Reviews

Task Design, Implementation and Assessment. Integrating Information and Communication Technology in English Language Teaching and Learning. Phillip A. Towndrow. Singapore: McGraw-Hill, 2007. ix + 125 pp.

Reviewed by
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In this short, nine-chapter book Phillip Towndrow has produced a basic 'survival guide' for educators wishing to incorporate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) effectively into their language classrooms. Though probably best suited for teachers with little or no experience, the book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in teaching using computers and Internet technology. The book has two major objectives. First, it is a resource for developing language teachers, providing an introduction into the benefits and drawbacks of integrating computers and ICT into their classrooms. Second, it presents language teachers with a range of possibilities for the use of computer technology and the Internet in their classrooms. The book is written in an accessible, easy-to-follow style with Towndrow drawing on his own experience as an educator and teacher educator to demonstrate how ICT can successfully be put to work in administratively efficient and pedagogically effective ways. Some readers may be put off by Towndrow's deliberate attempts to keep the content simple and non-technical. I found his use of endnotes for academic references to be frustrating. While this may assist in the readability of the book, I was constantly flipping back and forth through the chapter to learn who was being cited. If the book is being used as a textbook in a teacher-training course, the reflection questions appearing at the end of each chapter might be good for further discussion.

In Chapter 1, Towndrow sets the tone for the rest of the book, stating his desire to help language teachers "make better decisions about the design, implementation and evaluation of their actions and presence in their classrooms so that students can reap maximum benefits from learning with ICT" (p. 2). Chapter 2, getting into what teachers can do

with ICT, lays the groundwork for determining students' language and communication needs. The author lays out three areas of exploration: information on literacy in the digital age; the uses of ICT in social and academic situations; and introducing students to collaboration and negotiation with peers, whether distant or local. Chapter 3 demonstrates the need for language students to develop and enhance their literacy skills cooperatively for use on the Web and other digital media. According to Towndrow, skills like locating, assessing, and using information disseminated on the Web are best acquired when learners work together toward achieving socially-oriented, knowledge-building objectives. In so doing, learners come to discard the view that the Web is simply something "out there somewhere to be exploited" (p. 33).

Chapter 4 opens with a discussion concerning the tripartite relationship between teachers, students and technology in language classrooms. Towndrow sees a student-centered pedagogy as crucial, with teachers at the forefront orchestrating and coordinating the interaction of all three. According to Towndrow, increased funding and accessibility cannot be used to rationalize the worth of ICT in language acquisition, "rather the way to establish the utility and usefulness of ICT in language learning is through demonstration of value-added learning outcomes now and in the future" (p. 51). Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are probably the most interesting of the book for here Towndrow first introduces his notion of task design, implementation, and assessment as it relates to ICT. Like Long (1985), Towndrow opts for a dictionary definition of tasks which includes all activities, even those with little or no linguistic or communicative outcome. The book picks up speed, however, introducing five key characteristics of ICT-based task design: choice of task, media and tool use, outcomes, strategies and learning support. Task implementation follows design but teachers need to be cautious of two additional variables which can affect the outcome of a task: monitoring and the physical landscape of the classroom. Curiously, Towndrow makes no mention here of what may arguably be the first task-based ICT activity ever, the WebQuest. In Chapter 8, he sets up a framework for describing and explaining language teachers' professional development and use of ICT and provides helpful advice. Here, as elsewhere in the book, Towndrow urges teachers to reflect critically on the choices they make and to consider the implications their choices have on students' potential to learn. According to Towndrow, ICT can act as the catalyst in making these two things happen productively. The last chapter summarizes the ideas presented in the book and restates Towndrow's thoughts on the foundational beliefs, values, and practices

as well as the obstacles and hindrances teachers face relating to language teaching with ICT.

Overall, the book is effective in providing readers and future teachers with a global view of a range of topics concerned with ICT in language classrooms. However, I feel it attempts to do too much in a limited space and thus leaves one wanting a more thorough discussion and analysis. Despite this drawback, Towndrow provides a service to novice educators by introducing them to ICT, and suggesting ways in which technology can be incorporated in the classroom.

