

Handbook of Practical Second Language Teaching and Learning

This authoritative volume is a practical, comprehensive, and state-of-the-art overview of current knowledge and research on second and foreign language teaching and learning.

Thorough and reader-friendly, the Handbook is organized logically into six parts that address all major areas of L2/FL teaching and learning:

- **Part I: Learning Contexts and Language Teaching** covers the diverse populations of language learners, their needs, and the challenges they face
- **Part II: Curriculum and Instruction** addresses curriculum and materials design, and includes exemplars of instructional approaches with wide applicability across contexts
- **Part III: Listening and Speaking** overviews listening pedagogy, speaking skills, and pronunciation, among other key topics
- **Part IV: Reading and Writing** includes chapters on all practical matters related to learning to write in another language, with attention to spelling, orthography, extensive reading, and more
- **Part V: Vocabulary and Grammar** discusses assumptions and practical approaches on vocabulary and grammar instruction, with attention to important topics such as academic writing and multiword expressions
- **Part VI: Intercultural Communication and Pragmatics** concludes the Handbook with an examination of language learning across social, cultural, and regional differences

Bringing together leading experts in the field, the contributors offer important perspectives on major, established, and emerging topics. Each chapter overviews important developments, key research, and considerations and applications for effective second language instruction. A well-rounded, readable, and up-to-date resource, the Handbook is a compendium of the ongoing changes, innovations, and practices in L2/FL teaching and learning. It is an essential resource for students, teachers, faculty, and professionals.

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Handbook of Practical Second Language Teaching and Learning

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Handbook of Practical Second Language Teaching and Learning

Edited by Eli Hinkel

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Eli Hinkel</i>	
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
<i>List of contributors</i>	xv
PART I	
Learning contexts and language teaching	1
1 The changing landscape of English language teaching and learning	3
<i>David Nunan</i>	
2 Second language literacy: kindergarten to grade 12	24
<i>Reginald Arthur D'Silva and Lee Gunderson</i>	
3 Teaching L2 academic language in K-12: a contextual and developmental perspective	40
<i>María Estela Brisk</i>	
4 English for academic purposes	55
<i>Christine M. Tardy</i>	
5 English for specific purposes: classroom needs analysis	68
<i>James Dean Brown</i>	
6 Teaching English to young learners	83
<i>Sue Garton and Serdar Tekin</i>	
7 English as a lingua franca	97
<i>Andy Kirkpatrick and Iris Schaller-Schwaner</i>	

PART II	
Curriculum and instruction	115
8 Curriculum in language teaching <i>Kathleen Graves</i>	117
9 Materials development for language learning: ways of connecting practice and theory in coursebook development and use <i>Brian Tomlinson</i>	133
10 Content-based instruction: innovations and challenges <i>Marguerite Ann Snow</i>	148
11 Corpus uses in language teaching <i>Ericson Friginal and Ashleigh Cox</i>	161
12 Computer assisted language learning <i>Greg Kessler</i>	173
13 Digital literacies and language learning <i>Rodney H. Jones</i>	184
14 Teaching online: design for engagement <i>Maggie Sokolik</i>	195
15 Professional learning through professional development for second language teachers <i>MaryAnn Christison and Denise E. Murray</i>	209
PART III	
Listening and speaking	223
16 Teaching listening: dichotomies, choices and practices <i>Anne Burns and Joseph Siegel</i>	225
17 Second language listening <i>Michael Rost and Steven Brown</i>	238
18 Teaching speaking to language learners in the 21st century <i>MaryAnn Christison</i>	256
19 Teaching speaking in L2 contexts <i>Willy A. Renandya and Minh Thi Thuy Nguyen</i>	269

20	Effective pronunciation teaching <i>Donna M. Brinton</i>	281
21	Pronunciation and technology <i>John M. Levis and Ivana Rehman</i>	296
PART IV		
Reading and writing		313
22	Teaching and learning English spelling <i>Adam Brown</i>	315
23	L2 writing: toward a theory-practice praxis <i>Lawrence Jun Zhang</i>	331
24	Feedback on L2 student writing: current trends & future directions <i>Dana R. Ferris</i>	344
25	Principles for reading instruction <i>William Grabe and Fredricka L. Stoller</i>	357
26	Building a convergent model of the interlanguage reading system <i>Barbara Birch</i>	370
27	Extensive reading <i>Rob Waring</i>	384
PART V		
Vocabulary and grammar		395
28	Teaching and learning vocabulary <i>Paul Nation</i>	397
29	Re-examining some conventional assumptions in vocabulary teaching: what can we learn from the research? <i>Penny Ur</i>	409
30	Taking a practical approach to academic vocabulary in second language reaching and learning <i>Averil Coxhead and Thi My Hang Nguyen</i>	421
31	Teaching and learning multiword expressions <i>Eli Hinkel</i>	435

