

Book Review / Recension d'ouvrage

Language & Learning: An Introduction for Teaching, Canadian Edition

by Marie Emmitt, Matthew Zbaracki, Linda Komesaroff, John Pollock, Rebecca Luce-Kapler, and Jane Chin

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The recently published Canadian edition of *Language & Learning* is a relevant resource for teacher candidates and teachers interested in developing their understanding of issues in language learning. This edition, adapted from an Australian edition of *Language & Learning*, uses the Canadian education landscape to explore language learning. It addresses established and current topics in language learning (e.g., including diversity of languages and cultures present in Canadian classrooms) and aims to educate the reader about language learning theory and practice. This text would be ideal for use in teacher education programs because not only does it present pertinent theory and research in each chapter, but it also uses vignettes, references to specific Canadian curriculum documents, and guiding questions to engage students and teachers in discussion about language learning and teaching. The variety of components included in each chapter (e.g., highlighted definitions, text boxes, “theory in practice” sections, end-of-chapter summaries) makes *Language & Learning* an approachable and interesting read.

Language & Learning is logically organized into three parts: language and culture; linguistics and language structure; and language and learning. Part 1, language and culture, first provides the reader with an overview of the dimensions and characteristics of language from a socio-cultural perspective. It then addresses how language is used to communicate and presents factors influencing communication (e.g., personal, familial, social, etc.). Finally, the authors present information about language variation and prompt the reader to think about everything from language and culture to language codes (e.g., restricted, elaborated) to language levels (e.g., dialect, register). Findings presented in these chapters refer to both seminal pieces of work in the area of language learning and teaching as well as recent and relevant studies that reflect the evolving Canadian classroom.

Part 2 focuses on linguistics and language structure. This part includes four chapters centred on grammar; discourse analysis; syntax, morphology, and lexicology; and phonology. This part of the book moves beyond a general overview of language learning, and, instead, takes a very close-up look at the form and function of language. As such, Part 2 is valid and important for those interested in furthering their understanding of language learning. Topics such as genre, text cohesion, word properties, and the function of words in sentences would certainly help those interested in teaching writing to students with various language backgrounds. Understanding the characteristics of language at the sentence level informs teaching practices at all levels of education. When addressing topics such as morphology and phonology, easy-to-understand definitions are presented in list or table forms. These could serve as easy reference guides for those who wish to pursue additional study in language learning. Like Part 1, Part 2 shines the spotlight on the Canadian context; for example, in one “Theory in Practice” moment, the authors offer a list of Canadian words that are derived from Aboriginal languages and challenges the reader to think about how this information could be used in his/her teaching.

Finally, Part 3 of this book addresses the various stages and elements of language learning. In order to do this, the authors draw on research and explore theories to explain how language is learned (with the focus on how young children learn language). The exploration of theories (e.g., behaviourist, cognitivist, and interactionist views of language learning) provides the reader with a basic understanding of these theories without overwhelming the reader with the complexities of the research over the last several decades. The authors present stages and processes of language learning in a clear and concise

manner. Students and teachers who are working with students with various language abilities will be able to better understand their current language abilities and their potential future progress in language learning. An important inclusion in Part 3 is the chapter regarding learning an additional language. This chapter effectively looks at the characteristics associated with learning an additional language (e.g., motivation, aptitude) as well as the factors that influence additional language learning (e.g., cognitive, affective). Of particular relevance to teacher candidates, as well as novice and experienced teachers, is the section near the end of Chapter 9, which reviews the understandings one must develop that are relevant to the diverse classroom (e.g., knowledge of first- and second-language acquisition; knowledge of the socio-cultural and socio-political context of education; effective communication with families of diverse backgrounds).

Language & Learning packs a lot into just under 300 pages of text. It is approachable, well-organized, and clearly written. The “Theory in Practice” sections in each chapter encourage the reader to pause in order to explore how theory informs practice. Here, the authors pose questions on which students can reflect individually or in a classroom context. For professors in teacher education programs, these “Theory in Practice” sections can serve as extremely useful jumping off points for class discussions or course assignments.

In addition to the pertinence of the “Theory in Practice” sections, each chapter begins and ends with a vignette. These vignettes describe a realistic classroom situation and encourage the readers (students and teachers) to explore different approaches that could be used in the highlighted situation.

Other useful elements for students and teachers in *Language & Learning* are the end-of-chapter summaries, notes regarding the implications for teaching, and the lists of texts and websites for further reading. These additions to the chapter provoke the reader to extend his/her learning beyond the text and to engage with the material in additional ways.

In sum, *Language & Learning* is comprehensive and grounded in current and relevant research. The authors have thoroughly analysed language and learning from the Canadian perspective and successfully engage the Canadian reader. This text would serve students in teacher education programs well, whether in a general or advanced language learning and teaching course, as well as provide current information to practising teachers and teaching guidance for professors in language education.