeatedly emphasizes the importance of collaboration among teachers; she writes that, ideally, teachers should "gather together in professional learning communities in the workplace to discuss ways to develop effective classroom writing assessments and feedback amidst all the challenges they face in their own work contexts" (p. 154). If teachers form such a study group, this book could be used as a kind of textbook to build common ground for discussion. Despite its title, this book is not just about assessment and feedback; it actually deals with how to teach writing, where teaching, learning, feedback, and assessment are all connected.

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***Nonformal Education and Civil Society in Japan*. Kaori Okano (Ed.). Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2016. xi + 201 pp.**

Reviewed by

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Learning beyond the classroom is a vital aspect of education, and this is especially true in Japan, with its multitude of self-study, training, and cram school courses offered independently of formal schools. *Nonformal Education and Civil Society in Japan* describes “intentional teaching and learning activities that occur outside formal schooling” (p. 1) and which supplement or, in some cases, act as alternatives to government-sanctioned schools. In this illuminating volume, Kaori Okano brings together nine different themes that help to form a complete picture of nonformal educational opportunities available to various individuals in Japanese society. Programs range from after-school care for children to lifelong learning for senior citizens, and the majority are run by NGOs and/or volunteers.

This is the third English language volume on nonformal education in Japan. However, it has been more than 20 years since the first two (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996; Singleton, 1998) were published. Okano and the contributing chapter authors add a valuable element to the previous literature by linking the currently relevant government policy to each type of program discussed. The book is key not only to making a large quantity of Japanese-language work accessible to monolingual English audiences, but also to incorporating chapters by authors widely published (in Japanese) in the field.

The chapters all follow the same general structure. First, there is a review of the literature, followed by a case study, and lastly, the author's conclusions, including challenges and necessary improvements. The chapters are well organized and easy to read and information is concisely summarized in the conclusions to each chapter. In this review, I group chapters by themes, rather than in numerical order.

In Chapter 1, Okano provides a history of nonformal education in Japan (known in Japanese as *shakai kyouiku*, or "social education"). She also discusses the major social changes that have been occurring over the last few decades and gives an overview of new educational opportunities that have arisen.

Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6 deal with supporting school-age children (elementary through high school). In Chapter 2, Tomoko Nakamatsu discusses community volunteer-run after-school programs that provide Japanese language support and a family-like environment to linguistically and culturally diverse (CALD) students, many of whose parents are migrants. In Chapter 6, Hideki Ito gives an overview of alternative schooling for long-term absentees. These schools provide a supportive and nurturing environment, so students with psychological problems can gain a sense of belonging and complete their compulsory (junior high) and postcompulsory (high school) formal education. In a similarly caring setting, Eiji Tsuda (Chapter 4) discusses *ibasho* (places where students can play freely and safely while developing friendships) run by community volunteers. These after-school programs cater to vulnerable elementary school-age children, especially those with disabilities.

In Chapter 3, June A. Gordon tackles a taboo subject in discussing *burakumin* and ways the government has been attempting to break down stereotypes through education. (*Burakumin* are ethnic Japanese whose ancestors held undesirable jobs, and as a result, they have been marginalized and discriminated against for generations, including in employment and marriage.) With this undertaking, *douwa kyouiku* ([formal] schools for integration) were founded to empower *burakumin* youth to match their mainstream peers' academic achievement levels. These formal schools have their roots in nonformal practices with the involvement of social activists and programs to educate students' parents.

Chapters 5 and 8 cover programs that many mainstream Japanese students experience. In Chapter 5, Thomas Blackwood describes extracurricular sports clubs (*undoubu*) at high schools and the positive effects these clubs have on participants' nonacademic education. In Chapter 8, Jeremy Breden

provides an overview of the strictly formal job hunting process completed during the final year of university and goes into detail on intercultural competence (IC) training. Graduates seeking international-related jobs are expected to possess IC skills, even though, as Breaden notes, the meaning of this catch-all term is often unclear.

In Chapter 7, Okano looks at the ever-changing relationship between formal schools and schools for foreigners (Chinese, Korean, Latin American, several European countries, and English language international schools), noting that these schools have gained wider acceptance and more funding in recent years. (The term *schools for foreigners* can be misleading, as significant numbers of Japanese students are often enrolled, but the primary medium of instruction is a language other than Japanese.)

Chapters 9 and 10 complete the nonformal education spectrum in describing various civil programs. In Chapter 9, Chizu Sato details *kouminkan*, or local civic centres, where programs have expanded in recent years to fill a variety of roles for adults of all ages. Finally, in Chapter 10, Koji Maeda discusses lifelong learning programs for the elderly. He focuses on those that help retired corporate warriors, who had been so dedicated to their companies that they felt “not only at a loss personally but socially isolated” (p. 181) after retirement. The programs help members of this predominantly male group gain a social life outside the workplace and become active members of the community, often for the first time in their adult lives.

Although the book provides a clear and complete picture of nonformal education in Japan, there are two areas where the organization and clarity might be improved. First, the chapters might have been arranged in a different order. Although chapters are currently in order of target learners’ ages, there is a large range of program types. Therefore, it might make more sense to group by theme (e.g., support (2, 3, 4, & 6), mainstream students (5 & 8), lifelong learning (9 & 10)), while keeping chapters in age order wherever possible. Chapter 7 describes programs for school-age foreign and Japanese students, so it might fit nicely between the support and mainstream sections.

Next, there is one area that might be better clarified. The definition of *kouminkan* in Chapter 9 is a little confusing. These are defined as “comprehensive and composite community centres” (p. 161) and “local civic centres” (p. 159), but the author also states that community centres threaten to replace *kouminkan*. A lot of the Japanese literature cited in this chapter mentions *kouminkan* without defining precisely what is meant by

the term. The issue might be caused by vaguely worded government policy, but an explicit definition could have eliminated any confusion.

Overall, this book provides an excellent overview of nonformal education in Japan, describing in detail the history, policy, and background of various programs as well as positive effects they have had on participants and/or the community at large. It also delves into challenges programs have faced, in terms of government policy limitations or how a lack of funding has curtailed projects or forced creative solutions. For these reasons, I wholeheartedly recommend this volume to anyone with an interest in various types of nonformal schooling, including scholars in the fields of social or comparative education (especially with a focus on Japan or East Asia), future participants or would-be volunteers, and finally, parents who might benefit from a detailed description and background information on aspects of their child's education.

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