Reference

Long, M. H. (1985). A role for instruction in second language acquisition: Task-based language teaching. In K. Hyltenstam, & M. Pienemann (Eds.), *Modeling and assessing second language acquisition (pp.* 77-99). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Describing Discourse: A Practical Guide to Discourse Analysis. Nicola Woods. London: Hodder Education, 2006. xviii + 204 pp.

Reviewed by
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In her book *Describing Discourse*, Nicola Woods offers a succinct take on discourse: "language plus context", though subsequently admits "there is neither a single coherent theory nor a single definition of discourse" (p. x). She attributes this to the broad scope of understandings, inconsistent register and contentious approaches and interpretations of 'discourse', as well as concepts of discourse and what they represent.

The Introduction (pp. viii – xviii) outlines the generic and theoretical starting point for Woods to present and examine the characteristic discourse in advertising, politics, the legal and medical professions, and the field of education (Chapters 1 to 5 respectively). Within these contexts she states that the focus of her book is "the interface between institutions and ordinary people" (p. xvi). To this end she proposes the *top-down* approach (starting with the analyst's own understanding of the

context of the discourse), and the more speculative, even forensic *bottom up* approach (beginning with what is elsewhere referred to as "layers of discourse" [Hatch, 1992, Chapter 9]). She suggests "an intricate (and almost symbiotic) interplay between the approaches" (p. xi). But this promising, open-minded approach dwindles through the course of the book, as Woods' preference for a critically analytical, top-down view takes hold; she explicitly invokes it, stating that the focus of the book is "the interface between institutions and 'ordinary people'" (p. xi).

This begins in Chapter 1, 'Come and get it: The discourse of advertising'. Contending that in attempting to persuade would-be consumers, the purpose of advertising is "promotional" (p. 1) Woods pays attention to non-language discourse and frequent symbiosis between language and non-language discourse in advertising - including graphics, pictures, and commercial logos to illustrate this point. However beyond this valid and useful digression, the rest of the book follows her view that language is the basis of discourse and language analysis is at the base of discourse analysis.

Chapter 2, on Politics, frequently reads like a case study of Britain's New Labour political party, and as such could have limited relevance outside of Britain. Woods' main discussion point is manipulation of language by politicians and she shows how: about 18 out of the 37 example texts are drawn from the speeches and writings of former Prime Minister Tony Blair. She mentions that political manifestos and publicity for party and government policy resemble the discourse of advertising. Woods' leanings and bias become most apparent, including her faith in Fairclough's (1992) more extensive research on discourse in politics in Britain.

Description of discourse proceeds in Chapter 3 with the discourse of law. Woods' sub-theme, the tension between the need for law discourse to be both consistent and adaptable, is subsumed by differences in knowledge and power between professionals and non-professionals found in a paternalistic profession. She points out that such a situation is sanctioned by socio-political tradition, as exemplified by archaic and arcane language requiring ceremonial form and display—"terms of art" (p. 86)—embedded in the discourse of the society and culture. Woods later exemplifies how power differences appear and are maintained in spoken discourse, such as the cross-examination of witnesses in court and police interviews. Here she adopts a bottom-up approach, including rigorous and detailed commentary on discourse in review exercises. In this chapter, for the first time, syntax, lexical choice and register receive

extensive analysis. One wonders if other chapters should have been given the same categorical treatment.

Still, Woods' analyses act as critique of the profession rather than description of its discourse. She focuses on four types of discourse: statute, contract, court, and interview (including cross-examination and police interview). However, in the field of law—and also in many other professional and cultural fields—the range of contexts and text-types is more extensive (e.g., law reports, commentary and debate relating to law in broadcast media, contexts outside the profession extending into the lay / non-professional domain, not to mention the plain-English movements in various countries). Woods' omission of the key socio-linguistic concepts of 'genre' and 'text-type' limits the value of this chapter.

Taking up the discourse of Medicine (Chapter 4), Woods continues to employ the hierarchy of power theme, along with "tension between *care* and *cure*" (p. 121). Woods is best in her discussions of complexity of language, of maintaining power relations by obfuscation in specialised language and control maintained over patients in interviews, a characteristic of the discourse of medicine even more marked than that of law. However, Woods digresses into discourses of other fields, such as public health policy, without taking the opportunity to link them in theory to the discourse of medicine. Inexplicably, she fails to draw on the interdiscursivity concept, developed extensively by Fairclough (1992) among others.