Contents

32	Teaching grammar for a purpose in academic writing <i>Jan Frodesen</i>	449
33	The grammar choices that matter in academic writing <i>Nigel A. Caplan</i>	466
PART VI		
Intercultural communication and pragmatics		481
34	Principles of teaching intercultural communication in TESOL <i>Lixian Jin and Martin Cortazzi</i>	483
35	Teaching and learning pragmatics <i>Naoko Taguchi</i>	499
	<i>Index</i>	513

Preface

Overview

Around the world – and in most world regions – a great deal of resources, time, and work are dedicated to second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) learning. According to some counts, there are approximately 1.4 billion English language users around the world. They include a vast majority of nonnative speakers who are learning or have learned English for communication in a myriad of contexts and for a vast range of purposes in all manner of human endeavors. For this reason, the number of language teachers and learners in practically any location where English is taught and learned is predicted to continue to grow for the foreseeable future. The types of L2/FL populations who are English teachers and learners have also become increasingly diverse, thus adding to what was already a very broad field of language instruction, preparation, teaching, education, pedagogy, schooling, tutoring, guiding, coaching, mentoring, and directing. In this light, no handbook, no matter how large, can thoroughly cover the vast expanse of the contemporary language teaching and learning territories.

The contents of this book reflect the importance of practical considerations in language teaching and learning. The practical aspects of research discussed throughout deal directly with the applications of these findings to the needs of teachers and learners. It is a widely recognized fact, however, that a large body of studies on how language is taught and learned presents an incomplete picture, and there is much left to explore. The chapter coverage strives to remain as thorough as possible within the scope of one volume, but the main objective of the book is to shine the light on the practical matters entailed in working with language teaching and learning.

To this end, the book provides a broad-based discussion of language teaching and learning essentials, as well as the types of language learners that populate the language learning universe, such as young and adult learners, K-12 students, academic learners, and professionals in the disciplines. The development of foundational language skills is required for any type of communication. This volume includes all the classical areas in L2/FL pedagogy and applied linguistics, in addition to language curriculum design, digital literacies, computer assisted language learning, and teachers' professional development.

The practical aspects of language teaching and learning are directly concerned with how instruction is carried out, what types of skills and knowledge need to be addressed, and how the language systems and variations are communicated to the learners. One of the key considerations is identifying the ways in which instruction can be adapted to meet learning needs in local contexts. An important goal of this book is to bridge the divide between the large body of research findings and the needs of teachers and learners to make instruction as effective and as efficient as possible.

In light of the increasing importance of L2/FL usage around the world, the chapters examine in some depth the core areas without which no communication can take place: speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, grammar, and writing. In each of the skill areas, the contents take a look at traditions, innovations, and new directions in the practical aspects of instruction.

Methodology for Content Design

To identify areas and topics of relevance, importance, and usefulness, it was necessary to examine the topics of interest among professional and teaching associations around the world. The following approach was adopted:

- (1) To focus on currency and relevance, the themes and shifts highlighted at professional conferences, meetings, gatherings, academies, presentations, and in-progress workshops were collected.
- (2) The divisions, affiliates, special interest groups, as well as the topic areas in various professional associations and organizations in many countries and across continents were compiled to ensure the currency and breadth of research topics, content areas, and values.
- (3) A thorough and extensive review of the L2/FL research on teaching and learning published in the past several years played a key role. Regrettably, the number of pedagogical research publications has been in decline in the past couple of decades.
- (4) The new and additional teaching areas that complement established instructional areas are driven by the indelible effects of technology and real-world events on how languages are taught and learned at the present time.

This book includes six parts, each divided into several chapters, depending on the topics and contents. In general terms, the inclusion or exclusion of a particular theme or topic in this already huge compendium of overviews reflects its prominence in L2/FL research literature, and professional gatherings.

The structure of the book seeks to acknowledge the enormous complexity of teaching and learning the essential language skills. Most teachers, methodologists, and curriculum designers typically accept it as given that L2/FL teaching and learning is such a vast and complex area of study that it might be simply impossible to grasp it in its entirety.

One outcome of this complexity is that multiple perspectives, learning priorities, and instructional techniques can be found in most aspects of linguistic analysis and pedagogy. The diversity of perspectives reflects the rising professionalization of the field. The studies of language, as well as language learners, fundamentally hinge on indirect and interpreted evidence, and in almost all cases, more than one perspective and interpretation are possible. It may come as little surprise that in practical terms, views on key principles in language teaching and learning can differ to a great extent. Multiple and different perspectives on most aspects of L2/FL teaching and learning are probably inevitable.

