

Reviews

***What English Language Teachers Need to Know Volume III: Designing Curriculum (2nd ed).* MaryAnn Christison and Denise E. Murray. Routledge, 2022. xiv + 376 pp. ¥8,200. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429275746>**

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The second edition of MaryAnn Christison and Denise E. Murray's (2022) "What English Language Teachers Need to Know Volume III: Designing Curriculum" is a comprehensive resource that delves into the question of "What do teachers need to know and be able to do in order to help their students to learn English?" (p. i). For this edition, the authors have expanded their chapters to address the pressing technological and multilingual challenges facing learners and teachers in today's English Language Teaching (ELT) education, making it a timely and relevant reference for information. It is a must-read for pre-service teachers, policymakers, and graduate students interested in language education across different contexts. It takes us through the theory and practice in ELT curricula, aiming to develop, design, and promote student learning as the main goal of the curriculum.

The book's emphasis on the intricate status of English across various countries is noteworthy, as it takes into account the cultural, political, and historical contexts in which English is utilized. This consideration enables the presentation of multiple teaching methodologies tailored to the diverse contexts and needs of language learners. For example, the pedagogical approach in countries where English serves as a second language may differ significantly from that in countries where it is taught as a foreign language. The book is organized around three pillars of teaching—planning, instruct-

ing, and assessing. This three-pillar model is not linear but reiterative, with each pillar constantly evolving and interacting with each other (Graves, 2008; Macalister & Nation, 2011; 2020). The centre of this tripartite process is learning, which puts the content, teachers, and learners at the heart of the dynamic process of iteration, reevaluation, and curricular innovation.

In Part I, the authors show how various perspectives on education, language, and learning, along with input from different stakeholders, shape the curriculum and influence what gets included in it. This part contains five chapters to set the stage on the various ways a curriculum is developed (Chapter 1), the sociocultural milieu (Chapter 2), the decision-making behind the choice and use of a certain approach (Chapter 3), how this decision translates to teaching in a multilingual group of learners (Chapter 4), and how learning through the aid of technology is an important consideration in the 21st-century curriculum (Chapter 5).

Part II of the book contains a practical guide that discusses the curriculum design process, showing how to design a curriculum tailored to specific situations. In this part, chapters explain the cycle of curriculum design (Chapter 6), the connection of the curriculum to the course/program (Chapter 7), and the evaluation scheme on the quality of the curriculum (Chapter 8). The remaining parts—III, IV, V, and VI—offer examples of various approaches to curriculum choices. They focus on language, content, the learner, and the learning process. These sections are grounded in current research in ELT and related fields. Starting in Part III, this section focuses exclusively on linguistic-based curricula. It comprises six approaches (i.e., structural, notional-functional, genre/text-based, academic language functions, vocabulary, and language skills approach) based on certain language features, such as grammar. This practical guide equips teachers with toolkits to design effective sequencing of grammatical structures within a communicative framework, ensuring they are well-prepared for their teaching roles.

Part IV focuses on content-based curricula. This section departs from the focus on language and is centrally developed for *content*. In this part, there are claims that language and content learning complement each other, where the more content is learned the more learners improve their language. It is divided into two main approaches: content and language integrated (Chapter 15) and topical and situational (Chapter 16). The former incorporates essential content, such as academic subjects in K–12 schools or at the tertiary level, and the latter selects content based on what is motivating and valuable for learners. Each type offers a range of imple-

mentations, and the distinction between them is not always clear-cut. What stands out most about content-based curricula is that language use, in all its complexity, is guided by the linguistic demands of the content.

In Part V, the authors explain the concept of learner-centred curricula, which prioritize the learning *process* over the content. This means that the curriculum is designed around how learners learn rather than the specific goals of what they should learn. This book section includes three chapters focusing on negotiated, humanistic, and task-based curricula. Negotiated curricula enable the learners to be in the driver's seat, empowering them to be autonomous and putting the responsibility on the teachers for curriculum development because each class differs in collective needs and linguistic goals. The humanistic curricula have similarities with the previous, but the balance is different. The teachers are facilitators in the learning process, guiding students to discover knowledge independently. A task-based approach to curriculum design centres on tasks, recognizing that language is a tool learners use to engage with others and, in the process, use the language more naturally. This approach is particularly beneficial for language education as it allows students to learn daily task-related activities, promoting a deeper understanding and retention of the language.