In the final chapter, covering discourse in Education (her own profession), Woods effectively draws various themes together. The last 22 pages contain valuable, instructive, well-illustrated and supported discussion for teachers on facilitative interaction with students—the only place where she makes overtly clear the utility of being able to describe discourse without necessarily drawing in socio-political criticism as in other chapters.

This raises the question of whether readers are able to describe discourse after reading Woods' book. Clearly yes, they should be, especially if they have practised with the sets of in-chapter tasks and taken note of their attendant main-text commentary. But how well can the reader refer to specific approaches to, or elements of, discourse analysis? With a glossary of all the highlighted terms (I counted 66, of which 11 were not in the index) cross-referenced to the plentiful examples in the book, certainly *Describing Discours*e could be an excellent introductory text for any teacher, sociologist, even medical practitioner, advertiser, lawyer

or aspiring prime minister. References to seminal discourse analysis literature are plentiful but are glossed over more than discussed. But this is not Woods' purpose, which is to provide a basic guide for teachers or students of linguistics or literacy and language education—especially for those in Britain.

References:

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hatch, E. (1992). *Discourse and language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Literature, Metaphor, and the Foreign Language Learner. Jonathan D. Picken. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. (xiii + 174 pp.)

Reviewed by
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At first thought it might seem the appeal of this book's topic would be severely restricted, but there are clearly identifiable links between literature and non-literary discourse all around us. Consider how pervasive in society are conceptual metaphors like 'Life is a Journey'. This is discussed by the author within the context of teaching a Robert Frost poem (pp.100-103) and was seen recently by this reviewer as the catchphrase on a flyer for a guest house in Okinawa. Since the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the way our discourse is often shaped by such ideas has become widely recognized. Consider, too, Shakespeare's famous "Juliet is the sun" metaphor, also discussed by Picken (in various sections). This is a clear example of literary metaphor used to memorable and accessible enough effect for most of our students. Love and relationships are topics most of them are interested in and they can appreciate and find stimulating such figurative language.

However, despite the accessibility of the topic, this book is undoubtedly academic, both in writing style and in approach. It is crammed with references to research and should not be read for classroom activities (although there are a few suggestions in the last chapter). There are other

books for that, many cited in this volume. Rather, Picken's book is an excellent and comprehensive synthesis of recent research into literature, metaphor and language learning, and a report on his own research which, having been conducted with Japanese college students, should be of interest to most of this journal's readers. Picken's research has focused on presenting original or manipulated endings of short stories and poems to find out what his students made of the metaphors therein.

This book has seven chapters. The first, an introduction, includes discussions of what literature is – agreed by most critics rather vaguely to be "valued writing" (p. 3) – and why literature should be used in the foreign language classroom. Despite being in favor of its use, Picken accepts that some "language teachers may well have their doubts" (p. 2). This balanced and realistic view is one of the most commendable aspects of the book. For example, in chapter 1 and, in more depth, in chapter 2, the author weighs the arguments of stylisticians against those advocates of affective reader-response activities. Stylistics is a rather intellectual approach which can be too much like hard work for many students, but undoubtedly is useful in small doses and can lead to deeper insights into a text for the more motivated. As one who has tried stylistics tasks in Japanese classrooms with mixed success, I appreciate Picken's attempt "to find a middle ground" (p. 156) which combines interpretation and evaluation.

Chapter 3 outlines linguistic metaphors and conceptual metaphors before introducing three topics which are next afforded chapters of their own. In them he discusses and evaluates metaphor research in three areas: Comprehension (chapter 4), Interpretation (5) and Evaluation (6) of Metaphor in Literature. If the distinctions between these chapter headings are not immediately clear, the chapter sub-headings in the numerically dense social science style (e.g., 4.2.1 Conventionality and salience) may be even less clear to those unfamiliar with the field. In the text, however, the author has explained the terms clearly, and has achieved his stated goal of trying "to produce a book that does not depend on expert knowledge" (p. 9) for "L2 teachers who are keen to include work with literature in their..... classrooms" (p. 9).

One thing I liked in the author's discussion of the research and theories of teaching literature, and metaphor in particular, was his willingness to cast judgment. For example, he takes one researcher to task for a "counterproductive" (p. 57) rejection of Conceptual Metaphor theory when it "would be relevant and useful in his work" (p. 57) on poems.