The audience for the book is envisioned to be language practitioners of all sorts. These can include, for example, novice and experienced classroom teachers, advanced and not-so-advanced undergraduate and post-graduate students, the teaching faculty in teacher training institutes, teacher education, and applied linguistics programs, teacher trainers, curriculum designers, and material developers, or others who are still merely considering joining the profession.

The Organization of the Book

The societal contexts of L2/FL learning and users who undertake to learn a language (most commonly, English) are the top priority of the book. Thus, the book begins with language learning people, and the examination of the many populations of learners and their learning needs in a range of social and educational systems.

The book opens with **Part I, Learning Contexts and Language Teaching**. As is typical of many populations, language learners everywhere have broad-ranging objectives for achieving

different L2/FL proficiencies in order to accomplish their educational, vocational, personal, academic, professional, and communicative goals.

Part II, Curriculum and Instruction, discusses curriculum and material design and deals with a few prominent exemplars of instructional approaches in language teaching. These approaches were selected for a closer look because they are widely adopted in various geographic locations and social contexts around the world. The same can be said about the growing prominence of corpus analyses and their findings in all manner of language pedagogy. The proliferation of technology in language learning and instruction in and out of school (not to mention the ubiquity of technology anywhere and everywhere world-wide) has dramatically changed how learners go about their daily language-related activities.

The focus on specific language skills begins in **Part III, Listening and Speaking**. These chapters address the current and divergent perspectives on listening pedagogy and the development of speaking skills, as well as the role of pronunciation.

The chapters in **Part IV, Reading and Writing**, treat a number of broad domains of research such as orthography and spelling, the practical matters in learning to write in another language and teaching writing, L2/FL reading as an essential language skill, and the increasing prominence of extensive reading. Reading and writing are foundational first and second language skills. However, how teachers and learners go about teaching and learning to read and write is likely to vary greatly in a broad range of instructional contexts. For instance, pen-and-paper skills can find themselves in the company of digital technology that, by definition, requires advanced reading and writing abilities.

The six chapters in **Part V, Vocabulary and Grammar**, focus on various aspects of learning L2/FL lexicon and its nearest relative, grammar. In recent decades, dramatic shifts in theoretical foundations, teacher beliefs, and the practice of teaching have had enormous influence on the place of vocabulary, grammar, and their contributions to language pedagogy and uses. Although typically whole books are written on L2/FL vocabulary, grammar, or vocabulary combined with grammar, the chapters in this part only touch the tip of the iceberg. How, when, and in what contexts vocabulary and grammar are learned are the topics without which no handbook can do without.

The topics of **Intercultural Communication and Pragmatics** are considered in **Part VI**. The connections between language learning and communication across cultural, social, and regional divides has long remained one of the pivotal areas of study. More recently, intercultural and international communication have attracted further attention due to the increasing effects of globalization. Studies in L2/FL pragmatics are bound up with cross-cultural and cross-national language usage in an enormous array of socio-cultural frameworks.

The Structure of the Chapters

In this Handbook, as in any other large book that consists of dozens of chapters written by three or four dozen authors and co-authors, the contributions are likely to differ in character. To a large extent, the chapters reflect the diversity of the language teaching profession, the contexts in which language is taught and learned, and the individuals who teach and learn. However, each of the chapters seeks to present reader-friendly, accessible, and teacher-oriented overviews of the key areas in L2 teaching and learning.

In light of the great diversity of the field, research, and disciplinary perspectives, every effort has been made to make the chapters consistent in style, tone, and the depth of material coverage. For this purpose, all contributors were requested to construct their chapters along a similar outline:

- An explanation of how the topic discussed in the chapter fits into a larger picture of the practical aspects of language teaching

Preface

- Important developments, trends, and traditions in the specific area of instruction, as well as current controversies and the reasons that they have arisen
- A detailed explanation of the perspective expressed in the chapter and a review of current practices and innovations that supports this perspective
- A section on conclusions and/or future research directions
- A substantial list of references that can assist interested readers in backtracking seminal and relevant works

Each chapter represents a stand-alone examination of a specific area in language teaching and learning. However, the book as a whole seeks to reflect the major trends in the current state of professional affairs, as well as the people and the contexts where second and foreign languages are taught and learned.

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In Memoriam

The previously published volume of *The Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* and its three earlier volumes have been around since 2003 when the first handbook was originally proposed and then developed. In the past many years, the earlier handbooks have greatly benefitted from the expertise and generosity of world-class chapter authors, colleagues, and friends. Their scholarship, work, and contribution to the field have been invaluable to the study and teaching of language and second language. Their contributions to the lives of their colleagues, students, and readers have touched and will continue to touch all those who learned and will continue to learn from them.

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