In Part VI, the authors transition on the focus on process to a focus on *product*. This part of the book discusses three approaches under this curriculum type: outcome-based, competency-based, and standards-based. Each approach emphasizes outcomes, moving away from the foci of the previous curricula mentioned in the book. The outcome-based approach focuses on the desired results of the learning process, ensuring that students achieve specific learning outcomes. The competency-based approach emphasizes the skills and knowledge that learners should acquire, focusing on the development of specific competencies. The standards-based approach sets specific criteria for what learners should know and be able to do, ensuring that students meet certain proficiency standards. Understanding these approaches is important for educators as it helps them set clear learning objectives and assess the effectiveness of their teaching.

As elucidated in the book's preface, English language teaching within the global context encounters ongoing challenges that continuously influence curriculum development. In certain regions, English is valued for its substantial economic impact, often facilitated through shadow education and tutoring (Cao, 2024). Conversely, in regions classified as part of the inner circle—namely, Britain, Australasia, and North America (Kachru, 1986)—language curricula are increasingly adapting to serve a multilingual

clientele, the learners, coming from all linguistic backgrounds as a product of the increased global human mobility. The book acknowledges the global impact of English as it is “consumed and transformed transnationally” (p. ix). This global impact of English has significant implications for language education, as it necessitates a curriculum that is adaptable and inclusive, catering to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of learners. As a developing curriculum expert/researcher and an adult language educator, I find this a step forward to embracing and addressing the plurilingual and linguistic panorama of our classrooms (Gazzola et al., 2023; Piccardo, 2013).

On the other hand, Christison and Murray are well-known internationally for their contributions to the field of ELT. Their reputation is accompanied by a global field experience through their vignettes that are easy to read and relatable for novice and experienced teachers. The accessibility of the book resonates not just with me as a Canadian language educator but also with readers around the world who have different values and perspectives on what the best language education means to them. We have the option, not as passive readers of information, to apply a suitable approach. The intended readers—specifically, the language teachers—have the agency to choose, play around, evaluate, and examine the approaches until the “right” one works out fine. Teachers become the final frontier in curriculum success, acting as the “intermediary between national curriculum and classroom” (Parent, 2011, p. 186). According to the authors, examining the iterative curriculum development process underscores the importance of the educational experiences co-constructed by teachers and learners. This reciprocal relationship suggests that the effectiveness of the curriculum can be assessed when both teachers and learners are satisfied with the educational outcomes, which are central to the classroom environment—the “heart of education” (Graves, 2008, p. 152).

Despite the authors’ effort to be comprehensive, novice teachers may find the contents needing an in-depth explanation. Although the book is presented as being of the “how-to” genre, there may be foundational knowledge missing. There are two examples that I find needing more contextualization. First, readers may ask about curricular innovation because they work in an institution with an outdated curriculum. Chapter 6 briefly discusses curricular innovation, which may not be enough to support novice teachers looking into the complex process of educational change. Second, the curriculum is not a one-person job; stakeholders (e.g., parents, policymakers, and teachers) have interests to escalate within the commonplaces of the curriculum—“subject matter, milieu, learner, and

teacher” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 84). In this case, an explanation of the relationship between the stakeholders would provide a more robust background to the extent of curricular innovation: “Who adopts what, where, when, why, and how?” (Markee, 1992, p. 230). While the iterative nature of curriculum development is acknowledged, the authors seem to overlook the intricate social actions involved in educational change, an essential component for the continuous evolution of curricula.

While these shortcomings exist, they are relatively minor due to the inclusion of references at the end of each chapter, which serve as valuable resources for further reading. The authors demonstrate their extensive knowledge of ELT curricula through their presentation of the topics. Each chapter begins with a vignette and a pre-reading task, followed by an explanation of the topic, a post-reading task, and discussion questions. This structure resembles a lesson plan, enabling teachers to follow along with the chapters easily as if reading their own lessons. It effectively bridges the knowledge or the lack thereof that readers could follow up on. Even if a topic needs to be clarified, it is compensated with relatable examples that are valuable for a practicing teacher who has no time to scour the literature.