Such comments help to guide the reader through the mass of research summarized in the book.

Picken closes with a chapter addressing the ways language teachers can incorporate literature into their courses. Metaphor: Curriculum, Methodology and Materials includes a useful discussion of widely available textbooks and recommendations for which English-English learner's dictionaries are best at dealing with metaphor. He makes the interesting point, backed up by research, that it is probably more helpful for students to learn the core meaning of a word before the figurative one, even when the latter is used more frequently. The influence of corpus linguistics has tended to make frequency an increasingly dominant factor in how words are presented. Teachers, perhaps even publishers, should bear in mind Picken's point when dealing with vocabulary.

At the JALT2007 conference alone there were at least ten presentations, including some by famous reading experts, which argued for students reading extensively and quickly. While the research clearly suggests such reading is a good thing for language learners, both foregrounding theory and the idea of schema refreshment, which are both discussed throughout Picken's book, show that figurative language slows down readers. Still, being encouraged to embrace metaphor benefits readers in their appreciation of, and the development of their, proficiency in language, and thereby in their way of thinking about the world. As McCarthy and Carter (1994) aphoristically put it, "A more reflective language learner is a more effective language learner." (p. 165).

References

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (1994). Language as discourse: Perspectives for language teaching. London: Longman.

The Bilingual Edge: Why, When, and How to Teach Your Child a Second Language. Kendall King & Alison Mackey. New York: Collins, 2007. x + 289 pp.

Reviewed by
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In *The Bilingual Edge: Why, When, and How to Teach Your Child a Second Language*, Kendall King and Alison Mackey summarize decades of research in linguistics and second language acquisition to give parents a clear and concise guide to raising their children bilingually. Though written in simple language for a general audience, each of King and Mackey's recommendations is supported by published scientific research. In addition, each chapter is peppered with anecdotes from parents who are raising their children bilingually, including King and Mackey, who are both Georgetown University linguistics professors *and* mothers of bilingual children.

The book is divided into four sections, the first three covering the "why, when, and how" of the subtitle, and the fourth addressing problems that may occur when teaching children a second language. In the first chapter, King and Mackey briefly discuss the obvious benefits of learning a second language—such as improved cross-cultural understanding and greater job opportunities in the future—then move on to the perhaps lesser known cognitive benefits, including increased creativity and metalinguistic awareness. The second chapter tackles ten myths about learning a second language.

The next section addresses the issues of choosing a language and deciding when to start teaching it. The third chapter includes exercises to assess the language profiles of families and communities as well as statistics on languages throughout the world. The main conclusion of the fourth chapter is that there is no wrong time to start teaching children a language. King and Mackey mention that children who start young tend to have better accents, but adolescents have been shown to learn languages more rapidly in some studies. The fifth chapter discusses individual differences that parents need to consider, such as gender, personality, and birth order.

The third section of the book, covering how to teach children a second language, is the most useful to parents and educators alike. Chapter six

asserts that any type of language learning must be fun, used in everyday interactions, and connected to the lives of the children. King and Mackey list strategies for different types of families and communities, including majority-language families, minority-language families, mixed-language families, and one-parent-one-language in mixed families. They even discuss how to use babysitters and nannies to give children more language exposure. The seventh chapter discusses language learning products; the eighth covers how to find solid language programs and teachers.

The final section is the most practical part of the book. While the first three sections list the characteristics of the ideal language learning environment, King and Mackey acknowledge that things can be messy when teaching children to be bilingual, and again they offer both research-based and anecdotal information on how to deal with problems. There are chapters on mixing and switching languages, and on what to do about slow progress, multilingualism, dialects, and motivation. This section also addresses some of the major concerns parents have about raising children bilingually—specifically, they dispel myths that bilingual children will experience a language delay caused by code switching.

Overall, King and Mackey have written a thorough and accessible book that covers almost every aspect of raising children bilingually. They include recent research without confusing the general audience with statistics and technical language. While academics might find the ideas too basic, this book will give anyone who teaches a second language new ideas and a broader perspective on second language acquisition. Specifically, teachers at bilingual or international schools will find this book helpful in better understanding the issues and struggles facing their bilingual students and their families.

