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Publications Received

Books

Peter Robinson (ed.), *Second language task complexity: Researching the Cognition Hypothesis of language learning and performance*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. xii+345. ISBN 978-90-272-0720-3 (pbk).

Understanding how task complexity affects second language learning, interaction and spoken and written performance is essential for making informed decisions about task design and sequencing in task-based language teaching programmes. The chapters in this volume all examine evidence for claims made by the Cognition Hypothesis that, compared to simpler tasks, complex tasks promote greater accuracy and complexity in speech and writing, more interaction, and increased learning of the information provided in the input to task performance. Implications are drawn about the basic claim that the Cognition Hypothesis makes about syllabus design: that learners' tasks should be sequenced from simple to complex. The book presents theoretical discussion of the Cognition Hypothesis and cutting-edge empirical studies of the effects of task complexity on second language learning and performance. It will be important for language teachers, graduate students and researchers in applied linguistics, second language acquisition, and cognitive and educational psychology.

Bruce Morrison (ed.), *Independent language learning: Building on experience, seeking new perspectives*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011. Pp. viii+190. ISBN 978-98-880-8365-7 (pbk).

Independent learning is not a new concept for language educators, but while teachers, curriculum designers and policy makers have embraced it as the foundation of modern notions of education, it remains a dynamic and vibrant field for researchers and academics aiming to broaden its scope and deepen our understanding of how it may be applied most effectively, inside and outside the classroom. The contributors to this volume use their experience of applying the concepts related to independent learning in various geographical, cultural and pedagogical tertiary-level learning contexts to present new perspectives on how independent learning can inform and support policy, teaching methodology, curriculum development and the nurturing of successful learners. The first section of the book provides a view of the field from three broad curriculum development viewpoints, while the remaining chapters primarily focus on the experience of learners, teachers and curriculum developers in applying principles of learner autonomy, self-regulation and self-direction with various types of learner, each with their own identities, motivations, expectations and goals. These learner and teacher

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stories provide insights that are important for an understanding of some of the impacts an independent learning approach to language learning has on learners in various educational contexts.

Marianne Gullberg & Peter Indefrey (eds.), *The earliest stages of language learning*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2011. Pp. vi+283. ISBN 978-1-4443-3876-8 (pbk).

This volume provides a state-of-the-art overview of what we know about the cognitive and neurobiological aspects of the adult capacity for language learning. It brings together studies from several fields that examine learning from multiple perspectives using various methods, and covers linguistic domains ranging from phonology and semantics to morphosyntax. The volume will inform and extend further studies of language learning in multiple disciplines.

Martin East, *Task-based language teaching from the teachers' perspective: Insights from New Zealand*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. xix+259. ISBN 978-90-272-0722-7 (pbk).

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is being encouraged as part of a major overhaul of the entire school languages curriculum in New Zealand. However, teachers often struggle to understand what TBLT is, and how to make it work in classrooms. Using the stories that emerged from a series of interviews with teachers (the curriculum implementers) and with advisors (the curriculum leaders), this book highlights the possibilities for TBLT innovation in schools. It also identifies constraints, and proposes how these might be addressed. The result is a book that, while rooted in a particular local context, provides a valuable sourcebook of teacher stories that have relevance for a wide range of people working in a diverse range of contexts. This book will be of genuine interest to all those who wish to understand more about TBLT innovation, and the opportunities and challenges it brings.

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