Moreover, the book examines curriculum and learners away from their traditional roles in education; instead, it takes a fresh perspective on learners as agents of their own learning and curriculum as a collaborative process amongst the commonplaces in the education system. As such, *curriculum* has many ways to be defined, depending on whom you ask. The book describes it as a cyclical process that involves planning, implementation, and evaluation. The authors situate the language curriculum from a social contextual perspective where teaching and learning happen in the classroom (Graves, 2008; Macalister & Nation, 2011), inspiring teachers to value, reflect, and adapt contemporary teaching methods according to their on-the-ground experiences. Through this, readers are encouraged to continuously update their understanding of the curriculum, assessing the situation in their classrooms, who their learners are, and what they hope to achieve in learning a new language. This inspires readers to have the “nerve to believe that we can make the future what we want” (Eagan, 2003, p. 16) and that there are ways to better language education.

The book critically examines the definition of *learners*, from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants in forming their desired outcomes. The authors mention that these days, the term becomes blurry due to the modes of language acquisition (e.g., online/in-person, AI generative

platforms, and informal/formal schooling) with teachers coming from “different linguacultural backgrounds” (p. x). In other words, the authors do not promise a one-size-fits-all narrative of what English language teachers need to know but put forth possible ways curricula could be designed and implemented across a multitude of cultural and historical contexts. They emphasize the flexibility and constant reflection on the learners’ needs, the teachers’ beliefs, and institutional practices that embody the curriculum as a text and sociocultural artifact. Whenever a curricular approach fits the learner’s needs, teachers can pick the best approach without being limited to pre-arranged options (e.g., top-down curriculum). Teachers know their learners best, and coupled with their observations, needs, and environment analyses, they implement the curriculum accordingly.

Overall, the book comprehensively addresses the essential elements of curriculum development, providing invaluable assistance to novice teachers in navigating the complexities of its context, design, approaches, challenges, and assessment. The book sums up the “basics” of curriculum understanding into a handy “guidebook” that teachers, policymakers, and graduate students can use for a quick reference on handling learners’ unique and collective needs. This book is handy and provides teachers with answers to the questions of adopting and implementing any recommended curriculum. The people who will primarily benefit from this book are language teachers who are just about to start a career in teaching. It can be overwhelming for teachers to walk into classrooms full of students from a plethora of cultural backgrounds. It is highly recommended for educators who aspire to make a significant impact in their field, encouraging them to critically reflect on and enhance the delivery and implementation of their language instruction.

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Learner Corpus Research Meets Second Language Acquisition.
Bert Le Bruyn and Magali Paquot. Cambridge Applied
Linguistics, 2021. xiii + 275 pp. Approx. ¥6,540. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108674577>

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Researchers of Second Language Acquisition looking for a fresh perspective on learner language, or a fresh perspective on language in general, may want to pick up *Learning Corpus Research Meets Second Language Acquisition*. Still a relatively niche concept in SLA circles, learner corpora are defined in the book's introduction as electronic collections of both oral and written language which was collected in a way that could still be considered authentic and contextualized, like a snapshot of a natural phenomenon. Despite the large amount of learner data available in LCR, the field's influence on SLA has been lacking. Reasons for the gap are varied and are elaborated on by commentary articles in the volume by Sylviane Granger and Florence Myles. However, the two fields do have a large potential to complement each other, with SLA providing a "strong theoretical foundation that is often lacking in LCR studies" and LCR providing "detailed descriptions of interlanguage from a wide range of L1 populations at different proficiency levels" (Granger, 2021, p. 254).

Targeted primarily toward researchers in either one of the fields, the book contains a total of twelve chapters, all of which were reviewed by both an expert in SLA and an expert in LCR. Seven chapters are research articles that attempt to incorporate both SLA theory and LCR methodology. One chapter is devoted specifically to methodological suggestions in corpus analysis. There is also a chapter providing suggestions on how to build a unique, specialized corpus. Finally, there are two commentary chapters from Sylviane Granger, a leading learner corpora researcher, and Florence Myles, an established SLA researcher.

The two commentary chapters by Granger and Myles provide a solid overview of the gap between the two fields as well as their potential to inform each other. Sylviane Granger, one of the leading pioneers of LCR, acknowledges the differences between the two fields while remaining optimistic about the future potential to inform each other. Fundamentally,

these are two separate fields with different research agendas and ways of doing research. SLA, for example, prefers experimental settings, where variables can be controlled and specific language can be elicited. LCR prioritizes naturalistic settings to capture what it deems to be authentic language use. Nonetheless, Granger maintains that LCR can greatly benefit SLA, as illustrated in the book, primarily through studies on L1 transfer and proficiency, which will be discussed in more detail below.