Shogakusei ni eigo wo oshierutowa? Ajia to nihon no kyouiku genba kara [What is the Meaning of Teaching English to Elementary School Children?]. Kawahara Toshiaki (Ed.). Tokyo: Mekong Publishing, 2008. 330 pp.

Reviewed by
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With English becoming a compulsory elementary school subject in the academic year 2011, *Shogakusei ni eigo wo oshierutowa? Ajia to nihon no kyouiku genba kara*, edited by Kawahara Toshiaki, is a timely publication. In the preface, Kawahara recognizes that the English-in-elementary-schools (EES) debate may have become wearisome to some, but he stresses that by focusing also on the situation abroad, this book will help readers to consider afresh the issues in Japan.

The book is divided into three parts: (1) current issues surrounding EES in Japan, (2) case studies in Japan, and (3) EES in other Asian countries. Although entitled "The Present State of English Education in this Country", the first chapter, allocates over four pages to describing its development from the Meiji restoration. The background information, however, is by no means tangential; indeed, the placing of the present in historical, political and social context is a feature of this book and one that makes it informative. In chapter 2, the author argues that if *kokusa rikai* (international understanding), an oft-espoused aim of EES, is to be realized, more non-native English speaking ALTs (particularly from Asia) must be employed. Chapter 3 asks why it should be that in an increasing multi-lingual Japan, foreign language teaching has become practically synonymous with the teaching of English.

Part 2 opens with a chapter explaining what can be done to prevent pupils turning into *eigo girai* ("English-haters"), while chapter 5 describes the content of pupil-centered communicative lessons in the city of Kanazawa. Chapter 6 suggests how the coordination of English education between elementary and junior-high school has been facilitated in Kitakyushu.

Each of the nine chapters in part 3 covers a country in Asia. Chapter 1 describes South Korea's sometimes rocky path to the introduction of EES in 1997. It also surveys some long-term concerns over the increas-

ing influence of English, one of which is a widening of first-language linguistic and social differences between the two Koreas. In his conclusion, the author cautions that, despite its geographic proximity to and numerous commonalities with Japan, social, political, and religious differences mean that caution is needed when looking to adopt aspects of South Korea's system.

A chapter on Taiwan, where 40% of children learn English even before they enter elementary school, is followed by one on Hong Kong describing the testing system both for pupils and teachers. The uniform system of English teaching qualifications employed in Hong Kong could, the author suggests, be beneficially adopted in Japan, where no standard system exists.

In the first of two chapters on the Philippines, the reader learns that the counterpart of the native-speaker ALT does not exist; the Filipino teacher is the model for the pupils. Another contrast to emerge relates to textbooks, which in the Philippines are invariably written by women and tend to reinforce gender stereotypes — "Mothers bear children and fathers support them" is an example sentence found in one (p. 188). In contrast, sexual stereotyping is avoided in Japanese textbooks, which are authored overwhelmingly by men.

Streaming by ability-level, and its consequences, is the focus of the chapter on Singapore. A comparison of textbooks in the following chapter, on Vietnam, reveals that what is taught during three years at a Japanese junior high school is covered during elementary school there. A teacher interviewed in the chapter on Indonesia describes how her lower grades concentrate on receptive skills rather than speaking in order to avoid "bad habits" —a far cry from the classes in Japan described in part 2. A chapter on Fiji, where English plays a vital role in maintaining social cohesion, ends part 3.

The concluding chapter is an excellent overview of Japan's EES debate. Although penned by the editor, a footnote states that the views represent those of all fifteen authors. While opposing viewpoints are presented, Kawahara makes his stance clear. In, for example, the section entitled "Should pronunciation be acquired early?" he asserts that wanting a child to speak like an American is not only unnecessary (considering that most communication is now with non-inner-circle speakers), but undesirable because a Japanese with an American accent seems "unnatural" and "incongruous" (p. 320). There is also criticism of the government which, it is asserted, used "the worthy cause" of promoting English for *kokusa*

rikai kyoiku (education for international understanding) during lessons for integrated study as a Trojan horse to make the "future introduction of *gogaku kyoiku* (education for language learning) easier" (p. 324). Incidentally, Kawahara states in the preface that this debate over the role of English education—international understanding vs. language learning—has not occurred in the rest of Asia.