The other commentary article by SLA scholar Florence Myles reconsiders many of the criticisms of LCR she made a decade prior (Myles, 2015). These include a lack of oral corpora, a limited range of tasks, and a lack of thorough documentation in corpus compilation. However, progress has been made since then, especially regarding the increased documentation and more thought-out design of corpora, such as more longitudinal corpora and corpora that are specially designed to fit a specific theoretically informed research question. The increasing amount of oral data is also promising.

Most of the research articles in the book focus on either cross-linguistic transfer or proficiency. Three articles are dedicated to studying L1 transfer through LCR. Ionin and Diez-Bedmar (2021) write about L1 influence in the acquisition of articles from English essays of Russian and Chinese natives. Werner et al. (2021) compare the use of the present perfect among German and Chinese speakers from the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI) (Gilquin et al., 2010). Merilainen (2021) investigates universal tendencies in World English, using data from the above-mentioned ICLE. The study analyzes embedded inversion and the omission of prepositions in Finnish, German, and Swedish students.

There are four articles that research proficiency and development. Paquot et al. (2021) used corpus linguistics methodology to measure phraseological development in a longitudinal corpus. Tracey-Ventura et al. (2021) used a small, specialized corpus to study the individual lexical retention and attrition of 56 participants after study abroad. Verspoor et al. (2021) take an even more microscopic view and analyze a dense set of written data from 22 people using the complex dynamic systems theory (CDST). Polio and Yoon (2021), propose a new measure for accuracy through the analysis of n-grams, or commonly repeated phraseological units, from a corpus of 139 argumentative essays.

The two remaining articles give suggestions for those interested in doing LCR research. Bell et al. (2021) detail the challenges of creating a specialized corpus; Wulff and Gries (2021) provide methodological suggestions with a sophisticated statistical model called MuPDAR (multi-factorial

prediction and deviation analysis using regression/random forest), which can predict the linguistic choices a native speaker would make if they were in the same place as the learners.

This book was intended to convince researchers of either SLA or LCR of the potential contribution from the other field. While the writing style of the articles does contain a fair amount of jargon from both fields and may prove difficult for complete novices of either one, the two commentary articles from Granger and Myles help to put these articles in a broader context. Furthermore, researchers who have written their own articles on the topics of cross-linguistic influence and proficiency may find the new LCR approach to provide a refreshing new perspective to these long-time SLA topics.

All the articles are clear about their theoretical underpinnings, some starting from an explicit SLA framework, some from an LCR framework, and others somewhere in between. Werner et al.'s (2021) research on L1 transfer explicitly uses the framework of Jarvis's (2000) unified model for linguistic transfer. In this framework, there must be both a test for homogeneity for learners of a common L1 background as well as a test for heterogeneity among learners of different L1 backgrounds. This data can be easily provided by large-scale, multi-language corpora. These large data sets also allowed the researchers to perform statistical analysis unique to corpus linguistics, in this case, the above-mentioned MuPDAR. This allowed for a more nuanced and gradient response to the cross-linguistic transfer of present participles.

Similarly, Vespoor et al. (2021) ground their perspective in complex dynamic systems theory (CDST), which claims that language unfolds at different speeds, in different ways, with different individuals (De bot et al., 2007). This framework requires extensive data on individual learners over time, which could be provided by the longitudinal corpus of 22 people that was specifically designed for the study. Through the dense data in the corpus, the study could trace the individual development of written essays and show how the development differed among individuals.

Other articles start with an LCR framework and then bring fresh light on SLA concepts, such as accuracy and proficiency. Polio and Yoon (2021) and Paquot et al. (2021) use the common corpus linguistics statistical technique of collocation to provide a new perspective on accuracy and complexity. Collocations are a measure of the statistical association between words and phrases. For example, "strong coffee" has a stronger statistical association than "robust tea", which sounds a little strange to native speakers. Polio and Yoon used this technique to find unnatural

or awkward combinations of words that may be grammatically correct but still sound off. They then compared these off-sounding collocations to their frequency in a reference, native corpus. This style of measurement allows for a more gradient response as well as the identification of awkward-sounding combinations. Similarly, Paquot et al. (2021) measured the statistical association between verb + direct object structures as a way to track the development of phraseological complexity in a longitudinal corpus. Like Polio and Yoon above, the phraseological collocations were referenced to a native corpus. Learner corpora's large data allows for this level of generalization between word associations, as well as the ability to generalize and represent a native speaker norm that is not tied to any one individual but is instead abstracted from a large population.

The volume also provides a very good summary of the types of corpora that are available for anyone wanting to try their hand at LCR. Corpora such as the LINDSEI (Gilquin et al., 2010), and the ICLE (Granger et al., 2020) are versions of what Granger calls "all-purpose corpora" (2021, p. 246), as they offer the advantage of size and representativeness. However, these specific corpora are not as accessible as one would like. The LINDSEI requires contacting the University of Louvain for access, and the ICLE would cost about 120 euros for a one-year license. Freely accessible all-purpose corpora, such as The International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNLAE) (Ishikawa, 2023) or the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT-JLE) (Izumi et al., 2004), are unfortunately not represented in the volume. These corpora may be a smaller barrier of entry for potential LCR initiates.

However, such an "off the peg" corpus, as Myles (2021, p. 265) puts it, may not fit a more specialized research question, in which case, Bell et al. (2021) provide a thorough analysis of the process of how to create one's own corpus. Issues range from how to choose an appropriate task that will engage the student's interest to the mountain of transcription work required for even modest-sized oral corpora. While this may prove daunting, articles such as Vespoor et al. (2021) successfully showcase how corpora tailored to a specific research question and theoretical framework can bolster results.

The book successfully shows the potential for the fields of SLA and LCR to be mutually beneficial. The large datasets of LCR can provide the ability to generalize as well as perform sophisticated statistical techniques like MuPDAR. Likewise, the extensive theories in SLA can help to theoretical ground LCR research, which has been criticized for producing mere descriptions of language with no theoretical foundations.

With the rapid developments in technology in recent years and the increasing availability of oral data and longitudinal corpora, there is a high chance LCR will increase its influence on SLA studies. Publicly available corpora such as the above-mentioned ICNALE, as well as easily accessible corpus tools like Antconc (Anthony, 2024) and Sketch Engine (Kilgarrriff et al., 2014) allow anyone with even a minimum amount of computer skill to begin corpus research. While technical at times, this book provides a great introduction to SLA researchers who are looking for a fresh perspective on learner language.

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***Language Support for Immigrants in Japan: Perspectives From Multicultural Community Building.* Keiko Hattori, Makiko Shinya and Kurie Otachi (Eds.). Lexington Books, 2023. xvi + 196 pp. ¥7,410. <https://doi.org/10.5771/9781666910223>**

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As of the end of June 2024, the total number of foreign residents in Japan was 3,588,956, an increase of 5.2% from the previous year (Immigration Services Agency, 2024), and Japan will reportedly need more than 6 million foreign workers by 2040 according to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (The Japan Times, 2024), creating an urgent need for Japanese language education to enable foreigners to function fully as members of Japanese society. This timely book is a collection of papers about Japanese language education for immigrants in Japan, written by Japanese academics, teachers, and volunteers for an international English-speaking audience. The book is divided into two parts, “History of Immigration Policy and Language Supports” (sic), and “Practice in Various Fields”. The two chapters in Part One provide the historical background to Japan’s lack of immigration policy and haphazard approach to the provision of Japanese language education for immigrants. The eight chapters in Part Two each give descriptive accounts of grassroots attempts to cater to the needs of the diverse groups of immigrants throughout Japan from an equitable and inclusive multicultural community building perspective.

In their introduction, editors Keiko Hattori, Makiko Shinya, and Kurie Otachi explain that this perspective comes from a discourse that differentiates community-based Japanese language classes from conventional Japanese language schools, the former “being seen as places where attendees of equal status gather to discuss, foster mutual understanding, and learn together about local issues” (xi), rather than classrooms focused purely on language learning. These community-based classes have historically relied on resident volunteers, both Japanese and foreign. In Chapter 1, “Japan’s policies for Accepting Immigrants and the History of Official Japanese Language Education”, Katsuichiro Nunoo gives a comprehensive overview of immigration policies and Japanese language education for immigrants since the 1950s, including a critical analysis of the 2019 Act on

Promotion of Japanese Language Education, the first unified national policy for Japanese Language education.

Izumi Yamada, in Chapter 2, “Japanese Language Learning Support Activities by Local Residents for Immigrants”, acknowledges the ambiguity of the term “multicultural symbiosis” (多文化共生, ‘tabunka kyousei’) and states that Japan should be aiming for “equal multicultural symbiosis: A form of social participation in which the indigenous cultural majority and the new cultural minority participate equally on equal footing” (p. 26). Yamada sees community-based Japanese classes as having two roles and purposes: “mutual learning aimed at social change (as adult education)” and “second language acquisition for social participation (as compensatory education)” (p. 27), in which the following eight chapters present examples of language support in various contexts throughout Japan.