In the final four pages the authors set out their recommendations for EES in Japan. That English education exists to expand the pupil's potential and not the national interest is the first point made. The priority, therefore, must not be on *sokusenteki* (immediately practical) English, but on developing fundamental skills. This echoes somewhat Moteki's (2004) criticism of the widespread teaching of "hamburger" English, superficially communicative (you can order a hamburger with it), but of little use for building a solid foundation for language learning.

Readers with no experience of teaching in elementary schools may find the sections on classroom activities, textbooks, and curricula of less interest than those with direct involvement in EES. Also, in part 3, although comparisons with Japan abound, since each chapter follows a different format, inter-country comparison of basic data (the year EES was officially introduced into each country, for example) is impractical. It could have been facilitated by the inclusion of a simple table.

These small caveats aside, this book provides a readable examination of EES across Asia and insights into areas of the bigger picture such as language planning, the status of English in society, and problems, particularly those related to different forms of inequality—the word *kakusai* appeared throughout the book—caused by the spread of English. It is essential reading for those for whom April 1st , 2011 promises to be a significant date.

References

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Tasks in Second Language Learning. Virginia Samuda & Martin Bygate. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008. viii + 299 pp.

Reviewed by
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Most books on tasks in language learning can be divided into those taking a more empirical/theoretical perspective on tasks, and those with a more practical focus on how tasks can be used in the classroom. *Tasks in Second Language Learning* is aimed at teachers wishing to conduct their own research into tasks in second language learning.

The book is divided into four parts. Part 1 (Chapters 1-7) provides an overview of the historical and conceptual background of tasks as pedagogic and research instruments. While they cover much the same ground as previous books on tasks (e.g., Ellis, 2003), the authors view past task studies "in terms of their potential to inform users and designers of tasks in pedagogically useful ways—that is, in terms of their pedagogical relevance" (p. 82). For example, Chapter 7 looks at the various research designs of a number of task studies in terms of the type of data the different research methods generate, and how such data could be applied to make pedagogic decisions.

In Part 2 (Chapters 8-9), Chapter 8 focuses on only eight example studies the authors consider to "illustrate a range of task-related issues that researchers have focused on" (p. 113). Unlike the brief summaries of past research found in other books on task-studies, the eight example studies are presented in considerable detail. Each study is examined over five to seven pages with a separate text box providing, in essence, an abridged reprint of the entire original study. The advantage in presenting a limited set of detailed example studies is that the reader can clearly see the kinds of pedagogically motivated questions they could be asking, and how these questions can be investigated.

Chapter 9, examining situations where tasks have been used as part of a second/foreign language curriculum or lesson, reveals that, in practice, tasks are infrequently used in a Task-Based Learning Teaching (TBLT) syllabus, where tasks define and drive the syllabus and where task performance is a catalyst for focusing attention on form, not vice versa. Rather, tasks are employed more often in Task-Supported Learning Teaching

(TSLT) contexts, where tasks are one element in an overall program of instruction within a range of syllabus types (e.g., grammar-based, skills-based). Therefore, the authors argue it would be more fruitful to view tasks as pedagogic devices independent of any particular teaching methodology, asserting that tasks can perform different and valid pedagogic roles whether placed in sequence at the beginning, the middle, and/or the end of a lesson. The chapter concludes with a call for future investigations of how teachers actually use tasks and the rationale behind their choices.

Part 3 is solely dedicated to providing ideas for future research into tasks and how the reader could design these studies. Included are 32 research proposals grouped under five themes discussed throughout the book: tasks and language; tasks and process; tasks and development; tasks and teachers and learners; tasks and their ecological context. Each proposal outlines the research question, the "problem" (i.e. limitations in prior related research to date), and the steps required to conduct the study. Part 4 provides an extensive list of further resources on tasks divided by type, such as books taking an empirical/theoretical focus and those focusing on tasks in pedagogy, journals, and professional associations/websites/conferences dedicated to TBLT.

Tasks in Second Language Learning is a compact, well-organized volume, with each chapter reviewing the one preceding it and previewing the chapter to come. The extensive use of text boxes makes it easy to look up key quotes, concepts and studies, making this a useful resource for teachers or students taking post-graduate courses in TEFL/TESL.