In Chapter 3, “Roles and Practices of Local International Associations”, Takashi Yamanoue considers the role of local international associations focusing on Toyonaka in Osaka, in particular how the aim of its Japanese language education program changed following the Great Hanshin Earthquake in 1995 and the realization of the necessity for immigrants to be connected to the community. He details the development of a program that instead of focusing on textbook Japanese, gave the immigrants and their Japanese supporters the opportunity to interact and use Japanese to talk about everyday issues that were relevant to them, “turning the classroom into a community” (p. 49), meeting the self-professed needs of the immigrants.

Chapter 4, “People Involved in Language Learning Support in Community-based Japanese classes”, and Chapter 5, “Japanese Language Support for Immigrants in Rural Areas”, both use qualitative research data to illustrate the kinds of support being provided. In this chapter, Kurie Otachi and Keiko Hattori focus on three human resource groups involved in community-based classes: language program coordinators, Japanese volunteer supporters, and immigrant supporters, using questionnaires and interviews to investigate each group’s perceptions of their roles. In Chapter 5, Keiko Hattori and Makiko Shinya use ethnographic observations to look at the challenges of providing support in rural areas where there is no institutionalized language support. This chapter compares their efforts to establish language support in a prefecture in the Kinki region and in Shikoku, highlighting some important issues that need to be addressed as more immigrant workers are being sent to rural areas (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2025).

Chapters 6 and 7 both describe support programs originally initiated by immigrants themselves. In Chapter 6, “Japanese Language Education on Unrecognized “Refugees” in Japan”, Shin Matsuo looks at the complicated situation of refugees in Japan and attempts by Villa Education Center, a volunteer group, to provide language support for the Myanmar community in the Takadanobaba area of Tokyo. Matsuo gives a detailed description of the development of the program between 2014 and 2021, showing how participatory learning helped develop both Japanese acquisition and self-affirmation among the participants. In Chapter 7, “Japanese Language Learning for Technical Intern Trainees from Vietnam”, Jotaro Kato gives an equally detailed account of providing support to Vietnamese immigrants at Kawaguchi Catholic church, in Kawaguchi city near Tokyo, describing the changes in the Vietnamese community and their needs, from the boat people refugees and their Japan-raised children in the 1990s to the students and technical intern trainees of recent years. Chapter 8, “Challenges and Possibilities of Literacy Education for Immigrants”, addresses the difficulty of acquiring literacy in Japanese because of the complicated writing system, and proposes using the Kanji for Everyday Life program devised by the chapter authors Makiko Shinya, Keiko Mikogami, and Aimi Shinjo, for immigrants in Osaka. The program prioritizes learning kanji that immigrants need immediately in daily life, empowering them and enriching their quality of life.

In Chapters 9 and 10, the authors consider the role of night schools in making up for the lack of Japanese language education for immigrants in the Japanese education system. In Chapter 9, “Japanese Language Education for Young Immigrants Who Are Beyond School Age”, Tomoko Takahashi investigates two Filipino students who came to Japan after completing junior high school in the Philippines, and were able to enter senior high school after attaining a junior high school diploma at a night school in Osaka. Takahashi discusses the hurdles facing high school-age immigrants and argues that Japanese language education in senior high school needs improvement. Chapter 10, “Literacy Practices Ensuring Education for Resident Koreans in Japan”, centers on a 2005 case study of a public night school. Yohei Tanada provides a history of night schools, emphasizing their importance for Korean women who had been marginalized because of both ethnicity and gender. The night school curriculum caters to the students’ experiences, backgrounds and needs, enabling them to feel positive about their identity and to participate in Japanese society. The editors conclude the volume by noting that despite recent government legislation, im-

migrants are still regarded as guests in Japan, and by calling for a “mutual transformation that also transforms the majority” (p. 182).

While each of the eight chapters in part two focus on different communities, there are common threads that run throughout the book, notably the tension between the authors’ belief in community-based language classes and the aims of the 2019 Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education, which clarified the responsibilities of national and local governments, and employees in providing Japanese language education to immigrants. Both Nunoo and Yamada welcome the Act, but with caveats. Nunoo notes in Chapter 1 that the Act does not state that foreign nationals have the “right” to learn Japanese, and doesn’t define “symbiotic society” (p. 16). He also regrets that the Act doesn’t include any mention of the use of plain Japanese, simplified Japanese which is easier for non-Japanese-speakers to understand. Yamada, in Chapter 2, believes the community-based classes are still essential in order to give the local community the chance to interact with immigrants, but sees the Act and the 2020 “Report on the Qualifications of Japanese Language Teachers” as a positive development, with its increased training and accreditation for teachers, “professionalizing Japanese language teachers in several fields, including community-based Japanese language education” (p. 30).

Yamada also points out other problematic underlying issues affecting immigrants, such as not being eligible to vote, and immigrant children not being legally required to attend school, stressing the need for multicultural education in Japanese schools, and for projects which support immigrant children’s heritage language and culture. Tokunaga (2018) states that it is rare for public schools to provide education that affirms the native languages, cultural traditions and ethnic identity of immigrant students.

In Chapter 8, the authors acknowledge that while literacy is important in enabling social participation and improving educational and occupational choices, many immigrants, especially in rural areas, have neither the time or opportunity to attend Japanese classes, and that community-based classes usually focus on speaking and listening skills. As Nunoo details in Chapter 1, skilled workers wishing to work in nursing or the care industry need sufficient literacy skills to take written exams in Japanese in order to obtain the required qualifications.

Tanada, in Chapter 10, notes the changes in night school attendance, with the number of resident Korean students falling from over 50% in 1990 to 5% in 2021, while the number of newcomer foreign students has risen to 70%. This echoes Tokunaga’s (2018) belief that night schools

are critical alternative educational sites and an important safety net for immigrant students, providing a safe and comfortable setting as Tanada described.

According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the number of foreign workers in Japan reached a record 2,302,587 as of the end of October 2024, an increase of 12.4% since the previous year (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2025). Increases in rural areas were notable, with Nagasaki Prefecture recording the highest proportionate increase of 28.1%. Issues faced by Hattori and Shinya in rural areas (Chapter 5) included a lack of coordination between departments in local governments, the administrators not understanding businesses' needs, and not being aware of resources in the area. The authors suggest bottom-up cooperation with local governments and businesses to raise awareness of community-based Japanese learning.

For example, the largest group of foreign workers are Vietnamese, nearly a quarter of the total number of foreign workers nationwide. In his study of Vietnamese immigrants in Chapter 7, Kato is critical of the Technical Intern Training Program, finding in interviews with trainees that they lacked the time or opportunity to attend classes, and that abuse of the trainees was partly due to their lack of Japanese ability.

The research methods presented in the chapters vary in methodology and academic tone but for the most part are accessible to the non-specialist reader, providing detailed descriptive accounts, although some could benefit from tighter editing. Textual errors and possible mistranslations in some sections make these sections hard to understand; for example, in the argument for the continued need for community-based language support since the introduction of the Act for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education in chapter two. Some readers may desire more critical discussion of the use of 'multicultural symbiosis' as a translation of 多文化共生, (*tabunka kyousei*) and how it differs to multicultural coexistence. While Yamada gives four examples of multicultural symbiosis (slave-like, assimilative, equal and colonial) there is no attempt to situate this definition within the literature. Graburn and Ertl (2008) define symbiosis as "living together side-by-side in a relationship, positively" (p. 8), and describe a continuum ranging from being equal but separate to mutual dependence, the latter as evidenced by cooperation between immigrant and local communities after the Hanshin earthquake.

However, these issues do not detract from the authors' message of the need for multicultural community building. The book is important in bring-

ing Japanese insiders' views to an English-speaking audience, and will be of interest to students of Japanese society, immigration and language policy, as well as to those involved with Japanese language education. The writers are Japanese language teachers, experts and volunteers with hands-on experience, and the varied content reflects the diversity and complexity of the immigrant community in Japan. Each chapter raises pertinent issues that urgently need addressing given changes to the rules for specified skilled workers which allow for the possibility of long-term work in Japan, and increased opportunity to bring family members to Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024). The book includes recent data and explains policy changes affecting immigrants up to 2022. Taken as a whole, the book provides a rich description of attempts to provide language support to immigrants in Japan through community-based language classes and night schools, the challenges faced and still to be overcome as Japan increasingly depends on immigrant labor, and provides a convincing argument for multicultural community building.

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