The book stands well on its own merits, but is best read in conjunction with other works on tasks in second language learning/teaching and research methodology. *Tasks in Second Language Learning* is not intended for readers new to designing and using tasks in the classroom, nor does it explicitly try to convince readers of the case for using tasks in their teaching (as does, for example, Willis, 2007). Also, by focusing on a limited set of prior task-studies, the book does not provide the more exhaustive coverage of prior task research contained in works such as Ellis (2003). While the book outlines the steps required to undertake suggested further task research, it is not a book illustrating how to conduct research *per se*, for example, how to actually design a survey or analyze learner language. However, for readers already attempting to use tasks in their teaching and who would like to undertake further research into the use of tasks, and are familiar with research methodology, I highly recommend this volume.

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The Politics of Second Language Writing: In Search of the Promised Land. Paul Kei Matsuda, Christina Ortmeier-Hooper, & Xiaoye You (Eds.). West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2006. xiii + 320 pp.

Reviewd by
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Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, and You have edited a series of reports by second language specialists concerning their struggles created by institutional policies and their efforts to change them to better serve L2 writer development. The papers derive from the 2004 Symposium on Second Language Writing, whose organizing theme was "Second Language Writing Instruction in Context(s): The Effects of Institutional Politics and Policies." To give an overview, *The policies of second language writing: In search of the promised land* explores how institutional policies affect the instructional practices of second language writing in various settings such as language support programs from K-12 to postsecondary education and the ESL sections of first-year composition. Accordingly, this book describes various types of L2 writers who have received insufficient support: domestic ESL students, Generation 1.5 students (ESL students who have reached conversational fluency but need further support in obtaining academic writing skills), and international students.

This book is composed of 16 chapters organized into six parts. Part 1, "The Politics of L2 Writers in U.S. K-12 Schools," discusses how effective classroom practices can be offered for ESL students in a bilingual program and for Generation 1.5 students who are enrolled in language programs for academic writing skills. Part 2, "The Politics of L2 Writing Support Programs," points out deficiencies in the institutional language support systems at some universities and suggests ways to improve language

systems in order to meet the ongoing language needs of international students. Most notable in Part 2 is Chapter 6, which examines the roles of university writing centers. Jessica Williams points out that many university writing centers are not well prepared to serve an increasing number of international students who need help with their writing. Part 3, "The Politics of English Writing for Academic and Professional Purposes," discusses how the teaching of writing in this area can be improved to better serve L2 writer development. What echoes throughout the chapters is the importance of the cooperation of divisions within an institution.

Part 4, "The Politics of Second Language Writing Assessment," explores proper placement and writing exams in composition classes for international students. Part 5, "The Politics of Profession," describes the influence of institutional policies on the work of second language writing specialists. In the last part, Barbara Kroll outlines five major obstacles to overcome in order to provide an optimal learning environment for L2 writers.

Although this book's focus is on identifying institutional policies which hinder writing instructors in their efforts to offer proper academic support for L2 writer development, some chapters provide readers with insights into the unique characteristics of L2 writer development and L2 writers' needs. For example, Chapter 1, in which Danling Fu and Marylou Matoush advocate bilingual education, describes four transitional stages of writing development in ESL students in a bilingual program and discusses how their L1 literacy serves to develop their academic writing skills in L2. They argue that if such students are restricted to writing in their limited English, which prevents them from expressing the depth of their thinking, their cognitive growth will be thwarted. They claim that allowing ESL students to go back and forth between their native language and English helps them express the depth and fluency of their thoughts in English. As another example, in Chapter 14, which discusses the impact disciplinary institutions and their borders can have on teachers, Christine Norris and Christine Tardy describe a writing instructor's uneasiness about having graduate ESL students practice discipline-specific writing in an EAP course offered by the English Department. They state that their research showed that ESL students in the course valued the instructor's expertise in rhetoric and composition in English and they were not bothered by the instructor's lack of content knowledge in their field.

The limitation of this book, if any, is that almost all the chapters deal with situations in the U.S. with only two chapters written by researchers in other parts of the world. The editors explain that research in this area

has grown for the past three decades in the U.S., and that, as a result, almost all of the contributors to this anthology are researchers based there.

Overall, this book provides readers with valuable insights into the characteristics of L2 writer development and makes suggestions for those writing instructors who are struggling with the constraints created by institutional policies or who are making an effort to change them to better serve L2 writer development.